



### MARKETS



**MINISTER ALLAYS SUGAR SHORTAGE FEARS PAGE 3**

### SUPPORT



**ACT WELCOMES G20 DECISION ON DEBT RELIEF TO LDCS PAGE 4**

### CORONAVIRUS



**HOUSE TO HOUSE INSPECTION TO ENFORCE HAND WASHING PAGES**

### EMPATHY



**FREE EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS PAGE 6**



**CRDB TARGETS TO EARN HIGHER PROFIT FROM BURUNDI, INSURANCE BROKER SUBSIDIARIES**

**First Google developers' space opens in Lagos**

**Tycoon awarded KSh850m after Spring Valley home demolished**

# Covid-19 cases rise to 94 as Zanzibar reports six more

By Henry Mwangonde

THE number of coronavirus cases in Zanzibar has increased to 24 after six more patients tested positive yesterday.

All cases are local people residing at Kibweni, Magogoni, Kvarara, Kilimahewa Juu, Amani and Kidoti in urban Zanzibar.

The announcement was made by the Health minister Hamad Rashid Muhammad in a daily briefing regarding Covid-19 developments.

Like on Wednesday, cases that tested positive yesterday include five men and one woman. The youngest was a 23-year-old.

Union Health minister Ummu Mwalimu (pictured) had announced that 29 more people had tested positive in Dar es Salaam, bringing total infected persons to 88, in which case Covid-19 infections now stand at 94.

The number of Coronavirus cases in the country reached 88 yesterday after 29



**Tracing of people who came into contact with the various patients was underway, the minister's statement affirmed, urging members of the public to avoid unnecessary gatherings**

more people tested positive, with Zanzibar recording the first death of the invisible killer since it was announced in the Isles.

As of Wednesday, 29 people had tested positive for the viral disease with 26 in Dar es Salaam, two in Mwanza and one in Kilimanjaro Region, she said, noting that Covid-19 had so far claimed four lives with 11 recoveries.

Tracing of people who came into contact with the various patients was underway, the minister's statement affirmed, urging members of the public to avoid unnecessary gatherings.

Zanzibar was at that time announcing six new Covid-19 cases and one death, taking the toll of novel coronavirus infections to 18.

The deceased was a 63-year-old male, a resident of Kijichi who died on Saturday at his home and was buried the same day.



Pendo Msomi, chairperson of Shinyanga a based NGO known as People Empowerment, demonstrates to Busangwa village residents on Wednesday appropriate washing of hands as a precaution against the spread of Covid-19 infections. Photo: Correspondent Marco Maduhu

## Big heroin haul: Nigerian, two Tanzanians arrested

By Guardian Reporter

DETECTIVES with the Drug Control and Enforcement Authority (DCEA) have pounced on a suspected Nigerian drug lord operating in Tanzania along with two accomplices while trying to conceal over 200 kilogrammes of heroin.

Acting DCEA Commissioner General James Kaji told reporters in Dar es Salaam yesterday that the bust in took place on Wednesday at a Mbezi suburb house north of the city. A 270 kilogrammes pile of the drug was seized.

But the main target, the 39-year-old Nigerian, lives in the posh Masaki suburb while his Tanzanian accomplices live in Mbezi and

Changanyikeni areas, Kaji said.

One of the two Tanzanians is a librarian with a private university in Dar es Salaam but moonlights in the illegal business of drug trafficking and peddling, he said.

"We collaborated with other foreign agencies and have been trailing them since the April 8th. We were monitoring as they received the haul and took to the house before we raided it," said Kaji without saying from which country the drugs emanated.

The suspects built a new underground septic tank with a cabinet that was apparently meant for the safekeeping of the drug but the haul arrived before its construction was

TURN TO PAGE 2

## MOI makes wearing of masks mandatory

By Guardian Reporter

MANDATORY wearing of face masks at its premises has been directed by the Muhimbili Orthopaedic Institute (MOI), the first public institution to announce such a measure.

In a statement released yesterday, MOI said the new rule comes into effect from today and applies to staff, patients as well as visitors,

underlining that those without face masks will not be permitted to access the facility.

"This step has been taken as part of strategies adopted by the institute to ensure that patients, their relatives as well as all our stakeholders are safe from coronavirus," it reads.

Also mandatory before accessing

TURN TO PAGE 2



## WHO: Alcohol drives Covid-19

### ● Recommends curbing access to booze during lockdowns

By Guardian Reporter

ALCOHOL consumption can increase the risk of catching Covid-19 and worsen condition of sufferers, the World Health Organization has warned.

In a statement posted on its website yesterday, the UN health body further recommended that governments around the world to limit access to alcohol during coronavirus lockdowns.

"Alcohol compromises the body's immunity system and increases the risk of adverse health outcomes," the WHO's regional office for Europe said in its site, citing heavy alcohol use throughout the continent.

It affirmed that alcohol consumption is associated with a number of communicable and noncommunicable diseases that can make a person more vulnerable to contracting Covid-19.

It can also exacerbate mental health issues and risk-taking behavior and stoke violence, especially in countries that

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 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.



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**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 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



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## WHO: Alcohol drives Covid-19

FROM PAGE 1

have implemented social distancing measures that largely keep the population quarantined in their homes.

WHO also published a fact sheet dispelling the "dangerous myth that consuming high-strength alcohol can kill the coronavirus."

"It does not," the WHO said, insisting that it could result in serious health issues, including death, especially if it's adulterated with methanol. About 3 million deaths a year are attributable to alcohol without a pandemic driving up consumption.

"Therefore, people should minimize their alcohol consumption at any time and particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic," the UN body advised.

Americans are nonetheless stocking up. Alcohol sales at U.S. liquor and grocery stores were up 22 per cent for the week ending March 28 compared with the same time last year, according to data compiled by Nielsen.

And more Americans are drinking at home, asserted financial services firm Rabobank, as the market for on-site dining and drinking stands to miss out on \$15bn in alcohol sales over the next two months.

Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, the WHO's parent organization, warned earlier this month that the world is witnessing a horrifying global surge in domestic violence, as millions around the world stay home to curb the spread of Covid-19.

The social and economic stress of the outbreak as well as restrictions on movement have all contributed to the surge in abuse.

Last month, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus offered advice on how to stay physically and mentally healthy under lockdown measures.

"During this difficult time, it's important to continue looking after your physical and mental health. This will not only help you in the long term, it will also help you fight COVID-19 if you get it," Tedros said.

Here's WHO's advice for keeping healthy, that is eat healthy to boost your immunity system, limit alcohol and sugary drinks, don't smoke. It can exacerbate COVID-19 symptoms and increase your risk of getting seriously sick, exercise for at least 30 minutes a day for adults and an hour a day for kids.

If you're allowed to go outside, go for a walk, run or bike ride while keeping a safe distance from others.

If you can't leave the house, dance, do some yoga or walk up and down the stairs.

People working from home shouldn't sit too long in the same position.

Take a three-minute break every 30 minutes.

Get your mind off the crisis. Listen to music, read a book or play a game.

"It's normal to feel stressed, confused and scared during a crisis. Talking to people you know and trust can help," Tedros said.

"And try not to read or watch too much news if it makes you anxious. Get your information from reliable sources once or twice a day."



**Therefore, people should minimize their alcohol consumption at any time and particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic**



TBL Plc managing director Philip Redman (R) symbolically presents nine tonnes of maize flour in Dar es Salaam on Wednesday to Rufiji legislator Mohamed Mchengera for use by victims of recent floods in the district. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

## Big heroin haul: Nigerian, two Tanzanians arrested

FROM PAGE 1

completed. That is perhaps why the detectives found it in the house, he said.

The trio had been in the illegal business for a long time and their arrest was made possible by intelligence exchange with other countries, the director noted.

"The amount of drugs we seized is enormous. If it entered the market it would have destroyed the lives many youths," he said.

Tanzanians who work in illegal narcotics trafficking and peddling must change their ways and engage in legal economic activities as law enforcers will not relent in the war against drugs, he stated.

He also appealed to law abiding citizens to report to authorities whenever they see unusual activities or individuals with suspicious undertakings in their neighbourhoods.

The authority has embarked on procedures to prosecute the suspects, he said.

In February, DCEA detectives arrested two people for possessing

508.1 grams of heroin at Ubungo Kibo in Dar es Salaam. The arrests followed intelligence regarding the existence of illegal drugs circulating in the area, he further noted.

DCEA apprehended a Polish national in February, whom it said as growing cannabis in a farm surrounded by a high perimeter wall at Himo road junction in Kilimanjaro Region.



Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa has a quick word with Mpwapwa legislator George Lubeleje (R) in the National Assembly in Dodoma yesterday. Photo: PMO

## Millions face hunger as African cities impose coronavirus lockdowns

LAGOS

SHEHU Isah Daiyanu Dumus has run out of cash and says he only has a few handfuls of cassava flour left to eat.

The 53-year-old paraplegic man usually sells phone cards. But an extended lockdown to fight the new coronavirus in Nigeria's biggest city, Lagos, has left him stranded.

The Lagos state government sent him a text after the lockdown began on March 30 saying he would receive a food parcel. But no food came, and with government offices closed, he had no idea when or how he would get any.

"I am sure that if this coronavirus did not kill people with disability, definitely this order of stay at home will kill people," he told Reuters outside a building near the airport where a friend is letting him stay.

Hunger and anger are building in Lagos and other major African cities with little or no social safety net to protect the poor from the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The World Food Programme says at least 20% of Africa's 1.2 billion people are already undernourished - the highest percentage in the world.

The combination of widespread poverty, reliance on imported food and price spikes due to the epidemic could prove deadly if African governments don't act quickly, it says.

Under new restrictions in Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa, millions who once lived on daily wages are running out of food.

Many work as traders, labourers or craftsmen in the informal sector, which accounts for 85% of employment across the continent, and must now

stay home with no savings as a buffer.

In Lagos, three out of seven of its 20 million residents can't always get enough food under normal circumstances, according to the Lagos Food Bank Initiative, a nonprofit. The 14-day lockdown, extended by another two weeks on Monday, has thrown millions more into need.

Food prices spiked as residents raced to stock up. Imported rice rose 11% and the price of garri, a staple made from cassava, nearly doubled, said Lagos-based risk consultancy SBM Intelligence.

Michael Sunbola, the food bank's president, said his organization was getting 50% more calls than usual from frantic residents. Some trek for five hours to collect food.

As his team unloaded rice, beans, oil and cassava flour this month in Agboyi

Ketu, he said many would struggle as the shutdown continues.

"We are afraid some people might starve," Sunbola said.

The Lagos state government is trying to help. It distributed 200,000 food packs during the first weeks of the lockdown and aims to give out 2 million as soon as possible, Agriculture Commissioner Gbolahan Lawal told Reuters.

The federal government has promised cash grants for the poorest Nigerians, and food vouchers.

But videos online show angry Lagos residents tearing apart what they consider paltry offerings.

Lawal said those people did not understand that the aid was meant only for the most vulnerable. But officials acknowledge they are barely scratching the surface of the problem.

## PM warns on gatherings held in places of worship

By Guardian Reporter

PRIME Minister Kassim Majaliwa has described controlling gatherings in places of worship as one way to fight Covid-19 infections.

Speaking to reporters on Wednesday evening in his office in Dodoma via video conferencing, Majaliwa said there is the need to beef up education drive to people so that they understand well how to make themselves safe against the pandemic.

He said the government instituted initial one month quarantine, but the places will continue to serve worshippers until further notice as various steps are still being taken against the pandemic.

"In addition to allowing them to conduct prayers, I am told there are now Sunday Schools classes for young children in churches and mosques, therefore this has to stop immediately,"

he said.

He added: "We spoke to religious leaders about prayers only and not anything else and besides the said prayers should be short and worshippers to sit with adequate spaces apart."

He said if it were possible only a few people should be selected for prayers, but the government would not like to interfere in religious matters and bishops and sheikhs know about that hence they should assist.

On market areas, shops and supermarkets he said people should continue getting their services as the government has no intention to suspend them but called on shop owners to place hand washing facilities at the entrances.

Up to now Tanzania has 94 Covid-19 cases - 70 on the mainland and 24 in Zanzibar, out of whom four have died and 11 recovered.

## MOI makes wearing of masks mandatory

FROM PAGE 1

the facility is hand sanitizing and temperature screening, it elaborated. Temperature screening is already being done at bank door steps and other public institutions.

However, full time wearing of face masks has not been put in place since initial studies indicated that the virus that causes Covid-19 is not airborne. World Health Organisation (WHO) regulations state that healthy persons only need to wear a mask if they are taking care of a person with suspected Covid-19 infection.

It also recommends mask wearing for those who have symptoms of the disease, like coughing or when sneezing. WHO further maintains that masks are effective only when used in combination with other preventive measures such as frequent hand-cleaning with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.

"If you wear a mask, then you must know how to use it and dispose of it

properly," cautions WHO in a published advisory.

As for health workers, WHO provides another set of advisories which look thorough, unlike the ones for the general public.

Before putting on a mask, healthcare providers are required to clean their hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water. They are also advised to cover their mouth and nose with mask and make sure there are no gaps between their face and the mask.

"Avoid touching the mask while using it; if you do, clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water," the advice intones.

They are also required to replace the mask with a new one as soon as it is damp and cautioned not to re-use single-use masks.

To remove the mask, they are supposed to do it from behind (do not touch the front of mask); discard immediately in a closed bin; clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.





Kahama district commissioner Anamringi Macha pictured on Wednesday announcing the postponement of a scheduled meeting of the teachers' union, as a precaution against the spread of Covid-19 infections. Photo: Correspondent Shaban Njia

## Govt calls for collective efforts to curb wanton felling of trees

By Getrude Mbagu, Dodoma

MINISTER of State in Vice President's Office (Union Affairs and Environment), Hassan Zungu yesterday called for different stakeholders to chip in and support the government's efforts to curb deforestation.

Zungu made the call in the august House when presenting his office's budget estimates for the 2020/21 fiscal year.

The minister said that despite strides taken by the government and stakeholders to protect the country's environment, "but massive destructions have continued to be recorded in various parts of the country, something, which needs more serious and comprehensive measures to address."

According to him, the State of Environment in Tanzania report of 2019 had raised some concerns there are still a number of challenges facing the country's atmosphere, which include increased human activities which lead to degradation of land and water resources, massive deforestation, and biodiversity loss.

He cited poor environment knowledge among the public as one of the major challenges something which sustains various in activities which in-turn have great impact to the environment.

To address the challenges, Zungu said that the government will continue to strengthening institutions for improved environmental management.

"We continue embarking on inter-sectoral and institutions initiatives to ensure that we educate the public that most of the adverse effects that we are experiencing today are a result of our own activities, this is very crucial area," he said.

In the area of pollution, the minister acknowledged that there are some sub-standard electric wires, gas pipes and motor vehicles which contribute highly to the destruction of air and environment.

He said that the wave of massive pollution is also apparent on water sources and catchment areas with most parts started to experience the impacts.

"We are working on various strategies to fight any kind of environment degradation. We have a number of agreements and projects with our stakeholders going on across the country especially in the area of pollution, sea, river and management

He also said that the government is currently advocating for alternative energy such as gas instead of charcoal both in rural and urban areas to reduce deforestation.

"We have also continued to mobilise the public on tree planting whereby in a total of 209 million trees have been planted countrywide since the campaign was inaugurated few years ago," he said.

On issues related to union affairs, he said: "The ministry continues to strengthen union and various initiatives to cater interest of all parties of Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar."

Zungu added that the ministry also facilitates residents from all parts of the union to take part in economic, social and development projects within and outside the country.

The minister further requested the Parliament to review and approve the ministry's budget proposal standing at 27.99bn/- aimed to implement various initiatives in the 2020/21 financial year for the country's development.

Presenting the Constitution and Legal Affairs Committee report, Vice Chairperson Najma Giga commended the government for timely disbursement of funds in the Vice President's office.

The committee also commended the government its efforts in resolving various union matters such as in the area of tax and levies something which would stimulate economic development.

## Villager held for 'lying' to Health minister over Covid-19 'infection'

By Guardian Correspondent, Shinyanga

POLICE in Shinyanga Region are holding Mussa Kisinza (25), resident of Mwakitolyo village in Shinyanga District for telephoning and lying to Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children minister Ummu Mwalimu that he was suffering

from Covid-19.

In her press statement the Shinyanga Regional Police Commander Debora Magiligimba said after making the call, a team of doctors went to the area but on arrival Kisinza's mobile phone was off the air and hence panic descended among the residents of the area.

She after the caller switched off his mobile phone the doctors could not locate him and left the area.

RPC Magiligimba said thereafter detectives from the online crimes department went to the area and succeeded to identify and arrest the suspect while he was busy mining for gold at a mine field.

She said after arrest he was taken to Mwakitolyo village dispensary and after examination, he was found to be free of Covid-19 infection.

The RPC appealed to people in Shinyanga not to make jokes on Covid-19 and warned of stern legal steps against anyone who will be found to issue false on the pandemic.

## Bashungwa allays sugar shortage fears

By Guardian Correspondent,

Dodoma

INDUSTRY and Trade Minister, Innocent Bashungwa yesterday allayed fears over soaring sugar prices, insisting to import more than 20,000 tonnes of the sweetener to boost stock during the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak as well as the holy month of Ramadan.

Bashungwa warned business people from hiking prices of the precious product affirming to take stringent legal measures against traders who will be proved to hide sugar in warehouses.

Addressing journalists here yesterday following concerns on high prices of sugar at various regions countrywide, Bashungwa said the government has formed a special commission that have been tasked to investigate the available sugar stocks at different warehouses.

He accused some traders for purposely hiding sugar in warehouses thus causing price hike and artificial shortage of the products.

"The formed commission will include a number of experts from the Ministry of industry and Trade as well as all regional trade officers. They will work thoroughly by ensuring each of the warehouses is inspected", said the Minister calling upon traders who have intentionally hidden the sweetener to release it to the market.

He added: "Traders shouldn't aim to get super profit at the expense of Tanzanians. We are going

to take stringent legal measures against them".

The Minister informed that the government is taking various initiatives to boost local sugar production for domestic consumption.

Speaking at different occasions, some Dodoma residents appealed to the government to control the rising prices of the precious product.

Waziri Saleh, a resident of Mailimbili in the capital said the government must put in place strategies to help Tanzanians during the Coronavirus outbreak.

"The government should take serious measures to control such kind of malpractice by dishonest traders as Muslims are approaching the fasting period—the holy month of Ramadhan", said Saleh insisting the need for the government to come up with indicative prices for the product.

According to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture, Livestock and Water the country's sugar demand for the 2018/2019 was 670,000 tonnes of which 515,000 tonnes are for domestic and 155,000 for industrial use.

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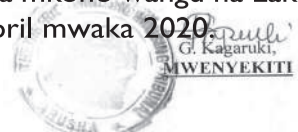
KINANA.....MDAI  
DHIDIYA  
SUBHASH V. LODHIA.....MDAIWA

### 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 27/05/2020 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/Muhuri wa baraza hili leo tarehe 03 mwezi April mwaka 2020



157051

## VEHICLES FOR SALE



Sn	Vehicle Reg	Make	Model	Colour	Purchased	ODO	Price USD
1	T 680 CDR	Toyota	Prado TX	White	2012	116,619	24,000
2	T 716 CDR	Toyota	Prado TX	White	2012	120,747	24,000
3	T 280 CDR	Toyota	Prado TX	White	2012	126,700	24,000
4	T 704 CDR	Toyota	Prado TX	White	2012	103,230	24,000
5	T 709 CDR	Toyota	Prado TX	White	2012	80,580	24,000
6	T 721 CDR	Toyota	Prado TX	White	2012	96,447	24,000
7	T 703 CDR	Toyota	V8 LC 200	White	2012	85,000	30,000

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157054



## ACT Wazalendo lauds G20 decision on debt relief to poor countries

By Guardian Reporter

THE opposition-*ACT-Wazalendo* has backed decisions by the G20 countries to suspend debt servicing by poor countries from next month to the end of this year.

The party's national chairman, Maalim Seif Sharif Hamad, said the G20 decision made on April 15th 2020 was crucial for countries including Tanzania which spends approximately US\$134 million per month on servicing external debt.

"This much needed relief will enable the government to develop a stimulus package to reignite the economy as well as ensure our health system is ready to face what is coming. *ACT-Wazalendo* will continue to hold the government to account and focus on how these much needed funds will be employed to help our people navigate the negative effects of the Covid-19 pandemic", said Hamad.

He argued that a one year suspension of external debt services for developing countries would help countries to stimulate economies and rebuild their health systems.

Hamad noted that accountability mechanisms are to enable the funds saved to be used to achieve the desired objectives of economic stimulus and developing health systems.

Hamad said a similar process that to that followed with the heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) should be embarked upon with each country developing a coherent plan with key milestones that will be monitored.

HIPC groups of developing countries with high levels of poverty and debt overhang eligible for special assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. He added: "If we don't get this right, there is a real danger that authoritarian tendencies and the pretext of Covid-19 emergencies may result in funds being

squandered".

Hamad said that he will write to the World Bank and IMF to formally request that HIPC like mechanism be instituted as a matter of urgency to ensure that countries such as Tanzania move with dispatch in directing saved funds to the right projects.

"As our party leader (legislator Zitto Kabwe) previously stated, we also remain ready to work with the government in any way we can to get our economy working and to protect our people", he said.

On Wednesday, financial officials of the Group of 20 (G20) major economies have said they agreed on a coordinated approach for a suspension of debt service payments for the world's poorest countries starting on May 1 until the end of the year.

The decision to suspend both principal repayments and interest payments affects all the International Development Association (IDA) countries that are currently on debt service to the IMF and the WB, and all least developed countries as defined by the United Nations that are currently on any debt service to the IMF and the World Bank.

The move is part of efforts to provide stimulus amid the new coronavirus outbreak, which they warn is pushing the global economy into the steepest downturn since the Great Depression.

They also called on private creditors to participate in the initiative on comparable terms.

IMF director Kristalina Georgieva and World Bank chief David Malpass on Wednesday praised the new G20 debt relief agreement, which suspends bilateral debt service payments by poor countries. The actions to freeze both principal repayments and interest payments will free up more than US \$ 20 billion for the countries to spend on improving their health systems and fighting the coronavirus pandemic.



Mwanza regional commissioner John Mongella (R) pictured in Mwanza city yesterday receiving a consignment of personal protection gear donated by various stakeholders in support of the war on Covid-19. Photo: Correspondent Neema Emmanuel

By Guardian Correspondent, Kahama

FOUR children from one family have died after they were crushed by a collapsing wall while they were sleeping yesterday night at Chalya village, Nyandekwa ward in Kahama district, Shinyanga Region.

Kahama District Commissioner Anamringi Macha revealed this when he spoke to this paper and mentioned the children as Emanuel Yona (2), Monica Yona (5), Tatu Yona (10) and Lusina Yona (13) and added that their mother Sarah Bundala received minor

## Collapsing wall crushes four children to death in Kahama

injuries.

He said the cause of the collapsing wall was the house's weak structure as it was built by mud bricks and could not withstand the incessant rains.

He said after the District's Defence and Security Committee reached the place it conveyed the government's

directives for the deceased to be buried with the cost of coffins met by the district government.

He said they have appealed to the villager accommodate parents of the deceased children and directed the leaders of the ward and village governments to see how they can assist

in building them another house.

Some villagers said they were greatly disturbed by the incident and added that they will continue taking care of their houses and appealed to the government to educate wananchi on how to construct robust and safe houses.



Al-Hekma Foundation director Nurdeen Kishk (R) briefs journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday on the cancellation of a Quran recitation competition which was to have been held during the upcoming Holy month of Ramadhan. With him are members of the event's organising committee. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

## Shield people with disabilities against Covid-19, govt urged

By Guardian Reporter

THE Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRGG) has commended efforts being made by the government to tame the spread of Coronavirus but advised that a special focus be directed at people living with disabilities (PLWDs).

In a statement it released yesterday, the commission noted that able-bodied Tanzanians have so far been reached with messages on preventive measures but not PLWDs.

"The commission asks the government to pay special attention to people living with disabilities because they need to be sensitized on how to prevent them from contracting Coronavirus," reads the statement signed by CHRGG Chairman Judge (rtd) Mathew Mwaimu.

"This include giving the right information through right means. For instance, the deaf must be reached through sign language and those with visual impairment reached through braille."

Mwaimu added that PLWDs be provided with preventive healthcare services and be protected against stigma.

In the statement Mwaimu congratulates the Ministry of Health and its officials, including doctors, nurses and other medical personnel for the huge task they were performing in mobilising, educating and providing appropriate service to wananchi who have already been infected by the disease.

He said CHRGG also hails the Civil Society and business people who have come out in support of government efforts in the fight against the pandemic.

The Commission also appeals to wnwanchi not to brush aside the pandemic as something of a joke, saying it is real hence it was imperative to support government's efforts by following the right guidelines given including all those suspected to have been infected by the disease and those already proven to stay in quarantine for the period set.

*"The commission asks the government to pay special attention to people living with disabilities because they need to be sensitized on how to prevent them from contracting Coronavirus"*

By Guardian Correspondent, Kyela

CONSTRUCTION of a one-stop border post at the Malawi-Tanzania border at Kasumulu in Kyela District will improve trade ties between the two countries.

This was expressed by the Mbeya Regional Commissioner Albert Chalamila during his inspection visit of the project financed by the World Bank and constructed by CGC Contractors from China at a cost of 26.4bn/-.

## Malawi-Tanzania one-stop border post will improve trade ties - RC Chalamila

RC Chalamila cited political and social stability in the two neighbouring nations as an essential lever in developing economic activities of the people of the two countries.

He said political stabilities in the two countries arose from strong planning by leaders thereof in improving other essential services including the construction of the one stop border

post. "Our aim is to ensure this border post develops the economies of both nations especially on issues of taxation and immigration by

increasing their revenues but also to improve the lives of people through trade," he said.

Tanzania Roads Agency (TANROADS) representative from the Region Eng

John Mahenge said the project is being implemented by the government through the agency.

He said up to now the construction is 23 percent complete but was supposed to have reach 50 percent due to weather challenges.

Grace Miyombe and Fred Samson from Tanzania and Malawi respectively said the project is good since it will improve their working environment especially to the small traders near the area.





The Guardian Ltd mechanical engineer Christian Mgwapaula (L) pictured at the publishing firm's printing unit in Dar es Salaam yesterday briefing a Clear Consortium team led by Kaposo Mwambuli (C, foreground) on newspaper printing. The consortium, whose activities are overseen by the Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children ministry, is well known for conducting the countrywide 'Nyumba ni Choo' campaign, whose thrust is on the need for better latrines at household level. Photo: Selemani Mpochi

## Traditional healers halt crowd-pulling rituals over Covid-19

By Guardian Correspondent, Tanga

TRADITIONAL healers in Tanga Region have suspended rituals that involve large gatherings of people to avoid fueling spread of Coronavirus.

The suspension was announced by Tanga Region's Chairman of the traditional healers association (CHAWATIATA) Waziri Bakari during the association's management meeting in Muheza District.

He said the association is now engaged in educating its leaders from all the region's districts on guidelines to take as precautionary measures against the pandemic which include traditional dances, rituals conducted by involving gatherings for patients.

CHAWATIATA's Tanga Region Vice

Chairman Athumani Kijjazi said another precautionary measure against Covid-19 is for the patient to stay two metres from the traditional healer during consultation and that the room should be well ventilated.

The Region's CHAWATIATA Secretary Ally Maogo called on association leaders from all the region's districts in collaboration of the office of the Regional Medical Officer and monitors of traditional healers to prepare a timetable for the inspection of individual healers in wards and villages.

He said it was essential for association's leaders in the Region to be in the frontline in the issue of educating to the traditional healers and their customers on how to protect themselves against Covid-19 infections.

## Mbeya to conduct house-to-house inspection to boost hand washing

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

MBEYA District authorities will soon conduct house to house inspection to ensure that every household has a bucket of water and soap and sanitizers in effort to fight Covid-19 infections.

The District Commissioner William Ntinika expressed this yesterday when explaining to people in Kabwe Bus Stand, Soweto Market, Uyole and Igawilo on how to protect themselves against the pandemic.

He said they have strongly emphasized in educating people in areas with gatherings, and added that there are people who are still disparaging the entire issue of the pandemic.

He said the house to house campaign to educate people on how to protect themselves against the disease will also

help to protect children.

Some residents in the district have complained over the high cost of the plastic water buckets with taps that now cost over 20,000/- as compared to their original price of 5,000/- and appealed to the government to control the price hike.

Mbeya District Administrative Secretary (DAS) Hassan Mkwawa claimed that drivers of the bajaj (tricycles) have not taken any precautions against Covid-19 including hand washing facilities.

Recently, when receiving modern water washing equipment invented by students of Mbeya University of Science and Technology (MUST) the Mbeya Regional Commissioner Albert Chalamba directed that every public servant should buy the equipment and he should be informed of anyone who will fail to do so.

## Govt to end shortage of housing for police personnel

By Getrude Mbago, Dodoma

THE government is constructing 450 new houses to accommodate families of police officers who are living outside police barracks across the country, the House heard yesterday.

The Home Affairs Ministry said this when responding to question from Special Seats MP, Anna Gidalya who sought to know who wanted

to know the government strategies to address challenge of shortage of accommodation facing police personnel in the country especially those serving the public in various wards.

In her basic question the legislator claimed that there are lots of police stations established in various wards, but the main challenge remains in the accommodation of the police officers

who are currently forced to rent in streets with other people in streets something which poses great risk for them.

In its response, the ministry acknowledged that the government recognises the challenge facing police officers saying that more houses will continue to be constructed depending on budgetary allocations.

"We are currently constructing

houses in various regions, but more efforts are ongoing to ensure that more are built in districts and wards to enable police officers live in favourable environment and deliver the best in work," read part of the ministry's response.

Furthermore, the ministry stated the government has been paying expenses for those officers who rent accommodation outside the barracks.



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## DAR ES SALAAM STOCK EXCHANGE PLC


**COMBINED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED 31ST MARCH 2020\***  
**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**  
 (ALL AMOUNTS IN TZS)

	Previous Quarter Group	Current Year Cumulative Group	Previous Year Cumulative Group	Current Quarter Company	Current Quarter Subsidiary
	31st Dec 2019	31st Mar 2020	31st Mar 2019	31st Mar 2020	31st Mar 2020
<b>ASSETS</b>					
<b>Non Current Assets</b>					
Property and equipment	350,002,097	305,144,503	510,066,033	296,279,719	8,864,784
Non-current prepayment	2,819,584,220	2,819,584,220	2,819,584,220	2,819,584,220	-
Intangible asset	66,725,308	76,892,226	94,244,053	49,105,110	27,783,117
Leasehold land	190,021,238	190,021,238	319,086,976	190,021,238	-
Deferred tax asset	4,457,517	4,457,517	-	-	4,457,517
Investment in Subsidiary	-	-	-	100,000,000	-
	3,450,790,380	3,396,099,705	3,742,981,282	3,454,994,287	41,105,418
<b>Current Assets</b>					
Trade receivables	1,018,408,304	1,047,883,082	350,616,512	773,038,567	274,844,515
Prepayment & Other Receivables	1,404,279,686	1,765,132,518	1,022,743,038	1,689,413,492	75,719,026
Government Securities	3,199,969,500	4,176,604,000	5,699,728,794	4,176,604,000	-
Short-term Deposits	15,491,983,056	14,454,814,905	10,771,295,844	13,915,822,097	538,992,808
Cash and cash equivalents	188,829,339	505,612,480	388,467,425	345,433,678	160,178,802
	21,303,469,885	21,950,046,985	18,232,851,613	20,900,311,834	1,049,735,151
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>24,754,260,245</b>	<b>25,346,146,690</b>	<b>21,975,832,895</b>	<b>24,355,306,121</b>	<b>1,090,840,569</b>
<b>SHAREHOLDERS' FUNDS AND LIABILITIES</b>					
<b>Shareholders' Funds</b>					
Ordinary Share Capital DSE	9,529,608,000	9,529,608,000	9,529,608,000	9,529,608,000	-
Share Premium DSE	1,850,374,351	1,850,374,351	1,850,374,351	1,850,374,351	-
Ordinary Share Capital to Subsidiary	-	-	-	-	100,000,000
Retained Earnings	10,506,101,393	11,355,705,360	7,958,529,974	10,675,464,043	680,241,317
Car Loan Fund	35,000,000	35,000,000	35,000,000	35,000,000	-
Revaluation Reserve	151,655,000	151,655,000	331,195,000	151,655,000	-
<b>Total Shareholders Funds</b>	<b>22,072,738,744</b>	<b>22,922,342,711</b>	<b>19,704,707,325</b>	<b>22,242,101,394</b>	<b>780,241,317</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>					
Capital Grants	1,102,315,819	1,057,249,273	1,292,240,520	1,057,249,273	-
<b>Current Liabilities</b>					
Contract Liabilities	714,455,124	732,547,008	355,193,988	590,797,008	141,750,000
Current Income Tax	11,033,824	6,838,150	6,838,150	6,838,150	6,838,150
Trade Creditors and Other Payables	853,716,734	627,169,546	623,691,062	465,158,445	162,011,101
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>1,579,205,682</b>	<b>1,366,554,705</b>	<b>978,885,050</b>	<b>1,055,955,453</b>	<b>310,599,251</b>
<b>TOTAL SHAREHOLDERS' FUNDS AND LIABILITIES</b>	<b>24,754,260,245</b>	<b>25,346,146,690</b>	<b>21,975,832,895</b>	<b>24,355,306,121</b>	<b>1,090,840,569</b>

**STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME**  
 (COMBINED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS)  
 FOR THE QUARTER ENDING 31ST MARCH 2020  
 (Amounts in Shillings)

	Previous Quarter Group	Current Quarter Group	Current Year Cumulative Group	Previous Year	Current Quarter Company	Current Quarter Subsidiary
	31st Dec 2019	31st Mar 2020	31st Mar 2020	31st Mar 2019	31st Mar 2020	31st Mar 2020
<b>Revenue</b>						
Listing Fees	795,782,763	689,850,649	689,850,649	481,879,480	689,850,649	-
Transaction Fees	157,459,594	382,961,438	382,961,438	146,577,787	382,961,438	-
Registry & CSD Fees	277,807,185	270,837,305	270,837,305	132,550,617	270,837,305	270,837,305
Investment Income	492,319,065	531,770,299	531,770,299	344,938,311	512,034,272	19,736,027
Other Revenue	145,680,662	146,026,988	146,026,988	72,382,263	146,026,988	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,869,049,269</b>	<b>2,021,566,676</b>	<b>2,021,566,676</b>	<b>1,178,328,458</b>	<b>1,730,893,344</b>	<b>290,673,332</b>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>1,869,049,269</b>	<b>2,021,566,676</b>	<b>2,021,566,676</b>	<b>1,178,328,458</b>	<b>1,730,893,344</b>	<b>290,673,332</b>
<b>Operating Costs</b>						
Staff Costs	657,823,104	723,546,296	723,546,296	615,882,917	523,504,603	200,041,693
Administrative Expenses	212,333,175	165,429,336	165,429,336	312,193,049	137,197,268	28,232,068
Operating Expenses	367,523,690	272,182,751	272,182,751	65,048,956	245,797,601	25,385,150
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1,237,679,969</b>	<b>1,161,158,383</b>	<b>1,161,158,383</b>	<b>993,124,922</b>	<b>906,499,472</b>	<b>254,658,910</b>
<b>Profit Before Tax</b>	<b>631,369,300</b>	<b>860,408,293</b>	<b>860,408,293</b>	<b>185,203,536</b>	<b>824,393,872</b>	<b>36,014,421</b>
Tax Provision**	23,160,813	10,804,326	10,804,326	-	-	10,804,326
<b>Profit After Tax</b>	<b>608,208,487</b>	<b>849,603,967</b>	<b>849,603,967</b>	<b>185,203,536</b>	<b>824,393,872</b>	<b>25,210,095</b>
Basic Earning Per Share	26	36	36	8	8	8
Diluted Earning Per Share	26	36	36	8	8	8

**STATEMENT OF CASHFLOW**  
 (COMBINED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS)  
 AS OF 31ST MARCH 2020  
 (Amounts in Shillings)

	Current Quarter (Group)	Current Quarter (Company)	Current Quarter (Subsidiary)
	31st Mar 2020	31st Mar 2020	31st Mar 2020
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>Profit before Tax</b>	<b>860,408,293</b>	<b>824,393,872</b>	<b>36,014,421</b>
<b>Adjustments :</b>			
Interest received	(531,770,299)	(512,034,272)	(19,736,027)
Current Tax	(15,000,000)	-	(15,000,000)
Amortization of Capital Grants	(45,066,546)	(45,066,546)	-
Depreciation and Amortization of Intangible Assets	57,730,634	53,784,172	3,946,463
<b>Operating Cashflows Before Changes in Working Capital Items</b>	<b>326,302,083</b>	<b>321,077,226</b>	<b>5,224,857</b>
(Increase)/Decrease in Trade Receivable	(29,474,778)	(48,083,794)	18,609,016
(Increase)/Decrease in Prepayments and other receivables	(360,852,852)	(298,794,220)	(62,058,632)
Increase/(Decrease) in short term deposits	1,037,168,151	756,903,425	280,264,726
Increase/(Decrease) in government deposits	(976,634,500)	(976,634,500)	-
Increase/(Decrease) in contract liabilities	18,091,884	(123,658,116)	141,750,000
Increase/(Decrease) in Trade Payables	(226,547,188)	22,558,116	(249,105,303)
<b>NET CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>(211,947,200)</b>	<b>(346,631,864)</b>	<b>134,684,664</b>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Interest Earned	531,770,299	512,034,272	19,736,027
Acquisition of Fixed Assets	(3,039,958)	(3,039,958)	-
<b>NET CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>528,730,341</b>	<b>508,994,314</b>	<b>19,736,027</b>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>NET CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>INCREASE/(DECREASE) IN CASH &amp; CASH EQUIVALENTS</b>	<b>316,783,141</b>	<b>162,362,450</b>	<b>154,420,691</b>
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PERIOD</b>	<b>188,829,339</b>	<b>183,071,229</b>	<b>5,758,110</b>
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE END OF THE PERIOD</b>	<b>505,612,480</b>	<b>345,433,679</b>	<b>160,178,801</b>

Signed By  
Moremi Marwa  
Chief Executive Officer

Date  
17-Apr-20

Lucas Sinkala  
Finance Manager

17-Apr-20

Mecklaud Edson  
Chief Internal Auditor

17-Apr-20

## 24 councils benefit from nationwide land valuation and planning project

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

THE implementation of a project for nationwide land valuation and planning to help improve residential areas both in rural and urban areas is near completion, the government said yesterday.

Ministry of Land, Housing and Human Settlement Development said the plan is to improve all poor residential areas in the country in all regions.

The ministry said this in a written response to a question asked by the Special Seats MP, Martha Umbula (CCM) who had wanted the government to tell the parliament what it is doing to help improve poor settlement throughout the country, including Manyara region.

The lawmaker argued that one of the criteria used in determining the rate

of poverty is by looking at their homes or houses. "In Manyara region there are people with grass thatched house mud houses, most of which do not meet the living standard. What is the government doing to help such people nationwide?" she asked.

In response, the ministry said in effort to improve settlements in the country, the government established the National Housing and Building Research Agency (NHBRA) to conduct a research on building materials available in the country, improve them to help in building strong and better houses.

The government cited soil stabilized bricks and interlocking bricks as examples of good use of improved technology to improve building materials. "Education on such new technologies has been provided to all

district councils in the country" stated the ministry.

The ministry explained that the National Housing Corporation (NHC) has been providing education and technical support to different youth groups on how to build affordable good houses.

"The government appeals to people to form housing cooperative groups so that they can be empowered on how to build good houses at affordable costs using materials researched by government agency" said the statement.

It explained that in the 2018/19 the government through the ministry loaned some 24 councils in the country a total of 6.28bn/- for planning and valuation of land whereby 40,651 plots have been surveyed and ownership is in the process.



Nobert Sumka (L), chairman of bajaj taxi operators in Iringa Region, presents foodstuffs to Tosamaganga orphanage matron Sister Winifridah Mhongo (R) in Kalenga ward yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Friday Simbaya

## Setback as thieves steal hand washing buckets at bus stand

By Guardian Correspondent, Tanga

UNIDENTIFIED people have taken away ten buckets filled with water for hand washing at the busy central bus stand in Tanga City, exposing hundreds of thousands to Coronavirus.

The former upcountry terminal is now being used by commuter buses plying various routes within the city.

The bus stand supervisor Ally Kibaya recounted the incident to the Tanga District Commissioner Tobias Mwilapwa, saying the thieves stole the

hand washing water facilities that had been placed for use by people at the bus stand.

Kibaya said the buckets with taps attached were donated by Bus Owners Association as contribution in the fight against Covid-19 infections, and added that as of now hand washing at the bus stand has been suspended, threatening spread of the disease's infection.

DC Mwilapwa was irked by the incident saying whoever will be found to have been involved will be dealt with

severely and pledged to replenish the stolen facilities at the bus stand

He appealed to all wananchi to be guards of their own selves over such facilities as the issue concerns their lives and stressed that the government will not tolerate to see such incidents recurring elsewhere.

He also called on other people including private institutions and organizations to continue offering assistance on the provision of these hand washing facilities in the efforts to contain Covid-19 infections.

By Getrude Mbago, Dodoma

A SPECIAL Seats MP, Amina Mollel has called on the government to start to provide free education to all students with special needs in the advanced level secondary education so as to enable them to study comfortably for their bright future.

In her question posed in the House yesterday, Mollel said that it is high time for government to come with a special programme to enable all students with disabilities access advanced level education free of charge so as to enable them fulfill their dreams.

She wanted to know the time frame when the government would start providing free education to the group considering that majority of the students come from poor families that usually fails to afford expenses including school basic needs something which thwarts them from attaining their intended goals.

"A lot dream of students with disabilities is shattered due unfriendly learning infrastructures as well as school expenses posed to them," she

## Students with special needs deserve free education - MP

said.

Responding, the minister for Education, Science and Education Prof Joyce Ndalichako said that the government has been working closely to ensure that all children have access to education with special care provided to children with special needs.

"Apart from ensuring that children with special needs have all the required learning infrastructures, the government through our district councils has been identifying and paying school fees to all students with disabilities who come from poor families," she said.

She also said that in order to ensure that every child in the country attains his/her educational dreams, the government set a small amount of fees at only 70,000/- for upper secondary students which it believes majority of parents can afford.

She said that the government will continue improving systems and make sure that all schools are well equipped with essential equipment and so as to enable students with special needs excel in their studies.

The minister added that in keeping with the national development goals, the government will continue working tirelessly with more focus on expanding access to secondary education, while also guaranteeing a good quality education to all students, ensuring students are empowered, gain skills, and build specialized knowledge to drive Tanzania forward.

In Tanzania, it is estimated around 4.5 million people live with disability. For decades PWDs face myriad challenges such as abuse, lack of education, illiteracy, and unemployment and despite the available international law and national laws that protect their rights.





Johanes John (R), a health officer with Morogoro Regional Hospital, checks the body temperature of Morogoro Regional Police Commander Wilbrood Mutafungwa (2nd-L) - as part of routine screening for Covid-19 - just before the latter attended a meeting in Morogoro municipality yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Frank Kaundula

## Police in Moro hold 20 over firearm, car theft

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

TWENTY people have been detained by police in Morogoro Region for various offences, including car theft and a pistol - Luger 9mm with S/N 512578 with eight bullets.

Morogoro Region police Commander Wilbrood Mutafungwa told reporters here yesterday that the suspects were nabbed at different times during police patrol conducted in various areas of the region.

He said the theft of the firearm occurred on April 7 this year at around 3.00 pm at Sitini Minarani grounds in Ifakara Ward, Kilombero District in the Region.

He said the pistol and other items including two laptops and mobile phone were stolen from John Kasekele, a businessman a Jongo resident in Ifakara.

RPC Mutafungwa said the pistol valued at 3.5m/= had eight bullets in the magazine.

He said the cause of the theft was sheer negligence by the owner who had parked his car outside the gate of his brother's house leaving all the items in the car inside a bag.

When he emerged outside the house he found the door lock of his car broken and the bag missing, after which he reported the matter to the police.

He said thereafter the police launched

a hunt of the perpetrators and by April 12 they arrested six suspects whose names were being held.

RPC Mutafungwa said the suspects were found with the firearm and seven bullets instead of eight, meaning one bullet was used or lost, the two laptops and the mobile phone and added that after investigations are finalized court action will be instituted against them.

In another theft incident RPC Mutafungwa said on the night of April 6 this year at Terminal Pub area in Msamvu one David Charles (30) had his car Reg T864DQM valued at 12m/- stolen.

Charles who is a policeman said some people followed him to his car as he was about to drive away. They overwhelmed him, bundled him into the car, drove away and dumped him in a remote place where he could not easily communicate.

The RPC said after intensive police investigations, on April 7 they arrested one Geoffrey Kayanda (22), a farmer and resident Mindu in Morogoro municipality with the car parked outside the house he was residing.

He said the suspect was being interrogated and will be taken to court after investigations are complete.

RPV Mutafungwa appealed to wananchi to continue cooperating with the police by reporting on criminal activities.

## 'Dumila-Rudewa-Kilosa-Mikumi road construction to end soon'

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

COMPLETE construction of the Dumila-Rudewa-Kilosa-Mikumi road is may not end so soon, the National Assembly heard yesterday.

The government said this yesterday in a written response to a question

asked by the Mikumi MP, Joseph Haule (CHADEMA) who had wanted to know when the government would complete the construction of the 142 kilometres road to tarmac level.

The lawmakers argued that the road is very important as it links many parts of the Morogoro and is instrumental

in promoting development in many areas.

In response, the ministry of Work, Transport and Communication said the road is under maintenance by the Tanzania National Roads Agency (TANROADS) that has carried out the construction to tarmac level in

different phases.

The first section from Dumila to Rudewa, stretching 45 kilometres was completed in 2014 at the cost of 43.62bn/-. The second phase, Rudewa to Kilosa with a total of 24 kilometres is still under construction and by March 2020, it had reached 18 percent.

The section from Kilosa to Mikumi with a distance of 73 kilometres is expected to start soon as feasibility study has been conducted and the government is now looking for funds to carry out the project.

"Let me assure the lawmaker that following steps taken by the

government the construction is expected to end in not so many years from now" the ministry stated in the statement.

The ministry maintained that the government through TANROADS will continue repairing the road to ensure that it is passable throughout the year.



A small trader roasts maize for sale along Mbeya Road in Dodoma city yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Juma

## UN chief chips in as Africa mobilises to cut losses, while COVID-19 continues its worldwide advance

NEW YORK

FROM procuring test kits to promoting debt relief, the UN will stand in solidarity with Africa as it braces against the unprecedented economic, social and health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, Secretary-General António Guterres has pledged.

"The crisis has wide-ranging implications", said the UN Chief, delivering remarks at a meeting with leaders of the African Group of countries on Wednesday. "This is in no way Africa's making. But as with the climate crisis, the African continent could end up suffering the greatest impacts."

Emphasizing the importance of solidarity to combat the pandemic, he praised Africa's swift drafting of a coordinated, comprehensive COVID-19 strategy as a demonstration of the continent's commitment to define its own development, including the high value it places on regional cooperation and multilateralism.

### 'Africa will not be spared'

According to the International Monetary Fund's latest Regional Economic Outlook for Sub-Saharan Africa, COVID-19 is likely to cause an acute economic crisis on a continent that has often lagged behind in development, threatening to reverse hard-won gains and recent momentum.

The IMF report projects that the region's economic growth will shrink by an unprecedented 1.6 per cent in 2020 amid tighter financial conditions, a sharp decline in key export prices and severe disruptions to economic activity linked to the pandemic.

"Sub-Saharan Africa will not be spared", said Abebe Aemro Selassie, Director of the IMF's African Department. "All indications are that the COVID-19 pandemic will exact a heavy

human toll."

Against that backdrop, the IMF is urging African countries and their partners to boost health spending and provide social transfers to those whose livelihoods are being upended. Support from international development partners - including debt relief for the most vulnerable countries - will be crucial.

### Governments take a lead

In line with the continent's strategy, a range of responses are already in place across African nations, many drawing from the painful lessons learned from recent Ebola outbreaks.

In Uganda, the Government is supporting businesses by rescheduling social security contributions. Namibian authorities are offering emergency income grants to workers who have lost jobs.

In Cabo Verde, new cash transfers and food assistance are available. Egypt is among those countries that have reduced or postponed the collection of taxes.

At the regional level, the African Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are working to establish a special anti-COVID-19 response fund and appoint special envoys to mobilize international economic support.

### Robust support, from training to testing

Personnel from across the UN system are building and complementing Africa's capacity to combat the pandemic.

Staff in peacekeeping and political missions are working to build awareness, including through mass community sensitization campaigns, trainings for civil servants and radio programmes.

In South Africa, the UN Country Team is helping to build

a new learning platform for children whose schools are closed. In Nigeria, the team has contributed \$2 million to procure essential medical supplies, including 50 ventilators, 30,000 test kits and personal protective equipment.

Among a range of ongoing efforts, the UN Economic Commission for Africa is working

with Governments in support of a debt relief package.

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization (WHO) has dramatically expanded early detection capacity across the continent, raising the number of countries able to test for COVID-19, from two at the beginning of the outbreak, to 47 today.

**THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA**

**IN THE FAIR COMPETITION TRIBUNAL  
AT DAR ES SALAAM**

**APPEAL NO. 05 OF 2020**

**BETWEEN**

**TANZANIA ELECTRIC SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED .....APPELLANT**

**AND**

**ABDULAZIZ NGOMUO .....1ST RESPONDENT**

**ENERGY AND WATER UTILITIES REGULATORY AUTHORITY.....2ND RESPONDENT**

**(Notice pursuant to Rule 16 of the Fair Competition Tribunal Rules, 2012)**

**TAKE NOTICE THAT** an appeal has been lodged in the Tribunal against the whole decision of the Energy and Water Utilities Regulatory Authority (EWURA) given on the 23rd February, 2019 in which EWURA held that the 1st respondent be put in the appropriate tariff category as per his electricity consumption as required by TANESCO Adjustment Tariff Order, 2016.

The appeal is based on the grounds that the decision was made in an error of the law and the award issued was based on improper assessment of evidence. Thus, the Appellant prays for order to set aside the award with costs.

**BY THIS PUBLIC NOTICE** any person who considers that he has sufficient interest may apply to intervene in the proceedings within seven days of the first publication of this notice to the Fair Competition Tribunal, 2nd Floor, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology Building, Jamhuri Street, Dar Es Salaam.

**GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL of the Tribunal this 17th April, 2020.**

**REGISTRAR**

15/2020



# The Guardian

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Taking A New Look  
At The News  
ESTABLISHED IN 1995

## Face of aid, dependency changing with donations to fight COVID-19

AS the world entered the battle against Covid-19 in an uneven manner, donations available by individuals and companies towards the fight against coronavirus in Tanzania had surpassed 6bn/- by last week.

While most of the donations are local, there was a significant component of aid from China, following an earlier delivery of key protective equipment and clothing for medical personnel.

The coronavirus disease outbreak is gathering speed in Africa, and this shall call for lots more of this spirit and solidarity in the days ahead - or so it appears.

Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa received one of the most recent donations from his Dodoma office - a total of 6.226 billion/-. This was in the form of cash, disinfectants and personal protective equipment and was delivered along with other contributions like fuel to power vehicles used by the national Covi-19 response team.

All these are efforts that need to be sustained, not a situation where energies are expended at preparatory levels only to die a sudden death later in the day.

From the look of it, the Covid-19 emergency has changed the face of routine expectations for humanitarian assistance, as most Western countries face a crisis of more staggering proportions in the fight to bring the Covid-19 rage to stability and decline.

African countries have taken measures to combat the spread of the virus, whose effects will unavoidably be mitigated. One person escaping screening and confinement is enough to start a series of infections from a family, a bar, etc.

How far these contributions will be sustained in the future will relate to both the scale of the problem and the level of motivation in civil society as well as among the global community.

If Western countries manage to attain the level of containing the virus that China has reached, they will reinforce the global solidarity that now appears to be centred in actions of individuals and companies.

This way these countries alter the image of who in the current situation in the world can actually extend a helping hand in times of crisis, and unquestionably that is a different picture of the world from what we are used to.

In addition, local centres of concern and ability to make a difference are increasing, in which case these sources could also play a significant role in the days, months and years ahead.

The Covid-19 pandemic hasn't reached its 'climax' in African countries, judging by trends in other countries, though its spread is somewhat subdued. For sure, no one can pray for anything worse than what we are witnessing.

The fact that the latest contributions delivered to the government were essentially from local sources, including joint ventures and individual investors, means that there is an element of the 'localisation of humanitarian aid'.

The Covid-19 crisis is tasking countries down to their last bit of raw energy and all sources of easing the stranglehold of the virus. Nowhere is a sense of community and solidarity more urgently needed than in a time of crisis. This is among the lessons we are learning as a nation in the midst of this global colossus of a threat.

## Lest we are led into complacency: Poachers won't spare our wildlife

ONCE, it was elephants that were listed as belonging to an endangered species.

Then it was reported that rhinos and cheetahs were also in for hell. Much later, we were warned that hippopotami were the new target for poachers largely owing to suggestions that their teeth were excellent raw material for carved ornaments.

The same way many are baffled by what people do with elephant tusks, equally weird is just how hippo teeth can pass as ornaments worth buying with hard-earned cash. Indeed, wonders will never cease in the world of poaching.

Illegal trade in the so-called ornaments reportedly fetches lots of dirty money in various parts of the world, sending armies of poachers into the wild to get the trophies at all costs.

According to a report entitled 'Fighting the Underground Trade in Hippo Teeth', poaching cartels operating in Tanzania and elsewhere in Africa have recently turned to hippos, whose teeth are said to be carved into sought-after ornaments.

In response to the reports, the government said then that plans were under way to conduct the first countrywide census of the animals as a protective measure.

The government's official position is that although Tanzania has a licensing system allowing hippo sport hunting and the sale of teeth collected from hippos dying a natural death, the formal issuance of permits for export of hippo teeth had been suspended since 2004.

Meanwhile, records of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) show that between

2004 and 2014 Hong Kong reported importing almost 60 tonnes of teeth from wild hippos from Africa for commercial purposes.

Trade figures showed that Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi were the major source countries. This bad news has burst before us even before the dust has settled on the celebratory mood brought about by a declaration by what used to be the world's biggest ivory market - China - that it was to take steps at home that could save thousands of elephants in Africa.

A coalition of 15 African countries operating as the Elephant Protection Initiative (EPI) applauded China's commitment to closing its domestic ivory markets.

The closure of China's ivory market, the foremost destination for ivory from poached elephants, was widely viewed as the single most important step towards securing a future for elephants in their current range.

But concern by some governments and conservationists was not on the plight of elephants alone, as hippos and a host of other protected wild animals were in grave danger as well.

The message here is that poachers remain hell-bent on wreaking havoc on our wildlife, which is our heritage and the heart of our economy chiefly through tourism, for their own gain and the twisted desires of their heartless customers.

When gains are made on one front, these merciless cartels inflict untold damage on the other - and they don't show any signs of stopping at will. They have to be stopped, and this because there is every indication that they won't spare anything in their pursuit of whatever they are pursuing.

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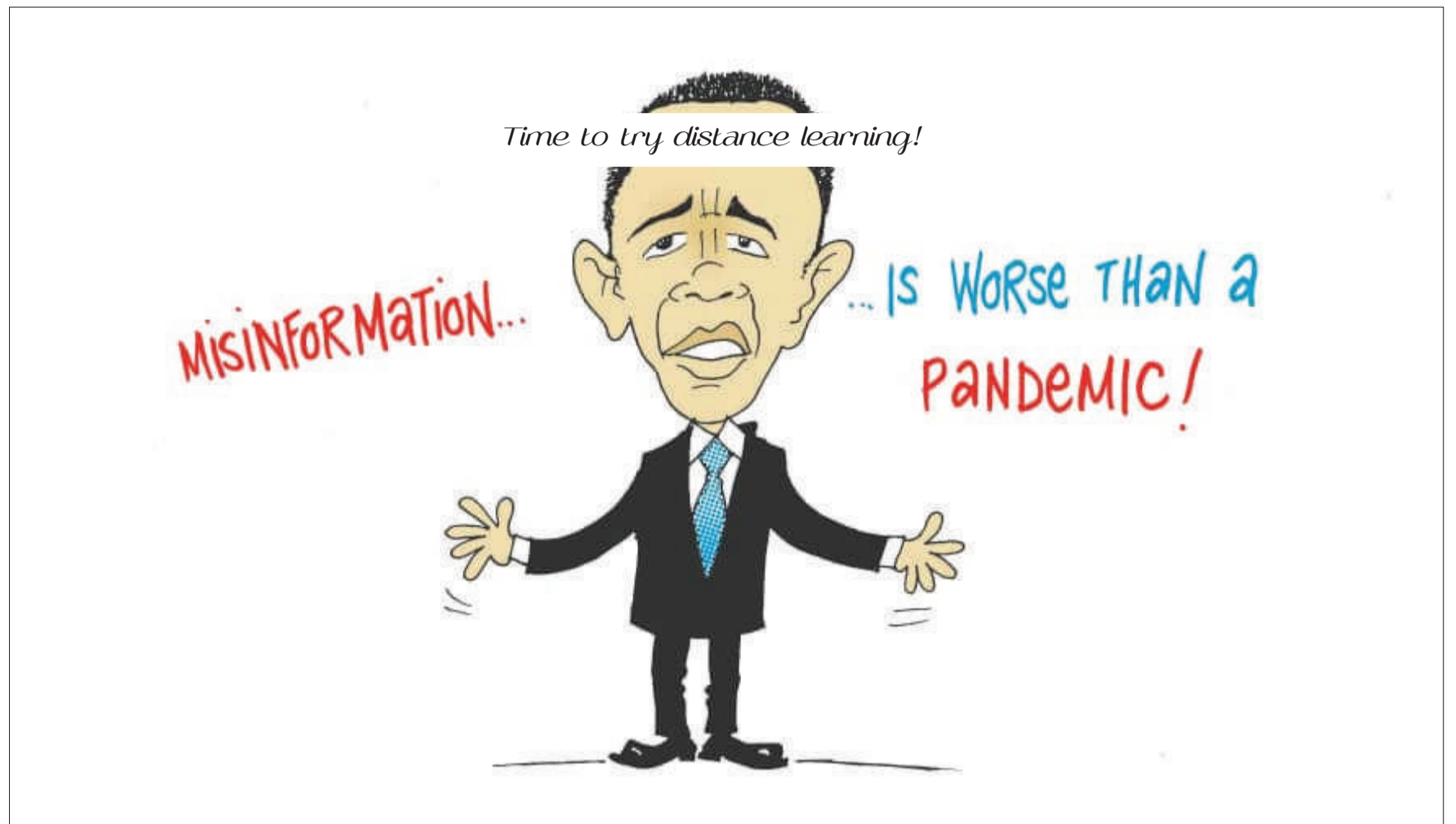
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By Emily Mullin

DR John Tomaszewski has been working 16-hour days since the new coronavirus hit Buffalo, New York, in mid-March. Though it's a six-hour drive from the pandemic's epicentre in New York City, Buffalo and the surrounding county has experienced a troubling surge in infections, racking up more than 1,700 cases and 101 deaths as of April 14.

As head of the laboratory at Kaleida Health, a nonprofit network of hospitals, Tomaszewski has been running coronavirus diagnostic tests non-stop. Even so, his efforts haven't been nearly enough for the Buffalo-Niagara Falls metropolitan area, which is home to around 1.1 million people.

With equipment donated from the University at Buffalo, where he is a professor of pathology and anatomical sciences, he has increased the number of tests his laboratory can run per day from 90 to about 300. He is hoping to double or triple that capacity soon, but he worries that even that will still fall short.

"We're nowhere near the amount of testing you'd want to do in our region," he says. Ideally, he'd like to be able to do at least 1,000 tests a day.

Labs across the United States, much like Tomaszewski's, not only need more tests but faster ones in order to learn the true magnitude of the pandemic.

The US can now run hundreds of thousands of tests a week, but it's still not enough to keep up with demand. In the absence of an effective vaccine or treatment, the fight against coronavirus is likely to drag on for months, and possibly into 2022.

New types of tests being developed at lightning speed could radically transform how we track Covid-19's progression and every future disease outbreak from here on out. What has been a slow and tedious process for diagnosing infectious disease could become rapid and decentralised with new technology.

Scientists are racing to develop new coronavirus tests that could be done much faster and with less equipment. More than 300 test developers are planning to submit requests to the US Food and Drug Administration to get emergency use authorisation for their tests, according to FDA commissioner Dr Stephen Hahn.

Some of these tests could be as simple to use as pregnancy tests and cost less than a dollar apiece to manufacture. These advances could move testing into more emergency rooms, urgent care clinics, doctors' offices, pharmacies and even the homes of millions of people. Instead of waiting for days or weeks for a test result, you could get one in minutes.

These new coronavirus tests could be here in as soon as a few weeks or months - provided that the FDA gives them the green light. Even then, the government and manufacturers will

## Scientists racing to get faster, simpler tests for coronavirus

need to figure out how to get enough tests to everyone who needs them.

But the ongoing pandemic has exposed the flaws not only in our testing capability but in the systems we use to deploy those tests.

"At the highest level, there has been a lack of national planning," says Dr Michael Pellini, a former diagnostics executive and a managing partner at Section 32 - a technology and life sciences venture capital firm.

"If we don't shift our thinking about diagnostic testing as a society as an outcome of all this, we will be in the exact same position when the next pandemic hits us," he notes.

Widespread testing for Covid-19 is crucial because it can reveal how and where the disease is spreading, what communities and populations are most at risk, and which people may now be immune.

However, testing shortages, faulty tests and long processing times in the US have made it impossible to know how pervasive the new coronavirus actually is. Rapid testing technology could help change that, if it's rolled out in time. The country's coronavirus testing problems started in early February, after the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention fumbled the rollout of its diagnostic test kits.

On February 5, the CDC began shipping the kits to local and state public health laboratories, which monitor emerging health threats. But when those kits arrived, many were discovered to be faulty, and those government-run labs had to wait weeks for new kits.

Meanwhile, diagnostic companies, hospitals and academic medical centres were stymied from running their own tests. They needed permission from the FDA to do so.

When the FDA finally granted that permission at the end of February, companies and labs rushed to alleviate the growing shortage.

The type of test the US currently relies on to diagnose Covid-19 uses a long cotton swab to scrape cells deep in the nasal cavity. This sample is sent to a lab, where a technique known as polymerase chain reaction, or PCR, is used to amplify the virus's genetic material to detectable levels.

PCR is the gold standard for diagnosing infectious diseases, but it can be slow. From start to finish, a PCR test takes about six to eight hours to run.

Bigger labs with high-tech equipment can use automation to run many tests at a time, but smaller labs must rely on a more manual process. Some large hospitals have these labs on-site, but often tests are sent to outside labs to be processed. With cases of Covid-19

mounting, labs everywhere are facing backlogs.

"All of a sudden you have a lot of people who need tests done at the same time," says Dr Brett Etchebarne, an assistant professor of emergency medicine at Michigan State University.

He's developing a coronavirus diagnostic test that uses a mouth swab and delivers a result in five to seven minutes. The technology for rapid testing has existed for some time, but not every hospital or lab has the specialised machines to do it. But Etchebarne's test could be performed on equipment that most hospitals already have.

In the short term, rapid tests could help relieve the backlog that laboratories are currently facing, says Etchebarne. They would also allow health care providers to test themselves and quickly find out if they are infected, instead of having to wait days on a result.

When the pandemic finally wanes, the same rapid technology could also help rule out other respiratory infections like flu and help determine who needs coronavirus drugs if and when they become available.

These tests are known as "point-of-care" diagnostics because they are done in close proximity to patients, like in hospitals, urgent care centres and emergency rooms, instead of being sent to a laboratory. One major benefit is that they are easy to perform and don't require special training.

Two companies quickly developed rapid, point-of-care tests when the FDA gave the go-ahead for labs to do so at the end of February. One test, from Silicon Valley-based diagnostics company Cepheid, provides a result in 45 minutes using machines that vary in size and the number of samples they can hold. It can use a sample from a nasal swab or wash, the latter being a benefit with cotton swabs in short supply.

The other test, from Chicago-based Abbott Laboratories, uses a nasal swab but can deliver a positive result in five minutes and a negative result in about 13 minutes. Abbott's test uses a machine the size of a toaster, but it can only run one test at a time. Etchebarne is designing his system so that it could run many tests at once.

To make even faster and simpler tests for Covid-19, some scientists are turning to the gene-editing technique CRISPR. Two companies on opposite coasts, San Francisco-based Mammoth Biosciences and Cambridge, Massachusetts-based Sherlock Biosciences, are harnessing CRISPR's ability to find and cut a specific sequence of genetic material in a rapid, paper-based test.

Both companies' tests use a protein

to look for the presence of SARS-CoV-2's genetic material in a patient sample. If there's a match, the protein binds to the genetic sequence and gives off a signal that causes a paper strip to change colour.

The readout takes about 30 to 45 minutes using minimal lab equipment. And the materials to make the tests are incredibly cheap. They could be produced for less than a dollar per test, says James Broughton, research lead at Mammoth Biosciences.

Such rapid tests could be used to screen people pre-emptively to prevent the further spread of the virus.

For example, patients who come to hospitals for non-Covid-19 reasons, like scheduled surgeries or other procedures, could be screened at the door for the safety of healthcare workers. "I think all staff would want these preoperative diagnostics to be performed before risking going into surgery," Etchebarne says.

Rahul Dhanda, CEO and co-founder of Sherlock Biosciences, notes that it will be important to screen people who don't have symptoms to find carriers of the virus.

"That would give you so much more information about how this disease is being spread," he says, adding: "Without a broad population being tested, we're never going to be able to contain any disease."

Broughton and Dhanda did not say when their companies' tests will be available, but both are working to launch them soon.

Some companies want to make testing so easy that one doesn't even have to leave one's house. Scanwell Health, a company that already makes at-home tests for urinary tract infections, is developing a Covid-19 test.

You'd get a testing kit in the mail, prick your finger to draw a tiny drop of blood, dab the blood onto a testing strip, and add a few drops of a solution.

Like in a pregnancy test, lines would appear on the testing strip to indicate a result. Then you'd take a picture of the result, submit it via an app, and be connected with a doctor to walk you through what the result means.

Scanwell's Covid-19 test is meant to tell you whether you have antibodies specific to SARS-CoV-2. Antibodies are proteins that the immune system makes in response to an invading pathogen (organism or biological agent that causes disease or illness to its host).

A positive result for SARS-CoV-2 antibodies would mean that you've been exposed to the virus. Scientists think that harbouring coronavirus antibodies could protect people from getting re-infected with the virus, at least for a time.

TURN TO PAGE 9



# Scientists racing to get faster, simpler tests for coronavirus

From Page 8

**T**HIS kind of test isn't good for diagnosing a current infection because it takes the body several days to start producing antibodies. Instead, it's meant to reveal whether one has previously been infected with the virus, perhaps without knowing it.

All of these advances could greatly simplify testing and help ramp up capacity but, in order to reach a large number of people, they'll need investment and FDA authorisation. Government coordination will also be needed to make testing widely available.

Some test makers have landed the FDA's nod, while others haven't. Cepheid and Abbott, whose tests were authorised at the end of last month, likely got fast approval because both companies already have rapid, point-of-care tests for flu and thousands of their machines in hospitals and healthcare settings all over the country.

But even with the FDA's blessing and praise from the Trump administration, Abbott's tests aren't getting to patients fast enough. Despite being touted by the Trump administration, the government hasn't ordered enough of the Abbott testing cartridges for state public health labs to use.

Meanwhile, new testing systems like Etchebarne's need to be validated to make sure that

they're accurate and reliable. Then the FDA must evaluate them before they can be used to diagnose patients. And even with FDA authorisation, tests developed by academic scientists often need outside investment to reach a wide population.

At-home tests also face hurdles. When the FDA gave certain labs permission to develop their own coronavirus tests at the end of February, a handful of companies raced to produce at-home collection kits.

However, after a few companies started marketing and selling those tests, the FDA issued a statement saying that it had "not authorised any test that is available to purchase for testing yourself at home for COVID-19".

Scanwell is seeking FDA authorisation for its test, but that could take weeks or months. The FDA and other medical experts are skeptical of at-home tests for many reasons.

One issue is that patients might not be able to administer a test properly; another is that they may be inaccurate, as critics of at-home antibody tests in the UK have pointed out.

Some worry that patients won't know how to interpret their test results. For instance, if someone currently has Covid-19 symptoms and gets a negative result with the Scanwell test, they could wrongly assume they don't

have the disease when in reality they might have the disease but no antibodies yet.

Dr Shantanu Nundy, chief medical officer at health benefits company Accolade Health, says the FDA should remove some barriers to getting new at-home tests to market during a national emergency. Beyond that, he says, the government needs to set up the infrastructure to get testing to the masses in an efficient way. "That infrastructure is going to make us more prepared for the next pandemic and it's also going to make us better off every day," Nundy notes.

Nundy says many of the concerns over at-home tests could be addressed relatively easily. For instance, YouTube videos could be used to show patients how to do a swab or pinprick correctly, or a healthcare provider could guide them through the process on a video call.

To address the possible misinterpretation of results, patients taking at-home tests could be connected to a doctor immediately after receiving a result via an app, like the one Scanwell is proposing.

At-home tests already exist for some health conditions, like flu and sexually transmitted infections. And many people with diabetes already take pinprick tests at home to monitor their blood glucose.



Tests that could be delivered to, and performed in, the home would prevent those infected with the virus from spreading it to others, and they could also help people learn whether it's safe to go out in public or back to work without infecting anyone else.

For Tomaszewski, rapid testing couldn't come soon enough. His lab in Buffalo doesn't yet have one of the new Abbott machines. "I would like to be able to test all the people we're worried about," he says.

Hahn, the FDA's commissioner, has

said that the agency has been "working non-stop to expedite the review and authorisation of novel diagnostics" during the pandemic.

And these advancements in testing could extend beyond the current pandemic. Both Mammoth and Sherlock are working on at-home tests for other infectious diseases, and researchers at Harvard are developing a test that could tell you all the viruses that you've ever been exposed to.

There's a clear need for rapid and at-home kits now and, with government

investment and coordination, these types of tests could soon become a reality for millions of people.

Beyond the current outbreak, having such tests available and ready for deployment in the event of a future coronavirus outbreak - or the emergence of an entirely new pathogen - could be the key to stopping it in its tracks.

**Emily Mullin is Staff writer at OneZero, covering biotech and Covid-19. Contact: emullin@medium.com.**

## Advanced economies must combat Covid-19 threat to developing world

By Mohamed El-Erian

**D**ECLINING coronavirus infection rates and plans to begin easing lockdown measures in some parts of the developed world have provided a ray of hope after weeks of unrelenting gloom.

But, for many developing countries, the crisis may barely have begun, and the human toll of a major Covid-19 outbreak would be orders of magnitude larger than in any advanced economy. With the US having recently recorded more than 2,000 deaths in a single day, this is no trivial number. If the international community doesn't act now, the results could be catastrophic.

Sub-Saharan Africa is a case in point. Several countries there would face significant challenges in enforcing physical-distancing rules and other measures to flatten the contagion curve. The region's already weak healthcare systems could thus quickly become overwhelmed by an outbreak, especially in a high-density area.

Africa has long suffered from a severe shortage of healthcare workers, with only 2.2 workers per 1,000 people (compared with 14 per 1,000 in Europe) in 2013. And few African countries have a meaningful supply of ventilators, a crucial tool for treating serious cases of Covid-19.

Nigeria is reported to have fewer than 500 in total, while the Central African Republic may have no more than three.

Moreover, Sub-Saharan African governments have little fiscal and monetary space (or operational capacity) to follow the advanced countries in countering the massive impact of containment measures on employment and livelihoods.

Spillovers from Asia, Europe and the US - including depressed commodity revenues (because of declining demand and prices), rising import costs, a collapse in tourism, reduced availability of basic goods, lack of foreign direct investment and a sharp reversal in portfolio financial flows - have already exacerbated these constraints.

For those who had access to international capital markets, terms have become notably more onerous.

While sub-Saharan Africa is not without some defences - including strong family networks and cultural resilience, as well as lessons learned from the Ebola crisis - there is a real risk that this Covid-19 shock would lock it in a race between deadly hunger and deadly infections.

Some states, already rendered fragile by decades of weak political leadership or corrupt authoritarianism, may even fail, which could fuel violent unrest and create fertile ground for extremist groups.

The risks are not limited to the short-term. Countries are also vulnerable to major future productivity losses, via labour and capital. Prolonged school closures and joblessness could contribute to increases in domestic violence, teenage pregnancies and child marriage, especially in countries that lack basic infrastructure for remote schooling.

Simply put, sub-Saharan Africa may be about to confront a human tragedy so profound that it could leave a generation adrift in some countries, with consequences that extend far beyond the region's borders. Two examples perfectly illustrate the multifaceted spillover risks.

First, by drastically reducing Africans' current and future economic prospects, the Covid-19 crisis could eventually fuel even more migration than current forecasts anticipate.

Second, by triggering a series of corporate- and sovereign-debt defaults, an uncontrolled Covid-19 outbreak could exacerbate the financial-market instability that the US Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank have taken such strong action to repress.

This increases the chances of reverse-contamination from the financial sector to the real economy.

The scale of the threat is not lost on the International Monetary Fund, which, through an enormous effort, has moved quickly and boldly to increase emergency funding. More than 90 developing countries have already approached the IMF for financial assistance. Together with the



Lagos state officials hand out food relief bags as Nigeria tries to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

World Bank, the Fund has also called for official bilateral creditors, including China, which has become a major creditor in recent years, to suspend debt payments by the poorest developing countries.

Leading the way here, too, the IMF is providing immediate debt relief for 25 of its low-income member countries, using grant resources to cover their multilateral debt-servicing obligations for six months.

Meanwhile, some countries, such as China, have offered large in-kind medical donations (what less charitable observers have described as "facemask diplomacy").

But, to stave off disaster in vulnerable regions, the international community must do a lot more.

Advanced economies, in particular, should supplement the home bias that has (understandably) characterised their responses so far with a broader assessment of the global effects, including spillovers to and spillovers from Africa.

They should expand official funding assistance, facilitate broader debt relief and urgently establish an international solidarity fund that other countries and the private sector could join.

Furthermore, developed countries should do more to share best practices for containment and mitigation of the pandemic.

To facilitate this process, the World Health Organization needs to do a better job of centralising and disseminat-

ing relevant information. Advanced economies' leadership, one hopes, will soon extend to the universal deployment of more effective medical treatments, or even a vaccine.

Finally, the international community must do a lot more to crowd in private-sector resources.

Much as it did in the developed countries, the private sector can play an important role in the crisis response in vulnerable regions, directly and through proliferating public-private partnerships.

While pharmaceutical and tech companies will do a lot of the heavy lifting, private creditors can help by working on orderly ways to reduce the immediate debt burden on more challenged developing countries.

But, again, this will require greater emphasis on enabling mechanisms. A bigger shift in mindset on the part of multilateral lenders and other international bodies (including the World Bank) will be needed.

The Covid-19 pandemic threatens to devastate large parts of the developing world.

Only with a concerted, cooperative and holistic approach can the international community avoid a large-scale humanitarian tragedy - and protect the rest of the world from destabilising blowback.

Mohamed El-Erian is chief economic adviser at Allianz. He served as chair of President Barack Obama's Global Development Council and is a former deputy director at the IMF.



# How a team of scientists studying drought helped build the world's leading famine prediction model

By Paul Voosen

THE Indian Ocean seemed ready to hit Africa with a one-two punch. It was September 2019, and the waters off the Horn of Africa were ominously hot.

Every few years, natural swings in the ocean can lead to such a warming, drastically altering weather on land—and setting the stage for flooding rains in East Africa. But at the same time, a second ocean shift was brewing. An unusually cold pool of water threatened to park itself south of Madagascar, leading to equally extreme, but opposite, weather farther south on the continent: drought.

Half a world away, at the Climate Hazards Center (CHC) of the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), researchers took notice. Climate models, fed by the shifting ocean data, pointed to a troubling conclusion: By year's end, that cold pool would suppress evaporation that would otherwise fuel rains across southern Africa. If the prediction held, rains would fizzle across southern Madagascar, Zambia, and Mozambique at the beginning of the growing season in January, the hungriest time of year. Zimbabwe, already crippled by inflation and food shortages, seemed particularly at risk. "We were looking at a really bad drought," says Chris Funk, a CHC climate scientist. It was a warning of famine.

The CHC team, led by Funk and geographer Greg Husak, practice what they call "humanitarian earth system science." Working with partners funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), they have refined their forecasts over 20 years from basic weather monitoring to a sophisticated fusion of climate science, agronomy, and economics that can warn of drought and subsequent famines months before they arise. Their tools feed into planning at aid agencies around the world, including USAID, where they are the foundation of the agency's Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), which guides the deployment of \$4 billion in annual food aid. Increasingly, African governments are adopting the tools to forecast their own vulnerabilities. "They've been absolutely key" to improving the speed and accuracy of drought prediction, says Inbal Becker-Reshef, a geographer at the University of Maryland, College Park, who coordinates a monthly effort to compare drought warnings for nations at risk of famine. "Every single group we work with is using their data."

The forecasts are needed more than ever. From 2015 to 2019, the global number of people at risk of famine rose 80% to some 85 million—more than the

population of Germany. Wars in Yemen, Syria, and Sudan are the biggest driver of the spike. Global warming, and the droughts and storms it encourages, also plays a role. The pace and severity of storms and droughts in Africa seem to be increasing, Funk says. "Both extremes are going to get more intense."

The consequences of drought can be catastrophic, but it is hard to detect. Unlike temperature, rainfall is spotty and local, heavily influenced by terrain. Three important clues that drought is coming—low accumulated rainfall, a lack of soil moisture, and high air temperatures—are difficult to measure from space. Satellites can see when green fields turn brown, but that often comes too late to inform a large-scale aid response. In Africa, researchers cannot rely on data from ground stations, either. Zimbabwe, for example, only has a few weather stations, and sometimes those don't even measure rainfall. This "reporting crisis" is pervasive across the continent; over the past 30 years, the number of stations with usable public data has dropped by 80% to only 600 or so.

Forecasting drought months into the future is even harder. Weather forecasts stretch out only a few weeks. Moving beyond that requires an understanding of large-scale climate patterns that influence weather over months or years. The banner example is the El Niño-Southern Oscillation, a pattern of winds and surface temperatures in the tropical Pacific Ocean that shifts every few years, altering global weather in myriad ways. Weather in Africa is influenced by other oscillations, including the two Indian Ocean shifts CHC was watching, known as the Indian Ocean Dipole and the Subtropical Indian Ocean Dipole. But the "teleconnections" between the ocean and distant weather patterns are poorly understood, and aid agencies can be leery of relying on them for long-term drought predictions. They want evidence from real-time monitoring that drought is on the way.

Double trouble  
Two ocean climate patterns have aided predictions of floods and drought across Africa. A swing in the Indian Ocean Dipole pushed warm waters off East Africa, boosting rains there last winter. A shift in the Subtropical Indian Ocean Dipole left a cold pool south of Madagascar, suppressing rains across southern Africa.

The growing season in southern Africa was still months away when CHC noticed the signs of trouble—plenty of time for it and its partners, including a team of food security analysts in Washington, D.C., to refine their predictions and validate them with local observations.

The fieldwork would be led by Tamuka Magadzire, a CHC agroclimatologist based in Botswana whose analysis had shown that conditions in Zimbabwe were already ripe for famine: The previous harvest was weak, shriveled by the lowest rainfall since the early 1980s. The currency was essentially fictional, and the country's poorest had to devote 85% of their income to food. On visits in the past few years, Magadzire brought along maize for his friends and family. "It's just been really bad in terms of long dry spells," he says.

A perfect storm was looming. Through the fall of 2019, Funk and his colleagues at FEWS NET sent a series of escalating warnings to senior officials at USAID. No one wanted to repeat what had happened a decade earlier, elsewhere in Africa. The group's forecasting record lent credibility to their warnings. But whether their call would be heeded this time would also depend on the strength of the evidence for an impending drought, political will in the United States and elsewhere—and a pandemic that had yet to rear its head.

CHC BEGAN with a dream. In 1995, Funk was a smart but directionless consultant working in Chicago for the credit card company Discover; he mined databases of personal information to identify consumers to target with ads. "It was, basically, working for the dark side," he says. In the dream, he was standing with friends in Lake Michigan, smoking and drinking beer, when he felt the lake tug on his legs. Turning, he saw a tidal wave coming to inundate the city. But his first impulse was to rush to the office and buy stock options. "This dream really freaked me out," he says. "What kind of person sees the city is going to be destroyed and wants to sell options?" Funk, from an Indiana farm town, recalled how struck he was as a child by Live Aid, the 1985 charity concert for Ethiopia. He needed to make a change. He wanted to make a difference. He quit.

Funk wound up studying geography at UCSB in a group that focused on statistical climatology. He met Husak, another geography graduate student, and James Verdin, a visiting remote-sensing scientist from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). The three of them witnessed the record El Niño of 1997-98, in which warm waters from the western Pacific sloshed eastward toward Peru, triggering long-range atmospheric shifts that brought punishing rains to their California campus. El Niños also seemed to suppress rains in southern Africa, so Verdin, who now heads FEWS NET, worked with Funk to see whether greenness measures of maize fell in southern Africa during the 1997-98 event. "It was kind of mixed results," Verdin says,



Models had predicted a drought that, by late January, was stunting the growth of maize in Zimbabwe

"but we got it published."

Verdin encouraged FEWS NET to sponsor Funk's and Husak's studies. By the time the next El Niño came, in 2002, the UCSB team had compiled scattered rainfall records dating back to 1961 to quantify how El Niño events dried up water resources across southern Africa. USAID used the resulting map and report to respond quickly after the 2002 El Niño, sending some \$300 million in food aid. It was the first time the agency incorporated climate forecasts into its food aid, Funk says, and it relieved some of the ensuing famine. "And we're still basically doing the same thing, better, smarter, faster."

Funk went to work for USGS, but he remains affiliated with UCSB, where he serves as resident provocateur while Husak steers CHC's growing staff. Funk's churning mind keeps them busy, Husak says. "We lift up a lot of rocks and see what's going on underneath them."

In the 2000s, one of those rocks led Funk back to Africa to study a different teleconnection. He and Alemu Asfaw Manni, a FEWS NET analyst in Ethiopia, gathered historical rainfall data across the country's highlands, where the soil is fertile but rain so scarce that some crops need months to germinate. Most climate models showed East Africa would get wetter with climate change. But since the early 1990s, the team found, the highlands' long rainy season had gone into a steep decline. "This was a holy moly moment," Funk says. The trend, dubbed the "East African climate paradox," has held true to this day.

The explanation seems to lie in the ocean. Weather records indicated that many droughts in East Africa seemed to strike during strong La Niñas, El Niño's opposite number, when the western tropical Pacific heats up while the eastern Pacific cools. The UCSB team didn't understand the connection, but by August 2010, another La Niña was brewing in the Pacific. FEWS NET warned that rains across the Horn of Africa, including Ethiopia and Somalia, would be late, weak, and erratic.

Politicians and donors largely ignored the alarm. La Niña's threat was poorly understood, different aid groups were issuing disparate warnings, and a degree of crisis fatigue had set in about Somalia, which had been in turmoil for years. But over the next 9 months, the rains failed as predicted. Food prices tripled and malnutrition grew rampant. In mid-2011, the United Nations finally declared a famine, and USAID ultimately delivered more than 300,000 tons of wheat, high-energy biscuits, and other staples. But the aid came too late and didn't reach enough people. Within the next year, the famine killed 260,000 people in Somalia alone. Half of them were children under the age of 5. As a damning U.N. report later put it: "The suffering played out like a drama without witnesses."

"It was really, really bad." Verdin sits in his austere, modern USAID office in Washington, D.C., reflecting on the Somali crisis, now nearly a decade ago. There were extenuating circumstances. Al-Shabaab, the Islamist militant group, was ascendant, and humanitarian groups feared that if their aid ended up in the wrong hands, the U.S. govern-

ment might have prosecuted them, he says.

The famine warnings had been accurate—but they had also seemed insufficient. The UCSB team "didn't convey the information as effectively as we could," Funk says. The loss of weather stations meant their rainfall measures were getting worse, and most satellite-based estimates lacked the detail to show how dry specific crop-growing regions were getting. And their explanation of why La Niña was a threat seemed far too abstract. "You're asking somebody to open up their wallet and spend millions," Funk says. "They're not just going to do it because you say, 'Our standardized precipitation forecast is -1.2.'"

THE FAMINE FORECASTERS needed better data. In 2015, those dreams came true when CHC released a tool called CHIRPS (which stands for Climate Hazards Center Infrared Precipitation with Station Data). It was the culmination of years of work compiling local rainfall records across Africa and folding in satellite data. Since the late 1970s, a coalition of European countries has maintained geostationary weather satellites over Europe and Africa. Among other things, the satellites measure the temperature of clouds by the infrared light they emit. When the temperature of clouds high in the atmosphere drops below -38°C, it is likely raining lower down. By using this record to fill in rainfall between ground stations, CHIRPS assembled a continentwide rain database stretching back to 1980.

CHIRPS not only provides the historical data for climate researchers to study teleconnections, but it also collects the contemporary data for near-real-time monitoring of rainfall. "It's quite a step forward," says Felix Rembold, a drought forecaster at the European Union's Joint Research Centre. It's also in constant development: Pete Peterson, the CHC coding guru who has spearheaded CHIRPS, often woos local agencies to fill gaps in station coverage. For example, Ethiopia shares data from 50 government stations with CHC—even though its agricultural and meteorological agencies won't share their data with each other.

The data find their way back to Africa as CHC-affiliated field scientists train African agencies on using CHC products. For example, Kenya's Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development has begun to serve up CHIRPS data to help local users forecast rains. Ideally, Funk and company hope to slip into the background, as Magadzire and his peers weave the CHC tools into the fabric of African drought response. Magadzire has had lucrative job offers, but the challenge is too compelling, he says. "My heart is in the improvement of conditions in Africa."

The long-term rainfall history in CHIRPS has enabled CHC researchers to refine their understanding of the La Niña teleconnection. By comparing global weather records and the predictions of climate models to the CHIRPS records, they have discovered the importance of the "western V," an arc of hot Pacific water that can appear during a La Niña event.

Shaped like a less-than sign, it angles from Indonesia northeast toward Hawaii and southeast toward the Pitcairn Islands, and it forms as La Niña pens warm waters in the western Pacific.

It has far-reaching consequences. As water temperatures spike, energetic evaporation saturates low-level winds flowing west from the cool eastern Pacific. The moist winds dump their water over Indonesia—the wet get wetter. The winds, now high and dry, continue their march west across the Indian Ocean and drop down over East Africa, preventing the intrusion of nearby moist ocean air and breaking up rain clouds. Global warming is strengthening these effects, causing them to linger even after a La Niña fades. And it appears that because of the ongoing ocean warming, they can happen without a La Niña at all, Funk says.

Armed with this new understanding, Funk in May 2016 found himself at USAID headquarters. A strong El Niño had just waned, and sea surface temperature trends suggested La Niña would follow. If it did form, he warned, FEWS NET's food analysts should prepare for sequential droughts in East Africa. A set of new seasonal climate forecasts from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration echoed Funk's drought warnings. CHIRPS revealed that the October-December rains had failed. And, seeking to amplify their voices, FEWS NET and its peers at the United Nations and in Europe issued a joint alert, warning of potential famine.

By December of that year, food aid for half a million Somalis arrived. The next month, 1 million; by February 2017, 2 million. Thanks to the shipments and the many improvements East Africans had made in their own safety net, food prices didn't spike when the rains failed again. The warnings had worked.

FOUR YEARS LATER, a different teleconnection is playing out, but the picture across Africa is equally grim. In February, in a small UCSB conference room, CHC climate scientist Laura Harrison pulled up a map of Africa. Although there was no El Niño or La Niña to influence events, the two Indian Ocean oscillations she and her colleagues had been watching were going strong.

The blob of hot water off the coast of Somalia turned out to be as hot as it's ever been, a half-degree warmer than a similar state in 1997. CHC had been right to forecast extensive rains in the Horn of Africa: Moist winds from the blob fueled drenching storms. The resulting flooding and landslides ruined 73,000 hectares of crops and killed more than 350 people. The storms also saturated arid regions, feeding lush growth that lured an unpredicted hazard to the region: a locust invasion. Hundreds of billions of locusts have chewed through rich farmland in Ethiopia's Rift Valley, while stripping pastures in Kenya and Somalia.

The blob of cold water south of Madagascar was doing the opposite. Just as the team expected, it had dried up rains across southern Africa. On Harrison's screen, CHIRPS data showed a red blob of anomalous dryness across Zimbabwe—rainfall was running 80% below average for the season.



Zimbabwe, crippled by inflation and weak harvests, needed food aid in 2019. This year could be far worse



## COVID-19 treatment: New findings may bring researchers a step closer

### NEW YORK

FIVE researchers from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, set out to learn more about the structure and mechanisms related to two coronaviruses that have created turmoil in the past.

These are SARS-CoV, the virus that can lead to severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), and MERS-CoV, which can trig-

ger Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS).

But in the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic, the scientists – Tiffany Tang, Miya Bidon, Javier Jaimes, Ph.D., Gary Whittaker, Ph.D., and Prof. Susan Daniel – soon turned their attention to the new coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2.

In their initial, as well as current research, the investigators

were particularly interested in the function of the spike protein. This is a protein that viruses use to transfer their genetic information into cells, causing infection.

The investigators now report their findings in the journal *Antiviral Research*.

The mechanism that might hold the answer

In their research, the scientists looked, specifically, at fusion

peptides, short-chain amino acids present in the spike proteins of the coronaviruses that they were studying.

To infect a cell, the viruses go through a multistep process called “membrane fusion,” which ultimately allows them to “inject” their genetic information into the cell they are infecting.

Membrane fusion happens once the virus locates a cell that

is susceptible to infection. The virus does this by taking chemical cues from its environment. Finally, the virus attaches to the receptor of the target cell via the spike protein.

At this point, the fusion peptide, which is a part of the spike protein, merges with the cell membrane. This forms an opening that allows the virus to transfer its genetic material into the

cell. This will ensure that the virus can replicate.

The researchers found that calcium ions help the fusion peptide to “do its job” and allow coronaviruses – specifically MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV – to infect cells.

A comparison between the fusion peptides of the different coronaviruses found that the biological sequences of the fusion

peptides present in SARS-CoV and SARS-CoV-2 were 93% alike.

This could mean that the mechanism affecting their fusion peptides are also very similar.

“What’s really interesting about SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV, and this new virus, SARS-CoV-2, is this particular part of the protein, the fusion peptide, is almost exactly the same in those three viruses,” says Prof. Daniel.

## Climate change set to accelerate biodiversity loss

### By Guardian Reporter

CLIMATE change could lead to sudden loss of biodiversity in Africa and other regions of the world sooner than predicted, with negative impact on people’s food security and income, a study says.

In many developing countries, according to Christopher Trisos, the study’s lead author, more people rely on immediate natural environment for the livelihood, food security and income and thus “a sudden disruption or loss of local ecosystems could seriously impact the ability of people in these countries to earn an income and feed themselves, potentially pushing them further into extreme poverty”.

“Millions of people in these regions, for instance, rely on fishing as an essential source of food and income, as well as eco-tourism and an abrupt disruption of marine ecosystems with sudden loss of species could negatively impact their food security and income,” he adds.

The study says that temperature rises above two degrees Celsius will severely affect biodiversity by the end of the century, although it is unclear whether the changes will occur suddenly or gradually.

But the study, which resulted from simulations of climate change data

and was published in *Nature* last week (8 April), suggests that abrupt biodiversity loss will begin as early as the 2030s in tropical ocean ecosystems under scenarios of temperature rises of at least two degrees Celsius.

“If we continue on a high emissions pathway, the risk will spread to tropical and temperate ecosystems on land by the 2050s,” says Trisos, a senior researcher at the African Climate and Development Initiative at the University of Cape Town, South Africa.

Trisos says that Africa, Asia and Latin America have large tropical land and ocean ecosystems that are at high risk of abrupt biodiversity loss.

In marine ecosystems along the west coast of Africa and Indo-Pacific region, the disruption could occur within a decade from now, Trisos explains.

Researchers combined the climate data with data on incidence for 30,000 species of animals and plants including mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, marine fish, corals, and seagrasses. They then calculated the warmest temperatures that each species had been exposed to between 1850 and 2005 as well as future scenarios for the years 2006-2100.

Abrupt biodiversity loss, Trisos says is extremely dangerous because of local deaths of the tropical land



Fishermen at a lake shores

and marine ecosystems.

Tobias Nyumba, a postdoctoral research fellow at the Institute for Climate Change and Adaptation, University of Nairobi, Kenya, says climate change’s negative impact on all levels of biodiversity – from individual organisms to communities of plants and animals – could accelerate the loss and even extinction of biodiversity.

“Global warming will also lead to the general loss of genetic diversity of populations through se-

lection and rapid migration and hence alteration of ecosystem functions and resilience,” Nyumba explains.

Africa is considered one of the most biodiverse regions of the world but human activities and climatic threats will most certainly modify how biodiversity interact, particularly at community level and how they depend on each other, he says, adding that most species will lose their ability to adapt to the emerging set of environmental condi-

tions.

With over 90 per cent rural population in Africa mainly relying on crop farming, livestock production, and nature-based income as poverty alleviation strategies, Nyumba calls for more action from African governments and key institutions.

“African governments and practitioners will need to invest in understanding the relationships between climate change and human and economic development,” Nyumba says.

## Tanzania can learn from South Korea in taming COVID-19

### By Guardian Reporter

THE fatal impact of previous outbreaks in Africa, such as Ebola in DRC coming to mind, in the past few years has exposed one painful fact: the continent has challenging health care systems.

Thus, the fears of experts about the potential devastating impact of the current coronavirus outbreak are not misplaced. It requires an extra-ordinary vigilance from both the authorities and the population to win this deadly battle.

During these times of the COVID-19 outbreak, we need to stop walking on eggshells and starting telling each other the truth and we also need to learn to accept some harsh realities for what they are.

According to the government official figures as of Wednesday April 15th Tanzania had recorded 88 cases with four fatal cases. The numbers are steadily increasing.

The first reality check is perhaps the wanting healthcare system in the country which could easily be overwhelmed as the infections keep on escalating.

Second reality check is the fact that people still gather in social events such as churches, funerals, which could turn out to be very catastrophic in terms of spreading the virus.

The number of people wearing masks is still low, although the number is increasing slowly. Wearing masks has an economic implication as one mask is sold from 2,000 Shillings, which not many Tanzanians can afford.

At this juncture, therefore, preventing the further spread of infections would not only mean saving lives but also avoiding a

lockdown that would in the long run leave an economic catastrophe of Kafkaesque proportions.

People should take the pandemic seriously and heed to government’s directives on measures pertinent to curbing spread of the highly infectious disease.

Although there has been huge awareness regarding washings hands, distancing, isolating (including limiting movements) where necessary is still very important.

As part of measures to control the spread of the infection, it was recently reported that the government has taken deliberate measures to use University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) hostels to house arrivals in Dar es Salaam from corona-hit countries as they undergo 14-day quarantine.

It came on the backdrop of increasing costs of fighting the pandemic, whereby arrivals used to be housed in hotels, which are much expensive compared to hostels.

The good thing is that we do not need to invent the wheel on how this pandemic can be tamed. South Korea has been applauded by western media for being a good example of success stories of fighting Covid-19.

According to *The Guardian* UK, South Korea took rapid, intrusive measures against Covid-19 and they worked.

The newspaper reports that on 29 February, 700 people tested positive in the primary South Korean outbreak city of Daegu. By 15 March, 41 new cases were reported there.

There were, however, no time for complacency. As expected, based on the continued lack of immunity in the population, on



A South Korean woman wears plastic gloves amid concerns over the COVID-19 coronavirus before casting her ballot for the parliamentary elections at a polling station in Seoul on April 15, 2020.

18 March, the number of cases began rising again, with Seoul, the capital was now bracing for the worst.

From 16 March, South Korea started to screen all people arriving at airports, Koreans included.

After few weeks the result has been phenomenon because as of Wednesday 15th April, about 7,616 patients were reported to have been recovered from the pandemic out of 10,591 total cases.

Korea has reported 225 deaths, which is a small number

compared to many countries with total cases above 10,000.

One of the most important aspects is the unbelievable unity between the government and the people during the entire period. The unity was also vividly indicated by the huge turnout during the Wednesday April 15th Parliamentary elections.

Despite the elections being held during the Covid-19 crisis a whopping 66.2 percent of turnout gave a victory to President Moon Jae-in’s governing party, which clearly showed the people’s confidence on the govern-

ment on how they handled the crisis.

Some other take-away lessons from South Korea’s success story includes intervening fast before it’s a crisis, Test early, often and safely, contact tracing, isolation and surveillance and enlist the Public’s help.

At the moment, we are yet to shift our focus on the full impact of the pandemic to the economy, with the focus being more on the people’s well-being and containing the spread of infections, but as the impact to the economy remains an uncharted territory

for now, and depending on how long the outbreak drifts on, it is likely there be dragons’.

South Korea also has successfully reserved the budget which they used it rapidly to help isolated people through provision of tax cuts, subsidies and helping vulnerable groups.

The *New York Times* notes that the South Korean’s successes have been well documented and yet its methods and containment tools are not prohibitively complex or expensive, an area a country like Tanzania can draw lessons

from. “During the darkest days of its coronavirus outbreak, South Korea didn’t have enough doctors and nurses to treat the sick, and patients were dying while waiting for hospital beds,” the *Times* report.

The report further says that some of the technology the country has used is as simple as specialized rubber gloves and cotton swabs. Of the seven countries with worse outbreaks than South Korea’s, five are richer.

Experts, however, cite some major hurdles to following South Korea’s lead, none related to cost or technology, one being political will. Many governments have hesitated to impose onerous measures in the absence of a crisis-level outbreak.

It may be too late for countries to deep into epidemics to control outbreaks as quickly or efficiently as South Korea has but infection rate in Tanzania is still low, albeit increasing.

The head of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, has hailed South Korea as demonstrating that containing the virus, while difficult, “can be done” and urged countries to “apply the lessons learned in Korea and elsewhere”, South Korean officials caution that their successes are tentative.

A risk of resurgence remains, particularly as the pandemic continue raging beyond the country’s borders. Let’s work together with vigilance to tame this scourge. It can only be won if government and people work together while taking the problem seriously.



# Girls' education and safety will be harmed by Covid-19 response

By Agnes Odhiambo

**A**BIGAIL, a young woman who lives in Zimbabwe's capital Harare became pregnant by a much older married man when she was 14. She had left school because her mother couldn't afford to pay for her fees, books and other school supplies. Her mother was also struggling to buy food and other basics for the family. The man had given her money. She felt she couldn't refuse him as he was helping her.

Abigail had had no sex education in school and didn't know how to prevent pregnancy. When she was 16, she told us: "I wish to go back to school because I am still a child".

In these trying circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, many vulnerable groups will be made even more so. Key among them are young girls from low-income backgrounds who risk falling into the same circumstances as Abigail. The crisis is likely to put them at higher risks of sexual violence and exploitation, trafficking, child marriage, forced labour, and social exclusion.

## How school closures affect girls

School closures harm girls in many ways, often with long-term consequences.

Across the continent, girls already face a host of barriers to education that result in substantial gender disparities. They are also exposed to many abuses, including child marriage and female genital mutilation, which end their education abruptly.

Schools typically provide safe spaces for girls. When they are in school, they are less likely to be forced into marriage. During this pandemic, however, schools are not there to protect girls.

Human Rights Watch research in several African countries shows that child marriage and the resulting early pregnancies, a key barrier to girls' education, can increase significantly in

crises.

13 out of the 15 countries in the world where more than 30% of primary school age girls are out of school are in sub-Saharan Africa. As girls get older, the gender gap in education steadily widens. By upper secondary school, there are gender disparities in 91% of the region's countries. The pandemic could threaten the African Union's Agenda 2063 commitment to eliminate gender disparities at all levels, including in education.

## What African governments must do to protect girls

African governments must act to ensure these statistics are not further worsened by the pandemic. There are many ways that they can start to mitigate the harm to girls.

To begin with, it is critical that emergency response measures address the particular vulnerabilities of women and girls. To ensure this, their participation in developing these measures is key.

Public awareness messages should always include specific information on risks that girls face as well as how to report abuse and seek help.

Governments should also work with communities, school officials and teachers to monitor whether girls are participating in remote educational programmes. If these initiatives are not reaching girls or if their families or communities are not prioritising the girls' education, they will need to intervene.

The government should empower teachers and provide them resources so they can do their essential outreach work. This will involve checking-in on their students, particularly girls, and talking to parents to ensure they understand that children need to remain engaged with their studies.

Governments should additionally provide information and services on sexual and reproductive health to adolescents. This includes making sure they can access a broad range of contraceptives, which respects their dignity and privacy.

When schools reopen, these efforts must continue. School officials and teachers should make sure that girls are returning.

From now, governments should be tracking the num-



bers of children affected by school closures and provide gender disaggregated data to ensure they can act if a significant number of children do not return to school. Governments should develop measures to identify and assist those who have not returned, for example by

providing financial assistance programmes.

Now is also a good time for countries that exclude pregnant girls and adolescent mothers from school to reform those policies and develop human rights-compliant policies.

The recent move by Sierra Leone to allow girls who are pregnant or have a child to attend school is a good example for other African countries like Tanzania to follow.

Girls are key to Africa's human capital and will be a key asset in the process of recovering from COVID-19.

It is imperative for governments to adopt and implement, as part of their pandemic responses, measures to ensure that all girls can continue their education, the key to unlocking their potential.



A woman wears a medical mask during a snowfall in Beijing this February 2.

# Coronavirus: WHO says changing climates and crowded cities drive disease outbreaks

By Berkeley Lovelace Jr.

**T**HERE is "no question" that changes in temperature, rainfall and humidity are driving infectious disease outbreaks around the world, but the impact of rapidly changing weather systems on the coronavirus are not yet known. World Health Organization officials said Wednesday.

Even though scientists are still learning about Covid-19, the virus has shown the capability to "accelerate in a number of different climates," Dr. Maria Van Kerkhove, head of WHO's emerging diseases and zoonosis unit, told reporters during a press conference at the agency's headquarters in Geneva.

"If you remember, this began in very cold temperatures, very dry temperatures, very low-level humidity," she said. "We don't know how this virus is impacted completely yet."

China reported its first known cases of the coronavirus to the international health agency on Dec. 31 when parts of the country were in the middle of the winter season. Since then, the virus has spread to nearly to every country across the globe and infected more than 2 million peo-

ple in a range of different environments.

Dr. Mike Ryan, executive director of WHO's health emergencies program, said that there are many other known diseases that are "climate-sensitive."

"You've seen outbreaks of cholera all around the world that are either related to flooding or related to drought, they are either related to too much water or too little water," he said.

Ryan said certain environments, such as densely populated cities, can also increase infectious disease risks.

Pakistan, which has more than 6,000 Covid-19 cases as of Wednesday afternoon, has struggled to clear coronavirus infections in some of its larger urban cities, Ryan said.

The population density in New York City, which has about twice as many people as Los Angeles, is believed to have helped drive the coronavirus outbreak there.

"In many ways, unfortunately, those populations are almost like kindling for a fire and not just a fire of Covid but any other number of diseases," he said.

The virus has often been compared to the seasonal flu, which also sickens millions of people

each year.

Last month, U.S. health officials warned that Americans need to prepare for a second cycle of the outbreak in the United States. Scientists say the virus could be seasonal and relapse in warmer conditions just like the flu, but that also means it could come back in the fall.

"Would this possibly become a seasonal cyclic thing? I've always indicated to you that I think it very well might," Dr. Anthony Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said a White House press briefing on March 25.

"What we're starting to see in the Southern Hemisphere of Southern Africa and the Southern Hemisphere countries, is that we're having cases that are appearing as they go into their winter season," he said. "If they have a substantial outbreak, it will be inevitable that we need to be prepared that we'll get a cycle a second time."

Scientists are also still learning about the virus's origins. Earlier in the outbreak, scientists said the coronavirus that emerged from a seafood market in Wuhan, China, likely originated in bats and then jumped to an "intermediate host," possibly pangolin.

# SA's universities, scientists deep in major Covid-19 push

By Edwin Naidu

**S**OUTH Africa's tertiary education sector has delivered a resounding response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Prof Ahmed Bawa, chief executive officer of Universities South Africa (USAf), confirmed: "there's a huge amount going on" and his organisation was collating a list of country-wide initiatives by tertiary education institutions related to COVID-19.

Management, academics and students at several institutions, including the University of the Witwatersrand, the University of Venda and Nelson Mandela University, among others throughout the country, have been involved in initiatives to curb the pandemic and address its effects.

It follows a call last month by Higher Education, Science and Innovation Minister Dr Blade Nzimande to tertiary institutions, including USAf, the South African College Principals Organisation and the departments of health and higher education to coordinate a sector response to the pandemic.

The Department of Science and Innovation has established a research team made up of the South African Medical Research Council, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the Human Sciences Research Council to focus on scientific research and interventions to combat the epidemic.

On 23 March Nzimande said work on the development of a vaccine for the virus had begun at the University of Cape Town in association with the CSIR and the Biological and Vaccines Institute of Southern Africa.

World-renowned HIV scientist and infectious diseases epidemiologist Professor Salim Abdool Karim said the country's medical brains trust was playing a crucial role in developing a vaccine and conducting "solidarity" clinical trials for COVID-19 treatment as part of the World Health Organization (WHO) Public Health Emergency Solidarity Trial.

While a 50-member committee chaired by Abdool Karim is advising Minister of Health Dr Zweli Mkhize on steps to take during the pandemic, at least 30 scientists, researchers and clinicians from eight of the country's medical schools are collaborating with counterparts from nine other countries on medical trials, testing certain treatments on COVID-19 patients to find out whether the drugs identified by the WHO are effective in reducing or minimising the effects of the disease.

"The virus spreads so fast. We had to take drastic action to try to stop it, as the main worry was that if 20% of the population or, let's say, one-fifth was going to require medical care or be put on a ventilator, it would put strain on medical facilities as we don't have the requisite number of ventilators; we wanted to avoid such a situation," said Abdool Karim, the CAPRISA Professor for Global Health in the Department of Epidemiology at the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University.

Dr Jeremy Nel, co-principal investigator with Professor Helen Rees at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), said WHO conceived and designed the trials being implemented in partnership with

national ministries of health from around the world, and multiple universities from across South Africa.

"To the best of my knowledge, no other African country has yet commenced with the Solidarity trial, although many have expressed interest."

Asked about progress in terms of treatment, Nel said currently there is no known effective anti-viral treatment for COVID-19 and this was to be expected given the relatively short period since the virus was discovered.

Shabir Mahdi, professor of vaccinology at Wits, said South Africa was part of a broader network being coordinated by WHO to explore different vaccines to reduce COVID-19 cases and possibly confer herd immunity. While it usually takes as long as 10 years to license vaccines from the time of first going into human trials, scientists around the world were working around the clock to accelerate the process.

## What universities are doing

Beyond medical research, other universities are making a contribution. The University of Venda entered the battle against COVID-19 by producing more than 100,000 litres of hand sanitiser which was given to students and distributed to residents in neighbouring villages.

Hand sanitiser was also on the production line at Nelson Mandela University in the Eastern Cape where the university's chemical technology institute, InnoVenton, is producing about 300 litres a day, while the department of pharmacy's pharmaceuticals division in the health sciences faculty is set to produce another 400 litres.

After Netcare 911, one of the country's emergency medical healthcare providers, called on the 3-D printing community to assist with head rings for face shields for use by medical staff treating patients with COVID-19, several teams at Wits from the Digital Incubator at the Tshimologong Precinct, the School of Mechanical, Industrial and Aeronautical Engineering along with the Transnet Centre of Systems Engineering and the Transnet Matlafatso Centre collaborated on producing a 3-D laser cut solution that saved time and met an urgent healthcare need.

The team plans on making 200 to 500 shields a day to provide protective gear for medical staff.

## COVID-19 Africa dashboard

Another innovation at Wits was a COVID-19 dashboard with new data features, including snapshot views of how the pandemic is spreading in Africa, as well as statistics showing world trends. The dashboard, launched on 22 March by Professor Bruce Mellado from the Wits School of Physics and senior scientist at iThemba LABS, is maintained daily and updated within minutes of the government's announcements of the latest statistics.

It provides historical data of relevant parameters, provincial and other breakdowns and has undergone several upgrades since its release.

"Many of the upgrades have been requested by scientists and journalists countrywide to improve the presentation of the South African data. Currently the site averages about 10,000 views a day," said Mellado.



# CRDB TARGETS TO EARN HIGHER PROFIT FROM BURUNDI, INSURANCE BROKER SUBSIDIARIES

By Property Watch Reporter

**A** MINIMUM of 10 percent profit will come from CRDB Bank Plc's subsidiaries this year as the largest, home-grown retailer posts a 120.1bn/- net profit for the year ending December 2019.

The net profit, which represents an 87 percent growth compared to last year's profit of 64bn/- had the two subsidiaries, CRDB Bank Burundi SA and CRDB Insurance Broker Limited contributing 4 percent to the group's profit.

The banking industry's largest retail bank dissolved another subsidiary, CRDB Micro-finance Services Limited during the year in what CRDB Bank Group's Managing Director, Abdulmajid Nsekela described as restructuring aimed at improving efficiency.

Nsekela attributed the impressive performance to sustained reforms targeted at revitalizing the business by creating new efficiencies and synergies to power growth. "All our key performance indicators are in the green. This is because we are taking our propositions seriously and we are working to elevate our customer experience by providing services efficiently and reliably," he said in Dar es Salaam this week while announcing the results.

He pointed out that the two subsidiaries contributed to the growth thanks to the transformation initiatives being implemented by the holding company. "We expect that in the coming year, our subsidiaries will contribute at least 10 percent of Group profits," Nsekela affirmed.

Separately, the results indicate that CRDB Bank Burundi SA's net profit leapfrogged by 146 percent to 6.4bn/- buoyed by growth in customer deposits and improved earnings



CRDB Bank Plc's new headquarters complex in Dar es Salaam which is undergoing finishing touches. File photo.

from government securities. It's the highest ever profit that the subsidiary has posted since it was established in 2012 with total assets growing by 26 percent to 258.9bn/- from three branches within the capital, Bujumbura.

The results also indicate that CRDB Insurance Broker Limited recorded a 17 percent growth in net profit to 1.5bn/- from 1.3bn/- made in 2018 with total income gener-

ated by the insurance subsidiary standing at 7.8bn/- representing 26 percent growth. The growth was mainly driven by a rise in the uptake of insurance products mainly in medical care, education and tourism.

The CRDB Bank results further show that customer deposits grew by 11 percent to 5.2trn/- mainly fuelled by strong growth from the retail segment supported by a

wide distribution network and augmented by CRDB Wakala agents.

During the year, the banking conglomerate recruited more than 9,000 CRDB Wakalas (formerly FahariHuduma agents) to bring the total number of agents to 14,761, in addition to 237 physical branches and 553 ATMs spread across the country.

Gross group assets also appreciated by 9 percent to 6.6trn/- signaling a robust balance sheet, which further cements its market leadership position as the preferred financial services provider in the country. "We are leading the way in empowering businesses to stimulate economic growth," Nsekela charged.

In its quest to facilitate economic growth, the banking group grew its loan portfolio by 8 percent to 3.4trn/- from 3.1trn/- during the period under review which represented a 20 percent market share of the industry's net loans and advances.

This growth was primarily motivated by sustained effort to provide affordable credit to the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and consumer sectors.

"We have launched several innovative financing solutions for different sectors and customer segments aiming at addressing financial challenges that impede growth," the group CEO stated.

During the year under review,

CRDB Bank also launched Jiwezesheshe, a credit facility for micro-entrepreneurs (machingas), aimed at providing cheap loans to enable them boost their businesses.

"We took advantage of the government's initiative to recognise the 'Machinga' as an opportunity to financially include them because we believe that they play a significant role in facilitating trade," Nsekela explained.

Additionally, the banking group also improved its asset quality by reducing bad loans (NPLs) from 8.3 to 5.5 percent, which is the biggest improvement, compared to an industry average currently pegged at 11 percent.

"We implemented several initiatives including modernizing and streamlining our credit processes; on loan origination, monitoring and collection, to improve turnaround time and quality of the portfolio," said Frederick Nshakenabo, CRDB Bank's Group Chief Finance Officer, Frederick Nshakenabo noting that return of equity improved to 14.7 percent against 8 percent currently prevailing industrial average.

"Our earnings remained strong with the group expanding its overall market share in Tanzania to slightly above 20 percent," he added while noting that mitigation measures against coronavirus are being undertaken to protect the public and bank staff.

# First Google developers' space opens in Lagos

LAGOS

GOOGLE has announced the launching of its first Google Developers Space in Lagos, Nigeria. Referred to as the Google Launchpad Space previously, the Google Developers Space is a hub for African developers, entrepreneurs, and startups.

Previously in July 2017, Google CEO Sundar Pichai, made a commitment to African entrepreneurs, to start the Launchpad Accelerator Africa program and launch a space to house these efforts in Nigeria. Google is launching the Google Developers Space in Lagos earlier this week to provide that home and space where entrepreneurs, developers, VCs, and investors can connect and collaborate with each other.

Launchpad Accelerator Africa head of Operations, Onajite Emerhor said, "Google is strengthening its commitment to supporting the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Africa by opening the Google Developers Space today. We have partnered with Impact Hub to bring the Space to life and worked with a local company called Spacefinish, which designed it specifically to create an environment that fosters collaboration and innovation. We're looking forward to working with startups and other players in the ecosystem from across the continent at the Space."

For use of the space, Google does not charge which in addition to housing Google Launchpad Accelerator Africa will support developer meetups, training, experts office hours, Women

in tech events, startup programs (outside of Launchpad), partner events that support the wider entrepreneur and developer ecosystem, as well as Google initiatives for empowering people through digital skills training.

Since the first class started in early 2018, Launchpad Accelerator Africa has worked with 47 startups.

These companies have secured millions of dollars in investments and created over nine hundred jobs across the continent.

So far, Launchpad Africa has accelerated startups from 17 African countries: Algeria, Botswana, Cameroon, Côte D'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, and

Zimbabwe. The next class will start at the Google Developer Space in May 2020.

Juliet Ehimuan, Country Director of Google Nigeria said, "This space is the next step to our support for developers across the continent. From our commitment to train 100,000 developers across Africa and the launch of developer merchant support in the Google Play store, making it possible for developers to earn money through apps they build. We are excited to continue our journey with the African startup and developer communities."

Google provides training aligned with real-life job competency requirements through Google Developer Groups and Women Techmakers. There are 173 active Google Developer Groups

(GDGs) in Africa which provide an opportunity for developers to meet other developers with similar interests at GDG meetup events. This includes talks on a vast array of technical topics and hands-on workshops.

GDGs also host DevFests, community-led developer events focused on community building and learning about Google's technologies. Over 100 DevFest events were held across Africa last year.

"Africa's startup ecosystem is growing and this space is our way of supporting and being a part of that growth. We're looking forward to working with startups and other players in the ecosystem from across the continent at the Space," Emerhor concluded.

# Tycoon awarded KSh859m after Spring Valley home demolished

NAIROBI

RECLUSIVE tycoon Mike Maina Kamau has secured an order compelling the State to pay him Sh859 million as compensation for his mansion, which was demolished in Nairobi's Spring Valley to pave the way for a road.

Justice John Mativo has directed the Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure as well as the Attorney-General to ensure the billionaire, who owns Marble Arch Hotel in Nairobi, is paid the millions.

The compensation is broken down as Sh847,277,351 for the demolished property and Sh12,259,342 as the cost of the case. Bulldozers tore down Mr Kamau's eight-bedroom mansion to make way for a bypass, prompting the tycoon to seek compensation. Franklin Bett was the minister for Roads when Mr Kamau's property was brought down.

Mr Maina had been awarded Sh711 million as compensation

in December 2017 but recently sought court action for speedy payment, including of interest for the delayed settlement. The State had opposed Mr Maina's application on the grounds that there was a pending appeal against the Sh711 million payout, arguing that taxpayers would be prejudiced if the payment was made before the appeal was determined.

Paul Maringa, the Principal Secretary for Infrastructure, said Mr Maina's property sat on land that was part of a road reserve. As a result, the house had to be demolished to pave way for the construction of the Waiyaki Way-Redhill link road. Prof Maringa said that the State was aggrieved by the earlier judgment and had sought to reverse the compensation.

According to him, the appeal had high chances of success, and, as such, the compensation should be frozen until the State exhausts its right of appeal. However, Justice Mativo said that an appeal does not imply suspension of court judgments, unless a judge has imposed

orders freezing the orders.

"It is a known principle of law that an appeal of a judgment by the unsuccessful litigant does not prevent the successful party executing the judgment immediately," said Justice Mativo.

"Ideally, the unsuccessful party should apply for a stay of execution after judgment is delivered from the court issuing the decree and if unsuccessful from the court to which the appeal is preferred." Mr Maina had built his palatial home in 2007 and at the time of demolition, he had not moved in yet but construction work was nearing completion. He successfully defended the acquisition of the land, claiming before court to have purchased it at Sh80 million.

In his evidence, Mr Maina said he had spent Sh299 million to build the mansion. However, the State, in its counter-argument, said Mr Maina had acquired the land unlawfully through fraud, misrepresentation and mistake.

It said the land was actually part of a road and that the



Maina's Marble Arch Hotel.

government had acquired it in the early 1970s for the purpose of building the link road to

cover a distance of 4.4 kilometres. The link road was to traverse through Grevilla Groove,

Kyuna Road, Loesho Ridge, Spring Valley Road, Kitisuru Road and Ngecha Road.



# SHINYANGA-BASED NGO RESCUES YOUNG GIRL FROM MARRIAGE, TAKES HER TO VETA FOR TAILORING COURSE

By Property Watch Reporter

**N**CHAMBI Seif (not her real name) considers herself to be one of the luckiest girls around. Just months ago, her father, Lyuba Seif wanted to marry her off and earn dowry proceeds. She was however rescued by Paralegal Aid Centre Shinyanga (PACESHI).

"This situation called for the need to take swift appropriate and rapid measures to save the young girl from the apparent marriage otherwise she was being married off," said PACESHI Program Manager, John Shija.

Nchambi is currently a student at Shinyanga Vocational Education and Training Authority doing tailoring thanks to PACESHI's facilitation. Her ambition is to establish her own mini clothes making factory.

Shija who has played a key role in weaning hundreds of school age going girls being married off by their greedy parents in Shinyanga, said Kishapu district where Seif hails from has a serious problem of child marriages.

"Early marriages have become a common practice that abuses the rights of young girls to get an education of vocational skills to become self sufficient mothers in future," he added. Shija further revealed that after learning about Nchambi's fate, PACESHI paralegals sat down with her parents and together agreed that the girl be assisted to train as a tailor under the not for profit organization's sponsorship.

Furthermore, PACESHI would provide her with the initial capital once she finishes the course to enable her purchase a sewing machine and other materials to start her business while receiving close supervision from paralegals.

Commenting on Nchambi's performance, Theresia Masinga who is a tailoring tutor at VETA Shinganya said from day one, the girl set her foot at the college, she has displayed remarkable will to learn.

"I hold the view that she has a brighter future ahead because of the degree of concentration that she always shows in class. I'm very impressed by her," Masinga said while noting that her predicament is a regular incidence facing girls in Shinyanga region currently.

Even the father of the girl is now accepting change because he believes that such a unique opportunity given to her daughter will not only benefit her but also



Nchambi Seif (not her real name) attending a tailoring session at Shinyanga Vocational Education and Training Authority centre under her tutor, Theresia Masinga (standing). Photo courtesy of LSF.

the whole family significantly through vocational skills acquisition compared to marrying her off.

"Paralegals based in the region are well-known for helping change the outcomes of many a predicament in which local girls find themselves due to outdated customs and

inherent traditions which are overtaken by time," she added.

Masinga said poor parents are also lured by dowry payment which includes a minimum of five herds of cattle and 300,000/- cash. "It's very tempting to poor families hence NGOs like PACESHI are very important to arrest the

situation," she underlined.

PACESHI which is supported by Legal Services Facility that operate in all districts of Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar to promote access to justice for all especially vulnerable groups such as women, children, and other needy community members. On average, para-

legals annually attend to over 70,000 cases in which 60 percent of these cases are resolved, 22 percent ongoing cases, 16 percent are referred to high authority while 2 percent are unresolved cases.

## City of Cape Town gets slammed for allegedly issuing fines to 'penniless homeless people'

CAPE TOWN

THE City of Cape Town is issuing fines to penniless homeless people, according to a GOOD party member of the Western Cape legislature.

GOOD secretary general Brett Herron said on Wednesday that he received reports that homeless people were "being held in lockdown" at the contentious Strandfontein camp and fined - allegations which the City is investigating.

Referring to a fine he had seen, Herron said the person was sanctioned for "threatening behaviour in a public place." As the national Covid-19 lockdown continues, homeless people struggle more and more to find a decent daily meal. The Glory Restoration Assembly church, took it upon themselves to provide homeless people in Cape Town with a warm meal.

The person faces being hauled before the Mitchells Plain Magistrate's Court on 29 July of R500 is not paid by 15 July. "The Strandfontein camp has been a chaotic and shambolic attempt at shelter and now it seems that the City has completely lost its mind by issuing fines to the penniless homeless people. A picture is emerging of a government that is completely out of control," Herron said.

"Taking 2 000 people off the street and forcing them to camp in Strandfontein was poor judgement. A proper plan would have anticipated the human dynamics of what was going to happen and would have prepared for this, with professionals available to intervene and to assist hu-



Strandfontein camp in Cape Town.

man beings to adjust to being effectively imprisoned."

### 'Reduce the risk'

Executive director for safety and security Richard Bosman said the City "just obtained further particulars" and would look into the allegations before responding.

Meanwhile, mayoral committee member for community services and health Zahid Badroodien defended the City's decision to deny various organisations and the media unconstrained access to the sports complex, saying that while it was a public facility, it was being used as a shelter as part of national efforts to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus.

"The City's service providers, including NGO professionals who care for the homeless as well as medical services and food distribution providers, are currently working at the site and are implementing ways of enhancing social distancing," Badroodien said in a statement.

"It is for this reason that the City is limiting the number of people entering the site. We want to ensure that we reduce the risk of exposure to those living in the safe space." The South African Human Rights Commission has visited the site several times. The City will continue to allow the organisation's representatives access to conduct oversight visits, according to him.

"For the record, the shelter was set up in terms of the Disaster [Management]

Act, on instruction from the national government, to mitigate the risk of street people contracting Covid-19; to ensure that, where cases do occur within this vulnerable group, they are treated timeously; and to provide a means of sustenance to street people whose economic lifeline has been cut by the national lockdown." About 1 500 people are being housed there.

"To date, 142 persons have left the site - either to be reunited with their families, or of their own volition. This is a clear indication that no person is being held against their will. Leaving the facility does not however exempt any person from penalties they may incur from not adhering to the Disaster regulations."

## German builders fret over China's dominance in Africa

BERLIN

CONTRACTORS in Germany are considering banding together to compete with Chinese contractors in Africa. "We need to work more intensively together," said Hans Joachim Bliss of the Federation of German Contractors (HDB). "One company can't compete with a state-owned company from China," he told Deutsche Welle.

With loans pouring out of China's Export Import Bank, Chinese companies are building most of the roads, ports, airports and railways across Africa. In 2018, they accounted for 62% of the continent's infrastructure market share, Berlin-based European International Contractors (EIC) has calculated.

German contractors complain that they regularly lose bids to Chinese competitors, who can offer bids that are lower by 20% or more because they benefit from subsidies from Beijing and preferential treatment in African countries. According to the EIC, Chinese companies are often exempt from visa regulations and taxes, as well.

Ranking German builders further, Chinese companies profit not only from Chinese largesse, but European funding as well, as African countries borrow from European and other development banks, such as the European Investment Bank and the World Bank, and use these funds to pay Chinese contractors for projects.

"We haven't found the right [Africa] strategy," said HDB's Hans Joachim Bliss. According to Deutsche Welle, the German Foreign Ministry has met with industry representatives to discuss how they could compete more effectively in Africa.

But whereas the Chinese government actively throws its weight behind infrastructure projects through its Belt & Road Initiative, German policy makers are reluctant to get involved.

"Business cannot be linked to the geopolitical strategy," Dorothee Schneider, head of the German Economy Ministry's Sub Saharan-Africa division, told Deutsche Welle.

## KPA tightens inspection of ships to keep virus at bay

NAIROBI

KENYA Ports Authority (KPA) has made changes in its operations in effort to calm nerves of restless employees after two of them succumbed to Covid-19.

Every ship from countries with confirmed Covid-19 cases will be

subject to elaborate inspection as directed by harbour master in consultation with the port health office, the agency has directed. Ships docking will also be required to make a mandatory pre-arrival reporting at least 48 hours before arrival while only Kenyans and permanent residents will be al-

lowed to disembark.

Masters of all ships set to arrive in a Kenyan port are required to declare their last 10 ports of call or voyage memo for the last three months. They will also be expected to ensure that there are no crew showing symptoms of Covid-19 on board and ensure the highest level

of hygiene is observed.

"It shall be prohibited for anyone to board a vessel before the completion of the health inspection of the crew or passengers," said acting managing director Rashid Salim. "All visitors should use protective disposable masks and latex gloves while on board and should

dispose of them on board before disembarking in a special disposal bin," Mr Salim added.

The KPA also suspended ship crew change until further notice with the exception of Kenyan crew and persons with valid resident permits.

On Tuesday, the Dock Workers

Union threatened to disrupt operations at the port of Mombasa, citing weak measures to protect workers from Covid-19. Simon Sang, the union's secretary general, said the number of dock workers being taken for quarantine was a worry and the Ministry of Health ought to intervene.

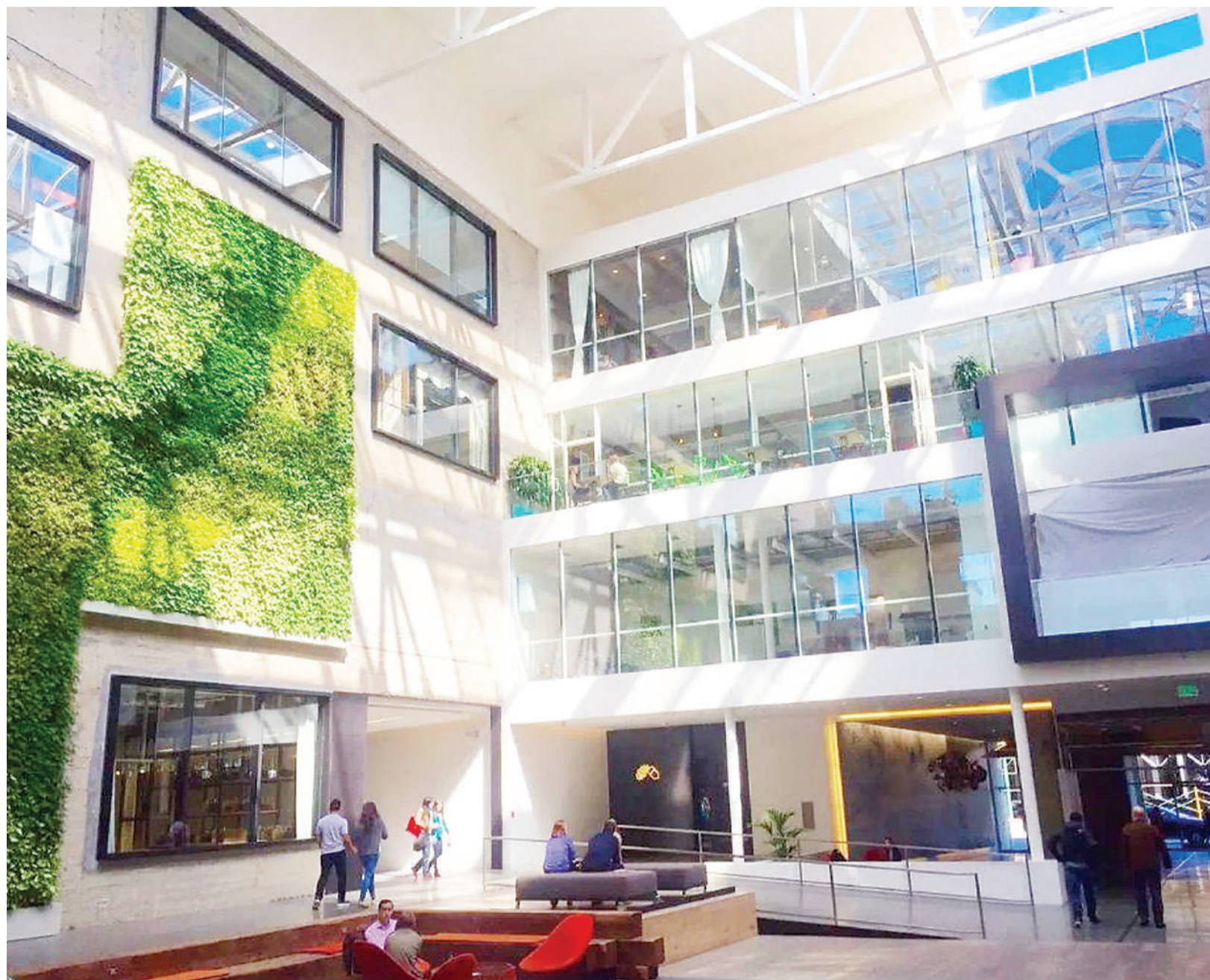
There will be mass testing of KPA employees, the ministry responded on Tuesday.

"We would like to assure our staff and the entire port community that no efforts shall be spared to ensure the port remains a safe working environment," said the acting KPA managing director.



## TECHNOLOGY

## AIRBNB RAISES ANOTHER \$1-BILLION, AS IPO PROSPECTS FAR FROM BRIGHT



Airbnb headquarters in San Francisco, California.

## SAN FRANCISCO

**A**IRBNB has lined up US\$1-billion in debt, adding to last week's same-size haul and boosting a financial cushion it can use to grow and pay bills as the global coronavirus pandemic crushes demand for travel and diminishes the prospect of an initial public offering.

Airbnb is raising cash by issuing first-lien debt, which has priority on the company's assets in case of a default, and it comes from a group of more than 20 investors, including Silver Lake, the largest participant, according to people with knowledge of the matter. Other investors are BlackRock, Eaton Vance, Fidelity Investments and T. Rowe Price Group, said the people, who asked not

to be identified discussing a private deal.

The company confirmed in a statement it had secured commitments for a \$1-billion syndicated loan but didn't name investors or elaborate on details.

San Francisco-based Airbnb, which makes money from homeowners who rent residences to travellers, had been planning to go public sometime this year, but the outbreak of Covid-19 has sent markets into a tailspin and made an IPO less likely. People around the world have put travel plans on hold as governments issue shelter-in-place edicts to stop the contagion, slowing sales growth and crimping profit at Airbnb. The additional funds could help the company weather the economic crisis and even make acquisitions without going public.

"I deeply appreciate the confidence and trust that so many have shown in our company even as every sector in travel is going through the storm of the pandemic," Brian Chesky, Airbnb's CEO and co-founder, said in the statement. "All of the actions we have taken over the last several weeks assure that Airbnb will emerge from the storm of the pandemic even stronger, regardless of how long the storm lasts."

## Doubles up

The list of participants includes Apollo Global Management, Benefit Street Partners, Blackstone Group, Glade Brook Capital Partners, Oaktree Capital and Owl Rock Capital, the people said. The deal builds on last week's investment of the same size from Silver Lake and Sixth Street Partners, which is also participating in the new debt, said the people, who asked not to be identified because the deal isn't public. Representatives for the other companies involved either declined to comment or didn't immediately respond to requests.

The new debt is senior to the company's borrowing from Silver Lake and Sixth Street that it unveiled earlier this month, which is composed of second-lien debt and equity securities. The warrants valued the company at \$18-billion, a fraction of its \$31-billion peak. The new transaction doesn't include warrants or other equity components, a person familiar with the deal said.

## PIF-backed Saudi refinancing firm lowers lending rates for long-term mortgages

## RIYADH

**T**HE Saudi Real Estate Refinance Company (SRC) lowered lending rates for long-term mortgages in an effort to boost home ownership in the kingdom.

SRC, owned by the kingdom's sovereign wealth fund, reduced rates by 15 basis points for its long-term fixed-rate mortgages (LTFR), it said in a statement on Tuesday. "Our LTFR mortgages will help customers alleviate troubles of high rate mortgages and allow more people to access the home mortgage markets," said Fabrice Susini, chief executive of SRC. "This will ultimately help us deliver the Vision 2030 housing sector goal of increasing the number of citizens owning their own homes to 70 per cent by 2030."

This is the first rate cut by SRC this year, following two rate reductions in 2019, making LTFR among the lowest rate for the mortgage product in the region, the company said. SRC was founded in 2017 by the Public Investment Fund to increase home ownership among Saudi nationals and develop the mortgage finance market.

Mr Susini added that the company has undertaken "several reviews to reduce the profit rates on real estate financing in accordance to the market conditions and in the



Riyadh's night skyline.

interest of Saudi citizens." "We also took the necessary measures to ensure that profit rates are maintained at the lowest possible level in order to achieve the company's goal of increasing home ownership rates in the kingdom. We believe the current market conditions represents an opportunity that is ideal for getting a mortgage at low rates."

Mortgage loans provided to retail clients by banks in Saudi Arabia reached 10.24 billion riyals in

February, up 142 per cent year-on-year, according to recent data by the Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority. During the fourth quarter of 2019, the loans figure rose 173 per cent to 26.5bn riyals.

The kingdom's mortgage market is expected to double in size within the next five years as the government pushes to increase home-ownership among its citizens. Fahad Alshathri, deputy governor for supervision at SAMA said last

year during a conference in Dubai.

Saudi Arabia, the Arab world's biggest economy, is aiming to increase home ownership to 60 per cent this year from 50 per cent in 2016 under a state-backed housing programme that encourages lenders and financing companies to allocate more funding to mortgage financing deals. Provision of housing is one of the key pillars of Vision 2030, the kingdom's social and economic reform agenda.



Capital hotel group's Durban hotel.

## Hotel industry offers 'bumless' beds in fight against Covid-19

## CAPE TOWN

**W**ITH no bums in beds in the local hotel industry and an expected shortage of hospital beds when the Covid-19 pandemic hits South Africa with all its might, hoteliers are gearing up to assist while hoping to retain at least some jobs in the sector.

At least two private initiatives also aim to provide safe accommodation for overworked medical staff and people who need to self-isolate. All of this at a fraction of the normal cost.

According to Lee Zama, CEO of the hospitality trade association Fedhasa, the industry is ready to make its 66 800 rooms available, provided its members can cover at least their basic cost. Fedhasa is working closely with the Department of Health and has already facilitated the use of three hotels in Gauteng as quarantine facilities.

Zama says at this stage the department is interested in properties with at least 100 rooms. She adds that it also has specific requirements, such as separate air conditioning systems for every room. The focus is currently on properties around Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban and the department is developing guidelines for different management aspects, including admissions and waste management.

Once a property is activated as a quarantine facility, the Department of Health completely takes over the running of it, even bringing in police to assist with security, says Zama.

## Blueprint

On its own initiative, the Capital hotel group has managed to retain a 40% occupancy so far and is working on a blueprint it hopes will be applied by the rest of the industry. When President Cyril Ramaphosa announced the national state of disaster on March 15, occupancy levels in the group's nine hotels, situated in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town and Durban, dropped from 80% to 10%, says Capital MD Marc Wachsberger.

The groups employs 550 people directly and supports a further 250 indirect jobs. With these people in mind Capital decided against summary closure, as most other hotels did at that stage. It instead approached the Department of Health with an offer to accommodate travellers who arrived from other countries and had to remain isolated for 14 days.

The group introduced new protocols for cleaning and management of the properties, all aimed at protecting staff and guests against Covid-19

transmission, and the Department of Health gave the green light. Passengers on incoming flights from China who had to self-isolate moved into the Capital properties and a sizeable number of the 800 rooms available for this service were filled.

## Health workers

Further interest came from health workers who preferred to stay close to work rather than go home every day and risk exposing their loved ones should they contract the virus, as well as companies wanting to isolate and protect key staff. The appeal was safe, clean serviced spaces with good internet connection where guests could continue working, while limiting their exposure to Covid-19.

What seemed like a plan that could carry the group through the current crisis came crashing down when Ramaphosa announced the nationwide lockdown. Only essential services were allowed to carry on trading and regulations changed daily.

The group decided to go one step further and offer its facilities to guests who had tested positive for Covid-19 but were asymptomatic. The Department of Health once again approved the plan and the group was allowed to keep its doors open. It further entered into a partnership with Discovery. "Discovery's projections show that Covid-19 is going to hit very hard in May. The number of patients will overwhelm the hospitals," says Wachsberger.

The 124-room Capital Empire Hotel in Sandton is available for guests who have tested positive for Covid-19 but don't show any symptoms and therefore don't belong in hospital, but cannot or prefer not to isolate themselves at home and risk spreading the virus among their loved ones. All of this comes at a 70% discount, aimed at retaining jobs only.

Discovery developed the hospital-grade protocols for these quarantine facilities, provides nursing services on site, and covers R400 of the nightly fee for its members. Should a guest develop symptoms, they will be provided with transport to a hospital.

Wachsberger hopes the protocols developed for Capital's properties will assist the whole industry to contribute to the management of the Covid-19 crisis in South Africa while retaining jobs in the hospitality industry. "We are writing the recipe and hope the whole industry will follow it," he says. "There are many risks and we are trying to show the industry that it can be done."

## Chinese construction right back with demand at last year's levels

## BEIJING

**I**NFRACSTRUCTURE construction has accelerated across China in the past month as the government invests to counteract the economic effects of the coronavirus lockdown.

Data from the China Construction Machinery Association shows that excavator sales, considered a bellwether for construction activity, reported that almost 49,500 machines were sold in March, a 12% year-on-year increase.

Meanwhile, the output of cement and steel rose, according to data from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, with the former reaching 94% of its pre-coronavirus level on 6 April and the latter showing a rise of 127,000 tonnes sold in the beginning of March to 238,000 tonnes in April.

"Demand in the construction industry has basically recovered to last year's level driven by new and resumed projects," said Xu Xiangchun, an analyst with mysteel.com, told China Daily.

The news outlet added that one of the main drivers of the industry's resurgence has been local government funding. The issuance of local government bonds, used mainly to fund infrastructure schemes, is set for double-digit growth this year, with the total value issued in March hitting \$55bn, bringing the total for the first quarter to about \$220bn.

Outside China, the country faces a fall in exports as its trading partners suffer the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and international construction projects face delays. The latest to be announced is Chongone airport, to be built in Gaza province in southern Mozambique, by China Aviation International Construction and Investment. This is now expected to be completed six months later than planned, as Chinese workers have been prevented from returning to the country after they went home for the Lunar New Year celebrations.



## WORLD

## Why are some recovered patients in South Korea testing positive again?

SEOUL

SOUTH Korean health officials are investigating several possible explanations for a small but growing number of recovered coronavirus patients who later test positive for the virus again.

Among the main possibilities are re-infection, a relapse, or inconsistent tests, experts say.

South Korea had reported 141 such cases as of yesterday, according to the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC).

## RE-INFECTION OR RELAPSE?

Although re-infection would be the most concerning scenario because of its implications for developing immunity population, both the KCDC and many experts say this is unlikely.

Instead, the KCDC says it is leaning toward some kind of relapse or "re-

activation" in the virus.

A relapse could mean that parts of the virus go into some kind of dormant state for a time, or that some patients may have certain conditions or weak immunity that makes them susceptible to the virus reviving in their system, experts said.

A recent study by doctors in China and the United States suggested the new coronavirus can damage T lymphocytes, also known as T cells, which play a central role the body's immune system and ability to battle infections.

Kim Jeong-ki, a virologist at the Korea University College of Pharmacy, compared a relapse after treatment to a spring that snaps back after being pressed down.

"When you press down a spring it becomes smaller, then when you take your hands off, the spring pops up," he said.



Medical staff members in protective gears stack plastic buckets containing medical waste at Dongsan Medical Center in Daegu, South Korea, on Tuesday. (AP)

Even if the patients are found to have relapsed rather than to have been re-infected, it could signal new challenges for containing the spread of the virus.

"South Korean health authorities still haven't found cases where the 'reactivated' patients spread the virus to third parties, but if such infectiousness is proven, that would be a huge problem," said Seol Dai-wu, an expert in vaccine development and a professor at Chung-Ang University.

## LIMITS OF TESTING

Patients in South Korea are considered clear of the virus when they have tested negative twice in a 48-hour period.

While the RT-PCR tests used in South Korea are considered generally accurate, experts said that

there are ways they could return false or inconsistent results for a small number of cases.

"RT-PCR tests boast an accuracy of 95 percent. This means that there still can be 2-5 percent of those cases that are detected false negative or false positive cases," Kim said.

Remnants of the virus could remain at levels too low to be detected by a given test, Seol said.

On the other hand, the tests may also be so sensitive that they are picking up small, potentially harmless levels of the virus, leading to new positive results even though the person has recovered, Kwon Jun-wook, deputy director of KCDC said at a briefing on Tuesday.

The tests could also be compromised if the necessary samples are not collected properly, said Eom Joong-sik, professor of infectious diseases at Gachon University Gil Medical Centre.

## 'Too early' to lift UK lockdown but outbreak peaking - minister

LONDON

THE United Kingdom's novel coronavirus outbreak is starting to peak but it is too early to lift the lockdown because the virus would "run rampant" if the government eased social distancing measures, Health Minister Matt Hancock (pictured) said yesterday.

"We think it is too early to make a change," Hancock said. "While we've seen a flattening of the number of cases, and thankfully a flattening of the number of deaths, that hasn't started to come down yet."

The UK's hospital death toll from COVID-19 rose by 761 to 12,868 as of 1600 on April 14, the health ministry said, though

broader statistics suggest the total toll is much larger. The number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Britain reached 98,476.

The United Kingdom has the fifth highest official death toll from COVID-19 in the world, after the United States, Italy, Spain and France.

A 106-year-old lady, Connie Titchen, is believed to be Britain's oldest patient to have recovered from the virus, according to the Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's top medical adviser, Chris Whitty, said on Wednesday that data on the extent and impact of the outbreak was encouraging but that it was too soon to focus the next phase of the government's



response.

The British government is widely expected to announce on Thursday that it will extend the most far-reaching restrictions on daily life in Britain's peacetime history.

Neil Ferguson, a professor of mathematical biology at Imperial College London who advises the

government, said Thursday Britain would probably have to maintain some level of social distancing until a vaccine is available.

Meanwhile, Northern Ireland, which has 1,967 confirmed cases and 134 deaths, will keep coronavirus restrictions in place for another three weeks, First Minister Arlene Foster said on Wednesday.

## Polio vaccine

The World Health Organization (WHO) does not recommend oral poliovirus vaccine (OPV) for preventing COVID-19, according to its daily situation report released Wednesday.

The WHO said that there was no evidence that OPV, primarily used against polio, protects people against COVID-19, the disease caused by a novel coronavirus.

A clinical trial addressing the effectiveness of the vaccine has been planned in the United States, and the WHO will evaluate the evidence when it is available.

"There are experimental signals from various studies over the years that OPV has non-specific effects on the immune system," the WHO said.

According to the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University, there are more than 2.06 million confirmed cases globally and more than 136,000 deaths.

Globally, the United States has the highest COVID-19 death toll with more than 30,000 fatalities. Spain has reported 18,812 deaths and Italy 21,645, according to the data. **Agencies**

## Trump threatens to force both chambers of Congress to adjourn

WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump threatened on Wednesday to use his executive power to force both chambers of the nation's Congress to adjourn if the Senate did not confirm his nominees for vacancies across the administration.

"The Senate should either fulfill its duty and vote on my nominees or it should formally adjourn so I can make recess appointments," Trump said during a press briefing at the White House. "We have a tremendous number of people that have to come into government. And now more so than ever before because of the virus and the problem."

Lawmakers in both chambers are not expected to return to the Capitol until early May due to the

coronavirus outbreak but they have been conducting pro forma sessions to make it impossible for Trump to make recess appointments.

According to the US Constitution, the president is allowed to make nominations for appointed positions like cabinet officers, but the Senate controls the process, including the rules that allow a nomination vote to get to the full Senate floor.

If the Senate isn't officially in session, the president does have the power to appoint officers directly using his recess appointments powers. The US Constitution also grants the president the power to adjourn both chambers of Congress "to such time as he shall think proper."

"No president has ever exercised



the authority, noted the National Constitution Center.

"Perhaps it's never been done before, nobody's even sure if it has,"

Trump said on Wednesday. "But we're going to do it. We need these people here. We need people for this crisis, and we don't want to play any more political games."

Jonathan Turley, a constitutional law professor at George Washington University, warned Trump against taking the step.

"The President just said that he may unilaterally adjourn Congress. ... This power has never been used and should not be used now," he tweeted on Wednesday.

Out of 749 "key positions" that require Senate confirmation, 150 do not have nominees, while 15 are awaiting nomination, according to a tracker provided by The Washington Post and Partnership for Public Service.

Xinhua

## S.Korea's ruling party wins landslide victory in parliamentary polls amid COVID-19 outbreak

SEOUL

SOUTH Korean President Moon Jae-in's ruling Democratic Party has won a landslide victory in parliamentary elections held amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The governing Democratic Party secured 163 directly-contested constituency seats, and its sister Platform Party won 17 proportional representation (PR) slots, the National Election Commission said yesterday.

It marked the first time since the constitution was amended in 1987 to end the past military dictatorship and adopt democratic elections that a single political party won three-fifths of the total seats in parliamentary elections.

The quadrennial polls for the 300 members of the National Assembly were held at 14,330 voting stations nationwide on Wednesday to let voters cast ballots for 253 constituency seats and 47 PR slots.

The main conservative opposition United Future Party and its satellite party garnered 84 constituency seats and 19 PR seats each.

The minor progressive Justice Party held one constituency seat and five PR slots, while the center-left Open Democratic Party and the centrist People's Party gained three respective PR seats.

Five independent candidates obtained the remaining constituency seats in the parliamentary elections, widely seen as a mid-term referendum on the Moon government.

Democratic Party Chairman Lee Hae-chan told a party meeting that he felt a "heavy responsibility" for the election results before being glad with the victory, urging the lawmakers-elect to keep humble and feel heavily responsible for people's livelihood and state affairs.

He expressed deep gratitude for people's support, vowing to prevail over the COVID-19 outbreak and preemptively respond to the economic fallout from the virus spread.

Former Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon of the Democratic Party won a parliamentary seat against Hwang Kyo-ahn, chief of the United Future Party, in the symbolic Jongno district in central Seoul. Their race drew public attention as they were seen as powerful presidential hopefuls in the liberal and conservative blocs each. Hwang stepped down from his chairmanship for the opposition party's defeat in the polls.

The election was held at a time of the COVID-19 outbreak across the world that delayed elections in other countries.

Preparations were made to protect voters from possible infection while casting ballots, by disinfecting voting stations and marking the standing line at intervals of at least one meter.

Voters were allowed to enter the voting booths only after wearing masks, checking body temperature, rubbing their hands with sanitizer and putting on disposable plastic gloves. Of the 43.99 million voting-age South Koreans, 29.12 million went to the polls for the general elections. The turnout of 66.2 percent was the highest in 28 years since 1992.

Agencies

## Snowden applies for extending Russian residence permit, lawyer says

MOSCOW

FORMER National Security Agency (NSA) contractor Edward Snowden has applied for extending Russian residence permit for another three years, his lawyer Anatoly Kucherena told TASS yesterday.

"Yes, recently we submitted documents for extending the residence permit for three more years. We hope the decision will be positive," the lawyer said, noting that the issue of obtaining Russian citizenship was not discussed at the moment.

In 2013, Snowden (pictured) leaked information on the methods of electronic surveillance by US intelligence services, including illegally wiretapping foreign leaders. Fleeing from prosecution, Snowden sent requests for asylum to some countries, including Russia.

On August 1, 2014, he received a Russian residence permit valid for three years, which was later extended for another three years.

In February, Kucherena announced that Snowden's residence permit in Russia would expire in April and the paperwork was underway to extend it.

In the United States, Snowden is charged with two counts of violating the Espionage Act. He may face up to ten years in prison on each of the counts. The US authorities have repeatedly stated that they consider Snowden a traitor who caused grave damage to national security.

Agencies



## China keeps engine roaring to ensure global medical supplies amid pandemic

AS demand for life-saving medical supplies continues to skyrocket globally, China, as a major world supplier, is sparing no efforts to ensure steady supplies, with factories running 24 hours a day to make everything from masks to test kits and ventilators, airlines and shipping firms scrambling to expand transport channels and officials stepping up efforts to help boost the supply chain.

However, even as China ramps up efforts to increase medical supplies, major logistical hurdles remain due to restrictions put in place by many countries to combat the global coronavirus pandemic. There are also

concerns over the quality of some of the equipment, in light of recent media reports about some malfunctioning masks and test kits - attracting calls for intensified quality-control efforts both in China and abroad.

## Surge in supplies

Beijing Aeonmed Co, which makes ventilators that help COVID-19 patients breathe, has kept its machines running 24 hours a day and has converted other production lines to focus on ventilators to meet surging export orders.

"There are too many overseas orders," Li Kai, an executive at the company told the Global

Times on Sunday, noting that the company has received "tens of thousands" of overseas orders from about 40 countries and regions, including Italy, the UK, Mongolia and Ukraine.

Aeonmed is not alone. Since February, there are 12,000 new companies in China that have started to produce masks and ventilators, bringing the total to 53,000, with over 17,420 of them being certified exporters, according to media reports. Some companies, such as Beijing Sirumedical Medical Device, said that all of its output of 80 to 100 per week are for the overseas market, Cui Gang, clinical director of the company, told the Global

Times.

As the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases surges across the world, global demand for ventilators, has increased as much as 10 times, according to some estimates. Facing dire shortages of the devices, public health workers in countries from Italy to the US have been or will reportedly be forced to decide which patients to save and which ones not to.

Apart from ventilators, global demand for personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks, gloves, gowns and other medical devices such as test kits and infrared thermometers has also been surging. Maria Van Kerk-

hoffe, an official with the World Health Organization, warned on Wednesday that the world was facing a "significant shortage" of PPE and other devices, though she did not offer a specific amount.

While the Chinese government and other organizations continue to donate PPE to dozens of countries around the world, the number of export orders has also been rising significantly.

More than 17 countries such as the UK and Italy have signed purchase contracts with Chinese firms, Geng Shuang, a spokesperson for the Chinese Foreign Ministry, said last week.

Over the weekend, France ordered one billion masks with the vast majority from China and will dispatch 56 cargo flights to transport them.

"The overseas demand for masks is far more than supply," Cao Jun, General Manager at the Zhejiang-based Lanhine Corp, told the Global Times on Sunday, noting that half of the company's 1.2 million daily mask output will go to overseas markets, including Germany and the US.

Shenzhen-based BGI Genomics said that it has exported 7 million test kits to 70 countries and regions and has increased its daily output to 600,000, the company said in a statement to

the Global Times.

Overall, China has significantly increased the output of PPE and other medical devices and the numbers could further grow, according to industry insiders. Between February 1 and March 15, 28,000 companies have expanded their operations to production of masks, gowns and other medical equipment, according to business data provider Tianyanqha. For example, daily output of masks has increased by 16 folds to around 116 million a day and the number could further jump, according to media reports.

Global Times



# New records of Russia in the global arms market

MOSCOW

RUSSIA confidently ranks second in the world in production and export of weapons. Despite sanctions, Russia's military-technical cooperation portfolio has reached \$ 55 billion, which is the highest in last ten years.

More than 700 enterprises incorporated in Rostec holdings have made a significant contribution in achieving these record-breaking indicators for our country.

As it appears from the new report of Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the United States, Russia and France hold the lead in arms exports in the world. According to SIPRI, over the past five years, Russia has retained the second place among the largest arms dealers.

SIPRI indicators somewhat differ from the Russian data in percentage terms.

According to experts' opinion, SIPRI methodology raises questions, main of which is the use of relative rather than absolute numbers. Ranking countries

is not entirely correct without an accurate data on the volume of arms supplies.

But what does not cause questions to anyone - Russia confidently ranks second in the world in the arms export market, and so far only the United States is the only serious competitor of our country.

According to SIPRI, from 2014 to 2018, the US share in global arms export market amounted to 36percent, while Russia had 21percent. France was in third place by a significant margin of its share close to 7percent.

Let us recall that in December of 2018, Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Borisov, who oversees the Russian defense industry, in an interview with RBC, stated that Russia is in second place in arms exports, with a 22percent share of the world market.

According to Borisov, Russia has been cooperating with almost 100 countries of the world, and the portfolio of orders for military-technical cooperation (MTC) over the past years has been at a level of no less than 45



billion US dollars, and by the end of 2018 it amounted to 55 billion US dollars.

Russian arms sales are showing sustainable growth. According to Rosoboronexport, weapons and military equipment (WME) worth 12.7 billion US dollars were supplied in 2015, exports amounted to about 13 billion

US dollars in 2016, and to 13.4 billion dollars in 2017, shipments reached a record 13.7 billion US dollars in 2018. It also needs to be remembered that the international military-technical cooperation market is extremely conservative and is growing by about 1-2 percent per year.

Despite sanctions, Rosoboronex-

port, which accounts for about 85 percent of export of military products of Russian origin, concluded over 1100 contracts totaling more than 20 billion US dollars in 2018. It should be noted that this amount exceeds the similar indicator of 2017 by almost a quarter.

Let us remind that Rosoboronexport, the only Russian state intermediary for the export and import of the entire range of products, technologies, military and dual-use services - is part of Rostec State Corporation since 2007. Today, only some of defense enterprises are allowed to export components and spare parts only for weapons supplied through Rosoboronexport. In this regard, Russian exports of weapons and military equipment are divided into total exports, exports through Rosoboronexport, and exports of independent parts suppliers.

Rosoboronexport has its representative offices in more than 50 countries of the world - China, India, Thailand, Vietnam, Iran, Egypt, Argentina and others.

Agencies



## Warren says she would accept an offer to be Biden's running mate

WASHINGTON

US Senator Elizabeth Warren said on Wednesday that she would accept an offer to be Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden's running mate if the position were offered.

"Yes," said Warren when she was asked on MSNBC how she would respond if Biden asked her to serve as his vice president.

Biden, who was Barack Obama's vice-president, has vowed to pick a woman to be his running mate and said he would name a committee to help him vet a shortlist of names soon.

Warren endorsed Biden earlier on Wednesday.

She ended her own bid for the White House last month and became known for championing detailed and sweeping liberal reforms. Biden has been working to win the support of more liberal parts of the party ahead of his battle against President Donald Trump in the Nov 3 election.

A spokesman for the Biden campaign declined to comment on Warren's remarks.

Several people likely to be in contention for the running mate role have expressed their openness to being considered.

"I would be an excellent running mate," former Georgia gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams said in an interview published by Elle on Wednesday. Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer told NBC News on Wednesday that she was "fortunate" to be considered for the position.

Agencies

# US confronts dilemma of reopening economy amid rising Covid-19 caseload

WASHINGTON

CONFIRMED COVID-19 cases in the United States have soared to more than 638,000 with over 30,000 fatalities as of Wednesday evening, according to Johns Hopkins University tally, as debates to reopen the country's economy are getting intense.

As one of the country's COVID-19 hot spots, New York City alone reported 214,698 cases and 14,064 deaths, followed by New Jersey with 71,030 cases and 3,156 deaths. Other states with more than 20,000 cases included Massachusetts, Michigan, Pennsylvania, California, Illinois, Florida and Louisiana, according to the tally updated at 23:10 p.m. on Wednesday.

## FACTORS BEHIND SOARING INFECTIONS

Experts have listed three reasons why the United States has the most COVID-19 infections worldwide.

First is the great amount of testing nationwide. More than 3 million tests have been completed in three weeks in

the United States, Dr. Deborah Birx, White House COVID-19 task force director, told a daily press briefing earlier this week. Robert Schooley, a professor of medicine with the Division of Infectious Diseases and Global Public Health at the University of California, San Diego, told Xinhua that the number of cases reported are heavily influenced by how much testing is done in a given location.

The staggering infection number in the United States is related to the sensitivity of its advanced testing methods, and the diagnostic criteria for COVID-19 patients, according to Zhang Zuofeng, a professor of epidemiology and associate dean for research with the School of Public Health at the University of California, Los Angeles. Insufficient sheltering in place and starting it too late also resulted in the high infection and death number in the country, Stanley Perlman, a professor of microbiology and immunology at the University of Iowa, told Xinhua. U.S. President Donald Trump announced

late March that the national social distancing guidelines aimed at slowing the spread of COVID-19 will be extended to April 30. He had originally planned to reopen the country for business by Easter which fell on April 12.

## STRICTER MEASURES

Though the infections continue to rise, new case numbers have recently been growing "steadily, rather than exponentially" especially in the hot spots like New York, because of the actions taken by federal and state governments including businesses lockdowns and social distancing, experts have said.

Americans staying home have slowed the spread of the coronavirus in the past week, especially in certain states, Deborah Birx, the White House coronavirus response coordinator, told a briefing Wednesday.

Birx said the number of new cases have declined over the past five to six days. In nine states, there have been fewer than 1,000 cases and less than 30 new cases a day in each state, she said.

The states of California, Oregon and Washington "never really had a peak because of the (social distancing) their populations did," she said.

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo said his state is "flattening the curve" last Wednesday, pointing out that new hospitalizations are at "the lowest number we've had since this nightmare started." Imposing a stricter measure to control the virus spread, Cuomo said Wednesday that all New Yorkers must wear face coverings when social distancing is not possible, including on public transport, in stores and on crowded sidewalks. The order will take effect on Friday. Also on Wednesday, the state of Maryland announced that it would require people to wear masks in public. "The wearing of masks is something we may have to become more accustomed to in order to safely reopen our state," said Maryland Governor Larry Hogan when announcing the order.

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti said Wednesday that

large gatherings like sporting events and concerts are unlikely to occur until 2021 due to the pandemic, which has dealt a major blow to one of the world's major sports and entertainment capitals. California Governor Gavin Newsom said Tuesday that the chances of social gatherings occurring in the near future are "negligible at best until we get to herd immunity and get to a vaccine."

## DEBATES OVER REOPENING ECONOMY

Given that over 90 percent of the U.S. population is currently under a stay-at-home order, worries about the economy are compelling the country to put Americans' life back to normal at an appropriate pace and scale.

Economic activity "contracted sharply and abruptly" across all regions in the United States as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Federal Reserve said Wednesday. All districts reported "highly uncertain outlooks" among business contacts, with most expecting conditions to

"worsen in the next several months," the Fed said in its latest survey on economic conditions, known as the Beige Book, based on information collected from its 12 regional reserve banks before April 6. The survey came after the Commerce Department reported Wednesday that U.S. retail sales plunged in March by the most on record as the pandemic is starting to take a big toll on the U.S. economy.

The U.S. economy is expected to contract by 5.9 percent this year, according to the World Economic Outlook (WEO) report released by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Tuesday. Trump has leaned into his desire to reopen the nation's economy by May 1, many of the governors and mayors who hold the power to enforce closures seem to disagree. Citing promising developments in the battle against coronavirus, Trump said at Wednesday's briefing at the White House that new federal guidelines meant to begin the process of reopening the country will be unveiled on Thursday.

Xinhua

# Iran, Pakistan, Mexico assured of China's support in virus fight

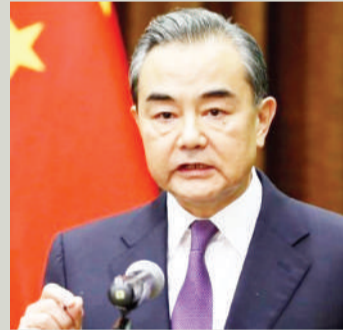
BEIJING

CHINESE State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi pledged anti-epidemic cooperation in separate phone calls Wednesday with his Iranian, Pakistani and Mexican counterparts.

Speaking with his Iranian counterpart, Mohammad Javad Zarif, Wang said that as comprehensive strategic partners with mutual understanding and support, China and Iran have helped each other through thick and thin in the fight against COVID-19 and have jointly written a chapter of cooperation.

China stands ready to enhance anti-epidemic cooperation with Iran and will continue to provide as much assistance as its capacity allows to the country, Wang said.

Bilateral cooperation will be deepened and the China-Iran comprehensive strategic partnership will grow deeper in the fight against the pandemic, Wang said. For his part, Zarif said since the onset of the outbreak, China has selflessly helped Iran, for which



the Iranian people are deeply grateful.

## All possible support

In a separate phone conversation with Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Wang said that China will continue to provide all possible support to Pakistan in accordance with its needs to help it overcome the COVID-19 epidemic at an early date.

At present, the Chinese people are concerned about the development of the COVID-19 outbreak in Pakistan. All sectors of the Chinese society have acted spontaneously to make donations and offer as much help as they can to

the brotherly and sisterly people in Pakistan, he said.

The Chinese government has provided multiple batches of material assistance, dispatched medical experts to Pakistan, and convened video conferences to share China's experience in the prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19, Wang said.

Qureshi expressed his appreciation for the valuable support China has offered to Pakistan, which he said has played an important role in the country's fight against the virus.

The Pakistani side is willing to continue to cooperate closely with China and constantly deepen their all-weather strategic partnership of cooperation during the fight against the pandemic, Qureshi said.

## Strengthening bilateral ties

Speaking to his Mexican counterpart, Marcelo Ebrard, Wang said that China and Mexico are set to strengthen bilateral ties in their joint battle against COVID-19.

Wang noted that Chinese President Xi Jinping and Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador had reached an important consensus in a recent telephone conversation on deepening cooperation against COVID-19.

Wang said that China understands Mexico's urgent needs and is willing to offer support to Mexico within its capacity, including helping it purchase urgently needed supplies from China, exchanging experience with Mexican medical experts, setting up express channels to facilitate cargo charter flights, and safeguarding the China-Mexico air bridge, he added.

For his part, Ebrard thanked China for its assistance to Mexico in its anti-epidemic fight and said he hoped that China could continue to support Mexico in the purchase and transportation of supplies, equipment and medicines, as the virus continues to spread in the country.

Xinhua

# Virus: EU presents roadmap for lifting containment measures

BRUSSELS

THE European Union (EU) on Wednesday put forward a roadmap for member states to phase out containment measures for COVID-19.

The guideline was drawn up by European Commission, the bloc's executive branch, in cooperation with President of the European Council Charles Michel, in response to the request from member states.

"It is important to consider carefully the next steps in the fight against the coronavirus. Today the European Commission presented criteria to help Member States decide when and in what order confinement measures can be gradually lifted, in a coordinated way," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said on Twitter.

According to the guideline, the member states should move



cautiously as they return to normal life and base their actions on scientific advice.

"I want to make sure that this is not a signal that confinement measures can be lifted as of now, but it intends to provide a frame for Member States decisions,"

she said at a press conference. "The strength of Europe lies in its social and economic balance."

First of all, the roadmap suggests that the government decide the timing of relaxing confinement based on following criteria: the epidemiological criteria showing that the spread of the disease has significantly decreased and stabilised for a sustained period, sufficient health system capacity and appropriate monitoring capacity.

Second, the EU asks its member states to notify each other and the European Commission before they lift measures.

The third key point is that phasing out confinement requires accompanying measures including reporting and contact tracing, expanding testing capacity, and developing safe and effective treatments and medicines.

Xinhua

5G technology is changing the lifestyles of the Chinese and reshaping global consumption and production with faster network, better user experience and more convenient services.

The technology enabled medical experts from around the country to carry out teleconsultations and check patients' conditions when China was hit by COVID-19. It also powers online education and telecommuting platforms where students and employees study and work from home.

Zhang Shuihan is a fancier of digital products from Beijing who bought a Huawei 5G cell phone online earlier this month. "The future will be powered by 5G," she said, adding that "the

# 5G technology expands new space for consumption

earlier I buy it, the earlier I can enjoy it. Though the network covers not much now, I believe 5G smart phones will become the majority.

China had over 130,000 5G base stations as of the end of last year, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT). In January 2020, the country's cell phone shipments reached 20.813 million units, including 5.465 million 5G models.

The country's homemade chips for 5G smart phones were also commercialized, with remarkable progress achieved in 5G application.

Chinese telecom giant China Mobile has kicked off its second 5G procurement plan and the company has at least built 80,000 5G base stations and contracted 10 million registered users for 5G network.

Though impacted by COVID-19, the company still maintains its annual target this year - to expand the number of base stations across China to 300,000 and cover all prefecture-level cities and above with 5G network.

Liu Xiangdong, deputy director of the economic research department at the China Center for International Economic Exchanges, said 5G features low

latency and a stronger broadband connection compared with 4G, and its convenience is the major reason for consumers to replace their smartphones.

"With wider deployment of 5G base stations and improving infrastructure, most consumers will consider 5G smartphones if the 5G packages don't cost much more," Liu said, adding that this will push consumers to upgrade to 5G at a faster speed.

5G technology significantly improved the efficiency of online education and telecommuting as Chinese employees worked from home with telecommuting applications and students had

courses at home on livestreaming platforms to avoid cross-infection during the COVID-19 epidemic.

Telecommuting, video conferencing and remote education call for immersive experience, said Liu, explaining that augmented reality (AR) or virtual reality (VR) might be applied to such services, which requires strong stability and connection for network transmission, and 5G technology can offer more than what's needed.

The forefront technology also played a big role in teleconsultation, remote command and video conferencing during the

nationwide fight against the novel coronavirus epidemic.

At Leishenshan Hospital and Huoshenshan Hospital in Wuhan, 5G network is a standard configuration which guaranteed teleconsultations and remote monitoring for the hospitals. Doctors around the country also joined the treatment of Leishanshan Hospital through a 5G-powered collaboration platform for CT consultations.

According to the DICOM (digital imaging and communications in medicine) standard and clinical practices, a standard CT image contains 5,000 to 6,000 continuous captures and a con-

siderable amount of scanning parameters, so it is essential for making diagnosis. The size of such an image ranges from dozens to hundreds of megabytes, and it was almost impossible for traditional technologies to realize massive remote transmission.

Thanks to 5G network, doctors in Leishenshan Hospital sent various original medical images to their peers in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou through a telemedicine platform in a rapid manner, and received immediate diagnoses from the latter who were presented with clear CT images. It is the latest application of 5G technology in telemedicine.

People's Daily



The  
**Guardian**

# SPORT



Uluguru bikers wave to cycling fans after they had featured in a competition targeting to commemorate the late Prime Minister Edward Moringe Sokoine, which took place in Morogoro recently. PHOTO: MICHAEL SIKAPUNDWA

## When sports returns, a chance to move past greed

By TIM DAHLBERG

GOLFERS on the European Tour received news this week that didn't exactly paint a rosy picture of what things might look like when the coronavirus crisis subsides and play resumes.

There will almost surely be less money to play for, which by itself was bad enough. Euro Tour CEO Keith Pelley told players he expects reductions in purses because sponsorships and television money will be down.

But no espresso in the player's lounge? No free courtesy cars to get around?

Possibly no fans, either, but that increasingly looks like the reality for most sports, at least for the remainder of this year.

A different era in sports is coming, thanks to the ravages of the new coronavirus. And it's not only golfers who will be feeling the fallout for some time to come.

Around the world, sports officials are scrambling to figure out a future that is suddenly uncertain. And just what that future might be is now beginning to come into a little focus.

In golf it likely means fewer tournaments, fewer perks and, yes, less money. While the PGA Tour has yet to weigh in, Pelley made it clear what the sport is facing in the places it plays around the world.

"The reality is, the pandemic is going to have a profound impact on the tour financially, as well as many of our partners, both in sponsorship and broadcast areas," Pelley said.

There will be changes in other sports, too. Money that has fueled exorbitant profits – and exorbitant salaries – for most of the current century won't be as easy to find as businesses and entire industries try to recover from the economic shock of the coronavirus shutdown.

The old guarantees are simply not there anymore. The financial model for sports may not be broken, but it's certainly going to suffer from a million cracks.

That's a big reason why the NFL folded its tent rather than try to resume what had been a promising first season. It's the same reason colleges around the country are beginning to make moves as they try to figure out what football and basketball will look like when sports resume.

Already, the University of Cincinnati has slashed soccer, a sport on campus for nearly a half century. Salaries at Iowa State have been trimmed, and

Louisville basketball coach Chris Mack had \$400,000 lopped off his \$4 million annual pay.

Meanwhile, Major League Baseball is cutting the salary of senior staff by an average of 35% for this year as it becomes increasingly clear any season that might be played – if it is played – will be shorter than anyone wants. MLB had already made a deal with the players' union to advance \$170 million to players in salary for the first 60 days of the season in exchange for players giving up the remainder of their roughly \$4 billion in salary if no games are played.

Revenues are going to be down across the board in all sports. There's no way around it because even if games resume, fans will be slow to return and adjustments will have to be made to lure them back.

That might not be such a bad thing for fans who have to pay \$50 to park and \$16 for a decent beer after already digging deep to buy tickets for the family. That's especially true now, with millions of fans out of work and others living paycheck to paycheck, with no money in the budget to go to a ballgame when they resume.

It will be a bad thing for players, who might be shocked to find out that in the real world, salaries can go down just as they once used to always go up.

It's already an issue in England, where players in the Premier League are digging their cleats in and refusing to accept pay cuts. That drew a response from a Conservative Party lawmaker who contrasted player pay to that of health care workers and said they needed to have their salaries cut as part of sacrifices being made across the nation.

There's no easy answer, and no magic wand to return to the days of not so long ago. There hasn't been since we first heard whispers of a virus in China that was spreading so fast it baffled health officials.

The world is being reset, and sports will be reset, too. The bubble of ever-escalating profits, salaries and costs has been punctured, and it's hard to imagine it will re-inflate quickly.

Everyone wants sports back, that's a given. But when they do come back, it can't be as if nothing ever really happened to force them to go away.

The price tag of sports that comes with sports will be in need of a heavy discount.

AP



Keith Pelley

## Yanga, Simba should tread carefully on Chama saga - Tiborohaa

Correspondent Adam Fungamwango

FORMER Yanga Secretary General, Jonas Tiboroha has disclosed the team and rivals, Simba, should tread carefully on an allegation by the latter on player tapping committed by the former.

Simba recently lodged complaints to Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) saying Yanga vice chairman, Fredrick Mwakalebela, confirmed to domestic media he had communicated with the former's midfielder Clatus Chama in a bid to have the Zambian professional sign for Yanga after the completion of his contract with Simba.

Mwakalebela is alleged to, in the process, have breached players' registration regulations given Chama is still under contract with Simba.

Tiboroha noted the two clubs should be reasonable when it comes to bringing the matter to an end.

He called on the two teams to meet to settle the issue given it stands to divert soccer stakeholders' attention from important issues should it be put before TFF.

He insisted the stakeholders will spend more time commenting on the matter and ignore issues which will help the country achieve success in the sport. He issued the statement after Mwakalebela's request for forgiveness for his comments.

The Yanga official's statement prompted Simba leaders to write complaints' letter to TFF, claiming



Simba midfielder, Clatus Chama

Yanga have breached registration regulations because Chama is still under contract with Simba up to 2021.

"It is true Mwakalebela erred in contacting Chama, approaching a player who is under contract with a different club amounts to breach of regulations. If Simba opt to table the issue before TFF both Mwakalebela and Yanga will be dealt with," he noted.

He added the two teams should not present the matter to the domestic soccer governing body given the two sides command great following and they are traditional rivals.

He disclosed they should, in this case, end the issue amicably, given Mwakalebela has already pleaded for forgiveness.

Tiboroha nevertheless called on domestic soccer sides' officials to operate professionally, given they are likely to bring themselves into disrepute, should they not stick to professionalism.

"An official should always be careful when it comes to presenting statement, given he or she is not a supporter, an official's comments reflects his or her club's stance," e noted. Simba had, as of Wednesday, tabled complaints to TFF on the issue.

A statement presented by TFF disclosed the federation has referred the matter to the federation's Legal, Ethics and Players Status Committee, given the committee has mandate to work on the issue.

## Women's sports likely to bear brunt of coronavirus fallout



In this Aug. 29, 2019, file photo, fans hold up a sign for equal pay during the second half of an international friendly soccer match between the United States and Portugal in Philadelphia. The United States won 4-0. Last summer's Women's World Cup in France, as well as this summer's Olympics in Tokyo, and the rising emphasis on gender equity has put the spotlight on women's sports. But the coronavirus pandemic threatens to derail those gains globally. (AP Photo)

By ANNE M. PETERSON

LINKED to the rising call for gender equity worldwide, women's sports were enjoying unprecedented attention and support before the coronavirus pandemic.

The World Cup in France put a spotlight on women's soccer, culminating with the United States lifting the trophy to chants of "Equal Pay!" – a nod to the team's gender discrimination lawsuit against U.S. Soccer – and the sport remained in the public eye to open the year. The professional National Women's Soccer League, home to many of the U.S. national team's players, was expecting to open its eighth season with a new television contract.

Women's pro softball was looking toward the sport's return to the Olympics for the first time since 2008. Professional volleyball, which enjoys popularity in Europe, Russia and Brazil, similarly draws peak interest in an Olympic year.

Any momentum these leagues, and women's sports in general, had worldwide has seemingly been halted by the pandemic. Now the question is whether women will lose the gains they had made when life returns to

normal.

"If the seas get choppy and rough and you're out there in a yacht, you can go downstairs and live it up and ride it out. You can eat good, drink good and all that. Men's sports are the ones with the yacht," said Cheri Kempf, commissioner of the National Pro Fastpitch softball league. "But if you're out there in a canoe, and seas get choppy, you're in big trouble. And that's women's sports. You know, we're riding around out there in a canoe."

Among the signs women's sports could suffer more came in Colombia when Independiente Santa Fe suspended all player contracts for its women's soccer team recently but said its men's team would only see pay cuts.

The impact of COVID-19 and the resulting hit to the economy could resemble the 2008 recession. The Houston Comets of the WNBA could not find a buyer and the league contracted back then. Whirlpool, meanwhile, pulled out of its planned sponsorship of Women's Professional Soccer, which had the unfortunate timing of launching in 2009 and lasted just three seasons.

The WNBA is in better shape today than many women's sports because of

its affiliation with the NBA. The league has put off the start of the season, set for May 15, but Commissioner Cathy Engelbert recently suggested it might be able to return sooner rather than later.

"We might be able to tip this season off before some other leagues since we only have 12 teams and 144 players," she told The Associated Press.

But there are concerns among those who aren't similarly positioned. Volleyball player Kelsey Robinson, who is on the U.S. team that was bound for the Tokyo Olympics this summer before the games were postponed, can usually make a living playing overseas, like many national team players. She was just heading into the playoffs with her club in Turkey, which has a thriving professional volleyball league, when play was suspended. Now she worries about her opportunities in a post-pandemic world.

"It's hard to say what will happen in Turkey or China, where there are pretty strong economies for sport. But for sure, Italy I know will have to decrease salaries, maybe not at the top team, but I'm sure it'll affect lower teams and clubs," Robinson said. "We're not finishing the season right now or playing, so that's a hard

financial burden for our club because a lot of the salaries for the coming season depends on how we finish in the playoffs."

NWSL Players Association executive director Yael Averbuch West said current fears about losses are legitimate.

"I think that everybody is afraid of that. And especially right now, looking at women's soccer and coming off of what we feel is a huge positive momentum after the World Cup, and the NWSL doing really well and continuing to grow, it's obviously a concern. This is tough for everyone, including the ownership groups, the fans, the players, the league office," Averbuch West said.

Athletes in individual sports could be hit hardest. Tennis, golf and track athletes are largely dependent on competing to earn a paycheck, and that's currently impossible. The athletes face uncertainties going forward: When the events do return, will the sponsors remain? Will younger prospects fall away from those sports out of economic necessity?

The WTA said last week that its planned start date is now July 13. Wimbledon has been canceled for this year.

AP



## FIFA braced for challenges over player contract extensions

By ROB HARRIS

FIFA is braced for legal challenges over the recommendation that player contracts should be extended until the seasons halted by the coronavirus pandemic can be completed.

World football's governing body made the recommendation in a set of guidelines intended to address the complexities caused by the unprecedented shutdown of the sport, and help preserve the integrity and stability of domestic leagues.

Most major European leagues are still hoping to resume at some point, most likely without fans, pushing the domestic seasons well beyond their usual end point - possibly even into August. However, many player contracts are set to expire on June 30, with some expecting to join a new club in July.

"You can appreciate the complexity of trying to give some guidelines globally," Victor Montagliani, the FIFA vice president who leads the body's coronavirus task force, told The Associated Press. "We fully understand there could be individual circumstances in various legal jurisdictions that may arise to questions being asked or even some challenges."

"I guess it's no different than a system we already had that happens even before we had this COVID-19 issue where if there was any challenge, it would go through the proper football judicial bodies. ... We fully understand that that may happen again this time and we'll deal with that accordingly, whether it be at the national level, confederation level or even at the FIFA level."

Another complication is that sports lawyers do not view the guidelines from Zurich-based FIFA as binding for any player, club or league. And it's unclear what happens if clubs and leagues from different countries disagree on which rules should apply.

At Chelsea, for example, there is already a deal in place to sign winger Hakim Ziyech from Dutch club Ajax on July 1 while striker Olivier Giroud and winger Willian are out of contract on June 30. The Premier League season was scheduled to end in May but teams still have up to nine games to play once it resumes - which may not happen until July.

"Under Swiss law - as in most jurisdictions - it is impossible for a club, a players' association or a league to unilaterally extend an individual contract of employment that expires on a specific date," attorney Despina Mavromati, who founded SportLegis Lausanne, told the AP.

"All contracting parties must reach an agreement and amend the contract accordingly. Further, if there is a new contract starting immediately after the expiration of the old contract, then all three parties (former club, new club and the player) must agree on the extension of the old contract and the modification of the starting date of the new contract."

Mavromati represents both clubs and players in cases and arbitrates at tribunals across multiple sports. "Contractual extension cannot be regarded in the same way as, for example, the impossibility of a club to comply with the terms of the contract due to financial difficulties or other reasons," she said. "And, even if a case goes to FIFA and then to CAS, it will be extremely difficult - if not impossible - for a club to enforce a unilateral extension of a player's contract."

Belgium-based lawyer Sven Demeulemeester doesn't think FIFA's recommendations are legally enforceable because contracts fall under national law.

"At best, FIFA's guidelines may lead to subsequent individual negotiations or collective bargaining on a national level," Demeulemeester said, "but they have no legal value as such."

European leagues have been told by UEFA to try to complete seasons that were paused in March. The European governing body wants domestic champions and European qualification determined based on results on the field rather than any calculations to formulate finishing positions. But UEFA based that on competitions being able to play on into July and August - past the expiration of player contracts.

"We are all football fans and we all want it to come back tomorrow," Montagliani said. "But I think right now we're in the battle of our lives, literally as a human race and I think that is our priority."

AP

## Fernandes on Paul Pogba: Don't treat him like Messi

LONDON

MANCHESTER United midfielder Bruno Fernandes has defended teammate Paul Pogba and said his critics should not expect him to play like Lionel Messi or Cristiano Ronaldo.

Pogba has been criticised for his performances since his return to Old Trafford in 2017 despite helping the club win two major trophies in that time.

The France international was embroiled in a row with Liverpool legend Graeme Souness over his trophy haul but Fernandes has backed Pogba's ability.

"Paul is coming from a bad moment, because of the situation," he told the club website. "When he played also, the club and the team was not good, because the expectations are high for Paul, because Paul is a top player and Manchester United pay a lot for him, and expectations are a lot for him."

"It's normal when you are in that situation you don't play like a superstar, because everyone expects from Paul like they expect from Ronaldo at Juventus or Messi at Barcelona."

"Everyone expects this from Paul in Manchester, because they know he has the qualities for this. Also this is confidence in Paul. The team, we have a lot of confidence in Paul."

Since his move from Sporting CP in January, Fernandes has been unable to feature alongside Pogba who has been out of action since December after suffering metatarsal and ankle injuries.

United striker Ighalo said the club will become successful when both midfielders start playing together and Fernandes said he is

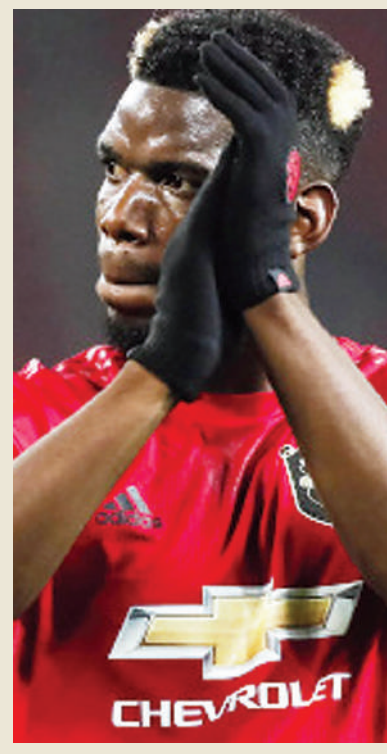
excited for Pogba to return to the team.

"[I'm excited] a lot," he added. "I think we have a lot of good players in the midfield. I know Paul from Juve, because I played against him in Italy. And believe me, it's really hard to play against Paul."

"Because I play in midfield, I mark him. We play in the same line, so it's really difficult to play against Paul, because he has power, he has technique."

"It's difficult to find a player like Paul: big, strong and technical. It's difficult to find a player like this, and he has a lot of qualities. I hope he comes [back] soon."

Pogba said he has been frustrated with injuries this season but is ready to make an even stronger comeback when football returns. (Agencies)



# Ronaldinho enjoys 'golden cell' in locked-down Paraguay capital

ASUNCION

WITH Paraguay's capital in lockdown, former Brazil soccer star Ronaldinho is spending his second week under house arrest in an exclusive hotel in Asuncion, where a ballroom has been set up to allow him to keep up his soccer skills, as he awaits trial for entering the country under a false passport.

The 40-year-old World Cup winner and his business-manager brother Roberto are occupying two \$350-a-night suites at the otherwise deserted Colonial-style Palmaroga hotel, just a couple of blocks from the government headquarters.

"Yesterday they brought him a regulation football. We set up a room - about 30 meters by 15 - for him to be able to practice his juggling skills," hotel manager Emilio Yegros told AFP.

"He seems like a good sort. He always has a smile, like his brother," said Yegros.

"His face has changed from his first day here. When he arrived he was tense and visibly stressed," the hotel manager said.

The former Barcelona star spends his days working out in the hotel gym, practicing his legendary juggling skills with the ball, and wandering the echoing halls of the 6,000 square-meter (64,000 square-foot) building, refurbished in 2019.

**- Lunch with 'Ronhi' -**

Ronaldinho and his brother are among 16 suspects in an extensive anti-corruption investigation. Arrested on March 6 for using falsified Paraguayan passports to enter the country from neighboring Brazil, they face up to five years in prison if convicted.

Being held in a police cell for the first 30 days of their detention gave Ronaldinho - his beard grown fuller in that time - and his brother a taste of Paraguayan prison conditions, before a court ordered them released into house arrest at the Palmaroga early this month.

**- Bail was set at \$1.6 million.**

The fact that the hotel is owned by the Spain-based Barcelona Group, which has construction projects in Paraguay, is "pure coincidence" and has nothing to do with the star's former club, said Yegros.

The former player is prevented from receiving visitors in the hotel under Paraguay's protocols against the coronavirus, which officially has 161 infections to date, with eight deaths.

**- 'Abusive and illegal' -**

Ronaldinho's Brazilian lawyer Sergio Queiroz says there are no legal grounds for his detention. "It's il-



A courtyard at the Asuncion hotel where Ronaldinho and his business-manager brother Roberto are being held under house arrest (AFP Photo)

legal, abusive," he said. "They did not know that the documents they had were illegal."

"Leave Ronaldinho alone," said former Argentine World Cup winner Jorge Valdano, now a coach in Spain.

"The only place Ronaldinho behaved like a troublemaker was on the pitch," he told a Madrid newspaper.

"One thing is being stupid, as his lawyer called him, and another thing is being a criminal."

But public prosecutor Alicia Saprizza is sure. "They knew," she told AFP.

What investigators are trying to determine is if the former star was being used as cover in the plot or whether he willingly lent himself to an alleged money

laundering and contraband operation to dispel possible suspicion.

"From the contents of his phone calls that have been examined there was a certain conversation with the brother Roberto in which the documents were discussed," before they arrived in Paraguay, Saprizza said.

Although prosecutors believe his brother Roberto bears more responsibility in the case, Saprizza says: "Ronaldinho could not be unaware. He cannot claim to have been acting in good faith."

Ronaldinho and his brother left for Asuncion on March 4 with their own Brazilian passports but showed the Paraguayan passports on arrival.

Mobbed on arrival by 2,000 kids wear-

ing T-shirts bearing his photo, he had traveled to Paraguay to open a casino owned by a Brazilian businessman and his agenda included attending an event organized by a children's charity.

Prosecutors are expected to limit the charges to using documents with "false content" and the pair will likely be released on bail when court activity resumes following the lockdown, judicial sources told AFP.

A key part of Brazil's 2002 World Cup winning side, Ronaldinho made club 529 appearances over his 17-year playing career, turning out for top European clubs, including Barcelona, AC Milan and Paris Saint-Germain.

AFP

## Brazil's 1970 World Cup squad were pioneers in physical preparation

By Tim Vickery, ESPN South America correspondent

EVEN in normal times, a fuss would have - rightly - been made of the 50th anniversary of Brazil's exhilarating 1970 World Cup win over Italy at Mexico City's Estadio Azteca.

The current circumstances, with no live football, have brought the celebration forward and ensured it of a bigger audience. FIFA have given permission and this week the Brazilian public are time travelling, enjoying the six consecutive victories of a magnificent campaign from half a century ago.

The debate around the matches can enrich the experience. All of the talk certainly should help put to bed one of the lazy views of Brazilian football - that it is a kind of carnival in boots, everyone concerned with expressing themselves and no one caring about defence, the team quite happy to concede six as long as they can score seven.

As a player in the triumphant sides of 1958 and 1962, Mario Zagallo - who took command as coach in March of 1970 - symbolized the quest to find a balance between attack and defence; he was a talented left winger who worked back in midfield. In 1958 Brazil had pioneered the back four. Twelve years later, under Zagallo's command, they were pioneers of the modern day 4-2-3-1.

But if Brazil had a tactical lead, they also were in front in terms of physical preparation. I once told Zagallo that as late as 1962, England went to the World Cup in Chile without so much as a doctor. He was so surprised he almost fell off his chair. He was well aware that, even in 1958, Brazil had a full back up team. There were doctors and a dentist, physical preparation specialists and even a sports psychologist. The latter proved premature, and had little to contribute. But the physical work was fundamental. At a time when many teams were happy to run a couple of laps round the field and then adjourn to the golf course, Brazil were attempting something more specialized.

In the post-mortem after their failure in the 1966 World Cup - Brazil were eliminated after losing two of their group games - one of the many errors identified was that the physical training man came from a background of martial arts rather than football. In 1970 they would not be so careless.

By modern standards, the team had a scarcely credible amount of time to prepare for the World Cup - more than three months. They used it well. The physical preparation specialist was Claudio Coutinho, an urbane and sophisticated figure who had extensive contacts in the United States. He got to know Kenneth Cooper - of the famous Cooper test, designed to gauge fitness in the U.S. military. And Coutinho also worked contacts with NASA who had conducted extensive research in their



Brazil overwhelmed Italy to win the World Cup in 1970 at Mexico City's Estadio Azteca. (Agencies)

human stress laboratory.

Brazil made good use of their work to prepare for a World Cup played in extreme conditions. Their first five matches took place in Guadalajara, in the fierce early afternoon sun of the Mexican summer. The final, in Mexico City, had the added complication of altitude. Brazil had prepared for it all - and it showed.

The team's left winger Rivelino once told me that he could not recall a single occasion in the tournament when he went over to the touchline to drink water. And Zagallo pointed out that "we

won most of our matches in the second half."

The numbers bear this out. Of the 19 goals Brazil scored in the course of the competition, 12 came after the interval. As their opponents ran out of gas, Brazil stepped on the pedal.

Czechoslovakia were seen off in the second half of the opener, as were England in the next game, Uruguay in the semifinal and, most notably, Italy in the final. The first half against the Italians was an even game. After the break it was one way traffic, with Brazil coasting to a

4-1 win.

Brazil were certainly aware of the importance of their physical preparation work. Claudio Coutinho was the national team coach at the 1978 World Cup in Argentina - and though that tournament did not go so well for him, he produced an outstanding team at Flamengo before drowning in a diving accident in 1981.

And his assistant back in 1970 was Carlos Alberto Parreira, national team coach who ended the long wait for the country's fourth world title at the 1994 World Cup.

**Gwiji** by David Chikoko





# SPORT

Ronaldinho enjoys 'golden cell' in locked-down Paraguay capital

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19



Cricket Australia's Chief Executive Officer Kevin Roberts.

## Firm launches Simulated Reality League

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

BETTING firm, M-bet, has launched Simulated Reality League (SRL) in African markets through leading Sportsbook provider SportRadar in Africa.

SportRadar is the world's leading provider for the gaming industry working with over 500 leading operators across the globe.

The league has added to the company's vast gaming portfolio in Africa.

The SRL is a new virtual sport that consists of pre-match and live betting options using simulated sports betting technology.

Based on Artificial Intelligence and machine learning capabilities, SRL provides a betting experience as close to real life as possible.

The company said the sport consists of the top Europe leagues from England, Germany, Italy, Spain and many other leagues from the continent.

The company added each event plays out for a full 90 minutes and a sports lover can bet on his or her preferred teams, view match statistics and league tables and even track his or her bets through the firm's live in-play tracker.

With SRL football fans are able to complete the current European football season as intended, with all games following their original schedule.

With the launch of the new SRL and virtual games across Tanzania, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia, customers are able to experience a unique gaming experience with low data usage.

The new games are available on both android app and web, providing a better player experience and multiple play options.

Daniel Fischer, M-Bet Group Chief Executive Officer, said: "With Simulated Reality League and other virtual games, M-bet is able to continue to deliver to customers unique gaming experiences across all markets."

"Customer are able to engage in pre-match and 90 minutes of live betting on their favourite leagues."

"SportRadar technology and insights are able to provide a real gaming experience with live in-play tracker."

M-bet Sportsbook is licensed to operate in Tanzania, Kenya, Zambia, DRC and Uganda (U-bet) giving access to mobile sports betting to customers via electronic payments.



SBC Tanzania official, Rashid Chenja (L), speaks at a press conference for bidding farewell to athletes Samson Lyimo and Gloria Makula who represented Tanzania in the 2018 Beirut Marathon which took place in Lebanon. Others are (L-R) Athletics Tanzania vice president, Hamad Ndee, and Lyimo.

## Dar company honours arts and sports icons

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

THE SBC Tanzania Company mid this week launched a campaign, dubbed 'Ishi Mpaka Max', which targets to honour individuals who use creativity to realize their dreams in all aspects of life be it sports, arts and others.

The launch, which took place in Dar es Salaam, was also in line with the launch of the company's new brand Pepsi Max.

The company's official Rashid Chenja said they are delighted to have come up with the new brand and promised that SBC will continue coming up with new brands which are good for all Tanzanians.

"We are happy and delighted that today, we are launching this new product, Pepsi Max is one of the best in the country and I'm sure people will like it," he said.

A popular Bongo Flava musician graced the campaign launch.

He called upon Tanzanians to value locally made products.

Pepsi Max is made by SBC Tanzania and the launch was done online as a way of preventing the spread of Coronavirus disease.

He also asked the youth in the country to use creativity to realize their dreams in life.

"I'm asking all Tanzanians to love locally made products, Pepsi Max is our product, let us all love it," he disclosed.

"It is through supporting local companies that they will continue creating jobs to our youths," he said.

## Flexibles by David Chikoko



## Cricket Australia staff stood down, pay cut by 80%

SYDNEY

AS its decision-makers scramble to plan for the potential impacts of coronavirus on next summer, the vast majority of Cricket Australia's staff will be stood down on drastically reduced pay until the June 30 end of the financial year.

Following on from decisions already announced by some of the state associations about pay cuts - with the South Australian Cricket Association forced to jettison 23 staff and contractors - CA staff will be asked to take an 80% pay cut or equivalent from April 27 until July.

CA is believed to be planning for a 50% reduction in revenue for next summer, which was slated to feature the T20 World Cup and a lucrative tour by India, and is also understood to still be seeking clarification on whether it qualifies for the federal government's JobKeeper wage subsidy scheme, which was flagged as being available to not for profit organisations.

At its most recent AGM last October, CA reported that it had \$26 million (US\$16 million approx.) in cash reserves plus another \$90 million (US\$57 million approx.) in investments.

Those investments are believed to have taken a serious hit due to the economic effects of coronavirus, reducing CA's ability to weather the current storm without making pay reductions for staff.

While an internal CA report from the governing body's chief medical officer John Orchard recently expressed cautious optimism about the game returning to cricket grounds in time for next summer, there remains a wide range of potential scenarios.

Among the more extreme would be the continuation of international travel restrictions, limiting CA to domestic cricket such as the Big Bash League and Women Big Bash League (WBBL), with the potential to have New Zealand touring for matches played in empty stadiums.

However, CA is understandably working through every possible scenario to allow for India to tour Australia next summer, from assessing quarantine options and hotels to more agreeable tour dates for the BCCI, which this week postponed the IPL indefinitely due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the subcontinent.

"Cricket Australia - like all sporting bodies - is planning for a return to training or play although no one is certain when this will be possible at this stage, and many scenarios are being considered," a CA spokesperson said.

"We are conscious of the impact this will have on Australian cricket and are working hard to manage that proactively."

"We have made the decision during this period of isolation, where activity has naturally been reduced, to stand down our people on reduced pay (with the exception of a skeleton staff) effective 27 April for the remainder of the financial year."

"We will continue to seek advice from medical experts and relevant government agencies to ensure the health and safety of our people, volunteers and communities, and to return to business as soon as possible."

CA had earlier announced a delay to its annual contracting for players, as the cricketers and with any revenue drop.

Under the MoU struck in 2017, male and female players share in around 26% of Australian cricket revenue.

**TONIGHT @ 9:00**

**EATV FRIDAY**

11:00 DADAZ LIVE  
12:00 Mid Week Movie (r)  
13:30 Kali Za Wana  
14:00 Bongo Hits  
15:00 Funguka  
15:30 Wakilisha (r)  
16:00 Ujenzi (r)  
16:30 #HASHTAG  
17:00 SSELECT  
17:55 Kurasa  
18:00 eNewz  
18:30 Skonga  
19:30 EATV SAA I  
19:45 MJADALA  
20:00 DADAZ (r)  
21:00 Friday Night Live  
23:00 Kurasa (r)

**Friday Night Live** The Weekend begins here! Listen to upbeat mixed music by the hottest Djs, Gossip, showbiz updates and exclusive interviews with celebrities from home and abroad. Don't you dare miss this.

**eastafrica RADIO**

06:00 Supa Breakfast  
10:00 MAMAMIA  
12:00 Kipenga Xtra  
13:00 Planet Bongo  
16:00 EA Drive  
20:00 Kipenga  
21:00 Friday Night Live

**88.1FM DAR ES SALAAM**