



## National Pg 3

NFRA to expand purchasing power



## National Pg 4

Contribution of agricultural research

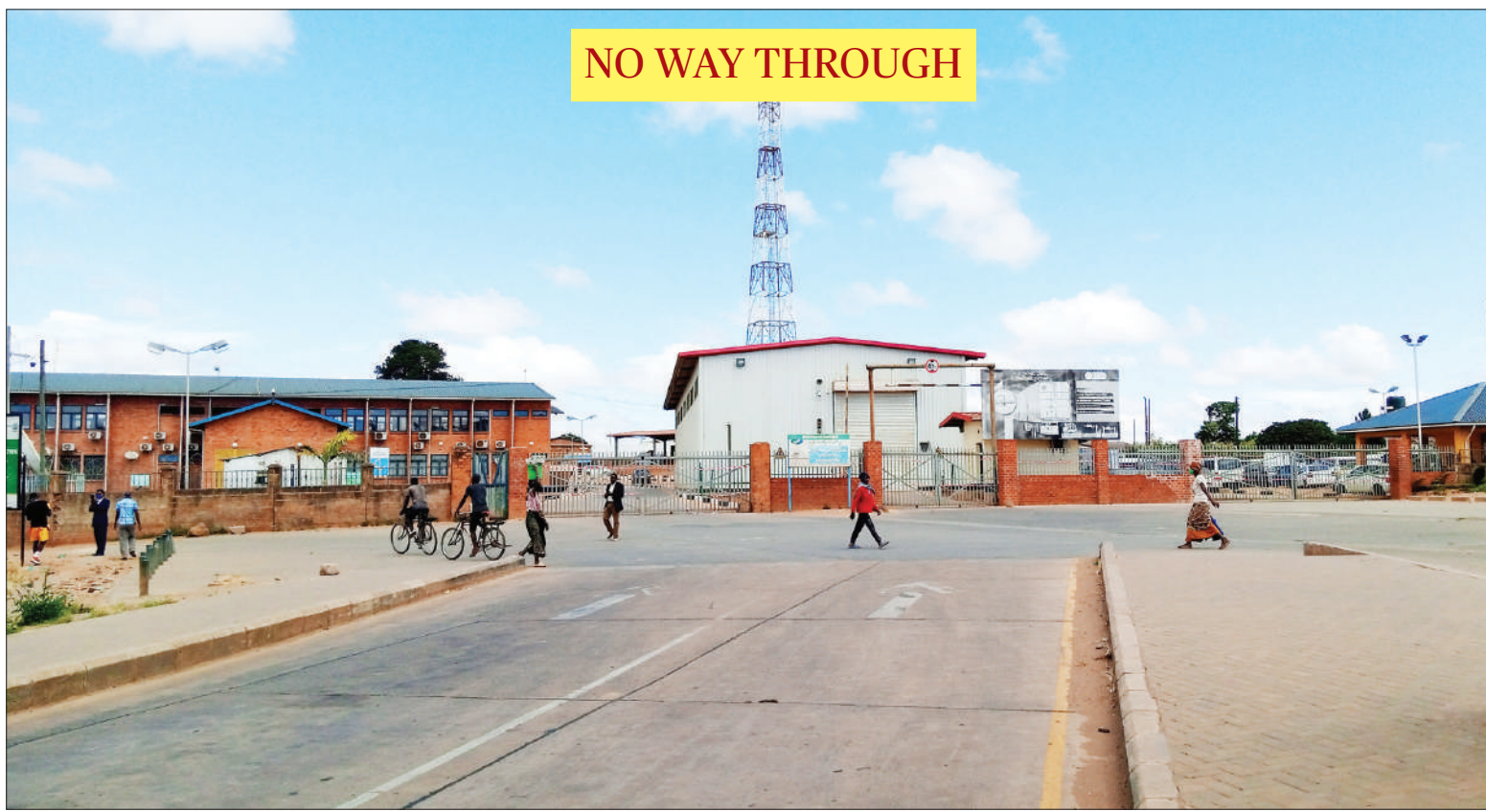


## Obituary Pg 9

Media guru Fili, a legend in his own right



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The entry gate to Zambia through the Tunduma border post in Songwe Region, Tanzania, stands closed on the Nakonde side yesterday after Zambia sealed its border and suspended all customs operations in the area. Photo: Correspondent Manuel Kaminyoge

# Sugar still scarce as retailers hike prices

Speaker calls for calm, promises detailed ministry report

By Guardian Reporters

SUGAR has continued to be in short supply in most parts of the country with retailers hiking the price contrary to government indicated rates.

The government issued indicative prices for the commodity where retailers are supposed to sell at a range of prices depending on the region, ranging from 2,600/- to 3,200/- per kilogram.

A random investigation by 'The Guardian' across the country's major urban centres showed that the sweetener was scarce in most retail shops including cities like Tanga, Dar es Salaam and Dodoma.

In Dodoma, a kilo of sugar is sold at 4,000/- while most retailers complained to have failed to procure the commodity from wholesalers

due to hiked prices.

"There is no sugar in shops. We are in a dilemma as we do not know where to get it. Traders have taken advantage of the shortage to make super profits," said Jacob Nkya, a resident of Tegeta in Dar es Salaam. He wondered why sugar dealers are ignoring the government's order on indicative prices.

"Many shops here have no sugar at all. I don't know what is going on at this critical time when the world is grappling with Covid-19 and some people are fasting during this holy month of Ramadan," lamented Asha Mohamed of Buguruni in Dar es Salaam.

When contacted, Kinondoni District Commissioner Daniel Chongolo assured city residents of steady sugar supply in the coming few days, urging residents to stop purchasing

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## Chadema CC expels its four MPs, cautions several others

By Guardian Reporter

LEADING opposition party Chadema yesterday expelled four Members of Parliament from its ranks and ordered several other MPs to provide thorough explanation as to why further actions should not be taken against them.

Secretary General John Mnyika said in a press conference yesterday that said the action followed a decision by the party Central Committee after holding a meeting online for two days.

The MPs have been expelled for what Mnyika said was disregarding party directives in the fight against Covid-19 infections.

MPs stripped of party membership are Anthony Komu (Moshi Rural), Joseph Selasini (Rombo), Wilfred Rwakatare (Bukoba Urban) and David Silinde (Mbozi).

An MP who had his all party positions stripped is the Central Committee member Mariam Msabaha (Special Seats) who was directed to explain why further disciplinary steps should not be taken against her.

Other Special Seats MPs who were directed to explain themselves are Susan Masele, Joyce Sokombi, Latifa Chande, Lucy Mlowe, Sware Semesi and Rose Kamili. Others are Japhary Michael (Moshi Urban), Peter Lijualikali (Kilombero) and William Kambalo (Karatu).

Mnyika said that the central committee, after evaluating the implementation of the party's stand, noting agreement among its MPs and party directives on 14 days isolation, found out that some of its MPs were contravening the directive, so it

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## Zambia closes border post, traders stranded

By Guardian Reporter

HUNDREDS of traders on the Tanzanian side were yesterday stranded following the Zambian government's decision to close the border over Covid-19 fears.

Tunduma is the country's busiest transit and entry point for linking transit trade to the Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The closure of the border post thus paralyzes business activities in the SADC (Southern African Development Community) region.

A cross-border trader and resident of Tunduma township, John Mtafya expressed fears over the closure of the Tanzania-Zambia border saying the move will affect business activities in the area, dampening business relationships between the two countries.

"Our lives depend on cross-border business. I don't know what is going to happen after this closure," he said.

Mtafya however lauded the Tanzanian government's decision to allow continuation of economic activities at the Tunduma border

amid Covid-19.

"As far as I can see, lockdown will make things worse," he said.

Songwe Regional Commissioner Brigadier General Nicodemus Mwangela, urged Tanzanian traders conducting business on the Zambian side to do business in accordance with the neighboring country's laws.

RC Mwangela noted that traders must adhere to Zambia's set rules and regulations as they do when opening shops in the other country's territory.

He urged traders to continue with businesses and other economic activities at the Tunduma border following temporary closure of the Nakonde border post between Tanzania and Zambia.

Economic activities on the Tanzanian side of the border will continue since the country has not closed its borders or implemented any lockdown measures after the Covid-19 outbreak in March, the RC noted.

"We have not implemented any lockdown measures, so Tunduma residents are free to

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## Electronic billing ups land sector revenues

By Henry Mwangonde, Dodoma

REVENUES generated from the land sector have increased from 74bn/- to about 100bn/- in the last five years, thanks to initiatives put in place by the government including strengthening the sector's electronic revenue collection systems.

Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development minister William Lukuvi made this observation in the National Assembly yesterday when tabling the ministry's 2020/21 Budget estimates.

He said that the sector generated 74.7bn/- in 2015/16 and 100bn/- in the 2019/20 financial years respectively.

Minister Lukuvi told the House that the increase was also attributed to the rise in the number of taxpayers and establishing new ways to facilitate property tax collections.

He further told the National Assembly that during the 2020/21 financial year, the sector is

expected to contribute 200bn/- in the form of charges, tolls and taxes to the economy. It is an increase of about 11percent from the previous financial year where it was expected to collect 180bn/- by June 2020.

In the 2020/21 the ministry tabled a 133.5bn/- budget for approval by the National Assembly.

"The ministry is working tirelessly to ensure land services are available at user's disposal but also at a lower cost as possible," he said.

Lukuvi said the ministry has solved 15,808 land conflicts administratively in the last five years, specifying that 131,606 land use conflicts were solved through land village and district land councils.

In the coming financial year the government will shift land councils operations to courts, he stated.

The government has also set aside 284, 349.07 acres for construction of industries countrywide,

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## SHARE FACTS ABOUT COVID-19

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AND

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



031546A 03/16/2020

cdc.gov/COVID-19





# Sugar still scarce as retailers hike prices

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the commodity in bulk.

"There is enough sugar; it will soon be available at your nearby shops. The current situation has been caused by hoarders who keep the product in their warehouses to create an artificial shortage", he asserted.

Chongolo said authorities in the district are working hard to ensure availability of the commodity which is currently in high demand due to the holy month of Ramadan.

The DC noted that government's decision to come up with indicative prices followed extensive investigations which showed the presence of sufficient sugar consignments from within and outside the country.

In Tanga city, food vendors have hiked tea cup prices claiming to buy sugar at higher prices to the extent that a cup of black tea is now sold at 300/- and up to 500/- from just 100/- lately.

A cup of tea with milk fetches up to 1,000/- and at times even 1500/-, while it previously was sold at 800/- or up to 1,000/-.

Tanga Regional Commissioner Thobias Mwilapwa said that six traders were arrested on Wednesday last week accused of selling the sweetener against the announced price caps.

Pangani District Commissioner Mohamed Hussein called upon traders to sell the commodity at an indicative price of 2,700/- per kilogram. However, most traders in the district are selling sugar at 3,200/- per kg.

DC Hussein warned that stringent legal measures will be taken against traders selling sugar at hiked prices.

"We will arrest and arraign traders violating government directives," said the DC, calling upon the residents to cooperate with the police by tipping them on the presence of traders selling sugar against government indicative rates.

In Mtwara, police are holding eight traders for hoarding 400 tons of sugar. The traders are alleged to sell the commodity at higher prices contrary to government directives.

Speaking to reporters yesterday after an exercise to hunt sugar traders violating government directives, Mtwara Regional Police Commander Mark Njera said they arrested the traders during a two-day inspection conducted at various shops.

Njera said they conducted two days previously saw the arrest of eight traders who were found hoarding more than 400 tons and were selling at hiked prices.

He said the government in the region will continue with the exercise on daily basis to nab traders who disregard government's directives on sugar prices.

Njera said the arrested traders will

be taken to court as soon as possible, appealing to traders who sell sugar at hiked prices not to do so as if found they will face the arm of the law.

Mtwara Regional Commissioner Gelasius Byakanwa said the government will not hesitate arresting traders who continue selling sugar at hiked prices, specifying that for Mtwara region the commodity's indicative price is 2,800/- per kg but there are traders who sell a kilo at 3,000/- or above.

Byakanwa said traders in the region are supposed to follow government directives on indicated sugar prices, insisting that there was no reason for them to hike prices especially during the holy month of Ramadan.

For his part, National Assembly Speaker Job Ndugai urged MPs to remain calm as the government will today provide explanations on the status of sugar in the country.

He said that Industry and Trade minister Innocent Bashungwa will provide a detailed report on the matter as he'll be tabling his ministry's Budget estimates for the 2020/2021 fiscal year.

The Speaker's remarks came after Ulanga MP, Goodluck Mlinga (CCM) who queried as why the National Assembly remained silent on the sugar shortage in the country, while millions of Tanzanians are struggling to get the commodity out there.

Last month, the government announcing price caps for the sweetener after prices went up to between 3,500/- and 4,500/-. Agriculture minister Japhet Hasunga said the price caps have been prepared in line with the Sugar Industry Act No. 26 of 2001 (Cap. 251).

But the government believes the rise in prices has largely been caused by hoarders who keep the product in their warehouses to create an artificial shortage.

The set prices caps indicate that in retail sugar prices in Dar es Salaam will be pegged at 2,600/- per kg while in Arusha, Kilimanjaro, Manyara, Tanga, Morogoro, and Coast region sugar is supposed to be sold at 2,700/- per kg.

Residents of Kigoma, Katavi, Rukwa and Ruvuma have to buy sugar at a retail price of 3,200/- per kg.

The country's five sugar processing factories were supposed to have the capacity of producing 378,000 tonnes during the 2019/20 season.

Minister Bashungwa said that Kilombero, TPC Limited, Kagera, Mtiwa Estate and Manyara were only able to produce a total of 298,949 metric tonnes of sugar during the 2019/2020 season.

As production was below target; the government made a projection of the sugar gap and issued permits to manufacturers so that they can import the product, the minister added.



Small traders and other residents of Songea municipality wait outside a Mohamed Enterprises store for their turns to buy sugar, now especially scarce across the country. Photo: Correspondent Gideon Mwakanosya

# Chadema CC expels its four MPs, cautions several others

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decided to take steps.

He said the steps taken are in accordance with the party constitution, procedures and guidelines.

"The party resorted to these steps by adhering to the importance of its constitution. The party has guidelines to oversee MPs, councillors and other leaders from the party ticket," said Mnyika.

He added: "And in the Guidelines, there is a specific section on Chadema MPs. In the second section (A) of the Party Guidelines it states that an MP

is required to obey directives given by the party through legal sittings and if he does not agree with the directives, he is required to explain why, through procedures set by the party constitution.

"Subsection B of the Guidelines also forbids an MP to defame the party or party leader inside or outside Parliament.

Speaking on Komu and Selasini, Mnyika said in addition that they have on their own lost qualification as party members by announcing that they do not agree with the party's ideology, they continued to issue inflammatory

statements against the party.

Mnyika said the central committee has directed the party secretary general to write to the Speaker of Parliament on the decisions reached against its MPs.

In regard to Rwakatare and Silinde, Mnyika said not only did they disregard party directives, but they have also been issuing inflammatory statements through the media and other communication outlets against party decisions.

On Msabaha, he said since she is a member of the central committee, the party had expected her to be at the

front line in showing by example in implementing party directives.

He said nine other MPs have been given the opportunity to explain themselves because in addition to their disregard of party directives they did not show a lack of discipline by defaming the party and its leaders.

All Chadema MPs who abided by the party directive to isolate themselves for 14 days should continue doing so as normally advised by health experts and will return to Parliament as and when the Covid-19 situation allows, the head of the party secretariat affirmed.



Kishapu legislator Suleiman Nchambi (C) under police escort at the Shinyanga District Court yesterday as he is led back to remand prison after his economic sabotage case was adjourned to May 25. Photo: Correspondent Marco Maduhu

# Zambia closes border post, traders stranded

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continue with economic activities. You should only consider adhering to Covid-19 preventive measures such as frequent hand washing, wearing masks and avoiding unnecessary gatherings," he stated.

He urged Songwe region residents not to cross the border in keeping with decisions of the Zambian government. Businesses should only continue on the Tanzanian side until it is announced otherwise, he emphasized.

Tunduma District Executive Director Regina Bieda urged traders to stop constructing shops on the Zambian side since there are enough designated business locations on the Tanzanian side.

"There is no need to establish shops on the Zambian side as we have ample land on our side," Bieda intoned.

On Monday, the Zambian government closed down its border with Tanzania after the country witnessed the highest spike of Covid-19 infections on Saturday.

As it widened screening, Zambia recorded 85 cases on a single day with three deaths related to the pandemic.

Of the cases, 76 were recorded

in Nakonde, the border town with Tunduma in Tanzania.

On Sunday, the country recorded 15 new cases after 250 tests.

Zambia Health Minister Chitalu Chilufya said the country is temporarily closing the Nakonde border post starting Monday.

The closure is meant to facilitate the retraining of health personnel and carrying out more screening in the area, he elaborated.

"No traffic will be allowed in or out of the district," Dr Chilufya said. It was unclear how long the border will remain shut.

Zambian President Edgar Lungu last week announced the reopening of some sectors of the economy like casinos and gyms which were shut on March 18, saying the economy is taking a hit due to the lack of activity.

He said companies ought to find a way of operating under the new normal as they observe measures meant to slow down the spread of the virus.

So far, the country has recorded 267 positive cases while recoveries stand at 117 and deaths remain at seven.

Nakonde is among Zambia's largest border posts, acting as a gateway to East Africa.

# Electronic billing ups land sector revenues

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he told MPs.

"During the last five years, the government in collaboration with various stakeholders had coordinated the issuance of 375,259 traditional title deeds in various districts and municipal councils countrywide," the minister noted.

In the 2020/21 financial year, the ministry is expected to register 25 land ownership certificates for villages and

100 traditional land occupancy title deeds.

Mtama MP Nape Nnauye (CCM), hailed the changes being made at the National Housing Corporation (NHC) saying they have had an impact as the agency is now being trusted and being given new tasks.

"The law which established NHC directs that the corporation should be run by the board but the CEO is not recognized as part of the board. There

is need to include him because he is part and parcel of its operations," he emphasized.

On revenues, Nnauye said there was need to widen the tax base by facilitating the lands sector to ensure it measures every inch of the country's land.

He said collection of revenue from the land sector was fairly easy, such that by giving more funds to the ministry, "there are all signs that the country's

tax base would be widened."

He urged increased speed on the establishment of a housing policy allowing many Tanzanians to legally own land.

Mussa Bakari Mbarouk (Tanga Urban, CUF) said land title deed owners should be given room to hold their title deeds while paying debt amounts, contrary to what is being done now where the title deeds are grabbed when they fail to pay on time.





Dr Msuya Foundation director Dr Ombeni Msuya (L) demonstrates to Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania faithful at Msangeni-Ugweni in Mwanga District at the weekend how to use an improved hand washing set before presenting ten such sets worth 2.5m/- in total as his donation to efforts to fight Covid-19. Right is Rev Eilewaha Msuya. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

# Tanzania to set new tourism standards after Covid-19 crisis

By Marc Nkwame, Arusha

AS the world is slowly but surely moving on after a long period of lockdown following the outbreak of the deadly Coronavirus, Tanzania is back to the drawing board setting new standards to guide the country's tourism industry in future.

"A number of countries are now lifting or lessening the lockdown anticipating resumption of life after Covid-19, we are confident that majority of people worldwide would like to travel after long periods of being confined in their house walls," stated the Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism, Dr Khamis Kigwangalla.

In anticipation to that, Tanzania has mobilised several ministries, travel industries' stakeholders to find ways of setting new travels, tourism and hospitality standards and procedures in the post-corona revival times.

For starters, the minister is envisioning removing the fortnight long quarantine period requirement for travellers to enter the country from overseas.

"We would rather focus on prevention or protection because confining visitors for two weeks was only during the time before the infections were reported in Tanzania," he contemplated.

The minister quoted the recent UK travel advisory, warning its citizens against coming to Tanzania because they would be forced to be quarantined for two weeks under what the statement claimed to be 'awful' environment.

Kigwangalla also called for new vetting of tour operators to allow just a few that will meet the new criteria of handling the 'now sensitive' visitors.

Some of the stakeholders interviewed by this paper explained how the new approach to safe conduct in travel and tourism can be conducted

in the country, once foreign visitors start flowing in.

"That may include re-outfitting of tour vehicles to accommodate fewer passengers in spaced sitting layout, separating the driver with passengers with glass panels and including intercom communications, regular sanitizing the cars and installing sanitizing booths at entrances to hotels," they suggested.

In achieving that therefore his ministry, together with those of health, finance, transport and information have special working meetings with representatives from various tourism sectors and departments, the hotel and hospitality industries and transport sector to lay new grounds of operation once or in case, foreign visitors start touring Tanzania again.

Before the global disaster, Tanzania was expecting to receive over 2 million tourists this year, but after the corona pandemic nobody is sure how many visitors will jet into the country before the 31st of December 2020.

Figures from the ministry indicate that the tourism accounts for 17.6 percent of Gross Domestic Product and 25 per cent of foreign currency earning but 99 percent of all revenues from the industry comes from overseas visitors.

**“We would rather focus on prevention or protection because confining visitors for two weeks was only during the time before the infections were reported in Tanzania”**

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

# Don't buy maize and beans alone, Hasunga orders NFRA

AGRICULTURE Minister, Japhet Hasunga has directed the Chief Executive Officer of National Food Reserves Agency (NFRA) Milton Lupa to ensure it buys various crops during this season and not maize and beans alone.

"I want to see NFRA changes, you should not buy beans and maize as it was in the past. Aren't there any other food crops available, in this season I want to see you buying various food crops," he said.

He also directed the agency to ensure the food bought within Arusha zone is

stored in the newly built silos.

He issued the directives in Babati district. Manyara region during his inspection visit of new modern silos and warehouses that are 94 per cent complete.

He said the building of modern silos and two warehouses in Babati district will make NFRA Arusha zone

that serves Manyara, Arusha and Kilimanjaro regions to enhance the national food reserve from 39,000 to 79,000 tonnes.

Reading his report before the minister, NFRA CEO Milton Lupa said the silos are being constructed at NFRA land in Maisaka area and began in December 2018 funded by a soft loan

from Poland.

Lupa said the project is being implemented in eight regions of Tanzania mainland including Manyara region whereas Arusha zone, will construct eight silos with 25,000 tonnes storage capacity and two warehouses with 15,000 tonnes storage capacity.

# Use official guidelines for misoprostol drug to improve maternal health - govt

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

HEALTH service providers in the country have been required to use official guidelines for application of Misoprostol drug to improve maternal health and reduce deaths while giving birth.

Misoprostol, sold under the brand name Cytotec among others, is a medication used to prevent and treat stomach ulcers, start labour, cause an abortion, and treat postpartum bleeding due to poor contraction of the uterus. For abortions it is used by itself and with mifepristone or methotrexate.

The call was given yesterday in the National Assembly by the Ministry of Health, Community Development,

gender, Elders and Children when responding to a question from Special Seats Member of Parliament Hava Mwaifunga (Chadema).

In her question, the MP said the drug is used by pregnant women and queried what were the government's plans in making its use official.

In response, the ministry said it continues supervising various efforts in the improvement of maternal health including the availability of essential drugs that aims to reduce deaths while giving birth in the country.

The ministry said the government had already sanctioned the correct use of the drug by preparing guidelines that took effect since July 2019.

The ministry said the guidelines are

about the correct use of the essential drug for pregnant women before and after delivery.

"In the guidelines the misoprostol drug is the 'third line' after Oxytocin, followed by ergometrine," it said.

Ergometrine, also known as ergonovine, is a medication used to cause contractions of the uterus to treat heavy vaginal bleeding after childbirth. It can be used either by mouth, by injection into a muscle, or injection into a vein.

"I take the opportunity to appeal all health service providers in the country to use the guidelines to improve maternal health, as together we can reduce deaths associated with birth," the ministry's response further said.



Kigoma Regional Police Commander Martin Otieno shows journalists yesterday firearms and other items he said police impounded while pursuing four suspected robbers they later killed at Mvugwe in Kasulu District. Photo: Correspondent Joctan Ngelly

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TENDER NOTICE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR VARIOUS SERVICES

1. National Bank of Commerce Limited has set aside funds for the procurement of various services during financial year 2020/2021, it is intended that, part of the proceeds of the fund will be used to cover eligible payment under the various contracts.
2. Request for proposal is open to all eligible service providers with proven experience and capacity to offer the required services. Interested eligible bidders are invited to apply for the provision of below list of services;
  - i. Supply of Point of Sale Machine (POS)
  - ii. Provision of Internet Service
  - iii. Supply and Distribution of Staff Refreshments/Groceries
  - iv. Maintenance and Support of ATM Machines
3. Request for Proposal documents can be downloaded from the website [www.nbc.co.tz](http://www.nbc.co.tz) and then click 'Procurement' to access the document.
4. All Proposals in one original and one copy set properly filled in, and enclosed in sealed envelope marked as per service name written on the RFP Document and should be addressed to; **CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, NATIONAL BANK OF COMMERCE LIMITED, HEAD OFFICE BUILDING, 6<sup>th</sup> FLOOR, and P. O. BOX 1863 DAR ES SALAAM.**
5. Sealed applications and bids must be submitted no later than **Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at 1600 hrs.** Proposal shall be delivered by hand to the Tender Box located at reception of Head Office building, ground Floor along Sokoine Drive/Azikiwe Street.

**CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER**  
**NATIONAL BANK OF COMMERCE LIMITED**

The Bank for a Working Nation

19/277





Masjid Al-Waahab chairman in Kahama town, Ahmed Haroun Alnooby (R), presents to Kahama Prison warden-in-charge Misana Shigumha 25 kg of sugar donated by Oman's International Istiqama Muslim Community for use by inmates. Photo: Correspondent Shaban Njia

## Tari-Uyole due to enhance strengthening of country's agricultural research system

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

TANZANIA Agricultural Research Institute at Uyole in Mbeya Region (TARI-Uyole) plans to strengthen agricultural production by bringing together farmers from various areas of the southern highlands regions to educate them on better farming and new technology in agricultural production.

The farmers will be taught in the production of food and cash crops including maize, beans, potatoes, sweet potatoes, wheat and avocados

with the aim realizing production benefits.

Speaking to this paper the director of TARI-Uyole Dr Tulole Bucheyeki said they decided to start sending the technology to farmers in order to enable the government attain middle economy.

He said in the past they used to give education and technology after harvests but discovered the system was not beneficial as many farmers were unable to grab the techniques thereof hence they decided to follow them to their farms.

Dr Bucheyeki said after they did some research they discovered that farmers failed to utilize the technology given because they its value was not impressed upon hence they decided to directly tell farmers that if the plant using the technology they will reap a certain amount of money.

He stressed that the Centre produces seeds in accordance with weather conditions and the area's environmental conditions of the area the seeds are planted.

TARI-Uyole agricultural researcher Boniface Minja said agricultural

training is essential to farmers following the government's target in attaining industrial economy that needs quality raw materials.

He said the technology imparted to farmers aims to increase benefits from the crops they produce so that ample food is produced for consumption and raw materials for factories.

Some of the farmers including Gwamka Mwaipanya said already they have started using farming techniques taught to them to increase production as traditional methods have been hindering economic wellbeing.

## Korean NGO introduces teaching programme for Standard One students

By Correspondent Beatrice Philemon

A Korean-based charity organisation 'Holt Children's Services Incorporation' has introduced a teaching programme for Standard One pupils from poor families in Keko Mwanga 'B' ward in Temeke district, Dar es Salaam.

To implement the programme, the organisation has recruited two teachers who will be preparing home works for the pupils in accordance with the topics and subjects they have learnt at school.

Parents will pick the home works from local government offices and re-submit them at the specific offices for a marking session by the teachers.

Briefing journalists recently, Holt Children's Services Program Manager, Vaileth Loy said the aim is to make sure children continues learning during the global Covid-19 crisis as well as ensure improved literacy and numeracy skills as per the country's curriculum.

"We have decided to begin with Standard One pupils before we expand it to cover upper classes. We want pupils to have a strong foundation for what they study in schools and improve their academic performance", she said.

According to Loy, the programme is implemented in collaboration with a non-governmental organization—Women in Social Entrepreneurship (WISE).

"Our target is to reach 100 pupils from poor households but we have so far reached 90 pupils. The organization will continue supporting more pupils depending on funds availability form donors", said Loy.

She added that it was important for pupils to continue learning during the Covid-19 outbreak. She urged parents to cooperate with the teachers by closely monitoring pupils when doing home works.

She said they arrived at the decision of using such a strategy after realising that most of the parents living in the ward were poor and do not have Televisions to allow pupils learn.

According to Loy, subjects to be taught include English, mathematics and arts. She said the number of subjects is likely to increase in future depending on the outcome of the first phase implementation.

Minister for Education, Science, Technology and Vocational Training Prof Joyce Ndalichako said last month that the government has introduced online learning sessions that are broadcasted by a number of televisions and community radios across the country.

Prof Ndalichako said the government has also eliminated charges and fees at its libraries as well as enable free accessibility of learning materials and publications from the Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE).

Previously, students had to pay some fees to access various educational publications. The learning materials at TIE include those for preparatory classes, primary and secondary schools.



**Our target is to reach 100 pupils from poor households but we have so far reached 90 pupils. The organization will continue supporting more pupils depending on funds availability form donor**

## Govt directs TADB to lower interest rates

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE government has directed the Tanzania Agricultural Development Bank (TADB) to ensure it lowers interest rates from 11 to 9 per cent for coffee farmers through the Kagera Cooperative Union (KCU) and Karagwe and Kyerwa Cooperative Union (KDCU).

It also said it does prevent the private sector to buy coffee but forbids them to buy the crop from individual farmers.

The directives were given yesterday by the Deputy Minister for Agriculture Hussein Bashe when speaking to leaders from coffee growing regions in the country.

Bashe said the aim for calling TADB to lower interest rate is to assist farmers conduct coffee farming profitably.

He said the farmers have been getting losses from coffee farming hence the government wants them to benefit commercially.

"This meeting should be a solution for coffee farmers and you are required to discuss carefully and come up with one decision - to build a just cooperative movement that will protect farmers," said Bashe.

On the issue of coffee buying, Bashe said those from the private sector are supposed to buy coffee from cooperatives, not directly from individual farmers.

"I direct you leaders to look for

people who were responsible for the 7b/- debt that KCU is now repaying while it is not theirs," he said.

He said the debt is inflicting great pain to farmers, saying those responsible must be hunted to say where the money is.

KCU general manager Edson Rugaimukamu said they expect to give farmers better prices that will give them profit, saying up to now they are certain during this season farmers will not incur losses as the union has mobilised itself to give farmers good coffee prices.

Oscar Dominick, an official from KDCU said the union have mobilised to bring benefits to farmers and will cooperate with the government to ensure coffee farmers develop economically.



**I direct you leaders to look for people who were responsible for the 7b/- debt that KCU is now repaying while it is not theirs**



Despite the global spread of Covid-19 infections and relentless sensitisation efforts on the need to take precautions including wearing face masks, it is business as usual in Dar es Salaam's sprawling Kariakoo market zone. Correspondent Miraji Msala captured this scene yesterday.

## Tanzania registers impressive success in dairy sub-sector

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo,

Dodoma

THE number of hybrid dairy cattle in the country increased by four folds to 1,294,882 in 2018/19 from 783,000 in 2017/2018, a development which saw milk production increasing from 2.4 billion litres to 2.7 billion litres.

The achievements are part of the ongoing National Five-Year Dairy Industry Development Plan (2018/19-2020/21).

However, per capital milk consumption in the country increased from 47 percent in 2017/2018 to at least 49 percent during 2018/19.

Registrar of the Tanzania Dairy Board (TDB) Dr Sofia Mlote told the Guardian that the poor milk consumption rate is due to low milk production.

She said, principally, an individual is supposed to drink at least 200 liters of milk in a year, but in Tanzania records shows that milk consumption stands between 45 and 47 liters per year.

"TDB works round the clock in partnership with other relevant authorities to increase milk production and processing, possibly by increasing dairy cows through Artificial Insemination (AI), embryo transfer and animal selection, among others," Dr Mlote expressed.

Dr Mlote said that currently there are at least 99 registered milk processing factories in Tanzania, out of which five have installed Ultra High Temperature (UHT) processing machines.

They are—Asas Diaries Limited,

Tanga Fresh, Milkcom, Galaxy and Azam.

"The factories have put in place systems that enable collection of enough milk from farmers in order to attain their break-even points," she noted adding the privately owned companies have come up with strategies to secure markets outside the country.

Tanga Fresh is now selling its products to neighbouring countries including Kenya," she explained.

UHT, is a food processing

technology that sterilizes liquid food by heating it above 135 °C (275 °F) - the temperature required to kill bacterial endospores - for 2 to 5 seconds. UHT is most commonly used in milk production, but the process is also used for fruit juices, cream, soy milk, yogurt, wine, soups, honey, and stews.

Due to advancement of UHT technology in the country, Dr Mlote observed that the country's annual Liquid Milk Equivalent (LME) importation has been declining.

Dr Mlote said in 2017/2018 Tanzania imported 20,920,537.58 LME's kg, valued at 30,290,485,222/- while in 2018/2019 the country imported LME's kg 617,659 worth 27,951,448,655/-.

She said the amount of imported milk products will decrease further this year. The Tanzania Dairy Board (TDB) was established by the Dairy Industry Act Cap.262 of 2004. The Board was inaugurated in November 2005 with a mandate to develop, promote and regulate dairy industry in Tanzania.





GBP Tanzania director general Baadar Seif Sood (L, gesturing) shows leads Energy minister Dr Medard Kalemani (to his left) to the company's GBP fuel reservoir in Tanga city yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Oscar Kasimiri

# Lake Victoria levels break 50-year record

By Special Correspondent, Kampala

THE waters of Lake Victoria have risen to 13.43m, an all-time record. The highest mark previously recorded was 13.41m, in May 1964.

The freshwater lake is shared by Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania, where the rising waters have caused destruction and displacement, leaving thousands of people homeless in recent weeks.

Sam Cheptoris, Uganda's minister for water and environment, says the state electricity generation firm is now releasing 2,400 cubic meters of water per second at the River Nile in Jinja, to save the hydro-power dams from being washed away.

Uganda relies almost entirely on dams along the River Nile for its electricity needs.

Last month, the swelling waters led a floating island, estimated to have been about two acres, to break off the river bank, blocking the intake gates of one of the dams and causing a brief nationwide power cut.

The Nile flows into Lake Kyoga, north of the capital Kampala, where the water being spilled downstream has also caused the lake to swell, displacing families and damaging farms.

East Africa is currently experiencing heavier than usual rains, which are predicted to continue throughout May.

Lake Victoria is the largest tropical lake in the world, and the second largest freshwater lake in the world in terms of surface area.

It plays a vital role in supporting the millions of people living around its shores, in one of the most densely populated regions on earth. Unfortunately, the introduction of invasive species (the Nile perch and the water hyacinth) and pollution on a massive scale have had a harmful effect on the lake's ecology and biodiversity, as well as the amount of fish caught. In recent years, the water level of the lake has also been dropping, a trend attributed to regional drought and increased flows for hydroelectric power in Uganda.



**Lake Victoria is the largest tropical lake in the world, and the second largest freshwater lake in the world in terms of surface area**

By Guardian Correspondent, Iringa

# Villagers plead for govt help in repairing damaged water irrigation infrastructure

RESIDENTS of Ruaha Mbuyuni Ward in Kilolo District Iringa Region have appealed to the government to restore the infrastructures of Mgombilenga water irrigation scheme that have been badly damaged by recent rains.

Speaking at the weekend during inspection visit by Kilolo Member of Parliament Venance Mwamoto accompanied by irrigation experts from the Water ministry they said the destruction of the canal that used

to supply water for irrigation was a big blow to them as they were hugely depending on it for farming activities.

Ruaha Mbuyuni Ward Councillor Issaa Mwisombe said there was a time in the past when villagers in the ward

were forced to move to other areas for farming due to similar problems.

He said his fear for this election year is for the villagers to move to other areas to engage in farming activities.

Apart from the destruction of

the infrastructures of the irrigation scheme, Ruaha Mbuyuni residents said they experience an acute scarcity of safe and clean water and are forced to use water from the river that they say is neither clean nor safe.

Mwisombe said more than 600 people, mostly farmers of various food crops were depending on the irrigation scheme.

Isaac Madumba, one of the villagers said water supply service in the area

has been problematic with men and women walking long distances to fetch water from the canal and asked their legislator to assist in raising the issue in Parliament.

In response MP Mwamoto said he had asked the Water Minister to bring water irrigation experts to assess the extent of the destruction to the irrigation infrastructures after which repair work would begin.

He said he understands that many residents in the area depend on irrigation farming for their livelihood.



## TENDER NO. 1.0/2020/2021 FOR THE AUDIT OF ESAAMLG ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 2021

1. ESAAMLG is a Financial Action Task Force (FATF) – Style Regional Body (FSRB) that was established in 1999 in Arusha, Tanzania. The organization's Secretariat is based in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania. ESAAMLG consists of 18 member countries, namely: The Republics of: Angola, Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Seychelles, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, The Kingdoms of Lesotho and Eswatini.
2. The Secretariat administers a budget of around USD1,500,00.00 per annum on programme activities and administration with approximately four to five hundred transactions per annum.
3. The Secretariat invites sealed tenders including cost and timeframe for the Audit of its 2020/2021 Financial year which ends on 31st March, 2021.
4. Tenders shall be addressed to the Executive Secretary Eastern and Southern Africa Anti Money Laundering Group, (ESAAMLG) Plot 96, Msese Road, Kinondoni, Dare Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania and should be received on or before 16.30hrs on 25th of June 2020 and all tenders to be opened on 29th of June 2020.
5. There will be a meeting on 29th of June 2020. from 9.00am – 11.00am for the interested eligible Tenders at the office of Executive Secretary at Plot 96, Msese Road, Kinondoni, Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING GROUP-ESAAMLG



The bank that listens

## ANNOUNCEMENT POSTPONEMENT OF 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 2020

We regret to inform our shareholders that the Annual General Meeting which was scheduled for **May 16th, 2020** at Arusha International Conference Centre, Arusha, has been postponed.

In these challenging times, nothing is more important to us than the safety and wellbeing of our shareholders, staff and society at large. As a responsible institution, we would also like to join hands with our government in fighting the spread of corona virus by ensuring that we comply with the advised safety measures including avoidance of mass gatherings.

Decisions regarding the course of action and the rescheduling of the meeting will be made in due course and will be duly communicated to all shareholders.

Should you have any questions, please contact the Office of Company Secretary through +255 22 221 2900 or through email [shareholders@crdbbank.com](mailto:shareholders@crdbbank.com).

John Baptist Rugambo

Company Secretary

11/05/2020



# Fuel traders in northern zone advised to utilise Tanga city depot

By Correspondent George Sembony,

Tanga

ENERGY minister Dr Medard Kalemami has directed fuel traders in northern zone regions to procure oil products from Tanga-based Gulf Bulk Petroleum (GBP) storage facilities to ease congestion at the Dar es Salaam port.

Briefing the minister on the state of oil in the city, GBP Managing Director, Baadar Seif Sood raised concerns that some traders were still procuring oil products from Dar es Salaam.

According to Sood, oil traders from Arusha, Kilimanjaro, Manyara and Tanga regions still purchase oil products in Dar es Salaam despite presence of the facility.

Responding, Dr Kalemami insisted the government has selected the Tanga port as one of the oil offloading center in the northern zone.

"There are no reasons for fuel traders to order the products in Dar es Salaam since there is oil depot in Tanga," he said noting that price differences may be among the reasons for some traders to buy the products in Dar es Salaam.

He directed the Energy and Water Utilities Regulatory Authority (EWURA) and the Petroleum Bulk Procurement Agency (PBPA) to carefully work on oil indicative prices by considering the interests of consumers, businessmen and the government.

He said the move will help in attracting oil traders from the northern zone regions to buy oil from Tanga.

"Customers need better prices, but traders need profits. There should be a balance in setting prices so that the government can also get taxes," the minister emphasised.

Dr Kalemami said the government decided to add two more oil depots in

Tanga to decongest the Dar es Salaam port. He said the move has paid off because ship downloading time has been reduced from between 40 and 60 days to between five and three days only. He noted that such measures increased the country's capacity to store oil to over 240 tonnes. The Dar es Salaam port can store 120,000 tonnes, Tanga and Mtwara ports have the capacity to keep 45,000 tonnes each.

Kalemami commended the GBP management for increasing its oil storing capacity to 182.18 million litres in just a few years.

He said that of the country's total oil reserves amounting to 428 million litres that can serve the nation for the next 60 to 70 days, 113 million litres are at the GBP depot in Tanga.

Meanwhile, the minister reassured Tanzanians that the country was prepared for any eventuality following the outbreak of Covid-19 insisting citizens to continue taking steps to expand oil reserves.

Recent government statistics indicates that crude oil prices at the world market dropped to \$ 23.27 per barrel in April 2020 from \$ 60.39 in 2019, a decrease of 61.5 percent. He said global prices of refined oil (diesel, petrol, kerosene and jet oil) decreased to \$ 593, 578. 612 per tonne compared to \$ 646,606.575 per tonne in 2018.

Following the decrease local prices of oil substances have decreased between 3 and 5 percent.

However, oil importation through the Bulk procurement System (BPS) has contributed into stable oil supply whereas 6.15 billion litres were imported in 2019 compared to 5.70 billion litres imported in 2018. Of the amount, 3.54 billion litres (57.5 percent) were consumed locally and 2.62 billion litres (42.5 percent) transported to neighbouring countries.



Agape director John Myola (3rd-L) pictured yesterday presenting to Shinyanga district commissioner Jasinta Mboneko (2nd-R) items for use in arresting Covid-19 infections. Photo: Correspondent Marco Maduhu

## China donates 225 boxes of PPE to Z'bar govt

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

THE Zanzibar government has said it will continue to value the great contribution from the Chinese government in support of Isles development.

The pledge was given by the Zanzibar Minister of State in the Second Vice President's Office Mohamed Aboud when receiving various items given by the Chinese government in support

of the fight against Covid-19 infections through its consulate in Zanzibar.

Aboud said the donation of 225 boxes of various items including PPEs for health workers has come at appropriate time.

He said the aim of the Zanzibar government is to ensure it reduces the infection rate and to eradicate it altogether in the shortest possible time.

"The Zanzibar government conveys its sincere thanks to the Chinese

government for the assistance that has come at the right time for tackling Covid-19 infections," he said.

Aboud appealed to the people to abide by the guidelines from the Ministry of Health in the fight against the pandemic including wearing of masks, regularly washing hands and avoid gatherings.

Chinese Consular for Zanzibar Xie Xiaowu said his country will continue assisting Zanzibar as the two countries

have historical ties.

He said China understands the adverse economic effects against development countries including Zanzibar which has some of its sectors impacted.

The Director of Zanzibar Disasters Commission Makame Khatib said the assistance will reach those targeted including workers in the health sector who are in the front line serving Covid-19 patients.



Rehabilitation of a bridge connecting Kisiwani and Msindo in Same District in progress, as found yesterday. It was damaged by recent rains. Photo: Godfrey Mushi

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE sea wall at Ruvula area in Mtwara is supposed to be built with boulders to prevent ocean waves washing to the direction of Mnazi Bay Gas processing plant.

This was expressed in a question by the Mtwara rural Member of Parliament Hawa Ghasia (CCM) who asked when the government will start erecting the

## Govt to build boulder wall to protect Mnazi Bay gas plant from damage by ocean waves

wall in order to protect Mnazi Bay gas fields.

In its response, the Ministry of Energy said the government through its Tanzania Petroleum Development

Corporation (TPDC) in collaboration with Maurel & Prom Company conducted in depth research of the area.

"The aim was for the government to

get recommendations and advice on the best way to strengthen the shoreline and initial research results recommended the erection of the boulder wall,' the ministry said.

The ministry said the government is in the final stages of going through the results of the research and the work in erosion control is expected to begin in the Financial Year 2020/21.

Earlier the ministry said the problem of soil erosion at Mnazi Bay shoreline for the first time started showing in January 2015 after heavy rains that produced violent ocean waves that swept away 100 metres of the shoreline.

It said in the short term measure the government in collaboration with Mtwara region Defense and security Committee filled the area with boulders aimed to control the erosion.

## Appeal for e-learning materials for students faced with disabilities

By Correspondent Michael Sikapundwa, Morogoro

LACK of e-learning materials for disabled pupils at primary schools has been referred to as among factors hindering the teaching process for the targeted group in Morogoro Region.

Regional Education Officer, Eng Joyce Baravuga said it has been difficult for teachers to continue teaching pupils with disabilities during the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak due to lack of e-learning materials.

She said there are 514 pupils with disabilities at elementary schools in the region.

Eng Baravuga appealed for support from education stakeholders to ensure children continues to learn even in presence of the pandemic. She said pupils mostly in need include those with mental retardation (326) and those with hearing impairment (131).

"We have prepared online lessons for all the pupils, the only challenge we have is how to teach those with disabilities because we do not have e-learning materials that suits them," said the officer.

Morogoro Municipal Education Officer (Special Education), Daniel Maganga said that stakeholders should consider assisting by constructing another classroom for pupils with

disabilities since there is only one classroom located at Kauzeni ward—three kilometers from Morogoro town.

"Pupils with mental retardation and hearing impairment need special online teaching programmes. It is better to support them during this time when the world is still battling Covid-19. This will help them keep updated because it is easily for them to forget what has been taught previously," said Maganga noting that teaching such special groups requires extra knowledge as at times teachers use role-play models.

He added that role-play teaching methods takes place on television with assistance from parents. He said children with mental retardation cannot learn independently hence the need for parents and guardians to assist them accordingly.

On March 17, 2020, Prime Minister, Kassim Majaliwa announced to close all primary and secondary schools following the outbreak of Covid-19 in the country. The school closure was later extended to colleges and universities across the country.

There are over 14 million students—12, 043, 577 (primary) and 2,023,457 (secondary) staying at home since the government announced to close primary and secondary schools.



# Prioritise children's mental health during the Covid-19 crisis, government advised

By Correspondent Crispin Gerald

THE government has been urged to prioritise and invest in children's mental health, well-being and learning as part of efforts to respond to the outbreak of Coronavirus.

This includes support for children living in the conflict affected communities that may be less equipped to respond to the needs of children who could be separated from parents due to illnesses, isolation measures or bereavement.

"All children, needs to have access to support services during and after lockdown, and prioritising the work of social care providers, including by classifying them as essential services, so they have the resources and capacity to do their work," said Marie Dahl, head of Save the Children's mental health and psychosocial support unit.

In her statement released over the weekend in London, she said: "while children are resilient, we cannot underestimate the impact the pandemic is having on their mental wellbeing and overall health. Children in a stable environment are likely to fare better, but many children are not so fortunate.

"Those who are living in poverty, who are experiencing violence at home, or are otherwise vulnerable, can really be pushed over the edge by long lasting lockdowns in the worst cases if left unaddressed, this could escalate to depression and other mental health concerns. The mental health impacts of Covid-19 could be seen far beyond the life of the pandemic," she insisted.

She added that, there is a need for schools, social services and authorities to monitor children during lockdowns and continue case management through remote approaches until

society and schools reopen and further support can be provided.

"This includes ensuring distance learning accessible for all children, who should contain messages on health, hygiene and keeping safe," Dahl explained.

According to her, parents and teachers must receive support to maintain structure and routine for the children, and to keep children engaged in play and learning activities in schools and at home.

"Mechanisms should be in place for early detection of signs, such as sudden changes in behaviour, unusual persistent sadness, and excessive worry, lack of concentration, trouble sleeping, or exhaustion, which could point towards looming mental health issues such as a depression.

Dahl further explained that: "Children are suffering enormous upheaval on a scale that we have not seen in this lifetime. There has been many sudden changes to their lives and so much is yet unknown about the long-term impacts of this crisis, which requires us to be vigilant and do everything possible to limit the impact on young minds."

"While some countries are starting to re-open schools, many children are still missing out on education. It's important that all countries are able to detect and respond to signs of distress and depression among children during lockdown and once these children return to public life."

Save the Children works in schools, health facilities, refugee camps and child friendly spaces, with national staff and partners trained to pick up on warning signs of distress among children and provide them with age appropriate support as needed. Where lockdown and physical distancing measures are imposed.



Traffic police officers wash their hands, as a precaution against the spread of Covid-19, before entering their office in Moshi municipality at the weekend. This was shortly after Bombambuzi councillor Juma Rahib presented to the office a set of hand washing items. Photo: Correspondent Woinde Shizza

By Guardian Correspondent, Mpanda

POLICE in Katavi Region is holding Ikuba Ward Councillor Emmanuel Washeri (43) for mobilising a group of youth who heckled the Mlele District Commissioner Rachel Kasanda after she impounded a truck that was found loading bags of sesame at his home contrary to procedures set by the district authorities in regard to purchase of crops.

The incident took place at Kashishi village in Mlele District when the police accompanied by the DC and members of her Defense and Security

# Katavi police hold councillor over 'heckling' of Mlele DC

Committee impounded the truck with Reg T 924 DNE with 83 bags of sesame.

Confirming the incident, Katavi Regional Police Commander Benjamin Kuzaga said the truck was being driven by one Yusuph Zephania, a resident of Sumbawanga in Rukwa Region.

RPC Kuzaga said while still at the councillor's house a group of youths led by two -Mwandu Ngaliga (25) and Bida Charles (28) who were mobilised by the councillor started heckling, jeering and throwing stones at the officials and the police.

The situation forced the police to fire four shots in the air so as to rescue the

Mlele District Commissioner and other officials but not before damage was done to the DC's car which had some of its windows broken.

Kazungu said apart from the councillor the police were holding people who initiated the fracas and the case will be referred to court after investigations are complete.



A truck lies stuck in the mud yesterday at a spot between Mashewa and Bombani villages in Muheza District, as Tanzania National Roads Agency (Tanroads) workers move to repair a bridge damaged by recent rains. This has made farmers in the area face serious problems transporting their crops to Muheza market. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

# RC reminds Kilosa District officials on need to finalise construction of building for the Mgubike Health Centre

By Guardian Correspondent, Kilosa

KILOSA District government officials have been required to as soon as possible finalise the construction of a theatre building at Mgubike Health Centre in Magole Division in accordance with President John Magufuli's directives that the work was to be completed within two months beginning March this year.

The Morogoro Regional Commissioner Loata Sanare issued the directives during his inspection visit in the district to follow up on the implementation of President Magufuli's own directives when he was inspecting the Kiegeya Bridge late last February.

Sanare said: "We have not finished the work within the given two months, but we are at a good stage.... now we have to finish the work by looking for various sources of funds... and finish as soon as possible."

Kilosa District Executive Director (DED) Asajile Mwambambale said they were in the finishing stages, adding that if there will not be alterations to the structure the work will be completed by the end of May this year.

Recently the DED was quoted as saying that the theatre building was

expected to cost 100m/- and upon completion will serve Magubike Ward residents including those from seven other nearby wards.

Mwambambale said the money was obtained from the council's internal sources after budget re-allocation was effected as it was not in the council's 2019/20 budget.

Meanwhile Sanare inspected repair work at Berega River bridge and congratulated engineers who completed the work within seven days after it had collapsed due to rains.

He said the bridge's completion has solved the long time challenges facing the residents while moving from one area to another across the river.

During his recent visit at the bridge the Morogoro Regional Administrative Secretary (RAS) Emmanuel Kalobelo said the regional government through Tanzania Rural and Urban Roads Agency (TARURA) needs more than 7b/- for the construction of a new bridge at a later stage when funds become available.

The Berega bridge built in 2013 was supposed to be a temporary bridge after the earlier one was swept away by floods and later TARURA decided to construct a permanent bridge.

# Kamwelwe launches online bus ticketing system

By Guardian Reporter

WORKS, Transport and Communications minister Isack Kamwelwe has launched online bus ticketing system on trial basis and said the system will be beneficial to the government, passengers and bus owners.

Speaking yesterday soon after the launch Kamwelwe said online bus ticketing system will eradicate loss of revenue to bus owners that has always

been attributed to touts and other middlemen at bus stations.

"It will enable transporters to easily access loans since records of their transactions will directly be remitted to banks and will increase investment in the sector due to increase of revenues," he said.

He said in regard to passengers online ticketing system will stop the need for them to go to buy tickets at ticket offices, and that it will also remove rampant fare hiking

especially towards the end of the year.

And in regard to the government he said the system will enable the procurement of essential information for correct decisions as it will be the country's transportation.

"The system will assist Land Transport Regulatory Authority (LATRA) to know the number of passengers travelling to different areas hence it will be able to allocate bus routes in accordance with passenger volumes, and other relevant

authorities will also be able to come out with appropriate transport policies," he said.

Kamwelwe said the system will be on trial run up to June this year after which LATRA will not issue licenses to bus owners who will not be connected to the system.

"By September this year the implementation of the system will start for commuter buses (daladalas) and I direct LATRA to fully supervise the transition - every bus owner given

license must first be joined to the system," he said.

LATRA Director Gilliad Ngewe said through the system service providers will not be cheated again on their incomes as every passenger buying a ticket the money thereof directly goes to the bank.

"Bus owner will reconcile his transaction all by himself and no need of middlemen, we are fully mobilized and our officials will work together with the police in ensuring all citizens

benefit by the system.

He added that there will be a customer service call centre with Number 0800110150 to be used for all inquiries on the system.

The Director of Imani Class Bus Transport, Amani Kaganda who has already started using the system on trial said its benefits are immense as the bus owners knows the amount of money collected each day that enables him to plan his expenditure.



# The Guardian

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TUESDAY 12 MAY 2020

**Taking A New Look  
At The News  
ESTABLISHED IN 1995**

## COVID-19: Vaccine research trials, tests must include African partners

RESEARCH is creative and systematic work undertaken to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of humans, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications. It involves the collection, organisation, and analysis of information to increase our understanding of a topic or issue.

At a general level, research has three steps: First; pose a question. Second; collect data to answer the question. Third; present an answer to the question. This should be a familiar process. You engage in solving problems every day and you start with a question, collect some information, and then form an answer.

Research is important for three reasons. First, research adds to our knowledge: Adding to knowledge means that educators undertake research to contribute to existing information about issues. Second, research improves practice: Research is also important because it suggests improvements for practice. Armed with research results, teachers and other educators become more effective professionals. Third, research informs policy debates: research also provides information to policy makers when they research and debate educational topics.

There are several forms of research: scientific, humanities, artistic, economic, social, business, marketing, practitioner research, life, technological, and what have you.

The Africa Society, like individuals, organisations and governments worldwide, joins in the call for accelerated, focused and thorough efforts to find a vaccine that is effective in preventing the novel corona virus (COVID-19) and a drug to treat infected patients.

We are fully aware that this virus brings unique challenges and that much remains to learn about this deadly disease that morphs quickly and can rapidly lead to death.

We call on the world's leading researchers and around the world to ensure that African scientists and

researchers, many of whom have been engaged in years of infectious disease research, and African medical practitioners, are included in the effort to isolate an effective drug and COVID-19 vaccine, and are taking an active part in the effort.

Their expertise and unique experiences relative to the African continent and African health, social, economic and cultural realities must be factored in. COVID-19 knows no borders.

The search for a vaccine for any new disease is a complicated process that involves isolating and identifying a possible curative drug, vaccine trials, (usually first on animals), and then administering the drug to individuals after rigorous tests. There are reportedly hundreds of trials underway; how many include African researchers and scientists? African partners will be needed not only for their scientific knowledge, but also for their ability to engage African populations with whom they have established trust.

While the number of COVID-19 cases in African nations has not ballooned to the extent that it has in the United States, parts of Asia, Europe, and other non-African countries, the likelihood that there could be an explosion of cases in Africa exists and the time for preventive action and inclusive partnership is NOW.

The lack of adequate hospitals, medical personnel and equipment in most African countries is well documented. The economic implications of massive COVID-19 cases in Africa would undoubtedly result in catastrophic destruction on many fragile economies- witness the peril of the US and other economies after only months of social distancing and other protocols to stop the spread.

Social distancing is a practice difficult to effect in most Africa milieu under every day circumstances, and is an unfamiliar concept. Citizens of the US and other countries are complying but adjusting has not been easy. Finding an effective drug to treat, and a vaccine to prevent COVID-19 is a medical and human rights imperative.

## The energy sector is central to efforts to combat climate change

PROMOTING sustainable development and combating climate change have become integral aspects of energy planning, analysis and policy making. Energy accounts for two-thirds of total greenhouse gas, so efforts to reduce emissions and mitigate climate change must include the energy sector.

Global warming is a long-term rise in the average temperature of the Earth's climate system; an aspect of climate change shown by temperature measurements and by multiple effects of the warming. In the modern context the terms global warming and climate change are commonly used interchangeably, but climate change includes both global warming and its effects, such as changes to precipitation and impacts that differ by region.

Executive director of the International Energy Agency (IEA), Dr Fatih Birol, has urged stakeholders to not lose sight of climate change challenges as they tackle the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19). He said that while the spread of COVID-19 "is turning into an unprecedented international crisis, with serious repercussions for people's health and economic activity... the effects are likely to be temporary."

Birol continued: "Meanwhile, the threat posed by climate change will remain. We should not allow today's crisis to compromise our efforts to tackle the world's inescapable challenge."

The IEA executive noted that as governments continue to draw up stimulus plans to counter the economic damage from coronavirus, these packages "offer an excellent opportunity to ensure that the

essential task of building a secure and sustainable energy future doesn't get lost amid the flurry of immediate priorities".

He urged that large-scale investment to boost the development, deployment and integration of clean energy technologies such as solar, wind, hydrogen, batteries and carbon capture should be "a central part of governments' plans because it will bring the twin benefits of stimulating economies and accelerating clean energy transitions.

"The progress this will achieve in transforming countries' energy infrastructure won't be temporary - it can make a lasting difference to our future." The IEA director highlighted that hydrogen and carbon capture, in particular, are in need of major investment to scale them up and bring down costs.

"This could be helped by current interest rate levels, which were already low and are declining further, making the financing of big projects more affordable. Governments can make clean energy even more attractive to private investors by providing guarantees and contracts to reduce financial risks."

Birol said these steps are "extremely important because the combination of the coronavirus and volatile market conditions will distract the attention of policy makers, business leaders and investors away from clean energy transitions".

"This situation is a test of governments and companies' commitment. Observers will quickly notice if their emphasis on clean energy transitions fades when market conditions become more challenging."

### The Guardian Limited Key Contacts

Managing Editor: WALLACE MAUGGO  
Circulation Manager: EMMANUEL LYIMO

### Newsdesk

News Editor: LUSEKELO PHILEMON  
0757154767  
General line: 0745700710  
E-mail: guardian@guardian.co.tz

### Advertising

Mobile: 0782253676  
E-mails: advertise@guardian.co.tz  
Website: www.ippmedia.com  
epaper.ippmedia.com



## COVID-19: Refugee girls and women should be integral part of the solution

By Marcy Hersh and Olfat Mahmoud

AS COVID-19 threatens refugee camps, humanitarian responses must not forget the needs of vulnerable women and girls

In Bourj-el-Barajneh refugee camp in Lebanon, residents now joke: "Perhaps COVID-19 will forget about us too."

Their sprawling settlement - home to up to 45,000 refugees - has no known cases of COVID-19 so far. Yet despite this grim humor, advocates agree that it is just a matter of time before the pandemic reaches all refugee camps, and those hardest hit will be girls and women.

For refugee girls and women everywhere, the feeling of being "forgotten" is rooted in an unacceptable reality: for decades, their perspectives have been an afterthought in humanitarian action.

Across the globe, most displacement settings have been left totally unprepared to protect the most vulnerable - particularly girls and women - from the new threat of COVID-19.

As world leaders and humanitarian responders take on COVID-19, the needs of millions of displaced girls and women must be upheld.

**These are some of the key issues that they should consider:**

**Consider gender in COVID-19 responses in humanitarian settings**

This pandemic must be a wake-up call to address inequalities in displacement settings - such as refugee camps, detention centers, and informal settlements - which keep girls and women from protecting themselves against COVID-19. For example, adopting frequent handwashing practices will be difficult if they find it unsafe to visit latrines or water distribution points in camps due to risks of gender-based violence.

All new humanitarian funding to fight COVID-19 - such as the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19 - must be designed with a gender lens, including a gender marker for tracking.

**Prioritize gender equality in health systems**

What happens if a refugee girl or woman shows symptoms of COVID-19? For many refugees health services are difficult to access, especially for girls and women already facing mobility restrictions in communities. COVID-19 does not discriminate,



so healthcare to mitigate the spread of the disease should follow suit. Governments must invest in stronger health systems for all. This includes exploring innovative ways to reach displaced girls and women where they are, such as mobile health services and telehealth information.

**Safeguard services for sexual health and protection from gender-based violence**

While we scale up health services to respond to COVID-19 in refugee communities, we must also ensure access to lifesaving sexual and reproductive health services - the bedrock of gender equality.

The need for sexual and reproductive health services during COVID-19 is even more acute in crisis settings, as intimate partner violence increases under lockdowns.

To meet these rising needs, funding to address gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health and rights must not be disrupted. This includes working with local women-focused civil society organizations to implement preparedness efforts and the Minimal Initial Service Package for Reproductive Health in Emergencies - a set of priority actions to save lives at the outset of every crisis.

**Prevent asylum delays that may put girls and women in danger**

Basic human rights - including the right to asylum, as enshrined in the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights - must also not be put on hold because of COVID-19.

We are already witnessing how fears of COVID-19 have fueled xenophobic rhetoric to blame refugees for the spread of the virus or its economic fallout, resulting in delays and denials in asylum processes and other threats to safety.

These delays can have a serious impact on girls and women in need of critical and immediate care - including those who are pregnant or survivors of gender-based violence - and impede access to the health and protection services they need immediately.

Governments and international organizations must work together to adopt stronger solutions to respect international protection standards during COVID-19.

**Engage with women-focused organizations in humanitarian settings**

Our strongest allies and partners in all this work are local women-focused civil society organizations in humanitarian settings. In Bourj-el-Barajneh camp, grassroots groups like the Palestinian Women's Humanitarian Organization are already ensuring girls and women are not forgotten.

They are sharing information about COVID-19, providing hygiene kits to help prevent infection, referring survivors of violence to protection services, and so much more.

Now, more than ever before, we need to find innovative ways to channel funding and resources to such groups. This means dramatically increasing the percentage of localized aid - currently less than 9% of all humanitarian funding - and ensuring this funding is flexible, long-term, and tailored to the unique needs of organizations operating in crisis situations.

Women-focused civil society organizations have always been powerful leaders and change-makers - it's time to let them lead.

For too long, the needs of refugee girls and women have been left behind in emergency response efforts. Few know this more than the resilient Palestinian women who have resided in Bourj-el-Barajneh camp for over seventy years.

Throughout those years, they have advocated with refugee women around the world to demand: "Nothing about us without us."

During COVID-19, it's time for all of us to join them in a new rallying cry: "Nothing without us will work." In the face of a pandemic that knows no border or citizenship status, there is no other choice.

*Olfat Mahmoud is the Founder and Director of the Palestinian Women's Humanitarian Organization in Lebanon.*

*Marcy Hersh is the Senior Manager for Humanitarian Advocacy at Women Deliver*



OBITUARY

# Media guru Fili Karashani, a legend in his own right

By Kajubi Mukajanga

At 12.21 p.m. this last Sunday (May 10) I spoke to Kagina Karashani about the progress of his father's treatment, and we discussed visitation plans. This was in consideration of the decision by the Muhimbili National Hospital (MNH) administration that, owing to the Covid-19 scare, only one person would be allowed to see the patient per visitation session.

The patient, journalism veteran Fili Karashani, had been admitted to Muhimbili two days earlier following the deterioration of his heart condition, which he had been battling for some years.

Six hours later, at 6.23 p.m. I got a call from Kagina. He was distraught: "There is sad news. Mzee has passed on," he told me.

I knew Fili 'Philemon' Karugahale Karashani as a jovial person, a family friend, a person full of jest and life, who, over a drink, would insist on letting me know that he would one day write my obituary. I would typically retort that it would be me who would, in fact, write his. And here I am, sadly doing so, and my heart bleeds!

I also knew him as an accomplished professional, a powerful and redoubtable journalist and a creditable media trainer. Before I took over as Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) Executive Secretary, we traversed the country together conducting training in journalism ethics, press club leadership skills, election reporting, investigative reporting and feature writing.

On March 30, 2012 Fili, as he was known to all and sundry, was the first person to be awarded the Lifetime Achievement in Journalism Award. It was conferred by President Jakaya Kikwete at the Diamond Jubilee in Dar es Salaam. The Awards are organised by MCT in collaboration with several partners as the pinnacle of the Excellence in Journalism Awards (EJAT).

Fili was one of those Tanzanian media professionals one could just not leave out when talking about accomplished journalism in the country. This guru did journalism for five whole decades as a reporter, feature writer, trainer, researcher and consultant, both in Tanzania and internationally. In his own words, he was "a child of the media".

Fili began his career in 1960 as an assistant bookshop manager in Dodoma, where he developed a habit of extensive reading and, later, prolific writing.

He got an opportunity to attend a journalism workshop in Kiomboi, Singida Region, organised by the Christian African Writing Centre - which was based in Kitwe, Zambia, emerging at the top of his class in the final test.

This feat enabled him to land a scholarship to study journalism in Kitwe, being one of 30 youths from Southern, East and West Africa. Upon graduating he was recruited as a reporter for the then newly established Target and Lengo, sister newspapers which had been launched jointly by the Christian councils of Kenya and Tanzania.

Two years later his employer sent him to pursue a diploma in journalism provided by the International Press



Fili Karashani (C) receives EJAT's Lifetime Achievement in Journalism Award from the chief guest, former President Jakaya Kikwete, on March 30, 2012

Institute. Again, he emerged at the top of his class of 30 students from across Southern and East Africa.

During graduation, he was approached by the editor of Kenya's Kiswahili daily Taifa Leo and offered a job. That was in 1964. Three months later he was "poached" by Kenya's Daily Nation, another Nation Media Group publication. He was the first Tanzanian in the newsroom of the Nairobi-based English paper.

From there, he never looked back.

To Fili, truth and accuracy constituted the bedrock of journalism. He once told me that his news editor at the Daily Nation, Mike Chester, was a mentor who had profound influence on him as a professional. Chester would not accept a story which did not answer the questions "why" and "how", he would say.

The young Fili covered civil strife, drought and famine in Wajir at the Somali/Kenya border and, as happened, some of the stories he wrote incensed Kenya's Agriculture minister of the time, Jeremiah Nyagah. However, thanks mainly to the reporter's adherence to truth and accuracy, the politician could not do much about it.

Fili also reported a myriad of problems and challenges in Daniel Toroitich arap Moi's Baringo constituency. Moi, by then Internal Affairs minister, was far from amused -

and sent the police for him.

When Fili arrived, the powerful minister looked at him in disbelief and shouted: "So this is Kaarachani! I thought he was an Indian! Kwenda!" The initial threat had been to lock him up; but again, truth and accuracy carried the day. When Tom Mboya was assassinated, it was Fili - yet again - who covered the traumatic event.

In 1967 Fili was transferred to Dar es Salaam. Most of the front page stories on Tanzania appearing in the Daily Nation then were written by him.

Upon returning to Nairobi, Fili climbed the ladder - from reporter to chief parliamentary reporter, columnist and later sub-editor.

But then he decided that he needed more education. He joined the University of Dar es Salaam and graduated in 1978; then moved on to do a Master's at Queens University in

Canada, graduating in 1981. After university, Fili joined Tanzania's government-owned Daily News before moving to the Tanzania School of Journalism (TSJ) - also government-run - as a tutor.

While at TSJ he also wrote internationally, including for the premier African news and feature publication, Africa Now, as well as the Inter Press News Agency (IPS).

But this did not sit well with his employer, who viewed it as double employment. When the going got rough, Fili left the school and was almost immediately offered a job by IPS who stationed him in Rome and later in Harare - as a Bureau Chief.

He returned to Tanzania in 1989 as founding editor of Business Times, a paper he launched together with colleagues Richard Mbuguni, Narendra Joshi, Ali Chimbyangu and Richard Nyaulawa.

In 1991 Fili assumed the editorship of the Southern Africa Economist in Harare, before returning to Dar es Salaam for the founding of The Guardian - and later Sunday Observer. From 2005 to 2006 he worked at Mwananchi Communications Limited's The Citizen as Training Editor.

In the last years of his life, Fili, an editor and trainer who nurtured many Tanzanian journalists, continued to train, especially in investigative skills, feature writing, as well as journalism ethics. He also provided consultancy services.

He wrote for a number of professional journals, including MCT's Scribes and The Global Journalist, a publication of the School of Journalism at Missouri University in the US.

Among the books he wrote or contributed to are: To Write or Not to Write - Ethical Concerns in Journalism; Poverty Reporting - A Manual for Tanzanian Journalists; Media Ethics: Duties and Responsibilities; Feature Writing Manual; and Investigative Journalism Practice in Tanzania.

Fili was once a Secretary General of the Kenya Union of Journalists and in the last years of his life, before infirmity put him down, he was chairman of the Dar es Salaam-based Tanzania Press Centre.

Fili Karashani was born on August 23, 1938 in Dodoma. His father was an Anglican pastor by the name of Yakobo Kagina, while his mother was called Blandina.

Fili and his wife, Geraldina, were blessed with five children: Magezi, Baraka, Kagina, Koku and Bahati. Baraka, who became a journalist like his father, died some years back. Upon Baraka's death, Fili quipped that the son should have buried him, and not the other way round. "Baraka was always in such a hurry!" he jokingly remarked. Fili is also survived by eight grand children.

**Kajubi Mukajanga is Executive Secretary of the Media Council of Tanzania.**

# Women taking charge during Covid-19

NEW YORK

AS the COVID-19 mayhem carries on in most countries, the role of mothers, daughters, and female caregivers have been affected the most. Besides looking after the household and home schooling children, they are also working on the front lines, actively or passively caring for their respective communities.

Globally, women make up the majority of workers in the health and social welfare sectors. Nearly one in three women work in agriculture and women do three times as much unpaid care-work at home as men. Two such women shared their stories with the IPS about giving back to their communities in their own adaptive ways.

Ferdousee Hossain, 24, is a retired teacher, mother of two and grandmother of three. She runs a few unnamed charities and two schools for rural villagers. In her late 60s now, she never thought she would face a situation like COVID-19 where she would be constrained and isolated. She feels alone, not being able to see her family and especially the children in schools.

During the month of Ramadan, in most Muslim countries, charity work reaches its peak and donations are gathered that sustain funds for the entire year. For her charity network, where she works hands-on, it has been very challenging to coordinate, but she has adapted to still serve where it has hit the most.

Thanks to Ferdousee, seven families of 45 members and an orphanage of 52 children under the age of 15 are surviving in the district of Barisal in Bangladesh, all whilst practicing social distancing for the last two months.



A Rohingya woman crosses the border from Myanmar into Bangladesh near the village of Anzuman Para in Palong Khali. File photo

In her own words to IPS Ferdousee says, "I have put unlimited internet data on our cell phones and I call each family every day, delivering and coordinating relief work so they can survive. Since I am in the capital Dhaka, I use video calls to personally see the situation in the villages and verify

with the appointed team member. Yesterday a girl needed \$60 (5000 takas) for immediate medicine and treatment for someone who is battling cancer. An 18-month-old child needed powdered milk and emergency care.

"We have kept separate funds for

such sudden needs. I have formed a chain of 'relay-ers' and our team distributes food and daily supplies after verifying with other members. I have to pay out-of-pocket for the team who are working on the front lines but in the current situation it is the least I can do", she adds.

According to Ferdousee, it is difficult to send cash because it can be stolen. "We have faced fraud too, where people fake names and collect money sent by phone. So, we make sure that no cash is distributed. These people live under the poverty line, and on a regular day, they may earn less than \$7 supporting a household of four."

With COVID-19 lockdown in effect street sellers, small businesses, hawkers stalls, rickshaw pullers and domestic help are all without work. Many chose to go back to their villages to save themselves from starvation. Local aid organizations have stepped up, but many are still going hungry without any work and do not know where aid is available.

"We ask around and get information from authentic sources and then get supplies delivered at their door," says Hossain, adding, "one of the village schools I run had 250 children. Now most have gone to stay at their home. Among them, 52 children are orphans and live in the adjacent orphanage. So, we are making sure they have food and safety and a routine is in place. Only 2 teachers who live on the premises go to get groceries always maintaining social distancing. Donations have been generated from North America and Canada and I am hoping to source more."

From the Khulna District, Ruksana Akhter, a doctor and mother of three said she has been a healthcare worker for more than 15 years. When the news of COVID-19 broke, they had to make tough decisions as a family.

Ruksana stated to IPS "Every night I come home, I get scared for my own life and for my children. I wait outside and my older daughter sprays me down. We have ten thousand plus cases reported so far in Bangladesh and it might spread more. I work in

the maternity ward and serve on the front lines. We have been supplied PPE but measures are still inadequate."

"I am the only adult in the house and my daughter is just 17. I worry what will happen if I get infected? Their father is working in the Coronavirus cell and is serving patients day and night. He has left the house to keep us protected and is staying at the hospital quarters. It has been more than two months that I have not seen him."

Ruksana said "it is a relief to know that people are surviving but every time the phone rings at night a shiver runs down my spine and I take a deep breath before answering the phone. We are health care personnel and the country depends on our services."

"It is challenging and mentally taxing for us," she continued. "One of my friends died, and another colleague who is a doctor herself is now battling Coronavirus. As a mother, I have to keep mentally stable and come back to my children, smiling. As a wife, I have to support my husband over the phone to keep him motivated. We talk at times when he gets a chance, but I can feel his desperation."

Women's economic empowerment boosts productivity, increases economic diversification and income equality in addition to other positive development outcomes. Empowering women in the economy and closing gender gaps in the world of work is key to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. By 2030, The United Nations has planned to progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 percent of the population at a rate higher than the national average. It can be concluded that if women, especially in developing countries, are facilitated with better support it will create a ripple effect of growth.

Agencies



# Chinese enterprises lend big hand to Africa to combat Covid-19

By Li Yingyan

CHINESE enterprises, while maintaining strict containment measures at home, are actively helping Africa upgrade its hospitals to cope with the exacerbating COVID-19 pandemic on the continent with a vision to build a community with a shared future for mankind.

"Chinese speed" once again proved its value by assisting African countries to fight the disease.

The Addis Ababa Silk Road General Hospital (ASRGH) is the first Chinese-invested hospital in Ethiopia. It started official operation last November, and was designated as a major facility for COVID-19 patients March this year by the Ethiopian government, which required renovation to the quarantine wards.

To help the country better cope with the health crisis, China State Construction Engineering Ethiopian Plc. offered free renovation service for the hospital, and soon established a work team consisting of over 30 employees from both China and Ethiopia.

Working around the clock, the team finished the task in just 5 days and delivered the transformed wards to the hospital.

On April 13, the first critically ill COVID-19 patient received by the ASRGH was discharged after 15 days of treatment. "The recovery of the patient enhanced our confidence to fight the disease, and helped us gain valuable experiences."

said Wang Jianhua, president of the hospital. So far, the hospital has received four COVID-19 patients in critical conditions, and the second is about to be discharged.

Ethiopian Minister of Health Lia Tadesse lauded China's efforts and achievements in combating the virus, saying the country is worth learning from. She said the ASRGH aided by China will play an increasingly important role for Ethiopia in preventing the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ethiopian newspaper Daily Monitor recently reported that the Chinese enterprises helped Ethiopia renovate the designated hospital in the shortest time, saying China has lent a helping hand of friendship at the difficult time. China is the most reliable friend of Ethiopia, the newspaper added.

Zimbabwe's Wilkins Hospital in its capital Harare is another designated hospital for receiving COVID-19 patients upgraded by Chinese constructors. Due to the lack of maintenance, the aging facilities at the hospital failed to meet the standards of a quarantine hospital.

Learning the information, Chinese enterprises soon responded with renovation plans. According to Zhou Xuegong, executive chairman of board of Jin An Corporation, one of the constructors upgrading the Wilkins Hospital, the construction teams worked non-stop after the project implemented, and finished the renovation in 10



days. That's why the Wilkins Hospital is now called Huoshenshan of Zimbabwe by locals.

Vice mayor of Harare Cllr Enock Mupamawonde commended the "Chinese speed," saying the fast upgrading of Wilkins Hospital enhanced confidence of the people in his country.

Senegal Women and Children's Hospital aided by China's Jiangsu Provincial Construction Group and China Railway First Group Co., Ltd. was completed last December. It was designated by Senegal's

**Members of a Chinese medical team wave on a plane heading for Zimbabwe at Huanghua International Airport in Changsha, central China's Hunan Province, yesterday. China has sent a team of 12 medical experts to Zimbabwe to help with the African country's fight against COVID-19. (Xinhua)**

health authority as a hospital for COVID-19 patients this March.

Gong Zhen, head of Jiangsu Provincial Construction Group's Senegal-aiding project, introduced that the Chinese side actively responded to the Senegal's health department and soon finished the rearrangement of facilities and the upgrading of the quarantine section for the hospital.

As of the end of March, 59 COVID-19 patients had received treatment at the Senegalese hospital, and 10 had been discharged. A woman surnamed Catherine who developed a fever soon after returning from the UK at the end of February was confirmed to have contracted the novel coronavirus and admitted by

the Senegal Women and Children's Hospital. The woman, who's about to be discharged soon, expressed her gratitude to China for building hospital and training medical personnel. She said she hopes Senegal would have more hospitals like this.

Senegalese President Macky Sall also extended his appreciation for China's support, saying the Senegalese will always remember China for building and upgrading the hospitals, sending preventative materials from thousands of miles away, and the generous donations made by Chinese enterprises and Chinese people in his country.

The timely upgrading of the hospitals by Chinese enterprises at the critical

moment demonstrated the profound relationship between the Chinese and Senegalese, said Senegalese newspaper Le Soleil in a report.

Chinese enterprises are also seen in other African countries assisting local efforts to combat the novel coronavirus pneumonia. They renovated two makeshift hospitals with 450 beds in Nigeria free of charge and finished upgrading of a quarantine hospital in Huambo, Angola in just three days.

The Chinese enterprises' concrete actions to assist Africa in the coronavirus pandemic once again prove that China and Africa have always been a community with a shared future.

People's Daily

## World's factory turns to domestic market amid global Covid-19 recession

FUZHOU

WALKING back and forth between shelves of neatly stacked shoes, some 20 live streamers dashed at the instructions of their followers on the phone, grabbing a shoe now and then from the shelves for a close-up in front of the camera.

At around eight o'clock every night, the supply chain platform 0594 in the city of Putian, east China's Fujian Province, springs to life as live streamers flock to the exhibition area to sell shoes produced by the local manufacturers, many of which are troubled by the cancellations or delays of overseas orders amid the global coronavirus pandemic.

"To get rid of the excess inventory, many manufacturers in Putian are turning to live streaming to explore the domestic market," said Chen Xing, general manager of 0594. "We are now cooperating with over 40 manufacturers and there will be more of them joining us in the future."

The platform is also building an internet celebrity incubator and has so far organized seven rounds of influencer training courses enrolling more than 200 attendees.

Huang Huafang, 39, signed up for the two-day crash course in late March and soon after started her first live streaming session. She works from around 2 p.m. to 10 p.m., attracting over 500 followers and selling more than 20 pairs of shoes every day.

Though she is not a well-known live streamer, she is optimistic about the future. "There is a long way to go, but I believe live streaming is a trend. It is an essential skill for anyone who wants to market online," said Huang.

According to Chen, the platform 0594 sold almost 130,000 pairs of shoes in April alone. As the domestic economic outlook continues to pick up, the sales target of May has been set at 200,000 pairs.

Like manufacturers in Putian, a city with a large number of export-oriented enterprises, many Chinese factories are turning to the domestic market for a lifeline, while grappling with dropping overseas orders as major markets remain in the grip of the pandemic.

ADAPT OR DIE

With decades of experience in man-

ufacturing and developing products for overseas clients, some export-oriented companies in China are rolling out products catering to the domestic market.

After months of gloomy business, Wu Songlin, general manager of Putian-based Hsieh Shun Footwear Co., Ltd., heaved a sigh of relief as trucks loaded with therapeutic shoes tailored to the home market left his factory.

It was the first shipment for the domestic market since Wu and his partners started the company in 2010. In the past, his company only had two clients, one from Europe and the other from Japan. Business used to run smoothly and life was good.

But his factory was on the brink of a shutdown in March when the coronavirus pandemic started to ravage the global economy. No new orders came in and shipments of existing orders were requested to be delayed until June.

"Orders were canceled after completion of production, and our capital flow is stuck in our inventory. The pressure is mounting to keep the factory running," Wu said. "By the end of June, workers would be left with no work to do as soon as we complete the existing orders."

After losing almost all their orders from overseas clients, the desperate shoemaker turned to the domestic market. He called one of his old business partners and secured an order for massage footwear, which is selling like hot cakes in the domestic market as health tops the agenda in the time of the novel coronavirus.

The factory produced 10,000 pairs of massage shoes in April, and the number is expected to reach 30,000 in May, enough to keep the production lines running.

Thanks to the company's quick adaptation, about 200 workers kept their jobs in the factory, while 20 percent were furloughed and the remaining workers were arranged to work in other companies as part of the city's employee sharing program.

"If domestic orders keep coming in, our operation will hopefully get back to normal by September when the monthly output of massage shoes will reach 90,000," Wu said. "By then the company will live and thrive without any orders from overseas customers."

But switching to another market is not easy, explained Wu. In the past,



People work in a footwear workshop in Putian, southeast China's Fujian Province, April 27, 2020. (Xinhua)

export-oriented factories were only in charge of manufacturing, while brands would take care of sales, promotion as well as customer support.

"If you are selling to the domestic market, you need to have your own brand and marketing capacity," he said. "Working with e-commerce platforms could be one way out, but it's more important to understand domestic consumers and meet their needs."

CUSTOMIZE THE FUTURE

For years, many export-focused manufacturers have been trying to climb up the value chain and tap the uncharted waters of the domestic market. As the pandemic continues to spread, there is a strong push for them to embrace customized manufacturing.

In an experience store located in downtown Putian, customers line up waiting to have their feet measured on a smart device. After a few seconds, they get their readings on the phone, and a few swipes and clicks later, they place their orders with unique features, colors, and shapes.

Adjacent to the experience store, there is

a flexible manufacturing workshop, which gives quick responses to orders and produces shoes following the customized demands of individual buyers.

SEMS, a longstanding sports footwear manufacturer that has established a partnership with several international brands, started to adopt flexible manufacturing years ago in an effort to adapt to the evolving domestic market.

Customization gives consumers the benefit of products that fit their needs, and at the same time allows factories to utilize improved workflows and technology to maintain high output and omit the process of inventory and distribution, said Zhu Yizhen, the executive vice president of the company.

"Currently we only sell over 100 pairs of customized shoes a day, but we are at the dawn of a new era," Zhu said. "We hope more companies awaken to the developing trend and join in the practice of mass customization."

Customer to manufacturer, or C2M, which allows consumers to place orders directly to factories for customized products, has be-

come a buzzword among export-oriented manufacturers hoping to reach domestic consumers amid the pandemic.

Li Junjie, who runs a ceramic flowerpot plant in Fujian's Dehua County, one of the manufacturing centers of ceramics in China, did not sell a single pot to his overseas customers since the coronavirus outbreak in late January.

The factory used to export 30 percent of its flowerpots to the United States and Spain, but Li managed to make up for the lost deals by selling on domestic e-commerce platforms. Instead of bulk orders placed by foreign clients, domestic consumers tend to purchase customized products in small amounts.

With the big data provided by e-commerce platforms, Li can tell which items will be a hit so as to increase their production and develop new products based on a thorough analysis of different consumer groups.

"Our online sales almost doubled over the past year, and we have sold over 100,000 customized pots this year, thanks to the C2M business model," Li said.

Li's company is one of many Chinese small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that have benefited from the e-commerce giant Alibaba's Spring Thunder Initiative, which is aimed at helping export-focused SMEs expand into new markets.

The initiative will also help some SMEs to transform and develop their business in the Chinese market through measures such as resource support, fee reductions, and fast-track processing.

Xinhua



# EU names four African nations for financial crimes watchlist

**BRUSSELS** ETHIOPIA and Tunisia have been removed, but four African nations are now on a financial crimes watch list issued by the European Union. Botswana, Ghana, Mauritius and Zimbabwe are identified as high-risk countries for money laundering and the potential for funding terrorism, according to an EU statement. The additions are meant to bring the EU effort to prevent financial crimes in line with the work of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), a global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog group that also lists Uganda as a country of concern. "We need to put an end to dirty money infiltrating our financial system," said Valdis Dombrovskis, the EU executive vice-president for economic affairs, as he introduced a comprehensive anti-money laundering plan. "There should be no weak links in our rules and their implementation," he added. "We are committed to delivering on all these actions - swiftly and consistently - over the next 12 months. We are also strengthening the EU's global role in terms of shaping international standards on fighting money laundering and terrorism financing." The new EU plan is meant to coordinate how the rules are applied in member states, which varies despite the fact that they extend to all European Union nations. The EU also plans to establish a supervisory role to cover states in a comprehensive fashion instead of the current independent supervision within countries. The measures are meant to address loopholes identified by the EU last year. The new list of high-risk nations will now go to European Parliament for approval within the next 60 days.

## Air pollution in cities 'up sharply in last 45 years'

By Eldon Opiyo

INCREASED air pollution in East Africa as revealed by decreasing visibility data over the last 45 years suggests that the sub-region is at high risk of pollution-related effects including diseases, a study says.

The three cities - Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, Nairobi in Kenya and Kampala in Uganda - have undergone rapid population surge, with increased citywide fuel use and motorisation leading to a rise in a mixture of extremely small particles and liquid droplets into the air, thus aiding visibility loss, adds the study published in Environmental Research Letters last month.

According to a World Bank report, indoor use of solid fuels could lead to about 390,000 premature deaths in Africa annually while urban outdoor pollution is associated with 49,000 deaths, with Sub-Saharan Africa bearing the main burden.

But the study says that lack of good quality historic air pollution data in Sub-Saharan Africa makes it difficult to understand the current air quality situation and to estimate the future air quality trajectory.

The study, which used visibility as a proxy for air pollution used data on Addis Ababa, Nairobi and Kampala for 1974 to 2018, found significant visibility decrease, allowing researchers to estimate that air pollution increased by 62 per cent in Addis Ababa, 162 per cent in Kampala and 182 per cent in Nairobi.

"Our study provides a much improved understanding of the past

patterns of air pollution in East Africa using historical visibility and meteorological data," says Ajit Singh, the study's lead author and a postdoctoral research fellow in the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences at the UK-based University of Birmingham. "High rates of urbanisation and population growth can affect air quality in these cities."

Researchers obtained meteorological data with a focus on the three cities using a tool called worldmet package for 1974 to 2018, and analysed the presence of a mixture of small particles and liquid droplets into the air over monthly, annual and seasonal cycles.

"Overall, a significant loss in East African visibility was observed since the 1970s where Nairobi shows the greatest loss (60 per cent) as compared to Kampala (56 per cent) and Addis Ababa (34 per cent)," the study says. Reduced visibility is an indicator of poor air quality and increased pollution.

Singh explains that the study focused on Kampala, Addis Ababa and Nairobi because they are the fastest growing cities in East Africa in terms of population, infrastructure, industrialisation and motorisation.

"This work greatly improves the data gap and provides a practical understanding of East African air quality trends and associated socio-economic consequences of poor air quality, which had never been attempted before," Singh tells SciDev.Net.

Africa is not well-equipped with air quality monitoring because of the high cost of air quality monitoring



equipment including their appropriate calibration and certification, he explains. He adds that unless systematic approaches with effective interventions are applied to control the air pollution in East Africa, increased pollution levels resulting from fast developments processes and activities could occur.

Charles Sebukeera, a research scientist and programme officer at the UN Environment Programme in Kenya, says that the study is important and is part of the efforts to build evidence

on the increasing trend of air pollution in East Africa, which is attributable to increase in emissions resulting from human activities.

"Such analyses are needed to support [the work] of policymakers," he adds.

But he explains that although the capacity to measure and deal with air quality monitoring is limited, there has been progress on air quality monitoring efforts in Kampala and Addis Ababa with publicly available data.

"At present there are few countries such as

Uganda and Ethiopia with capacity to monitor [air quality]. It is also important to link the [air quality] monitoring to policy to reduce pollution," he says, adding that key interventions to reduce air pollution from industries, households, cars and trucks include waste management and use of renewable energy.

Sebukeera explains that because falling visibility is linked to development, there is need to strike a balance between economic development and reducing major air pollution by investing in clean technologies such as clean energy.

## Rescuing Africa's orphan crops with biotechnology could help feed millions of hungry people

By Uchechi Moses

THE year is 2100 and Africa is home to the world's largest population of young people, with its current leader - Nigeria - having close to a billion people in a territory smaller than the State of Alaska. Although it's projected that some of the countries behind this phenomenal growth will be among the fastest-growing economies globally, this does not take into account the potential food shortages that

could result from the deleterious effects of climate change, water shortages, arid environments and famines exacerbated by conflicts in different parts of the continent.

Currently, the world decries that more than 821 million people - more than ten percent of the global population - do not eat enough nutritious food to live a healthy and productive life, which further translates to one in nine people going to bed hungry every day and about

three million dying annually from malnutrition. Sadly, this figure is expected to rise in the coming decades and much of it will probably come from the global south.

Currently, the world decries that more than 821 million people - more than ten percent of the global population - do not eat enough nutritious food to live a healthy and productive life, which further translates to one in nine people going to bed hungry every day and about

three million dying annually from malnutrition. Sadly, this figure is expected to rise in the coming decades and much of it will probably come from the global south.

Although the continent possesses 60% of the world's unused arable land, African countries are among the worst hit by global food shortages (in terms of nutritional content of food and crop yields), and much of their food must be imported. For instance, Nigeria spends

slightly above \$3 million dollars daily importing rice, a crop almost every Nigerian eats. Can you imagine how much will be spent on food imports in the next century if farm production is not increased?

The green revolution of the 1960s contributed to phenomenal growth in agriculture - reducing hunger, malnutrition and increasing exports - across India, Pakistan, Malaysia, China and Indonesia, with the expertise of agricultural scientists and

funding from capitalists granting some of the world's poorest countries a reprieve from poverty.

Africa missed the green revolution, sadly. But there is a way to defuse the continent's impending food shortage time bomb. By funding research into so-called orphan crops, commercially neglected but vitally important staple foods in Africa, governments, international organizations and advocacy groups can help the continent's exploding

population launch its own green revolution, with the help of modern crop breeding technologies such as CRISPR-Cas9 gene editing.

Research into crop improvement and productivity has doubled in recent decades, mainly due to a vibrant seed industry and rising population, which cascade into increased demand for greater quantities of more nutritious food. But this increase has occurred unevenly. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to the vast

## Drones can help in winning war against Covid-19

JOHANNESBURG

THE Department of Transport (Dot) has put regulations in place against the flying of drones in terms of the Disaster Management Act. The regulations form part of the government's national lockdown to prevent the spread of the virus that has infected thousands of South Africans.

Governments and industries around the globe have found themselves in a position where they have to adapt to the new realities and implement innovative strategies of operating whilst keeping their workers at a safe distance to prevent transmission.

The use of drones by the Chinese government is one such innovative strategy.

The Chinese government has been piloting ways to incorporate drones into their response to Covid-19, namely for aerial spray and disinfection; Transport of samples; and Drone delivery for essential goods.

The co-founder of agricultural drone company XAG stated that using drones which were originally designed to spray pesticides in the agricultural industry have been adapted for aerial spray of disinfectant for use in China.

He confirmed that aerial spray of disinfectant can be 50 times more efficient than people spraying.

The benefit of using drones to transport medical samples is that it can reduce unnecessary human contact and therefore, the transmission of the virus significantly. The samples are also delivered much faster via air compared to road travel, which accelerates the feedback process for critical tests needed by medical workers and patients.

Lastly, the utilisation of drones for the delivery of consumer goods such as food and basic necessities, makes it easier for citizens to comply with the regulations regarding social distancing and limiting human contact.

In order to circumvent the obvious safety risks that are associated with the use of drones, such as injuring people or damaging property, the Municipal Governments in China, its health department, major drone company Antwork and the Civil Aviation Administration of China worked in collaboration to approve routes and ensure proper safety measures were implemented.

The question is whether South Africa could successfully utilise drones for similar functions in our war against Covid-19 and whether our regulatory framework allows for it.

The Eighth Amendment to the Civil Aviation Regulations ("the

Regulations") was introduced in 2015 and governs, in Part 101, the operation of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems ("RPAS"), described in the Regulations as an unmanned aircraft which is piloted from a remote pilot station, which includes drones.

There is a distinction in the Regulations between private use versus commercial use of RPAS. If drones are to be used for the three functions detailed above, this falls under the commercial use category.

An RPA will only be allowed to operate for commercial reasons if it has been issued with a letter of approval by the Director of Civil Aviation; it has been issued with a certificate of registration by the Director of Civil Aviation; an RPAS Operating Certificate ("ROC") has been issued; and an air services licence has been issued in terms of the Air Services Licensing Act, 1990.

In terms of the regulations, a ROC holder is required, inter alia, to develop an operations manual containing all the information required to demonstrate how such operator will ensure compliance with the regulations and how safety standards will be applied and achieved during such operations; establish a record-keeping that allows adequate storage and reliable traceability of all activities



developed; establish a safety management system commensurate with the size of the organisation or entity; conduct security checks on personnel employed in deployment, ensure the RPA is protected from personal interference, ensure that security awareness training is conducted.

Furthermore, the operator is required to obtain an RPA pilot's licence. In order to acquire the licence, it requires the pilot to undergo medical certification, certification of radiotelephony, English proficiency, flight training, and passing both a theoretical examination and skills test.

The licence is valid for 24 months and applicants must be over 18 years old. The licence holder will have to undergo a revalidation check 90 days prior to the expiry of the licence in order to renew it.

In terms of regulation 101.05.4 of Part 101 of the Regulations, it provides that - "No object or substance shall be released, dispensed, dropped, delivered or deployed from an RPA except by the holder of an ROC and as approved by the Director in the operators' operations manual".

In order for a company to use drones for aerial spray of disinfectant, sample transport or consumer delivery in the time of Covid-19, it would be required that the holder of an ROC includes this

plan in the operators' operations manual, which has to be approved by the Director of Civil Aviation.

As is apparent from the above, the regulations for commercial use of a drone are extremely stringent with many approvals and oversight required by the Civil Aviation Authority.

However, the regulations are strict in order to ensure safety, top-notch security and adequate training, in order to protect against the potential infringement of people's human rights, such as privacy, dignity and safety. Furthermore, if the regulations were relaxed, it would create an opportunity for abuse and for criminals to use drones for illegal activity.



# How to return to work safely once the economy restarts – after Covid-19

By Robert Roy Britt

**M**OST people have little control over when or whether they can – or have to – go back to work, as health officials, politicians, and companies make decisions about restarting the economy.

However, there are several steps many workers can take, particularly office workers, to reduce the risk of infection for themselves and co-workers when they do go back. These measures dovetail with preventive steps bosses and business owners can take in order to avoid fresh outbreaks and keep their workers safe.

Beyond ensuring adequate testing and contact tracing for Covid-19, the most important measure to help prevent the spread of the disease in the workplace involves bringing only critical workers back initially – the minimum needed to get a given business rolling. This is what Joseph Allen, DSc, assistant professor of exposure-assessment science at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, says.

Beyond that, the solutions are many, and they should all be employed. “There’s no silver bullet here,” says Allen, a forensic investigator of sick buildings, in which employees fall ill due to mold, bacteria or other pathogens that often prove difficult to find, and co-author of the new book Healthy Buildings.

## How Covid-19 spreads

Understanding the range of protective measures requires an understanding of the ways SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes Covid-19, is now thought to spread: by direct contact with an infected person; when infected respiratory droplets from a cough, a sneeze, talking, laugh-

ing, singing, or breathing fall to surfaces that are then touched by another person; when smaller infected droplets, called aerosols, stay suspended in the air for several minutes and are inhaled or ingested by others; and through human stool.

“The question of which mode dominates is largely irrelevant,” Allen argues. It doesn’t matter if a given infectious pathway is responsible for 2 per cent or 50 per cent of cases, and we may never find out (these percentages are not known for the flu, he points out). What matters is taking precautions to limit each form of spread.

“We should be throwing everything we have at this virus, which includes controls for all modes of transmission,” Allen told reporters in a conference call last month.

His suggestions reflect best practices to prepare workplaces for Covid-19 adopted by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Allen lists out three pillars for a safer workplace, the first being improving sanitisation. Sanitising commonly touched surfaces at work – door handles, elevator buttons, desks, phones, coffee machines – is obviously vital.

While it is conceivable that employees could help with this, the task is not small, and employers must do the bulk of the dirty work themselves or hire professionals. It involves a two-step process of cleaning with soap and water and then sanitising with a disinfectant such as a diluted solution of bleach or isopropyl alcohol – as per CDC instructions.

There are additional risks you may be less aware of lurking in the bathroom, which you can help lessen. Research shows that flushing a toilet generates aerosols that can float around for up to 30 minutes. If that toilet contains the faeces of an infected

person, well, you get the idea.

The remedies are simple: If the toilet has a lid, close it before flushing, Allen suggests. If there’s an exhaust fan, leave it running when you leave the bathroom. Don’t go into the bathroom right after someone else. And, of course, wash your hands properly and often.

Companies with the means could use the current downtime to consider installing touch-free faucets and toilets and even touch-free bathroom doors, Allen suggests.

## Two: Improve ventilation and filtration

The World Health Organisation and the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention have been slow to emphasize that the coronavirus may be spreading through the air, beyond the six feet typically advised for physical separation, Allen and other experts have argued. “There are many of us in my field that are convinced that the science says airborne transmission is happening.”

To visualise why this matters, think of someone with bad breath, Allen suggests. “When you’re really close to them or right in front of them, you know it. But further away, they’re still emitting but it’s not going to be as potent.” It’s similar with the coronavirus. Larger respiratory droplets will fall nearby. Aerosols will waft and disperse.

Scientists don’t know how many coronavirus particles it takes to make someone sick, but experience with other viral diseases suggests that the dose matters. Therefore, Allen says, it’s important to dilute the concentration in a given space. That can be done simply by opening windows. Several studies have shown that increasing ventilation by opening windows reduces the spread of disease in general.

Employers should install high-



© Getty Images/AFP

grade filters (with a rating of MERV 13 or better) in their heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, Allen says. “It doesn’t really cost all that much to upgrade your filter to a higher grade,” he points out. It’s not entirely clear how effective this can be, however.

“Filtration in building heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems can be a part of an overall risk mitigation approach but is not generally regarded as a solution by itself,” states the National Air Filtration Association, a nonprofit that represents the industry.

“There is no direct scientific evidence of benefit, but some reduced exposure can reasonably be inferred based on the ability of some filters to remove particles that contain a SARS-CoV-2 virus,” it notes.

Portable air purifiers, though not cheap, can also reduce risk, Allen says. High-quality air purifiers, including those with HEPA filters, can indeed remove germs from the environment, and experts think this is true for the coronavirus as well, according to Consumer Reports.

## Three: Reduce density and don’t mask the realities

Today’s open office plans, with desks crowded next to each other and cubicle walls removed, present unique challenges amid a viral pandemic. But the challenges can be overcome, Allen says.

First, as more and more workers return, businesses should consider creating separate shifts, or alternate work days, so that fewer people are in the office at a given time. Conference rooms should be closed.

There are ways to improve physical distancing that employees can implement, too. If your desk faces another, try moving them to create an offset angle so that respiratory droplets and aerosols are directed into walls or open aisles instead of directly at each other.

Some businesses are considering the installation of plexiglass barriers between office workstations, and even a possible return to the once outdated cubicle.

Somewhat surprisingly, the least effective measure, in the grand scheme of protecting most workers outside of health care professionals and first responders, is wearing a mask or other personal protective equipment (PPE), Allen and other experts say.

Do it, they advise, but just know that it comes after all the priorities above in terms of effectiveness. “There’s a role for PPE, for sure,” he says. But he’s concerned that employers will consider PPE the best or only defence: “You don’t give someone a mask and say ‘Well, our responsibilities are done.’”

Whether employees are encouraged or required to wear face masks will come

down to state and local health department guidelines or individual company decisions. There’s no “law of the land” on this.

“If public health professionals recommend widespread use of PPE, such as masks, it will require clarity as to what is needed and who is responsible for providing such equipment, especially if shortages persist,” Suzanne Clark, president of the US Chamber of Commerce, said in a letter to members last month. If face masks are to be relied on, people need to know how to wear them properly.

Allen recommends masks especially in areas where employees gather, and particularly in elevators.

New York City’s Health Department, which knows a thing or two about elevators, suggests that the buttons be sanitised regularly, and everyone should maintain the six-foot separation rule, in line and inside the elevator. Yes, that means a potentially long wait or, as the city suggests, taking the stairs.

OSHA also advises companies to provide hand sanitiser and additional tissue boxes and trash receptacles, to actively promote proper hygiene, and to encourage sick employees to stay home.

The agency provides more in-depth advice based on exposure risks that differ by job type, such as controlling the number of customers in a retail store or providing gloves and eye protection to employees in high-risk jobs.

Allen stresses that none of these measures will make sense if we don’t first have wide-scale testing to know when people are infected or if they might be immune, and widespread contact tracing to notify people who might have contracted the disease. And, he says, nothing will eliminate all the risk as decisions are made to get the economy rolling again.

“There’s no such thing as zero risk,” he says, adding: “The goal here is to minimise risk.”

*A dispatch in Elemental, a new Medium publication about health and wellness. Robert Roy Britt is former editor-in-chief of Live Science and Space.com, author of the science thriller “5 Days to Landfall”.*

# The future of mass disinfection as weapon in war against Covid-19

By Drew Costley

**L**AST week, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that it is studying ways to disinfect large public spaces, like schools or office buildings, in order to slow the spread of Covid-19.

The research will be used to guide public agencies and private businesses around the country on how to kill potential traces of the virus in their facilities.

The EPA already maintains a registry of disinfectants, like Barbicide, Asepticare and Cavicide, which have been approved to kill the novel coronavirus.

However, because people and institutions around the country have inquired about the safety of new deep cleaning tools that aren’t on the official registry, the agency is now studying the efficacy of ultraviolet light, ozone molecules, steam and electrostatic sprayers and

foggers, equipped with EPA-approved disinfectants, for large-scale cleaning efforts.

“People have asked us, ‘Can I use a UV lamp or can I use an ozone generator to clean off packages when they come into our facility?’ or ‘Can I use them for cleaning up or disinfecting a room or perhaps the inside of a vehicle?’” Greg Sayles, PhD, director of the EPA’s Centre for Environmental Solutions and Emergency Response, tells OneZero. “The EPA doesn’t really know how well they work and we don’t really know how to best apply them,” he notes.

The EPA, with funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, is looking into how effective the disinfectant tools are at killing the coronavirus on different types of surfaces. For the ones that work well, they’ll develop guidelines for using them.

“That kind of thing would be applica-

ble if, sadly, we have another pandemic,” says Sayles.

While the EPA’s research is just beginning, several other countries – and even some institutions in the United States – are already using disinfectants on a large scale. Photos published last month in The Atlantic show workers in China, the Philippines, Iran, Italy and several other countries, many in hazmat suits, spraying large clouds and streams of disinfectant in offices as well as on city streets, escalators, and even people.

Applying disinfectants over large areas to mitigate the spread of Covid-19 has had mixed results. In one instance in China, more than 100 wild animals died of poisoning after Chongqing, a megacity in the southwestern part of the country, was sprayed with disinfectant.

Several health experts meanwhile told Reuters that mass disinfecting could be harmful to public health and is not as effective as targeted cleaning of



frequently used surfaces and promoting good personal hygiene.

“I don’t believe that it adds anything to the response and could be toxic on people,” Dr Dale Fisher told Reuters, adding: “The virus does not survive for long in the environment and people do not generally touch the ground.” Fisher is an infectious disease physician who chairs the World Health Organisation’s Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network.

But research published in the New England Journal of Medicine in mid-April found that Covid-19 can stay on some surfaces for up to 72 hours, suggesting that mass disinfection of indoor spaces has some use.

“You want to make sure that an indoor space is decontaminated before you allow people back in,” Joshua Santarpia, PhD, a professor of pathology and microbiology at the University of Nebraska Medical Centre, told the New York Times.

The EPA has had its eye on other countries’ mass disinfection efforts but wants to do more research before making any recommendations.

“I think it’s been very interesting to see these countries put those methods to work,” Sayles says, adding: “I think what we’re trying to do here is do a solid

scientific study to understand how well they work in order to inform our own use of them in this country.”

One method the EPA is studying is electrostatic sprayers. However, it is already being used in the United States to combat the coronavirus. These sprayers add a positive charge to disinfectant so that it better adheres to the surfaces they are meant to clean more than disinfectant from regular sprayers would.

Boston began using them to clean public schools in March. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority in the DC area has been using electrostatic sprayers on its subway cars since 2003.

The case is the same for Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), which runs through San Francisco. Jim Allison, a BART spokesperson, tells OneZero that after BART service ends for the night, trains are disinfected with electrostatic sprayers.

BART was using electrostatic sprayers with disinfectant before the Covid-19 outbreak began, but has started cleaning train stations and cars more frequently since the pandemic hit.

Some of the other methods are already being used, too. The Fort Lauderdale Fire Department has begun using ozone to disinfect its emergency

vehicles. The machine they are using releases ozone molecules into the air to kill off potential traces of the virus.

Dr William Schaffner, an infectious disease physician and professor at the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, told Shape that steam cleaning was, even before the coronavirus crisis, regularly used to disinfect medical equipment used in the laboratory.

And the EPA aren’t the only ones studying the use of certain types of UV light to disinfect large spaces. Universities and private companies are looking into the use of UV light to eradicate the coronavirus.

The EPA’s research on large-scale disinfectants could last up to a year, but they’re also looking for results within the next month that they can hopefully use to help contain this pandemic.

Sayles says that the work the EPA is doing now “absolutely” will have applications for future pandemics, which the world’s leading scientists predict will be more common.

*A dispatch in OneZero, a newsletter compelling tech stories in context. Drew Costley is a reporter, editor, photojournalist, and multi-media journalist who covers the environment, health, science and tech.*

## THE GUARDIAN SIMPLE WORD FIT // THE GUARDIAN CROSSWORD --00 82 00--

**WORD-FIT**

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

3 LETTERS: ACT, MAT, AOK  
 4 LETTERS: SCAR, ALLY, ABLE, ROON, EELS, UNIT ALOE,  
 5 LETTERS: PORTS, YEARN, THEME, HORSE, TONER  
 6 LETTERS: DETECT, PRESET, KRAKEN, PHASES, SENATE,  
 7 LETTERS: CHANNEL  
 8 LETTERS: MEANDERS  
 10 LETTERS: SLAVE TRADE

**CROSSWORD**

1 minutes, hours, days etc  
 2 call for, demand  
 3 Monetary unit of China  
 4 unarmed combat using the hands and feet to deliver and block blows  
 6 behave in a particular way  
 7 Oslo is the Capital city  
 9 building where dramatic performances are presented  
 12 abet, aid  
 14 a flat dish  
 16 at a higher level  
 17 Ruling party in Tanzania  
 18 the final part of something

**SOLUTIONS**

WORD-FIT: S U G A R C A N E S, O U F H S U D A N, O O L I M, I L R S D R, M A L L A D A P I, E G G S C A N O N, E D O D G E L I N, M E A S E L U, M A E O R E, E L E C T R I C, M A I D E N, E A, C R E S, A C I D E S S A Y, O D S, A C R E S, A C I D E S S A Y, C L I M A P E S, I R E F E R E S, R A C E A S, I D E A E S, Y E N D U R E, I B, E D G I N G





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# CAG says Petroleum Bulk not audited by PPRA since establishment a decade ago

By Smart Money Reporter

**P**ROUREMENT of goods and services by Petroleum Bulk Procurement Agency worth over 3bn/- annually is done without following public procurement regulations as laxity at Public Procurement Regulatory Authority has left the agency unaudited since establishment in 2016.

Controller and Auditor General Charles Kichere said in his maiden annual audit report as head of the national audit office that PBPA has also failed to put in place a procurement management unit or a tender board as required by law.

"Section 31 of PPA No.7 of 2011, require any public body to establishment tender board for procurement of goods, services, works and disposal of public assets by tender. Likewise, Section 37 requires procuring entities to establish PMU staffed to appropriate level. The Audit team noted that PBPA had neither composed Tender Board nor Procurement Management Unit," the CAG report said.

The report further added that in interviews with PBPA officials, auditors were told that lack of approved organization structure and small volume of procurements were the reasons for the shortfalls.

"Review of records revealed that, during the three years PBPA had spent about 3.3bn/- on procurement in the absence of a PMU and a Tender Board (TB). As a result, all public procurements undertaken were not being properly assessed by PMU and approved by



PBPA acting executive director Erasto Simon.

TB," the report noted.

The CAG further noted that due to such shortfalls, PBPA has had unplanned procurement throughout the audit period contrary to Section 49 of PPA No.7

of 2011 which requires that procuring entity prepare annual procurement plan to avoid emergency procurement, aggregate requirement and integrate procurement expenditure and budget.

"However, audit noted that, since 2015/16 when PBPA was established as per Government Notice (GN) 423 this agency has never prepared required annual procurement plans. Because of these procurement undertakings were done on ad-hoc basis," the CAG noted.

Other contraventions of the law by the PBPA include improper contract signing with most senior personnel holding office in acting positions.

"The audit noted that some of contracts were signed and witnessed by personnel in acting positions such as acting Finance Manager, acting Human Resource Manager and acting Supply Manager. This situation jeopardizes PBPA operations as accounting officer may not be aware of contracts signed and the contracts may not be enforceable by law in case of any disputes," the CAG warned.

The PBPA was also found to have inadequate records on procurement processes with a review of files showing that the agency does not keep records relating to procurement process as per PPRA procedural form.

"For procurement surveyors and petroleum bulk procurement some of the key information was in place. For other procurement undertak-

ings, only minutes, invoices and payment vouchers were presented for verification. This imposes a potential risk for some of necessary approvals to be overlooked by the accounting officer during the process," the CAG report stated.

The report also found out that there was no reporting on procurement transaction monthly and quarterly as required by the law.

"However, it was noted that, since its establishment PBPA did not submit any reports to PPRA to facilitate the required performance monitoring. This information relating to procurement at PBPA were not availed to PPRA," the report established.

The report however stated that PBPA officials said an organization structure was prepared and submitted to President Office Public Service Management and Good Governance for approval although, "No evidence was submitted to auditors in regards to the approval of the organization structure.

Recently, one procurement staff was temporarily transferred from the Ministry of Energy to facilitate procurement activities at PBPA," the CAG audit report added.

## International tourism numbers could plunge 80pct- UNWTO

GENEVA

WITH the Covid-19 pandemic resulting in a 22% slide in international tourist numbers for the first quarter of 2020, the crisis could result in a much more dire plunge of 60% to 80% this year.

This is according to the latest World Tourism Barometer report, published on Thursday by the Madrid-based UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). The report presents three possible scenarios, but paradoxically notes that these scenarios should not be "interpreted" as forecasts by the organisation.

"Prospects for the year have been downgraded several times since the [Covid-19] outbreak and uncertainty continues to dominate. Current scenarios point to possible declines in [international tourist] arrivals of 58% to 78% for the year," UNWTO says in a statement on the report.

"These [scenarios] depend on the speed of containment and the duration of travel restrictions and shutdown of borders," it explains. The report reveals that the double-digit decrease in first quarter international tourist arrivals is due to a significant decline in March.

"Arrivals in March dropped sharply by 57% following the start of a lockdown in many countries, as well as the widespread introduction of travel restrictions and the closure of airports and national borders." "This translates into a loss

of 67 million international arrivals and about \$80 billion in receipts [exports from tourism]," it adds.

The report shows that the 'Asia and Pacific' region took the worst knock in terms of first quarter international tourist arrivals, with a 35% decline. Europe was the second-worst affected with a 19% decline, followed by the Americas, down 15%.

Africa, the second-fastest growing region in terms of international tourism last year, declined by 13%. "The world is facing an unprecedented health and economic crisis. Tourism has been hit hard, with millions of jobs at risk in one of the most labour-intensive sectors of the economy," UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said following the release of the report.

The release of the report follows a statement by the UNWTO last week, noting that the Covid-19 pandemic has seen virtually "all destinations worldwide" introducing restrictions on travel. "This represents the most severe restriction on international travel in history and no country has so far lifted restrictions introduced in response to the crisis," it said.

Below are the three possible scenarios for international tourist arrivals in 2020 outlined in the report, based on international borders' gradual opening and travel restrictions easing by the following dates: Scenario 1: down 58% - early July; Scenario 2: down 70% - early September; and Scenario



UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili

3: down 78% - early December.

UNWTO said that under these scenarios, the impact of the loss of demand in international travel could translate into: Loss of 850 million to 1.1 billion international tourists; Loss of \$910 billion to \$1.2 trillion in export revenues from tourism; and 100 million to 120 million direct tourism jobs at risk.

Based on tourism industry experts surveyed, the organisation notes that a recovery in global tourism is largely anticipated in 2021. "Domestic demand is ex-

pected to recover faster than international demand. The majority [of those surveyed] expect to see signs of recovery by the final quarter of 2020, but mostly in 2021," UNWTO says.

"Based on previous crises, leisure travel is expected to recover quicker, particularly travel for visiting friends and relatives, than business travel. Sentiments regarding the recovery of international travel is more positive in Africa and the Middle East with most experts foreseeing recovery in 2020," it adds.

# Vodacom SA sees data traffic leap 66% in one year

JOHANNESBURG

THE volume of data traffic flowing across Vodacom's network in South Africa surged by 66% in the year ended 31 March 2020, after price reductions led to greater "elasticity" in demand from consumers.

The trend accelerated in the fourth quarter (January to March 2020), the company said, and may even accelerate as a result of work-from-home measures amid the Covid-19 pandemic. "We ended the year with data customers up 9.7% to 21.9 million and smartphone users up 11.8%, of which 73.3% are 4G customers," Vodacom said. "The number of 4G devices on our network increased 34.5% to 12.9 million, while the average usage per smart device increased 56% to 1.5GB."

It said it's confident the elasticity will continue following the price reductions agreed to with the Competition Commission after the financial year-end. South African service rev-

enue grew by 2.3% despite a tough economic environment, out-of-bundle rate cuts and the implementation of new regulations that affected out-of-bundle usage and revenue.

"Excluding the one-off benefit of R389-million from the change in revenue deferral methodology in the prior year and the current-year change in mobile termination rates (MTRs), underlying growth for the year was 3.3%. The fourth quarter revenue grew by 3.9% (5.1% adjusting for MTRs and prior year deferral) maintaining the commercial momentum from the previous quarter."

Prepaid declines However, prepaid customers declined by 5.6%, mainly as the result of continued optimisation of gross additions to improve the quality of the base. "This has resulted in the one-month active customers being stable, evidencing this improvement. Usage elasticity on data has helped offset the out-of-bundle revenue reduction, resulting in average rev-



Vodacom South Africa CEO Shameel Joosub.

enue per user (Arpu) returning to growth in the fourth quarter."

In the contract segment, customer revenue declined 0.1%. Excluding the impact of the prior year's revenue deferral, contract customer revenue increased 1.9%. Contract subscribers grew by 4.2% to 6.1 million. Other highlights of the South African full-year results included: Fixed-line revenue increasing by 8.5%, supported by strong growth in cloud and hosting and connectivity revenue. Vodacom more than doubled the number of homes and businesses connected with fibre to 61 427, with its own fibre now passing 104 000 homes and businesses; IoT connections increasing by 17.2% to 5.3 million, with revenue growth of 38.5%; A 1.8 percentage point margin improvement in the second half of the year as service revenue returned to solid growth; and Capital expenditure of R9.9-billion, with significant money directed to buying batteries and backup power to remain resilient during

periods of prolonged load shedding.

Addressing the impact of Covid-19, Vodacom said the strength of its balance sheet will help cushion the impact of the expected economic downturn over the short to medium term. Ninety percent of its debt is rand denominated, limiting the foreign currency exposure. "We maintained a market neutral debt structure between floating and fixed debt, which allows us to participate, with half our debt floating, in lowered interest rates while the other half of fixed debt protects against significant adverse interest movements," it said.

"We believe that continuing to invest into our network, IT and new platforms such as financial services is important throughout this period and we will maintain our flexibility in relation to the amount of capital expenditure and its allocation to different priorities considering the Covid-19 effects on the local economies in our markets.



## Relief as Swiss-based company cuts container deposit fees for importers

By Smart Money Reporter

**C**LEARING and forwarding agents with their clients heaved a sigh of relief after Swiss based company, Viaservice Limited has launched a new service which has pushed down container deposit fees from US\$500 to US\$60 each.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam last week during the launch of the service, Viaservice Tanzania's Managing Director, John Mathenge said both C&F agents and small and medium scale traders will lower their container fees as businesses struggle to address the impact brought by the novel coronavirus pandemic.

Mathenge said his company's move will also cut down the price of removing containers at the port hence reducing the cost of doing business at Dar es Salaam port. Businesses had long complained against hiked container guarantees charges at the port which was impeding growth as the amount charged per container was too much.

In addition to lowering the fee, Mathenge said importers will be able to pay for one container and get the second one cleared for free. "For example you have 40 containers at the port, you will pay deposit fee for only twenty containers and the rest will not be paid for," he said.

The Viaservice Tanzania CEO further noted that C&F agents and their clients will only deposit US\$60 as guarantee for a container which is payment made to



Viaservice Tanzania's Managing Director, John Mathenge.

shipping line. He said that "That money is refunded once one returned the containers but it was a lot of money hindering businesses to grow.

Imagine if you had 30 containers how much you would leave at the port as a container guarantee fee?" he wondered noting that over 80 percent of the cargo shipped into, out of and through the East Africa region is conveyed by sea.

"The bulk of this cargo is containerized with the two main ports in the region: Dar es Salaam and Mombasa handling a combined throughput of nearly two million containers," he added.

Over half of these containers are subject to container deposit to secure the commercial interests of the shipping liners.

Elisha Tegeni, Viaservice Tanzania's Commercial Manager said, Elisha Tegeni said the company's service will also make Dar es Salaam Port more competitive. "This promotion has been launched at the right time considering the financial effects of the coronavirus pandemic on businesses in the country and the entire region," Tegeni said while adding that the Swiss based logistics company is trying as much as possible to reach out to as many agents to access the service.

## Airtel Uganda, Avaya partner to enable execution of remote work

KAMPALA

**I**N quick response to the Ugandan government's decision to limit access to offices, and schools and universities to curb the spread of COVID-19, Airtel, Uganda's leading provider of prepaid, post-paid mobile and 4G services, has partnered with Avaya Holdings Corp (NYSE: AVYA) to enable organisations in the country to implement remote working and learning initiatives.

Through the partnership, Avaya will offer organisations in Uganda full-feature access to its flagship collaboration app, Avaya Spaces, on a complimentary basis, through Airtel Uganda. Avaya Spaces is a cloud meeting and team collaboration solution that goes beyond integrating chat, voice, video, online meetings and content sharing.

"We fully support the range of measures being taken by the government to slow the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. At the same time, we understand the challenges that these measures bring to the delivery of services and education. Our partnership with Avaya supports key sectors by enabling organisations to maintain the safety of workers, students and customers as their top priority, while ensuring minimum disruption to everyday business," said Airtel Uganda Managing Director, VG Somasekar.

"We have invested in building out the country's most advanced telecommunications network as an enabler of business continuity. Today, this investment will support the continued delivery of services and ensure that the economy continues developing, regardless of a lack of physical offices or classrooms."

Recognised for its ease and speed of implementation, Avaya Spaces works on all Android and iOS smart devices and can also be securely accessed on personal computers and laptops via Chrome or Firefox browsers. With obvi-



Airtel Uganda Managing Director, VG Somasekar.

ous use cases for schools, it enables teachers and administrative staff to reliably communicate with parents, students and each other to minimise learning disruption amid the school closure.

Using the app, students will be able to participate in virtual classrooms from any location, with the ability to download study materials and send assignments to teachers electronically. Businesses too will benefit from the new offering, as the app allows employees to hold virtual meetings, share documents and manage tasks, and establish dedicated digital forums where teams can engage non-stop on specific projects.

Since January, Avaya has seen

an increase of more than 3 000% in video collaboration traffic on the Avaya Spaces platform. Several hundred universities, schools and other organisations worldwide have engaged Avaya to gain the connectivity and collaboration capabilities Avaya Spaces provides as they address the challenges of COVID-19 pandemic.

Thousands of businesses have also moved online with Avaya Spaces, using the app to conduct virtual events, launch magazines, keep teams engaged, and enable business continuity.

"As the COVID-19 crisis has developed, we have reacted quickly and decisively in providing collaboration technology on

a complimentary basis to help those most affected. We are proud to be able to do the same in Uganda in partnership with Airtel Uganda, which has shown its commitment to social obligations.

Together, we aim to help Ugandan organisations minimise the disruption caused by COVID-19 and begin building a brighter future," said Fadi Hani, Vice-President - Middle East, Turkey & Africa, Avaya. Airtel Uganda also recently announced reaching a milestone of 2 000 network masts across the country. With the availability of this country-wide 4G LTE connectivity, students and teachers can access the app seamlessly.

## Insurers seek to cap corona bills payouts

NAIROBI

**I**NSURANCE companies are seeking to limit the amount of money they can pay for each claim arising from the treatment of Covid-19 as the underwriters face the possibility of increased expenses related to the respiratory disease that could push them into losses.

Industry players have been meeting to develop a joint response to the directive by the Insurance Regulatory Authority (IRA) that all Covid-19 claims be settled. Association of Kenya Insurers (AKI) chief executive Tom Gichuhi said the companies face great uncertainty if they continue to settle open-ended claims. He said a limit on claims must be set at a level that the industry can withstand in what will see the insurers set caps similar to those offered for maternity covers.

"Soon we will be able to tell the public the amount that will be paid per person and the total amount the industry can sustain," Mr Gichuhi said. On Friday, IRA confirmed knowledge of the talks, adding that it will issue a policy direction this week after meeting the insurers.

Kenya has confirmed 672 cases of coronavirus out of 32,097 samples with 32 reported deaths and 207 recoveries from the infectious disease that has become a global pandemic. Mr Gichuhi said life claims from deaths have not been a big issue but medical bills, which can top Sh1 million per person, may be challenging if the numbers are huge and the pandemic persists.

Medical claims contributed the second largest portion of premiums at Sh42.4 billion in the last quarter of 2019 and attracted the largest claims at Sh20.4 billion in the same period. In Kenya, medical insurance remains a loss-making segment due to price undercutting, fraud and high hospital bills. Medical insurers' underwriting loss doubled to Sh75 million in 2019.

The decision by the regulator to force insurers to pay for costs arising from the pandemic in full has thrown insurers into uncharted territory. Insurance is based on a model that claims are limited and that only a part of the insured population will suffer the risks covered.

Over the years, insurers have adjusted their claims to "direct and physical loss damages" to avoid the growing threat of pandemics with the increasing occurrence of episodes of viral diseases like Sars and Ebola.

The firms said their insurance policies only give basic cover, with no obligation to pay out in relation to a pandemic like coronavirus of fears of widespread ballooning costs. When the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the novel coronavirus a pandemic in March 11, AKI said the classification indicated that patients would settle their own bills if cases were reported in Kenya.

Mr Gichuhi said if there was to be widespread infection, then all insurance companies would have close shop because the claims have the potential to wipe out the insurers. He said this was the justification for exclusions put in insurance policies.

Now, IRA seems to have softened its position in the wake of the threat posed by Covid-19 that has forced a review of insurance rules. The regulator has increased the validity of insurance contract for three months where customers faced challenges paying premiums and made it difficult for insurance companies to avoid meeting claims.

The IRA also said late filing of claims or failure to pay premiums will not be used as an excuse to avoid coronavirus-related claims. Further, insurance companies will not be allowed to introduce new product exclusions or change product terms and conditions without approval from the regulator. That means companies wishing to withdraw some products will have to get approval from the commissioner of insurance.

The regulator said that all claims have to be settled while those facing trouble meeting premiums will be offered three months' holiday. Industry players say this holiday will be difficult to apply to general insurance since they should not be expected to meet all claims yet they are not getting premiums.

"Renewal of policies is coming up and the regulator should be clear on the premise of the holiday and what happens if claims arise," an insurance manager said on condition of anonymity.

Kenya has ten broad categories of general insurance, including motor, medical, fire, aviation, engineering, liability, marine, personal accident, theft and workman's compensation with high claims which saw an underwriting loss of Sh2.97 billion in the last quarter of 2019.

The regulator says that companies must submit status reports stating whether they face collapse or have adequate funds to meet claims.

## Nigerians spent N4.59trn eating outside home in 2019

LAGOS

**T**EN years after the last consumption expenditure pattern report was released, the National Bureau of Statistics has released the 2019/2010 consumption pattern report.

A breakdown shows that at the national level the total household expenditure on food and non-food for 2019 was N40.2 trillion compared to N21.6 trillion recorded in 2009/2010, the last time the survey was conducted. Of this total, 56.65percent (60.2percent in 2009/10) of total household expenditure in 2019 was spent on food with the balance of about 43.35% (39.8 % in 2009/10) spent on non-food items.

Food consumed outside the home at N4.59 trillion, followed by transportation costs at N2.58trillion and starchy roots, tubers and plantains at N2.52trillion were responsible for the largest proportion of household expenditure representing a combined 24.16 percent of total household expenditure in 2019.

Further analysis of food expenditure by households in 2019 reveals that various foods consumed outside the home, which includes starchy roots, tubers and plantains, rice, vegetables, fish and sea food, grains and flours in that order were the top food items households spent on in 2019 accounting for a combined 59.19percent of food expenditure and 33.53percent of total household expenditure on food and 24.8percent of total household expenditure.

Household expenditure on non-food items on the other hand were directed mostly at transport, health, education and services (which includes information technology and communication equipment as well as things like insurance, financial services and so on), rent and fuel and light, accounting for a combined 79.40percent of non-food expenditure.

Further analysis show that Nigerians spent more on non-alcoholic drinks and sugar-related products than they did over alcohol, during the period under review. In total, households spent N551.2 billion on non-alcoholic drinks, N205.5 billion on sugar, sweets and confectionary, and N150.3 billion on alcoholic drinks. The consumption pattern report also show that Nigerians spent a total of N2.46 trillion was spent on healthcare; N2.46 trillion was spent on healthcare, N2.3 trillion on education.

Total household expenditure in urban areas in 2019 stood at N19.1trillion (N8.4trillion in 2009/10), relative to N21trillion (N9.36trillion in 2009/10) in the rural areas. The total expenditure on food in urban areas stood at N9.84 trillion in 2019 (N3.65trillion in 2009/2010), while in rural areas it was N12.9trillion.

Interestingly, both areas spent mostly on food outside the home, Starchy foods, tubers, and plantains, and rice representing about 37.96percent for rural and about 42.59percent for urban areas of total expenditure on food. In the non-food section, education, transport, services and rent represented the highest expenditure for urban households while expenditure on health, transport, education and services dominated non-food household expenditure in 2019.



# The evolution of mobile financial payment systems in the digital age

By Smart Money Reporter

SINCE the introduction of mobile money in Tanzania in 2008 by Vodacom Tanzania Plc, millions have enjoyed the convenience that comes with mobile money which includes security and speed that it offers.

Digital payments have changed the way we do business and conduct everyday tasks. The use of physical money is much less of a feature of everyday life than it once was. More than a decade after mobile money debuted, it is still shaping our purchasing behaviours and taking the economy into digital status due to innovations.

Having become accustomed to the speed of digital services, customers are more demanding when it comes to digital payments because they want their financial transactions to occur conveniently, quickly, and securely thanks to technological innovations. This has led banks and financial technology companies alike to deploy innovative payment solutions, which rely on mobile devices as a key piece of the offering.

This demand coupled with competition has kept digital payment service providers on their toes as they battle to bring regular innovative solutions to meet customer needs and challenges. One such company is Vodacom Tanzania Plc which has embraced innovation with M-Pesa payment solution as an outstanding example of a brand that a telecommunications company has used to bring about a revolution in the payment system in Tanzania in the past



Vodacom Tanzania's M-Pesa director, Epimack Mbeteni.

decade.

M-Pesa has revolutionised making payments through mobile platforms as such transactions can be made on the move, at any time or anywhere within or outside the country. The telco's mobile money payment platform has championed the evolution of digital payments through innovation moving from just send and receive feature to a robust e-wallet capable of offering much more from loans, savings, overdraft to online payments.

The platform has since been linked to bank accounts, integrated into major service provider's payment gateways such government's ministries and agencies, utilities public entities, hospitals and merchants. Vodacom's M-Pesa Director, Epimack Mbeteni said the platform is an example of how

telcos have used mobile technology to bring about a revolution in the payment system in Tanzania in a span of a decade.

"M-Pesa has played a leading role in the evolution of payment systems making payment activities mobile as they can now be made on the move, at any time, wherever a person may be, in or out of the country," Mbeteni said.

"And that's not all, the telco has added yet another service to its offerings in order to meet customer demand by providing a standing order service to those who can now set payments on a timer at a recurring date of their choosing," he explained.

The standing order service is a product enhancement that focuses on enabling M-Pesa customers to do more by doing less when making bill payments as well as send money from one person to another through automated transactions which auto debits the sender's e-wallet.

"Standing order enables customers to set recurrent payments to send money and/or pay bills like LUKU and pay television subscriptions of a fixed amount at specific intervals automatically," Mbeteni noted.

The M-Pesa standing order service has already started winning hearts and minds of customers in the market. One such client is Yusuf Ahmed from Dar es Salaam who said with the new innovation, he can now rest assured that monthly recurring expenses are taken care of automatically.

"I have been using M-Pesa services for more than seven years and now I can set up standing order payment for my bills for utilities and school fees for my children," Ahmed said noting that he is since done with worrying about disruption of services or payment reminders as they are taken care of automatically.

"I am enjoying this service as it also saves time to go and make various payments," he explained adding that the latest M-Pesa innovation is a sign of what the future holds for mobile money payment platforms.

# As coronavirus pandemic worsens, inflation rate in Nigeria increases

LAGOS

THE world presently battles the Coronavirus pandemic, which has ravaged so many countries and which in turn have put in place almost homogeneous measures to mitigate the spread of the novel virus.

These preventive measures have inadvertently adversely affected economies and health systems of the countries hit by the virus. At present, over three million individuals have been infected across the globe with attendants of 220,414 deaths. The United States of America, Italy, Spain, United Kingdom and France are the worst hit. In Nigeria, 44 individuals have been killed by the novel virus and the country has recorded 255 recoveries.

For now, the economic lockdown continues to bite harder, Nigeria is not left behind in this because the economic effects of the mitigation measures put in place by the President of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari have immediately impacted the commodity markets resulting in a higher inflationary trend. With some of these measures still in place, there is a high likelihood the rising trend will continue in the months ahead.

The economic impact of coronavirus in Nigeria became more apparent in March 2020 following its first case in February 2020.

The impact in March 2020 is a toddler compared to that of April 2020 as the lock down and other major disruptions in normal economic activities of several states were not captured in this article because it is limited to the report of March 2020 alone. The lockdown effects this month will be spotlighted in April 2020 report.

The consumer price index, (CPI) which measures inflation increased month-on-month (MoM) by 0.84 per cent in March 2020. This is 0.05 percentage point higher than the rate recorded in February 2020 (0.79 per

cent). At the same time, the inflation rate increased year-on-year (YoY) by 12.26 per cent in the same month, representing a 0.06 percentage point increase over the YoY rate recorded in February 2020 (12.20 per cent) just before the initial 2-week lockdown in Abuja, Lagos and Ogun states.

The percentage change in the average composite (rural and urban) CPI for the twelve-month period ending March 2020, over the average CPI for the previous twelve-month period ending March 2019 was 11.62 per cent. This represents 0.08 percentage point increase over 11.54 per cent recorded in similar average for February 2020.

In the urban area, inflation rate increased by 12.93 per cent YoY in March 2020; a 0.08 percentage point increase from 12.85 per cent YoY change recorded in February 2020. On a MoM basis, the urban index rose by 0.88 per cent, up by 0.06 percentage point from 0.82 per cent recorded in the previous month. This MoM growth is largely the contribution of "food prices" to the overall consumer items.

Similarly, the rural inflation rate increased by 0.03 percentage point to 11.64 per cent in March 2020 from 11.61 per cent in February 2020, a major contributor to that index is the prices of food. At the same time, the index rose by 0.80 per cent, an additional 0.04 percentage point from the 0.76 per cent increase recorded in the previous month.

The percentage change in the average urban index for the twelve-month period ending March 2020, over the average CPI for the previous twelve-month period ending March increased by 12.15 per cent in March 2020 (this is 0.12 percentage point higher than 12.03 per cent reported in February 2020), while the corresponding rural inflation rate in March 2020 was up by 0.05 percentage point to 11.14 per cent in March 2020 compared to 11.09 per cent recorded in the previous month.

## Sub-Saharan crime threat continues to evolve - survey

By Nadim Najjar

REFINITIV yesterday released its Financial Crime in Sub-Saharan Africa Report 2020, which highlights several noteworthy compliance trends.

Responses show a high level of awareness of financial crime and a desire to upgrade compliance systems. The survey highlights that the crime threat continues to evolve, with techniques used by organised crime groups and fraudsters becoming more diverse and sophisticated.

According to the findings this year, more than 28 per cent of respondents recognise that driving internal behaviour change within their companies is their primary challenge, 61 per cent expect a substantial increase in their compliance investment, 74 per cent have a Know Your Customer (KYC) program, while 66 per cent embraced innovative compliance technology.

Only 43 per cent indicate they have a sanctions program despite the growth in regulatory risk, especially in the area of 'green crime'. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to a diverse range of wildlife and plants, as well as natural resources, and this has increasingly become the target of organised crime. We note that there is a robust regulatory response to green crime, thus increasing regulatory risk. The European Union has included environmental crime as a predicate offence under the 6th EU Anti-Money Laundering Directive (6AMLD);



Nadim Najjar is managing director of Refinitiv for Middle East and Africa.

and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) priorities for 2020 will focus on illegal wildlife trade. Sub-Saharan Africa based organisations should be especially vigilant, and it is encouraging to see that organizations are striving to meet the regulatory challenge.

"Africa is at the forefront of embracing mobile technology and is host to more than half the world's mobile money services. With this increased mobile access comes the threat of identity theft and money-laundering. In response, digital identity technologies, including those of Refinitiv, are quickly evolving to meet this need and as our survey reports, a quarter of respondents have already adopted digital identity solutions," said Nadim Najjar, Managing Director, Middle East and Africa, Refinitiv.

"The shift towards digitalization is a theme that comes through very clearly in our report. The pace of this transformation is likely to have accelerated in response to Covid-19 and it is unlikely to diminish once we exit the pandemic," he added. Najjar concluded that forward-thinking compliance functions will be focused on how they can best make the transition towards digital channels and tools, while ensuring the needs of their business and customer base are accounted for and their regulatory requirements are fully addressed.

Refinitiv is one of the world's largest providers of financial markets data and infrastructure, serving over 40,000 institutions in over 190 countries. It provides leading data and insights, trading platforms, and open data and technology platforms that connect a thriving global financial markets community.

NB: Nadim Najjar is managing director of Refinitiv for Middle East and Africa.

VIEW FROM THE TOP



## Businesses backing govt actions to go past challenges brought by COVID-19 outbreak

By Martin Gabone

THE past has been taken away, equally we are all attacked by the invisible giant which in order to get rid of, we need combined efforts and strategies. It is the right time for reflection as well as appropriate to plan for the future as the coronavirus pandemic ravages our health and the economy.

Strategically, mobilization of critical tools for intervention is now important because it is the right time than ever, to come together and navigate against rising tides and strong waves generated by the virus. It is a volatile situation for the entire globe as nations like Tanzania come together to collectively combine synergies in health experts to find both a vaccine and cure for the virus.

It is an undisputable fact that, if not well organized to tackle the scourge, the world economy will also suffer a lot just as our own country also suffers economically which translates into pain for ordinary people. It will be the greatest mistake for us to allow the public ignore health measures to contain the pandemic which has also affected normal functioning of economies.

Most of us are happy with measures undertaken by our government to contain the pandemic so far which includes imposing some restrictions while allowing economic activities to continue. There is

no doubt that the current state of affairs as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak has completely changed the way that we live.

Among other things, the virus has completely changed some of our societal customs and norms such as hand shake greetings, communal gatherings and socializing at leisure outlets or going to places of worship.

This behaviour of the citizens to abandon some of the customary practices is a result of government's directives based on health experts advise globally. The state believes that, what's good for business is generally good for the economy hence the measures such as social distancing to curb the virus' spread.

As part of the universe, we have to acknowledge that effects of COVID -19 are devastating because most economies remain locked down completely or partially. If this situation persists, the economic volatility globally is expected to worsen including our country hence the importance of adhering to health experts' advice.

Additionally, this is also the right time for our researchers and drug innovators show aggressiveness in seeking a quick solution in terms of a vaccine or cure for the COVID-19 so that normal life should continue.

Critically, we need to come together as a nation



Martin Gabone is Chairman of TCCIA in Kinondoni Municipality and CEO for Afrexa International Limited.

and forget about our ideological differences so that we have a common stand to defeat the pandemic which is negatively affecting our daily lives. Researchers, academicians and innovators should come up and introduce new ideas to the society that might offer us a more liveable environment to ease the pressure and threats associated with the pandemic which has already affected over three million people globally leaving thousands dead. For researchers and innovators, this is the

desirable time to discuss not just the 'what' but also the 'why' and 'how' in seeking answers to tough questions which mankind is facing at this point in time. As economists have already predicted that the global economy will go into recession for the first time in decades this year with Sub Sahara Africa also facing the danger of negative growth, Tanzania as a nation, has the potential to avoid a recession. With the good and courageous leadership of President John Pombe Magufuli who has ignored calls for a total lockdown of the whole country, or as others suggest, Dar es Salaam, it is certain that the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 may sidestep Tanzania.

Under Dr Magufuri, Tanzanians have a leader who through his government's strategic economic planning and hard-working, it is possible that our economic growth will simply reduce by some percentage points but not going into a recession.

The president who has rejected the notion of one size fits all as being pushed by some global powers, is already winning hearts and minds of many business people and investors who are happy with the idea of avoiding lockdowns which are disastrous to the economy.

As an apex body involving the majority private businesses which include farmers, Tanzania Chamber of Commerce Industry and Agriculture

(TCCIA) is very envisioned to work with Dr Magufuli's administration to encourage more investments by local entrepreneurs who are ready to go past the pandemic.

In fighting against the pandemic, TCCIA as a business community association, will continue to come up with the best available innovation based on collective investment models to support the growth and industrialization as sanctioned by the government.

TCCIA is also happy with performance of regulatory institutions such as Tanzania Revenue Authority, Tanzania Investment Centre, Business Registration and Licensing Agency, Tanzania Private Sector Foundation and other stakeholders for a job well-done to push the growth economic agenda of our nation.

TCCIA under the competent leadership of its president Poul Koyi has moved a number of its advisory services online, just like regulatory bodies have done so that economic activities can continue unabated. Digitization is a new way of life for businesses and regulators to go even after the COVID-19 pandemic is over.

NB: Martin Gabone is Chairman of TCCIA in Kinondoni Municipality and CEO for Afrexa International Limited.



## WORLD

## Official sacked after Wuhan sees six new local cases

WUHAN/BEIJING

AN official has been sacked in Wuhan, capital of central China's Hubei province, after the city recently reported six newly confirmed COVID-19 cases, local authorities said yesterday.

Zhang Yuxin was removed from his posts for poor management over the closing-off and control of the Sanmin residential community, which is under the jurisdiction of Changqing street, where Zhang served as secretary and member of the Changqing street working committee of the Communist Party of China.

Wuhan reported a total of six newly confirmed COVID-19 cases on Saturday and Sunday, all of which were from the Sanmin residential community. The community had previously reported 20 confirmed COVID-19 cases.

According to Li Ping, director of the Dongxihu District Health Bureau, more than 20,000 people will undergo nucleic acid testing in batches.

Among these people, more than 5,000 are residents in and around Sanmin residential community, and the other 14,000 are from the nearby market named Duoluokou.

Residents of the Sanmin residential community finished testing yesterday, and the others will be tested in the following days.

Wuhan, once the epicenter of the COVID-19 outbreak in China, has seen its urban life gradually return to normal since its lockdown was lifted one month ago after the epidemic ebbed.

7 out of 17 new cases on mainland imported

The Chinese mainland on Sunday reported 17 newly confirmed COVID-19 cases, of which five were in Hubei and seven were imported cases, Chinese health authorities said yesterday.

The National Health Commission said that the seven imported cases reported on the mainland were seen in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region.

Out of the other ten cases, which



Cyclists and pedestrians traverse a bridge at East Lake in Wuhan, Hubei province, on May 3, 2020. (File photo)

were transmitted locally, five were reported in Hubei, three in Jilin province, one in Liaoning province and one in Heilongjiang province, the commission said in a daily report.

Hubei's health authorities said the new cases were previously asymptomatic cases in the provincial capital Wuhan.

Seven provincial-level regions on the mainland had reported new cases transmitted domestically in the past 14 days, with an increase in cluster infections, Mi Feng, a spokesperson for the commission, said.

Mi called for efforts to cut off transmission chains by identifying sources of infection and routes of transmission and by stepping up contact tracing, quarantine, treatment and medical observation.

Meanwhile, no new suspected cases or deaths were reported Sunday on the mainland, according to the commission.

China has not reported any deaths from COVID-19 for 26 days in a row, Mi noted.

Altogether, 24 people were discharged from hospitals after recovery on Sunday, while the number of severe cases decreased by four to nine.

As of Sunday, the overall confirmed cases on the mainland had reached 82,918, including 141 patients who were still being treated, and 78,144 people who had been discharged after recovery. A total of 4,633 people had died of the disease, the commission said.

By Sunday, the mainland had reported a total of 1,690 im-

ported cases. Among those cases, 1,591 had been discharged from hospitals after recovery, and 99 remained hospitalized with three in severe conditions. No deaths from imported cases had been reported.

The commission said three people, all from overseas, were still suspected of being infected with the virus.

Sunday was the first time that the number of severe cases on the mainland dropped below 10 and the number of confirmed imported cases dropped below 100, said Mi.

According to the commission, 5,501 close contacts were still under medical observation after 678 people were released from medical observation Sunday.

Also on Sunday, 12 new asymptomatic cases were reported on the mainland. Six cases were re-categorized as confirmed cases, and 20 asymptomatic cases, including four from overseas, were released from medical observation, according to the commission.

Xinhua

## Japan PM criticised for move on prosecutors during pandemic

TOKYO

CELEBRITIES and other critics of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe have taken to social media in droves to protest against a plan to raise the retirement age for prosecutors, calling it undemocratic and ill-timed during the coronavirus crisis.



Critics fear such a move would let an administration retain favourites in key posts, endangering prosecutors' independence, and were angered by its timing during the virus pandemic, Abe's handling of which has drawn fire for being slow and clumsy.

A survey published in the Nikkei daily on Monday showed 55 percent of respondents disapproved of Abe's handling of the crisis, up 11 points from a previous poll, although support for his cabinet was little changed at 49 percent, after a decline this year.

"In the midst of the coronavirus calamity, we should focus on people's lives," well-known director Amon Miyamoto said on Twitter in one of what media said were more than 4.7 million similar messages, including repeats, over the weekend.

"To forcibly decide on a law that is clearly divorced from democracy is a tragedy for Japan."

Parliament is debating whether to raise prosecutors' retirement age to 65, from 63, except for the top prosecutor, as well as further extensions with cabinet approval.

"Please do not distort the law and politics for your own protection," actor Arata Iura said on Twitter. "Please do not destroy this country."

Abe defended the change in parliament, saying it was in line with those for other civil servants that aimed to make "full use of the rich experience and knowledge" of older officials.

He added, "It's wrong to argue that (the revised law) would lead to arbitrary personnel decisions by the cabinet."

Abe also faced criticism this year when the chief of the Tokyo High Public Prosecutor's Office, seen as close to the premier, was allowed to stay on after turning 63.

"The legislation would clearly destroy the separation of powers," said independent political analyst Atsuo Ito. "People are angry that they are trying to enact this speedily at a time when we face anxiety over the coronavirus."

While Japan has not suffered the explosive surge in infections of other nations, its tally by midday on Monday stood at 15,847 cases, including 633 deaths, public broadcaster NHK said.

The pandemic has delivered a crushing blow to the economy, stirring talk of a Great Depression-like downturn among Japan's central bankers. On Monday, Abe vowed swift further stimulus measures.

Agencies

## Malawi to hold elections in July amid COVID-19

BLANTYRE

MALAWI is set to hold a presidential election on July 2 this year at a time when almost every country in the world is trying to control public gatherings in fear of COVID-19.

Just like any other elections, July 2 polls will require a lot of people to gather in the processes of campaign, registering and voting. However, this can give room to a rapid spread of COVID-19.

Recently, Malawi government introduced a number of safety measures aimed at reducing the spread of the pandemic.

One of the measures was the ban on public political gatherings. But the question is, will this be possible?

As one way of ensuring safety, the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) has taken several precautions measures on how people should engage themselves ahead of presidential elections.

MEC has however started enforcing safety measures to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. In a latest development, MEC had restricted the number of people entering into Mount Soche Hotel in Blantyre where aspiring presidential candidates were present-



ing their nomination papers to the commission.

During the event, MEC had deployed several medical staff on every entry point, where delegates being scanned and handed sanitizer before entering into the premises. In addition, the commission only allowed 20 delegates from each party to enter into the hotel,

media personnel was also in a limited number and security was very tight in trying to limit the numbers on the premises.

According to MEC, this was done to ensure the safety of the candidates and the delegates. Social distancing was at the priority during the event.

Mass political gatherings may enhance the rapid spread of COVID-19 as thousands of party supporters flocked into the city in large numbers, breaking all the safety restrictions in the process. Commenting on this development, a local journalist said that it is very unfortunate to notice that

political leaders are silent when their supporters are breaking some of the safety restrictions that were meant to protect local people at large.

"In several instances, people were seen crowded in the main roads of Blantyre city, most of them were not in any protective masks and they were not observing a recommended social distance.

I think we need to be serious as a country, we need to learn from the other countries where the pandemic has taken a lot of lives, and we should not be too relaxed in our ways," he said.

Xinhua

## Netanyahu poised to form government under power-sharing agreement

JERUSALEM

AFTER securing support from a majority of lawmakers last week and jumping over several legal hurdles, sitting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will continue his fifth term in office as he prepares to swear in his government in the coming days.

The new government comes after over a year of political stalemate and three consecutive elections which led to inconclusive results.

After weeks of political negotiations, Netanyahu who leads the Likud party reached an agreement with his main rival Benny Gantz who leads the Blue and White party. On Sunday, Netanyahu met with members of his party and other coalition partners in order to assign cabinet portfolios.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 virus after the third election was what brought the sides to finally reach consensus after a year of paralysis.

The country, which has been under a care-taker government for a lengthy period, is now facing a major crisis and lack of a permanent government has made policy and budget decisions difficult.

Netanyahu and Gantz vowed to cooperate in order to lead the country through the crisis, including the major economic fallout which is now overshadowing the health crisis.

A total of 248 Israelis have died of the virus and over 16,400 people have contracted it. After weeks of severe lockdown measures, the economy is gradually being jump-started again. Unemployment has reached a record high and there are many prob-



lems to be dealt with, including preparation for a possible second wave of the pandemic.

Before the outbreak of the virus, Netanyahu and Gantz had failed to reach an agreement despite several attempts. Netanyahu faces three indictments of corruption and is scheduled to appear in court at the end of this month. From the beginning of his political career, Gantz vowed not to sit in a government with a leader

under indictment.

Three election campaigns later, Israel found itself at an impasse. In the latest March 2 election, Netanyahu fell just a few mandates short of grasping the 61-member majority needed to rule the 120-member Knesset. Gantz was also incapable of forming a coalition and decided to turn on his single most prominent campaign promise that was not to serve with Netanyahu.

Gantz's U-turn led to the disintegration of his party, leaving him to lead just his faction with 15 members, less than half of the original list. The circumstances led to a major change.

The new government is slated to be the largest in Israel's history with between 34 to 36 ministerial portfolios. The excess comes at a time when the projections for the Israeli economy are that it will shrink in 2020 and

there are approximately one million unemployed people.

"People are extremely frustrated by the size of the government," Eran Vigoda-Gadot, a professor of political science and governance at the University of Haifa, "The rehabilitation of the economy will be the main task of the government."

According to the deal, only until after the COVID-19 crisis is over, the government can pass legislation on other major issues.

The sides agreed that Israel could begin to move on annexation of parts of the West Bank as early as July 2020 as part of the implementation of the US peace plan for Israelis and Palestinians. Gantz and Netanyahu seem to have little differences on the matter.

Xinhua

## Traditional Chinese medicine builds solid firewall against COVID-19 for Wuchang district of Wuhan

BY giving out traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) in residential communities, Wuchang district of Wuhan, once the epicenter of the novel coronavirus pneumonia, built a solid firewall against the spread of the virus, as well as a line of defense that contributed to all links of the containment, from prevention to treatment, and recovery.

A 77-year-old man surnamed Du, who had contracted the novel coronavirus living in Shuiguohu neighborhood of Wuchang district, is one who benefited from the city's efforts to prevent the virus by TCM.

Du was discharged from hospital two and a half months ago, and is now able to cook after recovery. It's hardly imaginable that he was once in critical conditions and incapacitated by the disease, suffering severe breathing problems and losing the

ability to eat and walk independently.

The TCM initiative to help Wuchang district fight COVID-19 was raised by Tong Xiaolin, leader of a national TCM treatment group for the novel coronavirus pneumonia. He has been studying how to provide every patient with TCM drugs and prevent them from developing into critical conditions.

Based on his frontline experiences, Tong found most of the patients had symptoms of coughing, fever, inappetence, feebleness, diarrhea and nausea. Therefore, he concluded that lungs and spleen are the organs affected by the disease, and the balance in the patients' bodies is damaged by both dampness and pathogenic cold.

Tong and local TCM experts in Wuchang district jointly prescribed a basic formula which aimed to detoxify the lungs and remove obstruction in collaterals. Consider-

ing the development of the disease, Tong later adjusted the basic formula, making it into four sub-formulas that specifically relieve fever, coughing, inappetence and feebleness, respectively. The sub-formulas were put into use together with the basic one.

For instance, if patients with fevers showed no conspicuous sign of cooling after they take the basic formula for three days, they will be given one of the sub-formulas that is added with extra Chinese herb mahuang and plaster, as well as Radix Bupleuri and Phragmites rhizoma, to bring down their fevers.

Wuchang district is home to 144 communities and 125 million permanent dwellers, so to get prevention measures to the primary level is the right choice. On Feb. 2, the frontline command center of the National Administration of Traditional

Chinese Medicine and health authorities of both Hubei and Wuhan decided to distribute TCM drugs in communities as soon as possible.

Deputy head of the district Xiang Yue contacted Jointown Pharmaceutical Group, a major drug producer in Hubei, and ordered 27,000 bags of the basic formula. The drugs were later sent to all quarantine sites and community health service centers in the district, and distributed to residents free of charge.

Over 90 percent of suspected cases at Wuchang's quarantine site turned to confirmed cases as of Jan. 28, statistics suggested. After TCM intervention was adopted on Feb. 2, the figure was lowered to 30 percent on Feb. 6, and 3 percent on March 5.

The packages of TCM drugs distributed were printed with a QR code each, and the patients could report their conditions and

medication after a quick scan so that logs would be generated. Their information and conditions were recorded by volunteers through phone calls or instant messengers. This process enabled doctors to make timely judgement and adjustment.

Liu Baoyan, chief researcher of China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences and director of National Data Center of Traditional Chinese Medicine of China under the academy, told People's Daily that patients quarantined at home always had difficulties reaching doctors, which caused panic. Through phone calls and communication over instant messengers, they received professional guidance and relieved their anxiety, Liu added.

The basic formula achieved significant initial progress. As of March 5, over 90 percent of the 3,698 confirmed and suspected patients, as well as those with fever

who took the drugs found their symptoms gone, including fever, coughing, inappetence, feebleness, diarrhea, shortness of breath and anxiety. It took an average of 1.74 days to bring down the body temperature of the fevered patients.

As of March 25, 12,051 people in quarantine had registered information on mobile application, including 4,579 who had taken the basic formula prescribed by Tong. A total of 27,884 logs were generated.

Besides, 690 doctors volunteered to pay follow-up visits, assisting 4,571 patients and making over 30,000 phone calls to the patients.

Liu believes that Wuchang's efforts were an attempt to digitalize TCM through big data and internet, as well as a modern exploration to contain contagious disease with TCM.

People's Daily





Villagers plant white tea seedlings in Pu'an county, Qianxinan Buyi and Miao Autonomous Prefecture in southwest China's Guizhou province.

### Chinese villages team up for poverty alleviation through tea planting

OVER 20 tea pickers waving their hands around lines of dozen-inch-high tea plants and taking the fresh tea leaves into their pack baskets - that is a late-spring scene observed from the top of a lush mountain in Guizhang county, central China's Hunan province where the lands were once incredibly barren and empty.

Similar scenes can also be observed in Qingchuan county of Sichuan province, as well as Pu'an and Yanhe counties of Guizhou province, and it all owes to the generous assistance offered by Huangdu village of Anji county, east China's Zhejiang province which donated 19 million tea seedlings to 34 impoverished villages in the above four counties in the past two years.

These white tea seedlings, planted on around 358 hectares of land, have brought hope of a better life to the recipient counties.

The 34 impoverished villages in the four counties were chosen as recipients because they have suitable precipitation, temperature, soil and elevation for growing white tea plants, and it was a decision made by the technicians from the Tea Research Institute with the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences and Zhejiang Tea Group who traveled tens of thousands of kilometers to central and western China and conducted three field investigations in June, 2018.

They received the donation in October, 2018. Wang Yongming, Party chief of Qingping village in Qingchuan county, recalled the busy day when the first batch of one million seedlings arrived in three refrigerated trucks, saying that the saplings were immediately planted after they were unloaded by hundreds of earnest villagers.

Guizhang county's Wengcao village also cherishes the saplings very much. "We organized technical training for all corn growers in the village to familiarize them with tea planting," said Ou Sanren, a cadre of the village.

By establishing a cooperative, carrying out land transfer and distributing shares of the cooperative to planters based on their planting performances, the tea planting industry attracted more and more villagers in Wengcao.

However, the tea seedlings planted in Guizhang county were struck by several natural disasters. In the winter of 2018, the county was hit by a heavy snow rarely seen in southern China, resulting in partial damage of the plants. Unfortunately, the replanted seedlings were once again destroyed by the torrential rain pours in July the following year.

"Anji county soon sent technicians to help us. They visited the damaged tea gardens and helped farmers rebuild their planting business," Ou said, adding that a total of 300,000 tea seedlings were replanted after the two disasters.

As the benefactor, Anji county has continuously strengthened follow-up assistance and technical guidance to the recipients. Over the past more than two years, it has sent 275 technicians in 42 batches to Hunan, Sichuan and Guizhou provinces.

Huangdu village, the major force of the assistance, sent 35 skilled tea planters who made a total of 115 trips to the recipients for giving training on planting and management. Some of the technicians even offered on-site technical guidance for more than half a year.

Under the meticulous care of all sides, the tea seedlings have firmly taken root, bringing hope to impoverished locals for reducing poverty and increasing income. As the plants are currently yielding the first batch of tea leaves, the hope has been turned into reality.

Watching the shiny green tea leaves in her tea garden, 40-year-old Long Xingmei from Wengcao village showed a joyful face.

Long's husband works outside of the village, which leaves the woman in a difficult situation - she has to take care of her child, her paralyzed elder brother, and her septuagenarian mother, alone. As a result, her family suffers dire poverty.

Fortunately, the white tea seedlings have brought hope to the family. Contracting her family's land on the mountain to a tea cooperative, Long now earns 3,600 yuan a year. Her mother, who is hale and hearty, also works a part-time job at the cooperative and makes about 8,000 yuan every year.

People's Daily

## Russian airlines to tighten verification of residence when boarding export flights

MOSCOW

AIRLINES plan to tighten verification of passengers' residence addresses when boarding export flights, Russia's Communications Ministry said on Sunday. The ministry made this statement on its Telegram channel, created for the return of Russians to their homeland.

It is noted that "before issuing a boarding pass, airline employees will strictly check documents confirming [passengers'] residence in the region."

To prove their residence, passengers can provide originals of documents or photo copies of their "registration, rental agreement, medical insurance, work certificates, copies of relatives' registration and documents

confirming their kinship, as well as a note of hand that their relatives are ready to accept them for quarantine," the Communications Ministry said.

Since March 27, due to the pandemic, Russia has completely closed its regular and charter international flights, carriers can only carry out special export flights to bring citizens back home.

Agencies

## One-month full lockdown across Africa to cost 65.7bn USD - report



South Africans stocked up on food, alcohol and other supplies before the lockdown started (Siphiwe Sibeko/Reuters)

ADDIS ABABA

A one-month full lockdown across Africa would cost the continent about 2.5 percent of its annual GDP, equivalent to about 65.7 billion U.S. dollars per month, a newly published United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) report revealed on Sunday.

The newly published report entitled "COVID-19: Lockdown Exit Strategies for Africa," which indicated that at least 42 African countries applied partial or full lockdowns in their quest to curtail the pandemic, mainly proposed to African nations various COVID-19 exit strategies following the imposition of lockdowns that helped suppress the virus but with devastating economic consequences.

The UNECA also estimated that a one-month full lockdown across Africa would cost the continent about 2.5 percent of its annual GDP, equivalent to about 65.7 billion U.S. dollars per month, which is said to be in addition to the wider external impact of COVID-19 on Africa of lower commodity prices and investment flows.

The report, among other things, proposed seven exit strategies that provide sustainable, albeit reduced, economic activity.

The report sets out some of the exit strategies being proposed and tried around the world and outlines the risks involved for African countries.

"With the lockdowns came serious challenges for Africa's economies, including a drop in demand for products and services; lack of operational cash flow; reduction of opportunities to meet new customers; businesses were closed; issues with changing business strategies and offering alternative products and services; a decline in worker production and productivity from working at home; logistics and shipping of products; and difficulties in obtaining supplies of raw materials essential for production," the report read.

The ECA also argued that one of the most sensitive issues facing policymakers is the impact of COVID-19 lockdowns on food security.

On Sunday, the Africa Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) said that the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases across the African continent surpassed 61,165 as the death toll from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic reached 2,239 as of Sunday evening.

The seven COVID-19 lockdown exit strategies for African countries include improving testing, including

preventive or curative medicines are developed, contact tracing and mass testing, immunity permits, gradual segmented reopening, adaptive triggering, as well as mitigation.

Gradual segmented reopening may be needed in countries where containment has failed with further measures to suppress the spread of the disease being required where the virus is still spreading, the report indicated.

"The spread of the virus is still accelerating in many African countries on average at 30 percent every week," the report advised.

According to the report, active learning and data collection can help policymakers ascertain risks across the breadth of policy unknowns as they consider recommendations to ease lockdowns and move towards a "new normal."

It further urged African nations to learn from the experiences of other regions and their experiments in reopening; and to use the "extra time" afforded by the lockdowns to rapidly put in place testing, treatment systems, preventive measures, and carefully design lockdown exit strategies in collaboration with communities and vulnerable groups.

Xinhua

## Zambia receives mixed reactions on school opening decision amid COVID-19

LUSAKA

THE decision by the Zambian government to reopen some examination classes in schools amid the COVID-19 has received mixed reactions from stakeholders.

In March, the government closed schools as part of efforts to contain the spread of the pandemic.

However, in his national address Friday, President Edgar Lungu said examination classes in both secondary and primary should reopen on June 1 on condition that schools enforce all public health guidelines, regulations and certifications.

He directed the health and education authorities to ensure that face masks, hand washing soaps and sanitizers are prioritized to all schools and health centers, starting with those in examination classes.

People have reacted differently to the announcement, with some welcoming it while others have said the government should have waited a little longer.

"I am excited that my child is going to resume classes. We were really worried when our children stopped attending classes. We commend the president for the gesture," said Sharon Bwalya, 30-year-old Lusaka resident.

She noted that the announcement was good although she was quick to point out that the health of her children came first.

Charityimba, who is the examination class at Olympia High School in Lusaka said she cannot wait for June 1 to come so that she can resume classes. She said she is excited about the prospect of resuming classes after two months of just staying at home.

The National Action for Quality Education in Zambia, a lobby group also welcomed the decision with caution.

Aaron Chansa, the organization's executive director said his organization was in support of the decision because it is not clear when the pandemic will end.

He, however, urged the government to distribute masks to all pupils and teachers as well as daily screenings to ensure that the schools were safe.

The Zambia National Union of Teachers described the move as a bold decision.

The union has however called for mandatory testing of pupils and a 14-day mandatory quarantine before they report for lessons.

According to the union, the move, if not well managed, can result in schools becoming epicenters of the pandemic.

Xinhua

## WHO suspends staff activity in Yemen's Houthi-held areas

DUBAI

THE World Health Organization (WHO) has suspended staff activity at its hubs in Houthi-held areas of Yemen, a directive seen by Reuters showed, in a move sources said aimed to pressure the group to be more transparent about suspected coronavirus cases.

War-ravaged Yemen, one of the countries most vulnerable to disease, is divided between the internationally recognised government temporarily based in the south and the Houthi group that ousted it from power in the capital, Sanaa, in late 2014.

The Saudi-backed government has so far reported 34 cases of the novel

coronavirus with seven deaths in territory it controls, while the Houthis, who hold most large urban centres, have recorded just two cases with one death.

The WHO directive issued late on Saturday notified staff in Sanaa, the Red Sea port of Hodeidah, the northern province of Saada and central province of Ibb that "all movements,

meetings or any other activity" for staff in those areas were paused until further notice.

The WHO has temporarily paused its movements in northern areas due to "credible threats and perceived risks which could have an impact on staff security", it said in response to a Reuters' query, adding that operations

have not been suspended.

The United Nations is operating under the assumption that there is now full-blown transmission in Yemen, it said.

"We are competing for resources and supplies in the global market - and a country's 'priority status' in terms of who receives what for COVID-19 is di-

rectly linked to how many cases are in country and the need - it is the numbers," it said.

The UN has "systematically for weeks now" advised on case declaration and reporting, but the decision to do so rests with local authorities, the WHO added.

Agencies

## US city takes on bigots by denouncing words of hate

THE spread of the novel coronavirus is triggering hate against Asian Americans. One Texas city is trying to do something about it.

The San Antonio City Council unanimously passed a resolution on Thursday denouncing bigotry, anti-Semitism, crimes against Asian Americans and "hateful speech" amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The resolution, proposed by Mayor Ron Nirenberg, states that "COVID-19 is a public health issue, not a racial, religious or ethnic one, and the deliberate use of terms such as 'Chinese virus' or 'Kung Fu virus' to describe COVID-19 only encourages hate crimes and incidents against Asians and further spreads mis-

information at a time when communities should be working together to get through this crisis".

The resolution also says that the Jewish community has been targeted with blame and conspiracy theories regarding the disease.

"The City of San Antonio denounces anti-Semitism, anti-Asian bigotry, and all hateful speech, violent action and the spread of misinformation related to COVID-19 that casts blame, promotes racism or discrimination or harms the City of San Antonio Asian and Pacific Islander, Jewish, immigrant or other communities," the resolution says.

According to the Anti-Defamation League, or ADL, reports of xenophobic and racist incidents



targeting members of the Asian-American and Pacific Islander, or AAPI, communities in the US have surged since January.

Those incidents include Asian Americans being told to "Go back to China", being blamed for

"bringing the virus" to the US, being referred to with racial slurs, spat on, and in some extreme cases, being physically assaulted.

ADL compiled a list of anti-AAPI incidents that have been reported by media outlets across the coun-

try since January. The number of incidents is close to 100.

One of the most recent reports showed that in New York, an Asian man was attacked on the subway by a stranger who shouted at him, "You're infected, China boy. You need to get off the train." The assailant then grabbed the victim and attempted to pull him out of his seat.

Some comments regarding the report of San Antonio's new anti-hate speech resolution at ksat.com have been negative, indicating that such bias and discrimination are prevalent.

**'Rather disheartening'**

"It's rather disheartening to see such a large number of negative,

angry, and downright crude comments that have appeared on local social media and news media websites since the passage of this resolution by the San Antonio City Council," said Jon Taylor, professor and department chair of the political science and geography department at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

"Calling people out for their hateful comments is a reminder that words can and do have meaning and consequences. Those opposed to this resolution don't see it quite that way and view it as an infringement of their free speech rights. And that's their right as Americans. But that doesn't mean that people can't be civil," Taylor said.

Steven Pei, a professor at the University of Houston and honorary chair of United Chinese Americans, or UCA said: "We appreciate very much that the San Antonio City Council declared war against hate speeches such as 'Chinese virus' and 'Kung Fu flu' to ensure safety of the entire community."

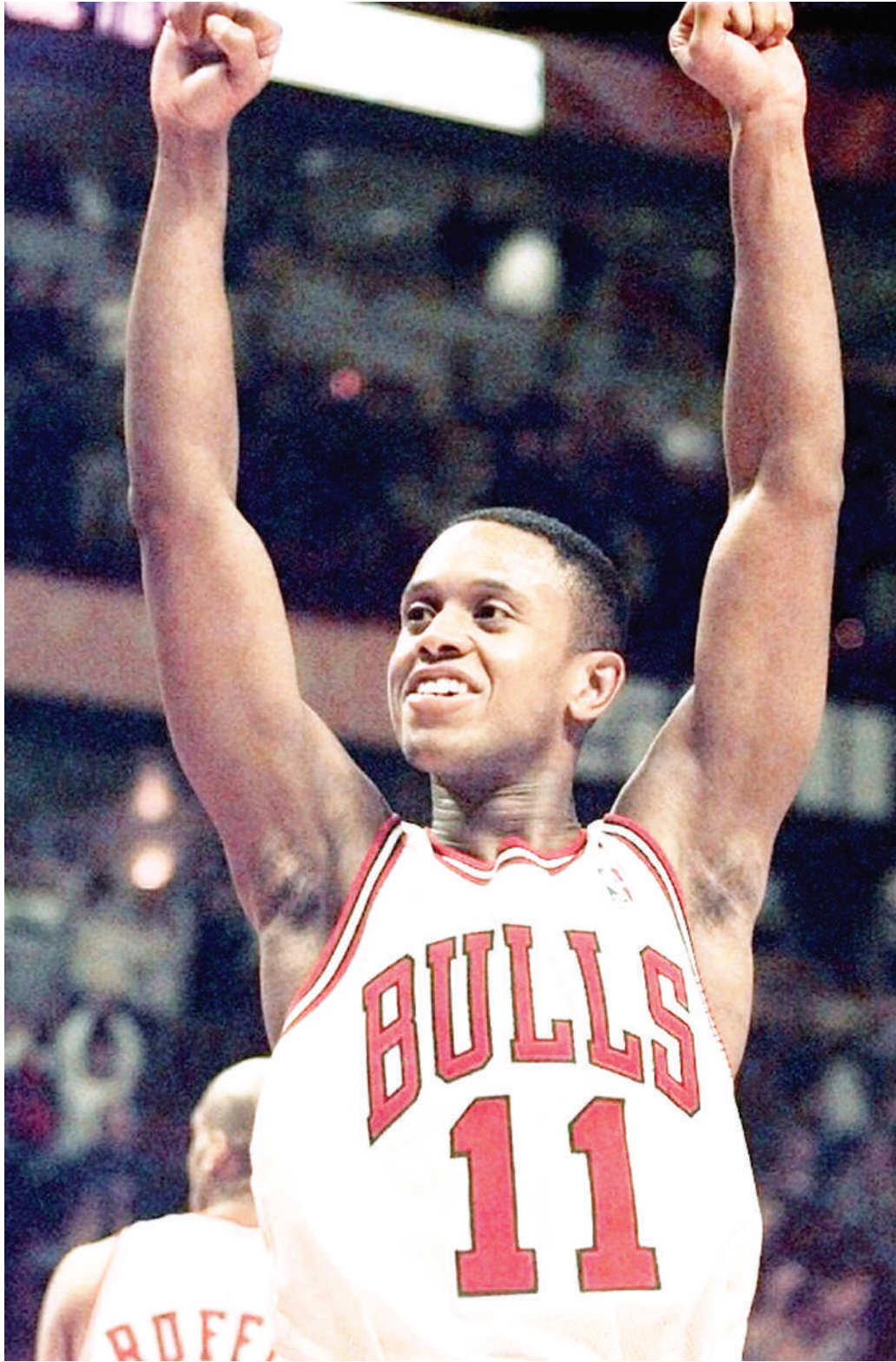
He pointed out that Asian Americans did not spread the virus; on the contrary, they have made great contributions to combat the virus by raising funds to donate personal protection equipment to medical workers, first responders and communities in need across the US.

Agencies



The  
Guardian

## SPORT



In this Jan. 5, 2000, file photo, Chicago Bulls' B.J. Armstrong celebrates the Bulls' 77-66 win over the Washington Wizards in Chicago. Armstrong earned three rings with the Chicago Bulls, as part of their NBA championship teams in 1991, 1992 and 1993. (AP Photo)

## A breakfast in '95 played a role in Jordan's return to Bulls

By TIM REYNOLDS

B.J. Armstrong might have played a role in the Chicago Bulls getting their 1996, 1997 and 1998 titles – even though he wasn't on those teams.

Armstrong was the person who, at a breakfast chat over pancakes in Chicago, nudged Michael Jordan to stop by the Bulls' practice facility one morning late in the 1994-95 season to go see his old teammates. Before long, Jordan ended his retirement; the Bulls won three more titles in Jordan's second stint with the franchise.

Jordan's first retirement in 1993, the murder of his father James, his stint in minor league baseball and – after a gentle push by Armstrong, who takes no credit for Jordan's return – his comeback were among the themes in the latest installments of the ESPN and Netflix documentary "The Last Dance," a 10-part series that showed episodes seven and eight on Sunday night.

"I've never thought about it, to be honest with you," Armstrong, the longtime NBA guard and three-time NBA champion with the Bulls who is now a California-based sports agent, told The Associated Press. "I just wanted to be a good friend and I just saw something in him. When you see someone who really loves something ... he loved it. He didn't like it. He loved it. That's who he was. And out of respect to the game of basketball, I wanted to be a good friend."

Sensing the time was right, Armstrong suggested Jordan to go to practice with him that day under the auspices of just seeing the guys. Then Jordan went back for another practice. Then another. Before long, Jordan's baseball days were done. He was back.

"I just got him, he got me, and we got each other and you did what was needed," said Armstrong, who helped the Bulls win titles in 1991, 1992 and 1993. "I didn't need to tell anyone or talk about it or anything. That's just what happened. I was just happy for him because I know what the game of basketball meant to him and meant to his life. He kept basketball in a sacred space and it was the most beautiful thing I've ever seen."

Jordan retired in October 1993, not long after the murder of his father and with the Bulls having just won their third consecutive title.

The first season of Jordan's hiatus became

Armstrong's best season, in terms of numbers. He set career-highs in points (14.8) and minutes (33.8) per game, started all 82 regular-season games for the first time, plus was a starter in what became his only All-Star appearance. He was a fan favorite, finishing third in All-Star voting that year behind only Charles Barkley and Shaquille O'Neal.

Armstrong didn't replace Jordan in the Bulls' lineup – he played point guard, while Pete Myers became the answer to the 'who took Jordan's starting shooting guard spot?' trivia question – but he did assume a much bigger role, and did so with Jordan encouraging him with occasional phone calls.

And when Armstrong was named the All-Star starter, Jordan was the first person to call him with congratulations.

"He was so happy for me," Armstrong said. "I wasn't playing to be an All-Star, but when he called, it meant the world to me then and it means the world to me now. I know what it means to have a friend and I always tried to be a good friend."

Unwittingly, Armstrong may have been a friend again in the 1998 playoffs – when he was with Charlotte, playing against Jordan and the Bulls in what would become their last title run. Armstrong hit what became a game-winning shot in Game 2 of that series for Charlotte in Chicago, and Jordan didn't like seeing his former teammate celebrating. He took it as a slight, and he always turned slights into fuel.

"I felt like B.J. should know better," Jordan says early in Episode 8. "If you're going to high-five and talk trash, now I have a bone to pick with you. I'm supposed to kill this guy. I'm supposed to dominate this guy. And from that point, I did."

The Bulls didn't lose again in that series. Armstrong – who got plenty of defensive attention from Jordan over those next three games – has no regrets.

"Whenever you start a series, you've got to let the other person know you're there for a fight," Armstrong said. "Michael knew exactly what was happening. I knew exactly what was happening. I don't know if anyone else did ... He didn't guard the point guards. He went there."

The final two episodes of the documentary series will debut May 17.

AP

# Mainland Premier League to resume in June

By Correspondent Lloyd Elipokea

SO, following concern among domestic football quarters, the Tanzania Football Federation (TFF)'s announcement lately that the Mainland Premier League could resume hostilities in earnest in June was greeted with muted good cheer.

Naturally, under normal circumstances, any news report that the 'bread and butter' of top tier sides, the Mainland Premier League, was going to pick up from where it left off would be news that would be joyously welcomed by football devotees en masse in the country.

But, of course, a country desperately in the midst of an epic battle against a terrifying pandemic would doubtlessly never be described as a 'normal circumstance' in anyone's book.

Hence, the discernible sense of deflated happiness in the air in the immediate aftermath of the TFF's announcement.

Significantly, it must be noted that the Mainland Premier League is due to resume in June but with one conspicuously absent element: the supporters.

Indeed, as part of precautions taken by the TFF to preclude the spread of the coronavirus, top flight league football run-ins will take place behind closed doors.

Unsurprisingly, this unprecedented move has NOT been met by universal approval by the differing stakeholders, factions and quarters who collectively constitute the domestic football fraternity.

Regardless of that fact, though, one hopes that the TFF in concert with the authorities will remain ever-vigilant so as to ensure that the new 'no fans' measure is strictly enforced



KMC FC keeper, Jonathan Nahimana, blocks an effort by one of Yanga players when two squads locked horns in this season's Mainland Premier League duel, played in Dar es Salaam. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

without fail across the length and breadth of the country.

Speaking of our blessed motherland, the country's golf scene was dealt a swinging blow lately following arguably the pre-eminent lady golfer on the golf stage, Angel Eaton's saddening admission that she is contemplating retirement due to a telling lack of sponsorship.

Indeed, for many enthusiasts of women's golf, who include this writer, Angel Eaton's startling revelation made for very gloomy reflection.

And, the reasons for our sorrow are not that difficult to find. After all, a close scrutiny of Eaton's career will reveal a grand-old haul of trophies

and titles won at various locales around the continent.

Indeed, from clinching the Malawi Ladies Open last year to emerging as the champion of the prestigious IBB Ladies Open in Abuja, Nigeria two years ago among other notable triumphs, Eaton is very much a golfer who can candidly claim to have been there and done that on the underrated and ferociously competitive African women's golf landscape during the course of her superbly fruitful career.

However, despite notching up victories all over the place, one perpetual drawback has always dogged Eaton's trailblazing career

and that is, yes, you guessed it, a chronic lack of funding or sponsorship.

In the end, if the seemingly constant lack of funding which has haunted Eaton's entire career proves to be the reason for her to call it quits, then this writer hopes that it prompts sports administrators to engage in a serious bout of soul-searching over how we, as a country, can raise a reliable supply of funds for low profile sports like, for example, women's golf.

Until you, Dear Reader, joins me next time in our treasured, little corner of the Guardian's sports pages, please stay safe.

## If games resume, athletes will 'need to know when to peak'

By CLIFF BRUNT

MAKING it safe for America's professional sports teams to start playing games is one thing.

Making sure athletes are in game shape is another.

The coronavirus pandemic brought sports to a halt, but stay-at-home orders are starting to be eased and a handful of NBA teams are opening practice facilities.

For players, the difference between merely working out and playing games will be a significant jump and experts say things shouldn't be rushed. With athletes unable to simulate game or even practice activity at home, they will need time before resuming competition.

"Whatever the amount of time is, just know that players will have the input and say so because we're the ones that's playing, and that comes first," said Oklahoma City Thunder guard Chris Paul, president of the National Basketball Players Association. "We don't ever want to put guys in a situation where their injury risk is high. It varies from player to player. But it's at least got to be three to four weeks."

Charlotte Hornets coach James Borrego said players could be at different points based on their access to equipment.

"There's veterans out there that may have a court in their home, in their facility and they're probably a little bit more ready to go than others," he said. "I think we're talking weeks. This isn't something where after one week these guys are ready to go."

NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman has said on multiple occasions he believes a two- to three-week training camp would be needed before the season resumes. Many hockey teams have had trainers send at-home workout routines to players, but few if any have been on the ice in months.

"As much as I could mentally be in game mode, your body's not ready for it if you don't get a full off-season of training and if you don't get to play a long training camp with like seven exhibition games," Los Angeles Kings defenseman Drew Doughty said. "If you only get a week training camp with a couple exhibition games, you're going to ruin your body"



In this March 8, 2020, photo, Oklahoma City Thunder's Chris Paul plays against the Boston Celtics during an NBA basketball game in Boston. Making it safe for America's professional sports teams to start playing games is one thing. Making sure athletes are in game shape is another. Experts say nothing should be rushed. Athletes in the NBA, NHL and Major League Baseball all indicate that a few weeks of training is necessary before any games. (AP Photo)

Edmonton Oilers forward Alex Chiasson said it is on the athlete to be ready.

"That's going to be on us," he said. "We're professional athletes. We've got to make sure we prepare. It's not easy, but it is what it is, and we've got to deal with the situation as best as we can."

While basketball and hockey were nearing their playoffs, baseball was in spring training when things were shut down. It created a particular wrinkle for pitchers, who tend to train methodically toward full games.

Washington Nationals general manager Mike Rizzore said he expects another period that resembles spring training before games are played.

"The most important part of any spring training is preparation for your pitchers, especially your starting pitchers," Rizzore said. "Whenever you have to expedite a spring training, that's probably the most impactful decision that you have to make: How to ramp them up."

Baltimore Orioles GM Mike Elias agreed. "When baseball does come back, you have to worry about guys going a very small

number of innings," he said. "I don't know that we've come up with a solution to that ... The public health guidelines makes it tough to do it without a training staff and coaches. Some of the pitchers are throwing into nets in their backyards and hitters are hitting off the tee."

Tampa Bay catcher Mike Zunino said the pitchers were his biggest concern.

"The biggest worry is injuries," he said. "It's one of those things. I think guys are staying in shape, they're throwing now. Hopefully a few weeks is enough. I think we'll have to be smart as the season opens to keep guys fresh."

Dr. Mike Reinold, senior medical adviser for the Chicago White Sox, said the challenge for pitchers has been how to at least maintain what they gained from their previous spring training progression.

"It will take around three weeks to get a starting pitcher likely ramped up to five innings, but that assumes that they have done the work to maintain themselves and are ready to even start that progression," he said.

Reinold said preparing is complicated

because there is no return date set: "They need to know when to peak."

"That's a big, important concept when we're trying to get our athletes ready for a competitive season that they're building for," he said. "This is the first time in my career that we've ever not had that."

Pittsburgh Pirates manager Derek Shelton said assessing each player's condition after the layoff will be a key part of getting things rolling again. He said those conversations are happening even now.

"We don't need a soft-tissue (injury) because guys were a little bit behind," he said. "That's why the openness of the player and the conversations we're having now are so important so we have a baseline coming in." Milwaukee Brewers general manager David Stearns said a second pre-season probably wouldn't need to be too long once it's deemed safe.

"Once it's safe, we can turn this thing on pretty quickly," he said.

Elias agreed: "We will be ready, and baseball will be ready for America when America is ready for us."

AP



## Khashoggi's fiancée insists moral values must come first in Newcastle takeover

LONDON

NEWCASTLE United and the Premier League should put moral values ahead of the financial rewards from a proposed £300 million (\$372 million) Saudi-backed takeover, the fiancée of murdered dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi said on Sunday.

Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, led by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, will reportedly take an 80 percent stake in Newcastle should the takeover be approved by the Premier League.

The mooted deal comes against the backdrop of the death of Khashoggi, a Washington Post contributor and US resident who was killed in 2018 while at Saudi Arabia's consulate in Istanbul to obtain paperwork ahead of his wedding to Hatice Cengiz.

Turkish officials say a 15-man Saudi squad strangled Khashoggi and cut his body into pieces. His remains were never found.

Cengiz has already called for the Premier League to block the Newcastle takeover and now she has questioned the morality of top-flight chiefs and the Tyneside club.

"Moral values should prevail," Cengiz told the BBC on Sunday.

"My message would be to the management of Newcastle United and to the decision makers.

"We should consider ethical values, not just financial or political ones. Money cannot buy everything in the world. So the message that will be given to people like Crown Prince is extremely important.

"There should be no place in English football for those credibly ac-

cused of atrocities and murder."

A Saudi court in December sentenced five people to death over the killing, handing three others long jail sentences and acquitting the remaining three charged in the case.

Rights group Amnesty International condemned the outcome as a "whitewash".

The two top figures investigated over the killing – both part of the crown prince's inner circle – were exonerated.

Both the CIA and a United Nations special envoy have directly linked the crown prince to the killing, a charge the kingdom vehemently denies.

"We don't want this deal to go ahead. We are not just talking about the murder of a human being but the efforts to keep all hopes regarding the future, to keep human rights alive, to support justice and to start a transformation in the Middle East," Cengiz said.

"This deal seems to be about buying something. But there is a wider picture. Saudi Arabia shows the world its face of reform.

"But it has another face where the reality is far from what is shown to the world. This is why we want this (deal) to be stopped and not be completed."

The Premier League must determine whether the bid fulfils its owners and directors' test.

Oliver Dowden, the UK culture secretary, told a meeting of the Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport committee last week it was a "matter for the Premier League" rather than government.

AFP

## Ex-Nigeria attacker Obasi in 2014 World Cup bribe claim

ABUJA

FORMER Nigeria striker Chinedu Obasi alleged on Sunday he was asked to pay a bribe to feature at the 2014 World Cup, before eventually missing out on selection.

Obasi, 33, who has been a free agent since leaving Swedish outfit AIK in January, made his last Super Eagles appearance in 2011 and had club spells in Germany with Hoffenheim and Schalke.

"I was supposed to be at the World Cup in 2014. I was playing with Schalke in the Champions League everything was going fine. At the end of the season, I was given an invitation for the World Cup preparations for friendlies in South Africa," Obasi said on social media.

"So, two days before the list came out, I was asked to pay some money if I wanted to be in the team," he added.

Obasi, who won a silver medal at the Beijing 2008 Olympics and played at the 2010 World Cup, said a move away from the Bundesliga fell through after missing the tournament four years later.

"I felt like I've paid my dues for the country, if you're a new player, I can get that but for me, it was a bit personal and very heart-breaking because I got injured - I was supposed to move from Hoffenheim to England," he said.

"And it takes a lot of dedication, it takes a lot of money and it takes a lot of investment in myself and my body. I went through surgery and did everything I could."

However, one of Nigeria's assistant coaches at the World Cup six years ago, Valere Houdonou, maintained Obasi was not good enough to make the final squad facing competition from the likes of Peter Odemwingie and Ahmed Musa.

"The question is, who could he have replaced among the strikers then?" Houdonou said.

"He was invited like every other potential player that could make the World Cup then because the coaching crew wanted to take the best to

Brazil then.

"He failed to make the list because he could not displace anyone in the team," he added.

- 'Two-way thing' -

Daniel Amokachi, who was also assistant coach at the World Cup in Brazil, took exception to Obasi's allegations particularly after head coach Stephen Keshi died in 2016, insisting the players are also guilty.

"This issue of bribe-taking or collecting in our football is not a one-way thing. Agents of players will come and meet a coach to offer money for their players to be taken," said the ex-Everton striker, who featured at the 1994 and 1998 World Cups.

"It's a two-way thing. Sometimes, players are the ones that will even go to the coach to say 'my agent said he will pay for me to be part of the team'," he said.

"You will also see some administrators and coaches who have turned agents that will try to be influencing things from the side," he added.

Nigeria's anti-corruption agencies are investigating senior officials of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) led by president Amaju Pinnick after "weighty" allegations were leveled against them.

AFP



# European leagues move at different speeds toward restart

PARIS

AS European leagues prepare to return from the enforced coronavirus break, screening tests are revealing cases in various championships, although, as yet, not calling into question plans to resume playing.

Germany still plans to be the first of the five "big" leagues ahead of Spain, England and Italy - France has declared its season over - to kick off on May 16, behind closed doors, despite the sobering events at Dynamo Dresden.

The second-tier club were ordered to self-isolate for 14 days on Saturday after testing uncovered two fresh coronavirus cases.

"It's not a reason to call the entire season into question," league CEO Christian Seifert told German broadcaster ZDF.

"It was always clear to me that this could happen. We're at the very beginning of the restart."

Seifert warned, however, that further coronavirus cases could jeopardise plans to end the season by June 30.

"It can reach a scale where it's not feasible anymore," he said. "It would depend on how much time there is left to finish the season."

Matches will be played behind closed doors and with a maximum number of 300 people, including both teams, allowed at each game.

In the run-up to the restart, all teams must go into a one-week quarantine training camp.

The German league said on Thursday that 1,724 tests at the 36 clubs in the top two divisions conducted in two rounds yielded 10 positives in the first batch and two more in the second.

Those include two players and a fitness coach at Cologne and a player and a physiotherapist at Borussia Moenchengladbach, but only the individuals concerned were placed in quarantine and the teams continued training.

- Three cases in Brighton, five in Spain -

In the English Premier League, which hopes to resume from June to August, a third Brighton player tested positive on Saturday and was placed in isolation, the club's chief executive Paul Barber told Sky Sports.



Mikel Arteta

The player was not named. One Brighton player tested positive in March and another in April and have recovered, the club said.

"It is a concern," Barber said. "Despite all of the measures that we've been taking over the past few weeks, where the players haven't been involved in any significant training at all, we've still suffered another player testing positive for the virus."

Elsewhere, players at Chelsea and Norwich as well as Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta tested positive while players at

Leicester, Everton and Bournemouth all self-isolated after showing symptoms but clubs did not confirm if they tested positive.

Representatives of the Premier League and clubs are due to meet on Monday to discuss the final details of the "Project Restart", including the organisation of matches behind closed doors, on neutral ground and the extension of player contracts.

In Spain, players in the top two divisions were allowed to carry out individual work at training grounds last week at the start of

a programme aimed at restarting competition in the middle of June.

On Sunday, La Liga said five players and three non-playing individuals had tested positive.

The five players, who have not been named, will be quarantined at home and tested again "in the next few days".

La Liga president Javier Tebas said he hopes the tournament can resume on June 12.

"I would like it (the season resuming) to be June 12, but it will depend on the numbers," Tebas told Movistar.

"In the end it will be up to the health authorities.

- Cases in Italy and Portugal -

In Italy's Serie A, which resumed individual training this week, four Sampdoria players, including one who had previously recovered, and three from Fiorentina have tested positive for coronavirus, the clubs announced on Thursday.

Clubs will have to wait until May 18 at the earliest to start group training, and the sports minister warned on Wednesday that it was "impossible to set a definite date" for the resumption of matches.

AC Milan technical director Paolo Maldini, who is recovering, and Juventus striker Paulo Dybala, who has been given the all clear, were among the most notable early football victims.

In Portugal, three players at top-flight Vitoria Guimaraes have tested positive.

They "are clinically healthy, asymptomatic and in quarantine," the club said in a statement on Saturday.

The government announced on April 30 that the first division was authorised to resume from the last weekend in May, behind closed doors and subject to the approval of a health protocol.

AFP

## Samba-style China bank on Brazilians in World Cup push

SHANGHAI

FERNANDO skips down the wing and crosses for Ricardo Goulart, who tees up Elkeson to smash the ball into the top corner.

Alan and Aloisio join in some Samba-style celebrations as a goal made in Brazil propels China to the 2022 World Cup.

It is the stuff of make-believe, but the world's most populous nation will soon be able to field a team with a distinctly Brazilian flavour.

Despite making Elkeson the first Brazilian-born player to represent their national team last year, China's hopes of reaching only a second World Cup hang in the balance after a lacklustre qualifying campaign so far.

However, naturalised forwards Elkeson and Aloisio are both in coach Li Tie's current squad while Goulart, Alan and Fernando are reportedly close to call-ups having finalised or nearly finalised the paperwork to play for China.

All five were born in Brazil, are offensive players and, according to transfermarkt.com, are contracted to Fabio Cannavaro's Chinese Super League (CSL) champions Guangzhou Evergrande.

Another Evergrande player, the former England youth defender Tyias Browning, could also represent China this year.

It accelerates a strategy, started under ex-coach Marcello Lippi, to bring in naturalised players to bolster a squad that remains thin on talent.

"Since 2019, Guangzhou Evergrande has helped (these) six players... get their Chinese ID cards and their household registration in Guangzhou," the state-run Guangzhou Daily said.

"At the same time, Guangzhou Evergrande and the Chinese Football Association have been actively promoting these naturalised players to qualify for the Chinese men's national football team."

- World Cup dreams -

Evergrande spent 870 million yuan (\$122 million) in transfer fees, wages and other costs on the six players, Soccer News said, citing the club's annual report.

Soccer News said that seven naturalised players could pull on China's red shirts this year as the country attempts to qualify for the Qatar World Cup.

The seventh is Beijing Guoan's London-born Nico Yennaris, who became China's first naturalised footballer when he made his debut last year and is now known as Li Ke.

The 26-year-old former Arsenal and England youth midfielder, whose mother is Chinese, was named alongside Elkeson and debutant Aloisio in the squad that is now in Shanghai for a training camp.

It is the first time in Chinese football history that three naturalised players have been called up.

The squad will be limited to practice matches because international games – among them World Cup qualifiers – are suspended because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Although football success, including hosting and even winning the World Cup, is a stated ambition of



Li Ke (L) and Brazilian-born Elkeson are both naturalised players now representing China (AFP Photo)

President Xi Jinping, China's hopes of reaching Qatar 2022 are in real jeopardy. Italian World Cup winner Lippi quit for a second time in November after China lost 2-1 to Syria, despite the presence of Elkeson – Chinese name Ai Kesen – and Yennaris.

The defeat left China trailing the Group A leaders by eight points, albeit with a game in hand.

The top team in each group automatically reaches the next stage of qualifying, along with the four best runners-up.

- 'Sense of belonging to China' -

Recruiting foreign-born players is not unique to China but it is a new approach for the country and some experts, fans and former players have voiced concern about the quick-fix policy.

Chinese state media has generally taken the line that as long as they improve the national side and win their places on merit, they deserve to play.

Gwiji by David Chikoko





# SPORT

European leagues move at different speeds toward restart

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19



Simba SC winger, Miraji Athuman.

## Kagera Sugar forward weighs recruitment options

By Correspondent Adam Fungamwango

KAGERA Sugar forward, Kelvin Sabato, has noted he has yet to reach decision on extending contract with the outfit, adding he is waiting for the conclusion of this season's Vodacom Premier League.

The muscular forward had also featured for top flight outfits which include Stand United, Majimaji FC, Mwadui FC, and Mtibwa Sugar.

Shinyanga-based Stand United, nevertheless, were relegated to the First Division League (FDL) in the previous season.

Sabato insisted he will either extend his contract with Kagera Sugar or look for other options after the conclusion of this season's top flight.

"I have though prioritized my club, Kagera Sugar, I will look for other offers if I will not seal the contract with Kagera Sugar," he disclosed.

The forward has scored five goals in this season's Vodacom Premier League, which is currently on a break.

The domestic top flight and the rest of sporting activities in the country have been indefinitely put on hold, as per the government's directives, with the aim of containing Coronavirus spread.

The striker, who joined Kagera Sugar from FDL outfit Gwambina FC during mini-transfer window, disclosed he signed six-month contract with Kagera Sugar.

He will, in this case, become free agent after conclusion of this season's Vodacom Premier League.

This statement means Sabato is free to join any of the rest of the Premier League outfits, which are among others, Simba, Yanga and Azam FC.

The mentioned outfits, which are so far prominent outfits in the top flight, are lately seeking new players that include prolific forwards.

The Kagera Sugar forward, who made his debut in Premier League in 2015/16 season, has scored 21 goals in total.

He first donned Mwadui FC jerseys in 2015/16 season, in which he completed the season with four goals to his name.

He later netted 10 goals in the 2016/17 season with two outfits, he recorded three goals for Stand United in the first phase of the season.

He went on to record seven goals for Ruvuma's Majimaji FC after joining the outfit in the season's mini-transfer window.

The striker went on to sign for Mtibwa Sugar in the 2017/18 season and finished the season with two goals.

He left Mtibwa Sugar for Mwanza-based Gwambina FC in the 2018/19 season.

Kagera Sugar roped Sabato in midway through this season, and he has recorded five goals for the outfit.

He has netted a hat-trick in two matches in the top flight, he first achieved the feat with Stand United in the 2016/17 season.

He scored the tree goals against Mtibwa Sugar, with the duel ending in 3-3 draw.

This season has seen him score hat-trick against Singida United, in which Kagera Sugar thrashed Singida United 3-0.



Nizar Khalfan

## Nizar Khalfan heaps praise on ex-Taifa Stars coach Maximo

By Correspondent Michael Mwebi

FORMER Tanzania international, Nizar Khalfan, has described ex-Taifa Stars head coach, Marcio Maximo, as a very smart and intelligent manager.

Khalfan worked with Maximo between 2006 and 2010 when the Brazilian tactician was in charge of Taifa Stars.

In a recent interview the attacking midfielder recalled the period he worked with Maximo as an unforgettable experience that he will forever cherish.

"Maximo was very much a father figure kind of coach, players enjoyed working with him," Khalfan said.

"He arrived when our football

was on its deathbed, he began to mould the team in his image. He tried to instil the fighting spirit."

"He motivated us to improve, both as a team and as individuals. He went as far as teaching us how to use various cutlery."

"He taught us how to handle forks and knives, how to fill our plates during buffets, most of us came from humble backgrounds such as Dar es Salaam's Mbagala Street. He really helped out in this regard," he added.

The duo reunited at club level, when they worked together at Yanga when Maximo briefly took charge at Jangwani Street outfit in 2014/15.

The Brazilian coach, who was brought by the former Tanzania

President, Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, oversaw the rebuilding of Taifa Stars' tattered public image. Maximo masterminded some famous victories in his first attempt at African Cup of Nations (AFCON) finals' qualification.

Taifa Stars began their 2008 AFCON campaign with a memorable 2-1 victory over highly fancied Burkina Faso.

Taifa Stars then managed a credible away goalless draw with Mozambique to make it four points out of a possible six in the first two qualifying games.

A disappointing 4-0 thrashing by Senegal did not dampen Taifa Stars spirit as they bounced back with a shocking 1-0 away victory over Burkina Faso.

The victory set the country buzzing with excitement and hopes of qualifying for AFCON finals for the second time in their history.

Unfortunately for the side, they missed out on qualifying for the 2008 AFCON finals after they were beaten at home by Mozambique.

A year later Maximo made good on his promise and delivered. He helped Taifa Stars qualify for the then inaugural African Nations Championship (CHAN), which has been designed for home-based players.

It is unlikely Maximo, who finally left Tanzania in early 2015, will ever be forgotten by Tanzanian football fans.

## Simba SC winger looks forward to VPL resumption

By Correspondent Faustine Feliciane

SIMBA SC winger, Miraji Athuman, has conceded he is looking forward to making his way back to action in this season's Vodacom Premier League after a lengthy lay off because of injuries.

Athuman recently regained fitness after missing out on several games his outfit took part in.

The skilful winger that was roped in from VPL club, Iringa-based Lipuli FC, had spent a long time away from the pitch because of the injuries.

He admitted his absence from his club's list of players that featured in matched frustrated him a lot.

He disclosed he is however pleased to have regained fitness and he badly wants to see the top flight resume.

"I'm lately attending training session, I'm fit and I appreciate I'm free to take part in training, I'm waiting for the tournament resumption," he disclosed.

"I'm training at home, gym and on the beach. I'm a soccer player and I depend on the profession... I'm waiting to make my way back and play for my squad."

The player, as it is the case for the rest of the top flight's players, are presently featuring in individual training because the tournament is on a break.

The domestic top flight and the rest of sporting activities in the country have been indefinitely put on hold, as per government's directives, with the aim of containing Coronavirus spread.

The Vodacom Premier League was halted on March 17.

Simba were, as of the day the domestic top flight was put on hold, topping the tournament after collecting 71 points, with Azam FC placed second after recording 54 points, the two clubs have taken part in 29 matches.

Yanga were placed third after posting 51 points from 28 outings.

**EATV TUESDAY**  
11:00 DADAZ LIVE  
12:00 MPYA  
12:30 Msimi Kitaani (r)  
13:00 Wanawake Live (r)  
13:30 Kafi Za Wana  
14:00 DK 10 za Maangamizi  
14:30 Bball Kings Highlights (r)  
15:00 Funguka  
15:30 SPORTS (r)  
16:30 #HASHIAG  
17:00 SSELEKT  
17:55 Kurasa  
18:00 eNewz  
18:30 Music/Soap  
19:00 EATV SAA 1  
19:45 MJADALA  
20:00 DADAZ (r)

**TONIGHT @ 9:00**

**NIRVANA**

Nirvana explores the hottest trends in fashion, beauty, art and lifestyle as well as interviews with notable people from the entertainment, art and fashion industries.

**eastafrica RADIO**

06:00 Supa Breakfast  
10:00 MAMAMIA  
12:00 Kipenga Xtra  
13:00 Planet Bongo  
14:00 EA Drive  
20:00 Kipenga  
21:00 The Cruise

**88.1FM DAR ES SALAAM**

## Flexibles by David Chikoko



“

'm training at home, gym and on the beach. I'm a soccer player and I depend on the profession... I'm waiting to make my way back and play for my squad.