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Biological products distributed



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Minister warns retailers over price hikes



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Mbarali rice traders face hefty fines



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Local kidney transplants saved 5bn/-, says minister

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

SAVINGS of up to 5bn/- were made by the government between July 2019 and March 2020, which would have been spent on medical bills for kidney transplants abroad.

Kidney transplants are now conducted at the Muhimbili National Hospital (MNH) in Dar es Salaam and the Benjamin Mkapa Hospital (BMH) in Dodoma.

Ummu Mwalimu, the minister for Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children, said in presenting the ministry's Budget estimates for the next financial year, that Muhimbili conducted 13 successful kidney transplants between July and March 2020, making a total of 56 patients who have received the treatment since it was



He encouraged international cooperation to deal with the crisis and combat the virus, which has infected nearly 3.5 million people and killed more than 240,000 people worldwide

introduced in 2018.

The cost for kidney transplant in the country is 30m/- while hospitals abroad charge 120m/- per patient, she said, noting that MNH plans to conduct five kidney transplants per month.

MNH is finalising processes to start offering bone marrow transplant after it received 6.22bn/- from the Treasury in June 2019, the minister noted.

The funds were used to purchase machines and essential medical supplies plus organising a laboratory unit for cell processing and chemo daycare, he said.

"We expect bone marrow transplant services to begin this month (May), with 11 Muhimbili surgeons having attended a one month learning session in India," she said.

The government has continued to provide funds for procurement of medical equipment at MNH, recently disbursing 900m/- for procurement of endoscopy machine at a cost of 397.2m/-, lung function test kit at a price of 140m/- and full blood picture machine at 362.7m/-.

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JPM: Check testing devices at Govt lab



President John Magufuli swears in Dr Mwigulu Lameck Nchemba as Constitutional and Legal Affairs minister at Chato in Geita Region yesterday. Photo: State House

By Guardian Reporter

PRESIDENT John Magufuli yesterday directed the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children in collaboration with security organs to investigate devices used to test Covid-19 at the National Health Laboratory, saying some could be defective.

He issued the directive in a televised address from his home village at Chato, Geita Region, when swearing in the newly appointed Constitutional and Legal Affairs minister, Dr Mwigulu Lameck Nchemba.

"Go and investigate the National Health Laboratory and its experts to find out if the gear have technical defects or the experts are being used by some people who don't have positive wishes for this country...We should do this immediately because everything we are using to test people is imported... we take it from outside," he said.

The president reminded his audience that in a recent meeting with heads of security organs, he directed them to go and check the test kits and other gear at the laboratory.

"We have taken some initial measures to see the quality of our national laboratory. Through our security organs we sent samples of goat, sheep, quail, jackfruit and pawpaw. We labelled them with human names without notifying the lab experts and the results came showing that goat, pawpaw and quail tested positive, while sheep tested negative. If this is true, then the

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Kwala dry port takes off with 29 first containers

By Guardian Reporter

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

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

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

The area is part of 60 hectares that will be built

to accommodate a total of 500 containers at one time, said Astashasta Ndiye, Deputy Minister for Works, Transport and Communications.

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

Congestion at the Dar es Salaam port has raised complaints from customers, he said, expressing gratitude to the government and the Tanzania Ports Authority in ensuring the project is completed.

He said he was satisfied with the big

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Pope: All Covid-19 vaccines must be shared worldwide

VATICAN CITY

POPE Francis yesterday called for international scientific cooperation in seeking a vaccine for Covid-19 and said any successful vaccine should be made available around the world.

Francis, who has been delivering his Sunday address from the papal library instead of St Peter's Square because of the lockdown in Italy, thanked all those around the world who were providing essential services.

He encouraged international cooperation to deal with the crisis and combat the virus, which has infected nearly 3.5 million people and killed more than 240,000 people worldwide.

"In fact, it is important to unite scientific capabilities in a transparent and impartial way to find vaccines and treatments," he said.

Francis said it was also important to "guarantee universal access to essential technologies that allow each infected person, in every part of the

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SHARE FACTS ABOUT COVID-19

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

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

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

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

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

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

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

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

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

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

AND

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

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

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



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cdc.gov/COVID-19



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Kwala dry port takes off with 29 first containers

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

He also threw a challenge to Kibaha District authorities and Coast Region authorities to work to use the dry port as an inducement for enhanced economic activity in the area.

Prof Ignas Rubarutuka, the chairman of TPA Board of Directors, said the project is a result of the fifth phase government's intention to solve the problem of goods congestion at Dar es Salaam port.

He appealed to businessmen inside and outside the country to use available the TPA ports as their operations and security have been beefed up.

Speaking on the implementation of the Kwala Dry Port Project, TPA Director General Eng Deuseddit Kakoko said the work is implemented in phases in the 60 hectares area, which is part of the 500 hectares taken over by TPA within

Kwala Ward.

Project work began in February 2017 with Suma JKT as contractors at a total cost of 47bn/- and is expected to be fully completed this year, he said.

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

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

He said so far the contractor has been paid 45 percent of the project cost which is 70 percent complete, and the entire project will be completed in July.

Phase three will include the construction of Kwala Dry Port to Viggwaza along Morogoro Road to concrete level.

The port will be connected with the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) to transport containers to upcountry regions and outside the country, he added.



CRDB Bank Plc corporate affairs director Tully Mwambapa (L) presents a dummy cheque for 50m/- in Dar es Salaam yesterday to Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute managing director Prof Mohamed Janabi in partial fulfilment of the bank's 100m/- pledge towards the costs in respect of children who were due to undergo heart surgery at the facility at the weekend. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Pope: All Covid-19 vaccines must be shared worldwide

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world, to receive the necessary medical treatment."

World leaders pledged in April to accelerate work on tests, drugs and vaccines against COVID-19 and to share them around the globe, but the United States did not take part in the launch of the World Health Organization (WHO) initiative.

President Donald Trump has said the WHO was slow to react to the outbreak and was being "China-centric," and as a consequence has announced a suspension of funding. The WHO has defended its handling of the crisis.

A number of pharmaceutical companies around the world have developed tests to identify antibodies

that develop after somebody has come into contact with the virus.

The Trump administration is planning to speed up development of a coronavirus vaccine with the goal of having 100 million doses ready by the end of 2020, according to a senior US administration official.

Most experts have suggested clinical trials to guarantee a vaccine is safe and effective could take a minimum of 12 to 18 months.

On Sunday, the pope also backed a proposal by an inter-religious group known as the Higher Committee on Human Fraternity for an international day of prayer and fasting on May 14 to ask God to help humanity overcome the pandemic.

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World Health Organization (WHO) has a big role to play," he said.

"We have to be aware that every test kit is from outside the country. If pawpaw, goats have tested positive for the coronavirus disease, then scientists have to do something on this. There are some of people who have tested positive, but haven't developed any symptoms."

"I direct you (Nchemba) to go and cooperate with the Ministry of Health, security organs to conduct investigations on these tools and if there is something wrong, or may be the tools have technical errors, more legal measures should be taken," he said.

"This disease has raised fears among the public. Some of them may die due to high anxiety from information they receive, and my plea to all Tanzanians is for their reassurance," the president

JPM: Check testing devices at Govt lab

remarked.

President Magufuli also appealed to global financial institutions to think of providing grants to African nations and not loans at this time when nations are struggling to contain the spread of the virus.

"This is not the first outbreak disease to hit our country. We had measles, tuberculosis (TB), HIV and Aids but we battled them and life went on. Why are we raising fears in this pandemic then? Let us continue working hard," he reiterated in customary refrain.

"Politicians should not take advantage of this disease to disseminate false information to the public. It is better they join efforts and educate the public on how to prevent the disease," he specified.

He further urged doctors, nurses and all health workers to continue

serving patients of coronavirus without stigmatizing them as the government is there to ensure that all the required equipment is available.

The president said he would appreciate seeing everyone who dies, regardless of the cause, to be buried at a place consented to by family and relatives.

"Government leaders should not prohibit relatives from burying their beloved ones at home. What is needed is to ensure that the bodies are well covered with protected tools," he said.

He pointedly demanded why the Mtwara Regional Commissioner forced the burial of Mtwara District Commissioner Evod Mmanda in Mtwara instead of his home region.

President Magufuli further said that he had been in talks with the Madagascan government for the

latter to avail its Covid-19 medicine to Tanzania.

"I have been in talks with Madagascar. They say they have discovered the medicine for Covid-19. We will send a plane to bring the medicine to Tanzania so that Tanzanians can benefit from it."

He said the government was working around the clock in an effort to defeat the Covid-19 scourge.

Dr Magufuli also vowed that the government will continue paying its employees their monthly salaries until the pandemic is tackled.

He reiterated that that the government will not lockdown any city, urging the public to continue with their economic activities but should take precautions.

Tanzania has so far reported 480 cases of coronavirus, 167 recoveries and 16 deaths.



Vodacom Tanzania Plc director general Hisham Hendi (R) is subjected to a body temperature test by security guard Masafa Hamad Muba after visiting a Voda shop in Dar es Salaam over the weekend - as a precaution against the spread of Covid-19 infections. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Local kidney transplants saved 5bn/-, says minister

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she stated.

Muhimbili has also introduced a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and a pediatric intensive care unit (ICU)

at a cost of 4.9bn/-, she further noted.

Between July 2019 and March 2020, MNH attended 428,700 patients where 391,230 were out patients and 36,819 were admitted. The hospital offered free medical services to 121,136 people

under various groups at a cost of 15,267,868,594/-.

Mwalimu said the Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute (JKCI) has attended 77,200 patients between July 2019 and March 2020 compared to 69,601

patients attended in the 2018/19 financial year.

Some of the patients were from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Comoros, Uganda, Malawi and Burundi, the minister added.

More displacements in Uganda as Lake Victoria swells - minister reports

By Special Correspondent, Kampala

The rising water levels of Lake Victoria have disrupted businesses, destroyed property and displaced thousands of people living and working by its Ugandan shores, even as the same is being experienced in Tanzania and Kenya.

Over 7,000 people have been displaced since February when water inundated the dry lake shores according to the Office of the Prime Minister.

THE rising water levels of Lake Victoria have disrupted businesses, destroyed property and displaced thousands of people living and working at Ugandan shores. The same is being experienced in Tanzania and Kenya.

Over 7,000 people have been displaced since February when water inundated the dry lake shores according to the Office of the Prime Minister.

The most affected communities are those on the lake shores on the many islands in the lake, with some risking being submerged. Water has moved more than 13.12 metres ashore, the second highest on record since it rose to 13.46 metres in 1964.

Uganda's Minister of State for Disaster Preparedness, Musa Echweru, said that about 1,000 people living on such islands have been relocated.

"We have provided food and tents for shelter, and although we have advised that these islands are not safe for human habitation, many are refusing to be relocated to the mainland," said Mr Echweru.

Since December last year, the waters of Lake Victoria, shared by Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, have been rising, flooding beaches, residential places and hotels in Uganda and Kenya. Property worth millions of shillings

in Entebbe and Jinja in Uganda and in Kenya's Kisumu, Siaya, Migori, Homa Bay and Busia have been destroyed. It is the same scenario in Mwanza, Tanzania.

In Kenya, floods from backflows from the lake and rivers bursting their banks across the country have killed 169 people and displaced several others, as well as bridges washed away disrupting commerce and travel.

Ugandan social media video clips show resorts and posh homes flooded and look like they were built inside the lake.

The Serena Kigo and Commonwealth Resort Munyonyo have also borne the brunt of the deluge.

The increase in the water volume has also had an impact on downstream water bodies like the Lake Kyoga whose water levels have subsequently increased causing a similar menace to the populace around it like its southern counterpart.

Parts of Nakasongola district around Lake Kyoga recently flooded yet it had not rained there. This was attributed to the increase of water volumes entering the lake from upstream. Communities have been displaced by the raging waters.

Transport on the lakes have also been disrupted with ferries run by the Uganda National Roads Authority contending with flooded landing and dock areas.

The roads agency said on Tuesday that a ferry connecting Nakasongola and Amolatar districts had been affected by the increasing water levels.

Entebbe also remains cut off from the biggest Lake Victoria islands of Kalangala districts disrupting business.

The rising lake was also blamed for a nationwide power blackout on April 14 just before President Museveni's address to the nation on Covid-19.



Gerald Malangalila, a Hehe elder, holds his gun at the burial of former Constitutional and Legal Affairs minister Dr Augustine Philip Mahiga – himself a Hehe – at the Tosamanganga graveyard in Iringa Region at the weekend. He had sought to use the firearm in performing a traditional “ritual”, but was restrained. Photo: Correspondent Francis Godwin

Heavy rains leave 100 people homeless

By Guardian Correspondent, Misenyi

MORE than 100 people have been left homeless in Misenyi District, Kagera Region following ongoing heavy rains.

The victims are now housed at S. K. and Omundongo primary schools in the district.

Speaking to this paper one of the victims, Lucia Mkagaruki, said they were surrounded by water and failed to move to higher ground until the Fire Brigade and Rescue Services personnel came to rescue them to safety.

“When the Fire Brigade people came they shouted to come over to us, but we couldn’t because the water level was

very high, hence they came over and too us took us to safety together with our children. However, we left behind all our belongings,” Lucia said.

Another flood victim, Erica Johnbosco, said they are grateful for being evacuated to safety and given shelter by the government, but added that when the rains stop and return to their homes they will not have any food to eat, as all their crops including cassava, potatoes and yams had been destroyed by floods.

Another flood victim, Johnbosco Benedicto, said after getting shelter at the school four families were in one classroom and they had to sleep with their children.

Various stakeholders including World Vision Tanzania had come forward to assist them to supply food and other basic needs.

Presenting a donation of 1,000 kg of flour, 320 kg beans, 248 blankets, 200 mosquito nets and 120,000 water guard tablets all valued at 16.7m/-. Kagera zone World Vision Tanzania representative Victor Nsiima called on them to use the supplies for the intended purpose and should not sell them. Misenyi District Commissioner, Col Denice Mwila, appealed to people who built in lowland to shift to higher ground to avoid the effects of floods due to heavy rains.

Col Mwila said the most affected

people were those from Mabuye, Omundongo, Kasambya and Burifani, and added that apart from the 400 families given shelter at the school, others have been sheltered by friends and relatives

On how they will get food after they return to their homes, Col Mwila said there are many wards that were not affected by the floods and they will try to make arrangements for them to get food from those who were not affected.

He added: “Many people here build houses using mud instead of cement bricks, hence when the house is flooded the water sweeps away the mud houses and such homes are not safe at all to live in.”

Govt procured and distributed 96,000 litres of biological products - minister

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

THE government procured and distributed 96,000 litres of biolarvicides in 12 regions in Tanzania mainland to enhance the fight against malaria during the 2019/2020 financial year.

Biolarvicides are biological products whose active ingredient are entomopathological spore forming bacteria used for controlling mosquitoes larval stages

The amount is higher compared to 60,000 litres procured in the 2018/2019 financial year, as part of efforts to eliminate malaria.

Apart from killing mosquito larvae, the biolarvicides also helps in controlling other diseases which are spread by mosquitoes such as dengue, yellow fever, Zika, Rift Valley fever, Chikungunya and elephantiasis.

Tabling the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children budget estimates for the 2020/2021 financial year, Ummu Mwalimu told the House that the biolarvicides were distributed to Dar es Salaam, Lindi, Mtwara, Kagera, Geita, Kigoma, Tanga, Tabora, Ruvuma, Morogoro, Dodoma and Mwanza.

The National Assembly endorsed 900,088,240,000/- for the ministry’s development and recurrent expenditure for 2020/2021.

Mwalimu explained that the National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR) has been conducting a number of projects on how to control mosquitoes at the larval stage whereas a total of 954 samples of mosquitoes were collected from 57 municipalities countrywide.

“Results of the researches which aim to prevent the larvae from maturing into adult mosquitoes will be release later in October”, said the minister.

She said the ministry conducted indoor residual spraying in various municipalities within four regions—Kagera, Mwanza, Geita and Kigoma. She said in Kigoma spraying was also done at three refugees camps of Nduta, Mtembeli and Nyarugusu.

She said in between October 2019 and

March 2020, indoor residual spraying was conducted in Kasulu, Kakonko, Kibondo and Biharamulo districts where a total of 331,044 houses (98.3 per cent) out of 336,806 were sprayed. She said that second round of indoor residual spraying will be conducted in May this year at two municipalities namely Ukerewe and Bukombe.

To eliminate malaria, Minister Mwalimu said the government continues to implement a continent-wide campaign dubbed ‘Zero Malaria Starts with Me’ which is supervised by Roll Back Malaria—RBM partnership to end malaria in collaboration with the African Union.

“The campaign was aimed to help countries with high malaria infection rates to achieve national and continental targets to eliminate malaria by 2030 in accordance with the sustainable development goals (SDGs)”, she said adding it was officially launched in Coast region in November 2019.

She however, noted that the national malaria infection rate has dropped to 7.3 per cent by March this year from 14.8 per cent in the past four years. She said during the particular period, deaths caused by the disease dropped to 2,079 from 6,311.

She said the number of patients who were diagnosed for malaria using malaria rapid diagnostic tests (MRDT) increased to 98 per cent in March, this year from 95 percent in 2015/2016.

Mwalimu attributed the increase to the community sensitisation campaign, ‘Not Every Fever Is Malaria’ conducted by the ministry whereas most of the people no longer take malaria drugs without testing.

She said the government has distributed 1,951,689 insecticide mosquito nets to expectant mothers in Kigoma, Kagera, Geita and Mwanza regions. She said another 7,097,565 insecticide mosquito nets will later be distributed to citizens under the Mass Replacement Campaign (MRC) which will cover ten regions namely, Mbeya, Njombe, Rukwa, Songwe, Dodoma, Singida, Iringa, Tanga, Kilimanjaro and Manyara.

Minister calls for massive production of face masks

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

INDUSTRY and Trade minister Innocent Bashungwa has called on textile manufacturers to produce more face masks that will be distributed to Tanzanians by the Medical Stores Department (MSD).

He said: “This is part of the government’s initiatives to ensure availability of Covid-19 protective gear.”

Bashungwa made the call when responding to queries from legislators during a debate on budget estimates for the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children on Thursday.

He said the government has also contacted raw material producers to ensure constant supply to local factories producing surgical masks.

He said surgical masks are currently manufactured locally whereas the Dar es Salaam based factory produces 30,000 pieces of face masks per day.

“We have capacitated the industry to produce more masks through facilitation of raw materials. It will soon start producing 40,000 masks daily although when operating on full capacity it will produce 100,000 face masks every day”, said the minister.

On hand sanitizers, Bashungwa told the House that local factories can now manufacture 64,000 litres of ethanol per month. He said sugar factories are expected to produce more ethanol in June this year

“We have currently allowed importation of ethanol to enable local industries to produce more sanitizers, the products are now available countrywide at affordable prices”, said the minister noting factories have been directed to make sure the hand sanitizers are packaged at different proportions ranging from 50mls and 100mls so that everyone can afford them.

He said the Tanzania Medicine and Medical Devices Authority (TDMA) has provided licences to 65 local hand sanitizer manufacturers with the capacity to make 3.7 million litres of hand sanitizers per month.

He however said that most of hand washing facilities are now produced locally by Tanzania Engineering and Manufacturing Design Organization (TEMDO), Tanzania Industrial Research and Development Organization (TIRDO) and Small Industries Development Organization (SIDO).

Bashungwa commended local innovators for coming up with various solutions that help in prevention and treatment of Covid-19. He said TEMDO had manufactured ventilators which are now tested at TMJ hospital in Dar es Salaam.

According to the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children a number of initiatives have been taken to enhance testing and treatment of the disease whereas so far, a total of 2,113 health workers from 11 regions and 47 from Dar es Salaam have been provided with specialized trainings.

The World Health Organization (WHO) announced Covid-19 as the public health emergency of international concern in January, 2020 and as a pandemic early March.

US asks China to consider debt relief to Africa during pandemic

NAIROBI

THE US has said African countries burdened with Chinese loans should seek a change of terms with their lender, during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

In a teleconference session with African journalists last week, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo spoke of Washington’s bid to help Africa’s fight against Covid-19, including a project to develop a vaccine; but added that some of the challenges the continent may face will require debt adjustment.

“We are constantly evaluating both the how and the when,” he said, referring to whether debt in Africa should be forgiven or suspended.

“I would also remind everyone that there is an enormous amount of debt that China has imposed on African countries. It is something that the African countries should consider, too, in asking China to possibly enter debt relief on some deals that have incredibly onerous terms that will impact the African people for an awfully long time, if relief is not granted.”

China whose influence in Africa has grown enormously in the past two decades, has also loaned the continent some \$160 billion, most of which has gone into infrastructure projects. Critics charge that most of that money is lent as commercial loans with hefty interest rates.

Anti-debt campaigners have been asking for relief or suspension of payments at least until the pandemic is over.

By Friday, Africa had 37,391 cases of Covid-19 of which 1,598 had died while another 12,213 had recovered.

Yet the continent’s poorest economies, who also carry biggest debt burden, may suffer longer.

In early April, the G20—the group of world’s richest 20 countries—which includes China, agreed to suspend debt repayments due to them from poorest countries, for the rest of 2020, seeking to free up to \$12 billion for use on priority health emergencies.

But those 64 countries, of which 30 are in Africa, will have to make individual applications for the change of terms.

EAGLE CEMENT COMPANY LIMITED (COMPANY NUMBER: 85344)

Certified resolution of the meeting of the members of the above Company duly convened, held and constituted at the registered office of the Company on the 2nd day of December, 2019.

Members of the Company:

1. Abbasi Exports Limited
2. Mantar Limited
3. Aunali Fidahusseini Rajabali

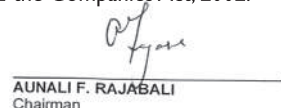
REDUCTION OF SHARE CAPITAL

1. The Chairman reported that the Company intends to reduce its nominal share capital by Tanzania Shillings 790,000,000 (TZS Seven Hundred Ninety Million Only) divided into 790,000 shares of Tanzania Shillings 1,000 (TZS One thousands) each.
2. The chairman then read to the Members Article 44 of the Articles of Association of the Company which permits the Company to reduce its Share Capital by way of an Ordinary Resolution.
3. The Chairman further reported that the Company would after the decrease in Share Capital have an issued Share Capital of Tanzania Shillings 2,155,867,000 divided into 2,155,867 Ordinary Shares of Tanzania Shillings 1,000 (TZS One thousands) each.

IT WAS RESOLVED that:

The proposed Reduction of the issued shares capital is hereby approved and the company secretary is hereby authorized to process the reduction in Accordance with the provisions of the Companies Act and the Articles of Association of the Company.

IT IS HEREBY CERTIFIED that the above is a true and complete extract from the minutes of the meeting of the members of the company and that the resolution set forth above was duly passed in accordance with and comply with the Memorandum and Articles of Association and Regulations of the Company and the Companies Act, 2002.


AUNALI F. RAJABALI
Chairman

Date: 2/12/2019


SAJJAD F. RAJABALI
Company Secretary

Date: 2/12/2019



DRC DANISH
REFUGEE
COUNCIL

TENDER NOTICE

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) intends to purchase Kitenge Therefore, the Danish Refugee Council in Kibondo request the suppliers to submit their prices for the above goods.

The bidding documents can be collected at the Danish Refugee Council Office in Kibondo from 04th May, 2020 during the working days and hours. 8:00 Am to 4:30 Pm in the following address: Old IRC Road Area, Kibondo. You can call on: +255627428470 or through email jean.kabore@drc.ngo to receive the soft copy by email.

The closing date for the submission of the bids is 12th May, 2020 at 4:30 Pm.

The ITB will be opened on 14th May, 2020 at 10:00 AM at DRC Kibondo Office, PO Box 177 Kibondo by the DRC Tender Opening Committee.

You can return your bid form through RFQ.TZA@drc.ngo

OR DIRECT TO THE DRC KIBONDO OFFICE otherwise is void

PLWDs receive training on Covid-19 prevention in Geita

By Guardian Correspondent, Geita

At least 200 people living with disabilities (PLWDs) in Geita Region have received training on preventive measures against coronavirus.

Speaking at the weekend during a training session in Chato district where 100 PLWDs have benefited, Geita Regional Commissioner Robert Gabriel said it is important to focus on the group with messages on preventive measures as it is likely to be left out in general public sensitisation programmes.

"Understanding the programmes are key to winning a war; with this awareness to people with disabilities and other abled-bodied Tanzanians, we are better placed to win the war against Covid-19," he said.

The RC commended Plan International for organising the training which was facilitated by health experts from the office of regional medical officer (RMO) in Geita.

Groups that benefitted from the training included visually impaired, deaf and people with albinism.

In her presentation, public health coordinator from the RMO's office, Paskazia Maduhu, took the participants through basic Covid-19 preventive measures namely regular washing of hands and social distancing as well as symptoms of the disease.

Chairman of PLWDs in Chato district,

Justin Lupande, said it was the first time for the group to get such training on preventive measures since Tanzania's COVID-29 was announced on March 16.

"This means a lot to us because most of our members are not reached with messages that target the general public. I challenge other organisations to emulate Plan International and reach more people with disabilities wherever they are," he said.

One of the participants, Elizabeth Kengele (38) who lives with physical disability said she had heard that people should wash hands regularly but did not know the symptoms of the Coronavirus until she attended the training.

"It is after the training when I knew that you get the virus unknowingly and take it to your body by touching eyes, nose or mouth. I can now effectively protect myself and my seven children," she said.

Plan international Manager for Geita region Adolf Kaindoa apart from the 200 PLWDs, who were trained for two days, the organisation also reached other groups including 154 teachers from primary and secondary schools, 144 peer educators and 1465 community volunteers.

"I hope that the beneficiaries will take the messages of prevention measures against Covid-19 in their communities," he said.



Girls who escaped genital mutilation and now cared for at Safe House in Butiama District, Mara Region, pictured late last week sewing masks for their own use and for sale. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

By Guardian Correspondent, Bunda

BUNDA district commissioner, Lydia Bupilipili, has said the government has launched investigations in the district to identify whether there are parents and guardians who use the ongoing school closures countrywide due to Covid-19 pandemic to marry off their girl students.

The DC was speaking when receiving four modern machines for taking body temperature (thermoscans) donated by Kivulini, a Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) to the fight against

Bunda to investigate girl students married off during school closures

COVID-19 pandemic.

She said the government is investigating whether some parents gave false reports at the Bunda main police station that their girls were missing as a stratagem to marry off

their girls.

Bupilipili directed village and ward executives in the district to prepare reports on all primary and secondary school students were out of school deliberately due to early marriages,

before and after the schools were closed because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"The government will take stern steps to parents who use various plans to mislead state organs including

falsely reporting missing of the girls," she said.

Earlier, Kivulini director Yassin Ally said his organisation has been involving itself in mobilising education for girls and fight every form of gender

based violence in the society especially in Lake zone regions.

He said in recent days they have been receiving reports from various rural areas in the district about parents who use various means to fight the government's efforts and NGOs to raise the level of education of girls in particular.

According to the district commissioner the thermoscans will be placed at all vulnerable areas especially those with huge gatherings including the Kisorya ferry, Bunda main market and the district's main police station.

HALMASHAURI YA JIJI LA DODOMA



TANGAZO LA UZAJI WA VIWANJA

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

Viwanja vinavyouzwa ni katika maeneo ya:

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

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

Kwa mawasiliano zaidi piga simu namba 0714 785513.

Tangazo hili limetolewa na:
Mkurugenzi wa Jiji,
DODOMA

Retailers warned not to hike prices in response to coronavirus demand

By Guardian Reporter

INDUSTRY and Trade deputy minister Stella Manyanya has directed factories producing plastic goods to manufacture more plastic buckets and issued a stern warning to traders who hike prices for washing hands products.

She gave the directives at the weekend in Dar es Salaam during her inspection visit to factories producing plastic goods including Silafrika Tanzania Ltd (Sumalia) and Cello Industries Ltd.

She hailed the factories for producing plastic buckets and other items in plenty for washing hands that are in great demand during this time of the fight against Covid-19 pandemic.

She warned traders who continue selling the buckets and other items for washing the hands bay as an opportunity to make huge profits.

Manyanya also stressed that the government will follow up and take action on traders who violate government's directives by hiking prices of various items during this period of Ramadhan and the fight

against Covid-19 pandemic.

"I continue to stress that the government will countrywide hunt on all traders who violate the directives, just as we did for those who were hiking sugar prices, we shall also hunt for those who hike plastic goods during this period for people to protect themselves against Covid-19 infections.

She added: "The ministry is still reviewing the prices of the buckets which will take into consideration the factory price, transport costs after which we shall announce indicative prices for each region."



Industry and Trade deputy minister Stella Manyanya pictured at the weekend touring Dar es Salaam's Silafrika Tanzania Ltd factory, one of several manufacturing plastic buckets now popularly used in the washing of hands in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Photo: Correspondent Eliud Rwechungura



Small-time gold miners in business at Ntambalale in Shinyanga Region yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Shaban Njia

Traders overstuffing bags of rice to face hefty fines

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbarali

MBARALI district commissioner in Mbeya region, Reuben Mfune, has ordered the arrest and imposing fine from 100,000/- to 50m/- all people, in particular traders who will be overstuffing bags of rice.

Mfune issued the directives at the weekend at the district councilors meeting for the third quarter of FY 2019/2020 convened to discuss various development activities in the district.

He said he had issued the directive at the appropriate time - the harvesting season of the rice crop, the season when traders con farmers.

He said in order to stop the habit those who will be involved will be fined according to the weights and measures laws, including Council by-laws starting from 200,000/- to 1million/-.

"There are clever people who come up with large bags that take over 100 kg, but with similar colour and design with the approved bags. We will disregard the colour, we will physically inspect those who will exceed the weight will

be fined," said DC Mfune.

He also directed steps to be taken against those who will be tempering with revenue collections in the district and appealed to collection agents who have not remitted the money to do so as quickly as possible.

Mbarali district executive director Kivuma Msangi called upon the councilors to continue cooperating with revenue collection experts.

He said up to now collected internal revenue had reached 81 per cent of the set target and the aim was to increase the target.



There are clever people who come up with large bags that take over 100 kg, but with similar colour and design with the approved bags

DC set to take stern measures against acts of rape, sodomy and witchcraft

By Guardian Correspondent, Chunya

Chunya District authorities have vowed to take legal action against people engaging in murder, rape, sodomy on women and children during this time that schools have closed when various activities are conducted with utmost precaution against the Covid-19 pandemic.

Chunya district commissioner Maryprisca Mahundi (pictured) issued the warning at the weekend when speaking to this paper on strategies being put in place to tackle violence including gender based violence amid the war against the coronavirus pandemic.

She said such acts are associated with witchcraft beliefs from gold miners some of who believe in so doing they will get more minerals and become rich.

She said the authority in Chunya had mobilised itself against these criminal acts in collaboration with the police, councilors and people that there are signs that such behaviours were declining because they are being reported and measures taken against the perpetrators.

"Last year seven incidents of rape, murder and sodomy were reported while for 2020 up to March only two such incidents had been reported, we believe it is from stern measures that are being taken in addressing them and we are determined to end them completely," she said.

DC Mahundi said the strategies to eradicate them include educating the public in all 20 wards of the district for people to stop witchcraft beliefs.

She congratulated the police in the district for their good work against these crimes as they make follow ups on every report nab the criminals.

In his recent statement the Mbeya Regional Commissioner Albert Chalamila warned all those who will proved to have impregnated girl students during this period of Covid-19 pandemic, saying they will deal with accordingly and appealed to parents and guardians to be close to their children.



Last year seven incidents of rape, murder and sodomy were reported while for 2020 up to March only two such incidents had been reported, we believe it is from stern measures that are being taken in addressing them and we are determined to end them completely



SWISSPORT TANZANIA PLC AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

Commentary

The Board of Directors of Swissport Tanzania Plc is pleased to publish the audited financial results of the Company for the year ended 31 December 2019. During the year, total revenue decreased from TZS 48,637M to TZS 35,814M and total operating costs decreased from TZS 37,872M to TZS 32,321M. As a result, net profit dropped to TZS 2,311M from TZS 7,459M reported in 2018. The decrease in revenue was attributed by the decline in yield and reduced business volume in the ground handling business. Consequently, the overall financial results of the Company was negatively affected, despite measures taken by the management to reduce operating costs.

Dividend to shareholders

No dividend is declared during the year to enable the company to use the available cash to settle its maturing obligations (in 2018, a dividend of TZS 3,730M or TZS 103.61 per issued and fully paid share was declared).

Future Outlook

Before the outbreak of COVID-19, we envisaged the financial performance for 2020 to improve significantly from 2019 as all product lines (ground and cargo handling) were anticipated to perform better. This was mainly attributed by the retention of airline customers and the acquisition of Air Tanzania, the National Carrier, as our new customer from 1st January 2020.

However, the outbreak of COVID-19 negatively affects the Company's forecast for the remainder of the financial year. The effects associated to this pandemic will determine the financial impact. The aviation sector is amongst those that are hit hardest by this crisis; at the time of this publication, international passenger traffic has come to a complete stop while air cargo volumes have reduced significantly. The Company's financial performance for 2020 will depend on the time it will take for the COVID-19 crisis to be contained and for the aviation to resume normal operations.

Appreciation

The Board would like to thank all customers for their patronage and is looking forward to continue serving them in 2020. The Board would also like to commend staff and the management for their valuable contributions.

Jeroen de Clercq
Jeroen de Clercq
Board Chairman

STATEMENT OF PROFIT AND LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME For the Year Ended 31 December 2019	2019 TShs M	2018 TShs M	Change %
Revenue	35,446	48,214	(26%)
Other operating income	368	423	(13%)
Total revenue	35,814	48,637	(26%)
Total operating expenses	32,321	37,872	(15%)
Operating profit	3,493	10,765	(68%)
Finance costs	186	-	100%
Profit before income tax	3,307	10,765	(69%)
Income tax expense	996	3,306	(70%)
Profit for the period	2,311	7,459	(69%)
Other comprehensive income	(1,225)	204	(700%)
Total comprehensive income for the year	1,086	7,663	(86%)
Earnings per share	64.19	207.19	(69%)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION As At 31 December 2019	2019 TShs M	2018 TShs M	Change %
ASSETS			
Non-current assets			
Intangible asset	16,920	19,232	(12%)
Property and equipment	16,131	16,150	(0%)
Right of use of assets	1,099	-	100%
Deferred tax assets	513	562	(9%)
Staff receivables	157	289	(46%)
Current assets			
Inventories	408	392	4%
Trade and other receivables	6,944	6,200	12%
Income tax recoverable	1,678	604	178%
Cash and cash equivalents	3,435	4,277	(20%)
Total assets	47,285	47,706	(1%)
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES			
Equity			
Share capital	360	360	0%
Retained earnings	30,550	33,195	(8%)
Total equity	30,910	33,555	(8%)
Non-current liabilities			
Lease Liabilities (long term)	587	-	100%
Retirement benefit obligations	3,027	3,026	0%
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	12,192	10,166	20%
Interest bearing loan	-	959	(100%)
Lease Liabilities (short term)	569	-	100%
Total equity and liabilities	47,285	47,706	(1%)

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS For the Year Ended 31 December 2019	2019 TShs M	2018 TShs M
Profit before income tax	3,307	10,765
Adjustment for:		
Depreciation of property and equipment	2,414	2,469
Amortization of intangible assets	2,312	2,383
Depreciation of right of use of assets	609	-
Unrealized exchange loss on bank loan	-	4
(Loss)/gain on disposal of property and equipment	(141)	45
Interest expenses on lease liability	186	-
Interest expense on loan	23	251
Provision for retirement benefit obligations	436	642
Provision for loss allowance	63	2,112
Working capital adjustment		
Increase in inventories	(16)	(8)
Increase in trade and other receivables	(675)	(1,150)
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	710	(1,703)
Operating activities	9,228	15,810
Retirement benefit paid	(1,354)	(892)
Interest paid on lease liability	(186)	-
Interest paid on loan	(23)	(251)
Income tax paid	(1,496)	(3,407)
Cash generated from operating activities	6,169	11,260
Investing activities		
Proceeds from sale of property and equipment	162	-
Purchase of property and equipment and intangible assets	(2,416)	(5,458)
Cash used in investing activities	(2,254)	(5,458)
Financing activities		
Loan repayment	(959)	(3,643)
Dividends paid to the Company's shareholders	(3,246)	(2,586)
Payment of principle lease liabilities	(552)	-
Cash used in financing activities	(4,757)	(6,229)
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents	(842)	(427)
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January	4,277	4,704
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 December	3,435	4,277

Jeroen de Clercq
Jeroen de Clercq
Board Chairman

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NOTICE OF THE 35TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
The Company shall not convene its AGM due to the ongoing meeting restrictions because of COVID-19. Notice for the AGM shall be released once meeting restriction is uplifted.

From landing to take-off: we care !

Jeroen de Clercq
Jeroen de Clercq
Board Chairman

Mrisho Yassin
Mrisho Yassin
Chief Executive Officer

Imani Mtatya
Imani Mtatya
Chief Financial Officer

Intensify support to Covid-19 response, Tanzanian private sector players urged

By Henry Mwangonde

THE country's private sector has been tasked to intensify support to the Covid-19 national response through interventions such as establishing infrastructure that can promote the hand washing, sanitizing practices and invest in mechanisms that encourage social distancing and ensure safety in the workplace.

They have been also tasked to prioritise social protection interventions for economic resilience and importantly, play an active role in the strengthening of direct health response interventions.

The call was made over the weekend during virtual Roundtable discussion on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 in Tanzania, which was organized by the United Nations Global Compact Network Tanzania, UNDP and the Tanzania Private Sector Foundation (TPSF). It was aimed to facilitate sharing of ideas on responsible business practices; lessons learned on private sector mobilization during health emergencies; and to mobilize business representatives to increase their support to the implementation of the COVID-19 National Response Plan.

The Executive Director of the Tanzania Women Chamber of Commerce (TWCC), Mwajuma Hamza, emphasized the need for the private sector to rise above the challenges and team-up with other actors to ensure continuity of their businesses, and provide support to women led businesses particularly in the Tanzanian context.

"The coronavirus spares no one and therefore it is in our best interest to all participate in our different ways to stop the spread of the pandemic," Hamza said.

In response to the crisis some companies she said that they've already expanded their business lines and increased production to take care of increased demand of some products due to importation challenges and export opportunities.

The Roundtable also agreed on the need to put all hands-on-deck in addressing the threat posed by the coronavirus to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Tanzania. Failure to fight together against the pandemic, they said, would weaken the country's capacity to address the effects of COVID-19 and other future emergencies.

The UN Women top official, Hodan Addou encouraged all businesses to support the call by the United Nations to scale-up the immediate health response, engage in mitigation of the economic impacts with a

particular focus on women, youth, low-wage workers, small and medium enterprises, the informal sector and vulnerable groups already at risk.

"At the moment what is important is to put our heads together and ensure Tanzania survives the pandemic. The Multi-Stakeholder approach to the response by the Government creates opportunities for us all to pool our financial and technical resources and keep health systems functioning alongside addressing the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 in the country," Addou said.

She said in the national response, the private health sector is critical in supporting the provision of essential health services and products, she said citing public private partnerships in other countries including the pan-African business organization, Afro-Champions, which has launched a COVID-19 response fund in partnership with the African Union and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC).

This is aiming to raise over \$150 million to support the continental response and procure the necessary medical supplies. The funds are being contributed by a coalition of African banks, including Ecobank, Standard Bank, and Equity Bank; several private equity firms; and healthcare companies. "We can replicate a similar approach at country level," Addou said.

Addou further said the United Nations was ready to work through public private partnerships to support operating through the three cross-cutting priorities laid out by the United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres.

These she said, aimed to ensure women's equal representation in all COVID-19 response planning and decision-making; drive transformative change for equality by addressing issues of paid and unpaid care; and targeting of women and girls in all efforts to address the socio-economic impact of COVID-19.

"These cross-cutting priorities, which are supported by other frameworks targeting gender responsive interventions should form part of any COVID-19 response. I encourage all businesses to consider the Women Empowerment Principles (WEPS), which provide guidance to businesses on how they can promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and local communities," Addou said.



Simai Mohammed Said (in cap), Zanzibar's Education and Vocational Training deputy minister, pictured yesterday assessing damage due to floods induced by heavy rains. Photo: Correspondent Martin Kabemba

PCCB in Mara Region holds magistrate over 2m/- bribery

By Guardian Correspondent, Tarime

THE Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) in Mara Region is holding Tarime District magistrate Bhoke Chacha for soliciting and receiving 2m/- bribe.

Mara region head of PCCB Alex Kuhanda said in Musoma town yesterday that the suspect is alleged to have received the

money as inducement to do some favour in a case against the complainant who has not been named as investigations are yet to be completed as well as for his own safety.

Kuhanda said his office received a tip off from the complainant who is a businessman that the said magistrate had asked from him the stated amount so that he grants him a favour in a case concerning his

benefits claims hence he referred the matter to PCCB who set a trap that saw the suspect nabbed.

It is alleged that the suspect was audacious to give his ruling while at home when on maternity leave in violation of legal procedures.

Meanwhile, Kuhanda said the Bureau has succeeded to rescue a total of 159m/- in the region from private lending activities that charge very high interests to their

debtors, many of who are public servants.

He said they have instituted investigations on the private lenders that have mushroomed in the area and many of them were not registered hence they have been conducting businesses illegally.

"In most cases these lenders charge very high interest rates to the recipients many of who are public servants and thereafter start



Hodan Addou, UN Women's Representative in Tanzania, speaks at a past event in Dar es Salaam. She has called for multisectoral support in addressing the social and economic impacts of Covid-19 in the country. Photo courtesy of UN Women

By Guardian Correspondent, Babati

THE Bishop of Tanzania Methodist Church (TMC) Manyara Diocese, Samweli Nyanza, has donated various items for the prevention against Covid-19 infections to public institutions and churches valued at 12.84m/-.

Presenting the items yesterday to the Babati District Commissioner Elizabeth Kitundu at the Diocese headquarters he said TMC has decided to suspend the whole TMC church in order to

Manyara church donates items worth 13m/- in support of efforts to forestall COVID-19

provide the items for the fight against the pandemic.

He mentioned the items donated as including hand sanitisers, masks, water buckets, basins and two sewing machines to be used by church women to make enough masks for the

wananchi.

The institutions which received the items were the office of the District Commissioner, the office of Executive Director of Babati Mrara Council, Magugu elders centre, Magugu health centre TMC and other friendly

churches.

Nyanza said they decided to provide the assistance after seeing there were problems within the churches and followed TMC head Bishop Yusuph Bundala directing that the sermons should be shortened and to avoid

congestion.

Babati Town Health Officer Aretas Laurent, speaking to TMC followers, warned that the disease spreads through the eyes, noses and the main symptom is the rise of body temperature.

Benin, Ivory Coast also withdraw from the Arusha's African Court

By Guardian Reporter

BENIN and Ivory Coast have joined the Tanzania and Rwanda bandwagon by withdrawing from the Arusha-based African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, saying the court has undermined their sovereignty.

According to a statement issued by the court, the Republic of Benin through its embassy in Ethiopia on April 21 transmitted a note verbale expressing the decision of the government of Benin to withdraw its Declaration that recognizes the jurisdiction of the African Court to receive applications from individuals and Non-Governmental Organisations with observer status before the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights which was deposited on February 8, 2016.

"The note verbale states further that the Republic of Benin reached a decision to withdraw from the Declaration under Article 34(6) due to the African Court interference and intrusions in areas that have not been assigned to its jurisdiction which results into serious disruption of the domestic legal order," the statement reads in part.

It further said that the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire on the other hand issued a statement on 29 April 2020 stating that the African Court has undermined the sovereignty and the Ivorian

justice system and that the decision to withdraw from Article 34(6) is a result of serious and intolerable actions from the African Court.

The withdrawal notice from Cote d'Ivoire comes a week after the African Court issued an order in application number 012/2020; Guillaume Kigbafori Soro & Others vs. the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire that the respondent state suspends its arrest warrant against Guillaume Soro and a release of 19 of his relatives who have been imprisoned for several months.

Guillaume Soro, a former Ivorian prime minister and former speaker of parliament is a presidential candidate for the upcoming October presidential elections in Cote d'Ivoire. He was sentenced in absentia for 20 years in prison on Tuesday 28 April 2020 for embezzlement and money laundering.

Benin and Cote d'Ivoire join Rwanda and Tanzania in a series of withdrawals from Article 34(6) of the African Court Protocol, putting a stop to direct access for individuals and relevant NGOs to the African Court.

"This is indeed a step back towards access to justice and promotion of human rights in Africa. It is also a manifestation of the unwillingness to recognize the authorities of regional human rights systems and unwillingness to abide to human rights commitments in the region," the court said in a statement.

He also said that not every illness is Covid-19 or every person dying is due to the pandemic.

After receiving the assistance DC Kitundu thanked the Church and said there are problems in the markets and auctions, adding that people should not go to those places unless the trips were of necessity.

She also called on the wananchi not to listen to misleading information that have not been verified and instead to abide by what government spokespersons say.



Tanzania Women Miners Association chairperson Eunice Negele (3rd-R) hands over foodstuffs to TWMA members in Mkinga District facing hard economic times, with the spread of Covid-19 infections having led to a drastic decline in the flow of customers - and therefore in income. Photo: Correspondent Oscar Kasimiri

Council dishes out soft loans totalling 54m/- to fourteen women groups

By Correspondent Mutayoba Arbogast, Bukoba

MISENYI district council in Kagera region has from January to March, this year dished out soft loans worth 54m/- to fourteen groups of women, youth and persons with disabilities so as to boost their entrepreneurship and other income generating activities.

Speaking during councilors meeting here, Flavian Nturwa, district community development officer said that the loans provided were in cash and property.

"We dished out 48.9m/- in cash as well as two motorcycles worth 5.5m/-," he said.

He urged others to apply for the loans because the conditions only require a well focused business idea for the group to grab the funds.

For his part, Projestus Tegamaisho, Misenyi district council chairman maintained that the council will continue supervising them to ensure that women, youth and persons with disabilities have access to loans anytime they want.

"Special groups have been facing financial

constraints as most of them have limited access to other opportunities. This is why the government is supporting them through soft loans," he noted.

He also reminded the groups to maintain trust by making sure that they repay the loans.

Misenyi district commissioner, Col Denice Mwila hailed the chairman and district executive director, Innocent Mukandala for their tireless efforts to monitor the revenues and supporting the groups financially as directed by the government.

Some of the beneficiaries, Imelda Emmanuel and Ramadhan Mwombeki commended the district for supporting them with the funds, saying that they had been struggling for years to improve their businesses but failed due to lack of enough capital. "We are happy now as we are going to see our businesses growing, lack of capital was one of our major hurdles in previous years."

Districts and municipal councils had been directed by the government to allocate 10 per cent of internal annual revenue collections for special groups.

THRDC asks mobile phone service firms to reduce rates until Covid-19 conquered

By Guardian Reporter

THE Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) has appealed to mobile phone service firms and providers of Information Communication Technology (ICT) to lower the rates of their products during this period of Covid-19 pandemic in the country.

THRDC National Coordinator Onesmo Olungurumwa said since the government announced the existence of the pandemic in the country, the economy has shaken due to closure of many businesses with other people deciding to work at home.

"From the situation now, it is evident that students, teachers, businessmen, defenders of human rights and workers in the civil society organizations that were closed are now forced to do their work at home," he said and added that the situation has increased substantial profits to mobile phone services providers and ICT providers because mobile phones and computers have become the alternative means of communication in the society.

He said it would be better for these firms to lower the rates of the products and be inventive in issuing low cost bundles to provide relief thw wananchi during this period.

He asked the Tanzania Communications regulatory Authority (TCRA) to direct the firms to lower their rates, and if possible offer some of their products for free especially at bus stops.

He also advised the Ministry of Finance through the Tanzania revenue Authority (TRA) to lower tax on internet services during this period of Covid-19 pandemic.

In addition he advised business people to use online services in effecting sales of ttheir products and other services to reduce unnecessary congestions in shops.

"From the situation now, it is evident that students, teachers, businessmen, defenders of human rights and workers in the civil society organizations that were closed are now forced to do their work at home"

Dr Shein sends message of condolences to Dr Magufuli over passing of Dr Mahiga

By Guardian Reporter

ZANZIBAR President Dr Ali Mohamed Shein has conveyed message of condolence to President John Magufuli following the death of the Minister for Constitutional and Legal Affairs Amb Dr Augustine Mahiga.

Dr Mahiga died at his home in Dodoma on Friday morning last week after a short illness and was buried in Iringa yesterday.

In the message Dr Shein said he received with great shock the news of Dr Mahiga's passing away.

"On behalf of the Government and people of Zanzibar I hereby convey my sincere condolences to the family of the deceased and all wananchi of the United Republic of Tanzania for the death of Dr Mahiga who was truly committed in the service of the country and loved by all Tanzanians," said Dr Shein's message in part.

Dr Shein said Dr Mahiga will be remembered for his great contribution in defending the nation's interest in international relations, including East Africa, the United Nations, the African Union and in other international organizations.

He said Dr Mahiga was in the front line in the issues of development and the maintenance of peace in the country by following the constitutional and legal principles.

He prayed to almighty God to provide strength to the family of the deceased and all Tanzania to exercise strength during this period of mourning.



POPOTE INATIKI

na SimBanking

Sukuma miamala upendavyo

PIGA PAKUA KWENYE *150*03#



The Guardian

www.ippmedia.com

MONDAY 4 MAY 2020

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

Ensuring women invest in gainful agribusiness is the right way to go

IN the age of smartphones and 5G networks, social media has been the lens through which many people view the world. Online networks exist on every social media platform and the network is the social part of each social network. It's your followers on Twitter and Instagram, your friends on Facebook and your contacts on LinkedIn. Online networking is the process of growing these social media networks via online communication channels.

Obviously, some platforms are better suited to online networking than others and while you will find proponents for building relationships on pretty much every platform, there are quite obviously those that make networking easier and those that frustrate the process.

As important as networking is, most people recoil at the thought of attending networking events with their attendant social pressures and the self-imposed and perceived expectations. The good news is that networking online is not only possible but even preferable.

More than 400 women have signed up to Africa's first online platform for female agribusiness, launched at a trade fair in Nairobi, Kenya

The #VALUE4HERConnect network will help bring women entrepreneurs in agriculture together in a virtual community and serve as an important business resource for members.

The network, which was launched at the AWAN-Afrika's 1st continental conference and #VALUE4HER B2B fair, is part of a programme led by the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) to empower women in agriculture.

Despite accounting for 40 per cent of the agricultural workforce worldwide, women's participation in agribusiness is often limited to low-profit production.

"While women are key players in agriculture, they often face challenges at the business end", said Sabdiyo Dido Bashuna, Senior Programme Coordinator, Value Chains and

Agribusiness at CTA.

"With #VALUE4HERConnect, they now have access to buyers, to market information and intelligence, investment and capacity building opportunities, which will ultimately help them to form strategic partnerships towards accessing global markets for increased incomes."

The platform includes a Women2Women Community forum, allowing women to interact, trade and share information, and market information such as country profiles, trade policies and market entry requirements. The network also provides information on financing and opportunities for training.

The AWAN-Afrika's 1st continental conference and #VALUE4HER B2B fair was organised by the African Women Agribusiness Network (AWAN), with CTA and the Africa Women Innovation and Entrepreneurship Forum (AWIEF), under the theme of "Enhancing women inclusion in agribusiness".

During the two-day event, women agribusinesses from 21 African countries gathered for masterclasses, hackathons and pitching opportunities to showcase their businesses and try to secure regional and global business deals.

"Today, we have this opportunity to accelerate the manufacture and intra-African trade of value-added products, moving from commodity-based economies and exports to economic diversification and high-value exports", said Beatrice Gakuba, Executive Director of AWAN.

"The demand is high", she added, echoing African women entrepreneurs.

Irene Ochem, founder and CEO of AWIEF, added: "We are pleased once again to partner with CTA and AWAN: #VALUE4HERConnect will make the difference in how women grow and scale their businesses. The platform bridges the gap in information and data. We connect women to intra-African opportunities, to finance and to markets."

Innovation in previous crises should provide vital lessons with Covid-19

THE world should start drawing important lessons on how to move forward with the developmental agenda when the Covid-19 pandemic finally comes under control.

It is clear that Covid-19 has disrupted the world developmental agenda in general and individual countries' developmental trajectories in particular.

The ability to innovate and quickly adapt will be major issues framing the world's developmental trajectory post the Covid-19 era.

In fact, for the last five months since the coronavirus that causes Covid-19 was discovered in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, the world has literally come to a virtual standstill.

The situation is expected to continue like that for some time to come until all countries can safely say that they are free of the virus

Five months is a very long time in terms of development, especially considering the volatility of world economies and currencies.

Budgets and targets for developmental projects will have to be revisited and revised, while some countries will realise they have to fork out more for projects they could have executed for less. It will be like starting afresh for most countries, especially the developing ones. While developing countries are likely to be the most to feel the pinch, Covid-19 has given the rise to increased calls for equal and balanced world development.

It will be of no benefit, for example, for some countries to declare themselves free of the virus, while others are still fighting to get rid of it.

As long as the disease exists in one country, all the other countries will still remain at risk because even if they institute measures, they cannot completely and effectively curb the

movement of people.

Somehow, as has been happening now, a person from the infected country will still have the potential to meet someone from another country, thereby re-igniting a wave of new infections.

What is important now is for countries with capacity to help the less fortunate ones in the fight against the virus to ensure the whole world is safe.

Of course, countries will come out of Covid-19 at different stages, depending on the measures they institute, but it does not augur well for world development if others take too long to shake off the disease. The more the virus lingers on in some countries, the more the world remains unsafe.

In this way, the virus has exposed the folly of unequal development, and the need to close the widening gap between the rich and poor countries.

This developmental gap needs to be closed so that all countries have the capacity to fight pandemics such as Covid-19, almost at the same level.

What is needed is for the Western countries to immediately lift the illegal sanctions on Zimbabwe to enable to the country to end Covid-19 on its territory.

In light of the existing situation, countries like Zimbabwe will have to put extra effort to mitigate the effects of Covid-19 and ensure that after the storm is over they can go back on track with their developmental agenda.

And one of the ways of achieving such desired development is to be innovative.

From now on, let the way forward be characterised by innovation and the use of locally available resources to implement the developmental agenda.

Covid-19 should not kill the original vision of industrialisation and modernisation as enunciated by President John Magufuli which the country has set its eyes on.

The Guardian Limited Key Contacts

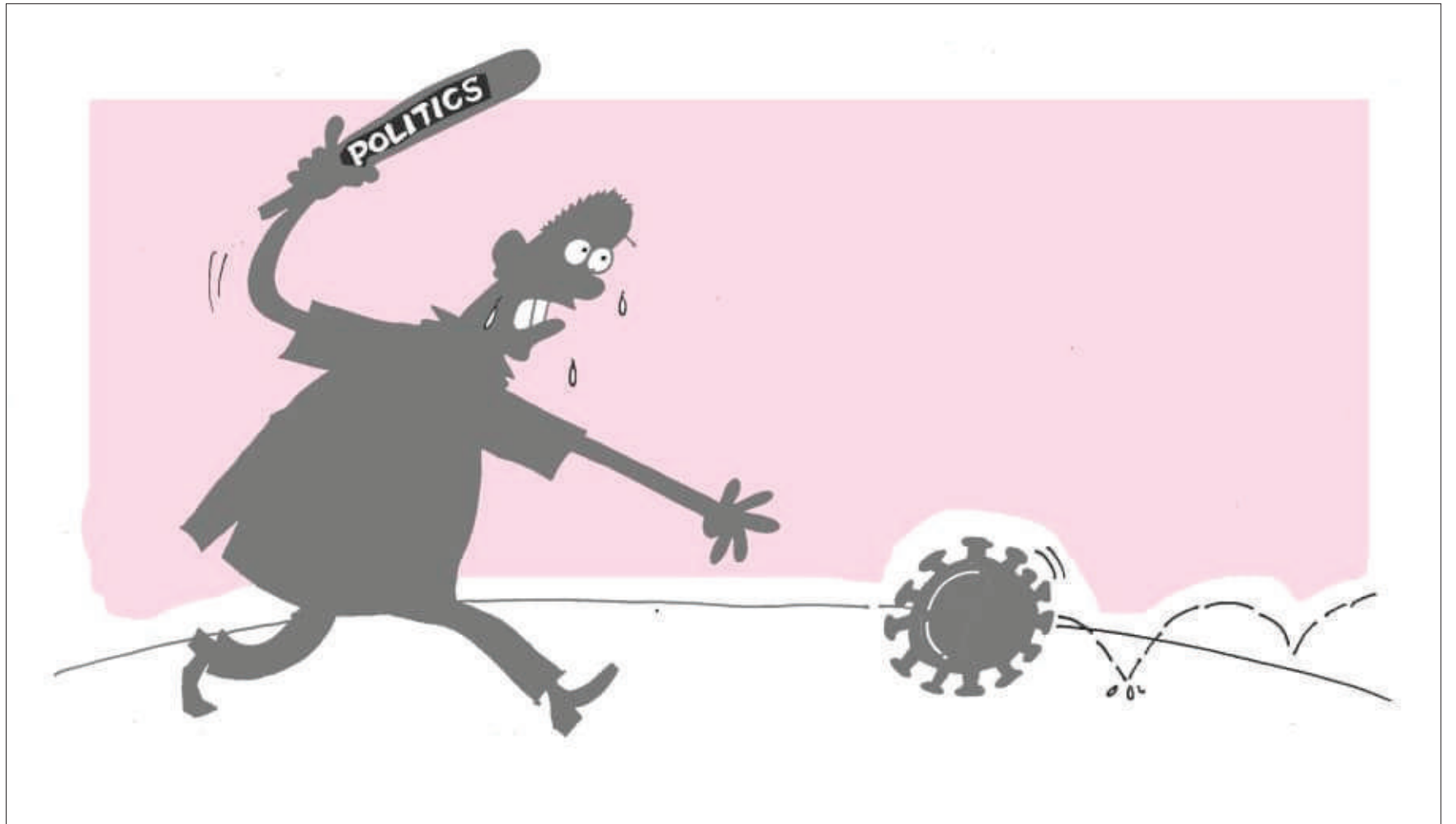
Managing Editor: WALLACE MAUGGO
Circulation Manager: EMMANUEL LYIMO

Newsdesk

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

Advertising

Mobile: 0686101335
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Freedom Day has a cold and panicked feel

By Sune Payne

FREEDOM Day 2020 feels different as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has brought stark, lingering inequalities to the forefront. The public holiday that was my favourite while growing up is not the same anymore.

My favourite holiday growing up was Freedom Day – the countless images of snaked lines of hope, reflections of people who have the same skin colour as me, the rainbow pictures of a new hopeful South Africa and the stories my mother would tell me about running away from police in Manenberg in 1976, trying to protest for a better future. If you'd asked her, in that tiny makeshift voting station in Delft in 1994, if she knew 26 years later people would be arguing over roast chicken she'd probably have thought you were smoking something.

But 26 years later, in 2020, the build-

up to Freedom Day doesn't feel as free as it should. No playing of countless clips from our freedom fighters, no images of that glorious day. Where are the images of Mandela, Mbeki and De Klerk, where are the symbols of a new South Africa? Freedom Day 2020 feels cold and panicked as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The numbers of those affected are growing daily.

The brutality of the police, the general lack of thought and appreciation for human rights makes this Freedom Day feel like a slap in the face for every freedom fighter – dead, alive or struggling to cope with the psychological effects of apartheid. But, most importantly, this Freedom Day exposes what a lot of people have already known: Not much has changed for poor black South Africans. While people are complaining about Woollies cooked chicken, black women – mothers – are being arrested for trying to earn a living during this pandemic.

Black men are getting assaulted and killed by police and the SANDF for being indoors; in their own homes they are murdered by a democratic police force.

As a country, collectively, we see images of people – often black, working-class people – who are treated differently to white people. Have the police beaten up a white man in Sandton who was in his living room-like they did Collins Xhosa in Alex? If the Green Point woman who tried to run away from police while running her dog – which is illegal under the current lockdown regulations – had been black she would probably have been arrested, tear-gassed and thrown in the back of a police vehicle. Depending on the mood of the officers, she might even have been shot in the back by a rubber bullet.

While we can argue over Bheki Cele and his dictatorial tendencies over walking dogs, we need to ask

this Freedom Day: How equal are we? How equal is it that a white man can walk in the leafy suburbs without qualms, but when a black man goes to the shops to buy essential items he will get his goods confiscated, his money stolen by the police or worse, get assaulted and humiliated by the very same police who are supposed to be protectors?

This Freedom Day, I am reminded that, since 27 April 1994, black South Africans might have gained small victories but, when push comes to shove, there is a lot to be done. We as black people in South Africa, our own country, our home, need to be treated equally – within the police service, within government, in the private sector and within the economy.

After this pandemic – perhaps next Freedom Day – hopefully we will think back to this moment and recall that something good came of it and we gained a bit more equality.

Dr. Edward O. Amporful

THERE was an enquiry on the use of Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) in COVID-19 patients.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has a Release on its website dated April 20, 2020. The Release from the WHO explains the stance of experts on the matter. The WHO notes that Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are among the most commonly used drugs, and have a wide range of uses. NSAIDs include nonselective cyclooxygenase (COX) inhibitors (such as ibuprofen, aspirin, diclofenac, and naproxen), as well as selective COX2 inhibitors (such as celecoxib, rofecoxib, and valedoxib).

The WHO notes the concerns raised that NSAIDs may be associated with an increased risk of adverse effects when used in patients with acute viral respiratory infections, including COVID-19. The WHO as result conducted a review in order to establish the nature of evidence available in relation to the concern.

The review aimed to assess the effects of prior and current use of NSAIDs in patients with acute viral respiratory infections on acute severe adverse events such as mortality, the acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), acute organ failure, and opportunistic infections. Furthermore, the review sought to find the effect on acute health care utilization (including hospitalization, intensive care unit (ICU) admission, supplemental oxygen therapy, and mechanical ventilation) as well as on quality of life and long-term survival.

Therefore, a rapid systematic review was carried out on 20 March 2020 on NSAIDs and viral respiratory infections

Use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) in Covid-19 patients

using MEDLINE, EMBASE, and WHO Global Database. The review included studies conducted in humans of any age with viral respiratory infections exposed to systemic NSAIDs of any kind.

All studies on COVID-19, the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) were included irrespective of their sample size.

The WHO review of the evidence available covered a total of 73 studies (28 studies in adults, 46 studies in children, and one study in adults and children). All studies were concerned with acute viral respiratory infections or conditions commonly caused by respiratory viruses, but none specifically addressed COVID-19, SARS, or MERS.

The review showed very low certainty evidence on mortality among adults and children. Effects of NSAIDs on the risk for ischaemic and haemorrhagic stroke and myocardial infarction in adults with acute respiratory infections are also unclear.

Moderate to high certainty evidence showed little or no difference between Ibuprofen and Paracetamol among children with fever with regard to effects on death from all causes, hospitalization for any cause, acute renal failure, and acute gastrointestinal bleeding. Most studies report that no severe adverse events occurred, or that only mild or moderate adverse events were observed.

There was no evidence regarding the effects of NSAID use on acute health

care utilization, explicit quality of life measures, or long-term survival.

The WHO notes the limitation of the review in that there no direct evidence from patients with COVID-19, SARS, or MERS was available. Therefore, all evidence included should be considered indirect evidence with respect to the use of NSAIDs prior to or during the management of COVID-19. Only one randomized controlled trial included a sufficiently large number of participants to identify rare severe adverse events.

The remaining evidence derives from smaller randomized controlled trials, which are likely to be underpowered for detecting rare severe adverse events, and from case-control and cohort studies with methodological limitations. Studies included not only patients with confirmed viral respiratory infections and known pathogens, but also those with conditions commonly caused by respiratory viruses, such as upper respiratory tract infections and fever in children. It is likely that not all participants had viral respiratory infections.

NSAIDs are a diverse set of drugs with different risk profiles for different populations and conditions. Not all studies distinguished between different types of NSAIDs. Some of the older studies are likely to have included patients taking specific NSAIDs that are no longer available owing to adverse effect. The WHO concluded that at present there is no evidence of severe adverse events, acute health

care utilization, long-term survival, or quality of life in patients with COVID-19, as a result of the use of NSAIDs.

The U.S.A FDA in a Release on March 3, 2020 said it is aware of news reports stating the use of Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen, could worsen coronavirus disease (COVID-19). These news reports followed a March 11, 2020 letter in The Lancet medical journal which hypothesized that an enzyme (a molecule that aids a biochemical reaction in the body) is increased by NSAIDs and could aggravate COVID-19 symptoms. At this time, FDA is not aware of scientific evidence connecting the use of NSAIDs, like ibuprofen, with worsening COVID-19 symptoms.

The agency is investigating this issue further and will communicate publicly when more information is available. However, all prescription NSAID labels warn that "the pharmacological activity of NSAIDs in reducing inflammation, and possibly fever, may diminish the utility of diagnostic signs in detecting infections." For those who wish to use treatment options other than NSAIDs, there are multiple over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription medications approved for pain relief and fever reduction. FDA suggests speaking to your health care professional if you are concerned about taking NSAIDs and rely on these medications to treat chronic diseases.

Meanwhile stay safe, observe all the advised hygiene measures, daily/regularly consume polyphenol-rich cocoa to strengthen your immunity.

Coronavirus: The morning after

By Alex Otti

PUT first things first and second things are thrown in. Put second things first and you lose both first and second things.' - C.S. Lewis

Not too long ago, the President of the US, Donald Trump, was engaged in a fierce war of words with Kim Jong Un, his North Korean counterpart, ostensibly over the testing of submarine ballistic missiles. The muscle flexing included stepping up of the usually controversial US/South Korea joint military drills and exercises in the peninsula. North Korea threatened fire and brimstone and in response, Kim Jong Un carried out an intimidating display of sophisticated military arsenals and launch of various categories of ballistic missiles, to warn his adversaries that his country should not be taken lightly. The world was amazed at the military sophistication displayed by North Korea. Of course, no one doubts the strength of the US when it comes to sophisticated military apparatus and defence spending, after all, it is the number one superpower. It took an unprecedented peace meeting between Trump and Kim to deescalate the hostilities and start a denuclearization program.

Today, the exchanges and meetings along the Korean peninsula are like irritants to the rest of the world that is fighting a real enemy that is killing rampantly in thousands. Trump is trying everything to stop the spread of Covid 19 and reduce the death toll, including recommending unproven and even ridiculous 'therapies' like the use of disinfectants and ultraviolet rays. Kim on the other hand is reportedly battling to stay alive after a surgery that didn't seem to have gone well. Clearly, the massive investments in defence and the stockpiling of armaments have been rendered useless in a War in which the world is threatened by a little, invisible and unarmed virus.

One thing that is clear is that by the time these difficult times would be over, the world would not be the same again. Amazingly, no one in positions of influence and authority seemed to have foreseen this catastrophe a few months ago. Economies have tanked and markets have behaved in ways that were thought impossible just days ago. For instance, who, three months ago, would have thought that producers of oil would be begging buyers to take the dark stuff from them even for free or fee payable by the seller? It is projected that by June, the world will run out of storage space for crude oil. Demand has dropped dramatically as factories have closed, airlines are grounded, and transportation has come to a virtual stop in many parts of the world.

It is obvious that priorities will change in the emerging post Covid-19 era and the world may begin to focus on what is truly important. Abraham Maslow propounded what is widely known as the "The Theory of The Hierarchy Of Needs", in which he stated that man's needs are ordered hierarchically as in a pyramid, starting at the base with Physiological needs, Safety needs, Social belonging needs, Self-esteem needs and finally Self-actualisation needs. The first level (Physiological needs) and the most important need of man is made up of the rudimentary necessities of life, which would include health, food, shelter, clothing, and sleep. These are basic needs which, only when met, would trigger the need for the satisfaction of other relatively less important, even though necessary needs. In just a few months the needs of people around the world have been reduced to the basic and physiological. Interestingly, many

countries of the world will be unable to even fulfill these needs for most of the population.

Our thesis today is about preparing ourselves and our nation for the end of Covid 19. One thing we are certain about is that the Pandemic will end one day. We may not be sure of when or how it will end but we can hazard a guess as to the state that it would leave us as it ends. This is not a difficult task as we are not in doubt about where we are, just 4 months after its debut. Our economy is already in a mess. The global supply chain has been disrupted in both the consumer and producer sides of the divide. The only country shipping anything at all for now is China. Even at that, a significant component of its shipment comprises food, personal protection equipment and medicaments. Those are what is important to the rest of the world now. The USA, for instance, has run out of face masks, gloves, ventilators and respirators. Ironically, it had to receive help from Russia and in what could be seen as a diplomatic coup, Russia sent America medical materials manufactured by a firm that is under sanctions. The physiological need was more important in the transaction. The case is not different across the world. Investments in high technology applications and appliances not related to healthcare, specifically treatment of Covid-19, have been put on hold. Of course, any investment that is not channeled to physiological needs at this time, is dead on arrival. However, while we prepare for extended co-existence with Covid 19, one thing that is clear nevertheless, is that the economy has gone into a tailspin which will ultimately lead us into a recession by October this year. In fact, if care is not taken, it will degenerate into a depression. This is the stark reality and we must begin to think of how to deal with it.

We had stated many times before that we should start planning for a post oil economy. We were not even expecting a catastrophe like Covid-19 then, but everybody knew that the mono product economy we had been running, was not sustainable. Granted that oil prices may, in the medium to long term recover, we must now seriously begin to think of replacing oil as the driver of the Nigerian economy. One fact brought home to us once more, is the need for the diversification of the economy. Luckily, we are a country blessed with material and human resources to make this happen. We must get more serious and decide that much of what we cannot manufacture here, we do not need. This will help us boost our productive capacity and support a self-reliant economy. Closely related to this is the curse of import dependency. We seem to be hooked on the conspicuous consumption of foreign products at the detriment of locally made ones. Unfortunately, this pandemic has brought us face to face with a major foreign currency scarcity the way we haven't seen it in many years. So, even if we choose not to tame our appetite, the reality of the scarcity of foreign currency would force us to adjust. We are aware CBN is trying to stabilise the foreign exchange market, but it can only do so much as it cannot give what it doesn't have. Therefore, devaluation or whatever fancy name we wish to call it has started happening and will continue given the circumstance. We will, therefore, have fewer dollars to commit to avoidable importation of foreign goods to meet our acquired tastes. CBN will do well to prioritise allocations that have direct impact on physiological needs, and they are not many.

As identified by Maslow, a major Physiological need of man is food. Covid-19 has taught us that we can do without a wide range of things, but not food. This



has been demonstrated by the reaction of people during the lockdown where some had to disregard the policy in search of food. There is no doubt that any time, is dead on arrival. However, while we prepare for extended co-existence with Covid 19, one thing that is clear nevertheless, is that the economy has gone into a tailspin which will ultimately lead us into a recession by October this year. In fact, if care is not taken, it will degenerate into a depression. This is the stark reality and we must begin to think of how to deal with it.

Covid-19 has opened our underbelly with respect to our criminal neglect of our healthcare sector. No one could fathom that there was going to be a day when our rich people would not be able to fly abroad for medical needs. Before now, some rich people would boast that they did not have any doctor in Nigeria. "My personal physician is in the US, Harley Street in London, Germany, Dubai and Singapore" you would hear some people say. Others would tout India and Saudi Arabia. Now we are all holed up in Nigeria, our physicians have become overstretched. I believe that post Covid-19, we shall all insist that our public health system be properly funded and seriously revived. Something good that one observed as we fight Covid-19 is that the feat

also support the facilities with well trained personnel. One is not oblivious of the very low standard of education and the practice of medical experts taking flight in search of greener pastures. Our experience should teach us that we must begin now to plant those greener pastures here and start the process of reversing the human resource flight to enable us get our people back and attract other African skilled professionals to the country.

We expect to see more investment in education and Research and Development (R&D). We have written extensively on education and we believe that we all agree that we have failed our nation on education. As the world is battling to find a cure and vaccine, we should not just be spectators.

A massive investment in R&D would help us pioneer efforts in finding solutions to our problems be they in healthcare, education, technology or agriculture. Innovation is the result of effective R&D. The world economy is ruled by innovators. Science and technology depend largely on R&D. We should get our scientists and engineers busy in the laboratories. That was how China did it. And talking about China, we believe that we can take over a chunk of manufacturing and global supply chain from them, post Covid-19. Prior to this time, China was the manufacturer of the world. Many countries are now rethinking that strategy of outsourcing manufacturing to China. In fact, Japan is offering incentives for Japanese companies to relocate back to Japan and elsewhere. The US has hinted at that also. We have the population and if we have the will, we can attract part of that market to Nigeria.

There is no doubt that we will not be able to fund the national budget for 2020 and beyond. We are likely to add at least another \$10b loan to our existing debt profile, thus taking us to about \$95b. Given the massive drop in revenues we will be unable to service the debt. Government should therefore begin to engage our creditors for debt

relief and cancellation as that is the only option we have. In any case, we will not be the only ones asking for that. But the bad news is that the additional debt would not do much to prevent the crises. The only choice we have is to perform a surgical operation on the public sector to get rid of excess fat. We cannot afford the bloated public sector expenditure anymore. The monthly sharing ritual in Abuja would come to an end shortly because there will be nothing to share. Those who have been addicted to the despicable feeding bottle would have to fend for themselves. It is then that we will understand that building infrastructure and attracting investments and businesses to our states are no luxury. We will also understand that governments are run by taxes and not handouts. To collect taxes, you must have created some prosperity for the taxpayers.

The public sector must not only yield to the private sector but support it for economic survival. The Federal government would have to work with the CBN to implement a quantitative easing policy to stimulate the economy. This, again can only work if implemented at the private sector side of the economy.

Many other sectors of the economy must change. Travels, both local and international will take time to recover. The aviation sector realises this and is already downsizing. Markets, both wet and dry would suffer, particularly in the urban areas. Stores, malls and digital platforms would be the beneficiaries. Social distancing will not abate very soon. Businesses that depend on crowds should reassess their business model as people would rather watch movies in their houses than go to a cinema, for instance.

Let us conclude by stating that many of our postulations remain in the realm of wishes. If we choose to seize the moment, out of the ashes of this pandemic, we shall emerge a stronger economy. As usual, we may also refuse to take advantage of this opportunity and sink deeper into the abyss. The choice is ours!

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Issued by:

THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA),
Mawasiliano Towers, 20 Sam Nujoma Road, P.O Box 474,
14414 DAR ES SALAAM.

30th April, 2020

This is what I've learned treating patients suffering from Covid-19

By Special Correspondent

As a critical care medicine specialist, I am used to seeing the sickest of the sick. I am used to seeing patients with respiratory failure. I am used to seeing patients in shock. I am used to seeing patients gasping for air, with dangerously low oxygen levels. I am used to seeing patients in kidney failure. Never, however, have I seen patients as sick as those with COVID-19.

Frightening hypoxemia (low oxygen levels): First of all, almost all of these patients present with such frighteningly low oxygen levels. I am also a lung specialist, and I am accustomed to seeing patients with low oxygen levels.

Normal oxygen levels are anything above 90 per cent, and I have seen patients come with levels as low as the 70s. Rarely, however, do I see patients presenting to our hospital with oxygen levels in the 50s and even lower.

What's more perplexing, sometimes these patients have oxygen levels that low and have absolutely no symptoms. I have never seen that before in my career as either a lung or critical care specialist.

Frighteningly quick deterioration: Secondly, when these patients with COVID-19 crash, they crash very quickly and crash very hard. Each patient is a ticking time-bomb, and they could be doing fine for several hours, and then - suddenly - they are gasping for air with plummeting oxygen levels and a plummeting blood pressure.

One patient - a sweet woman in her 60s - was holding her own for several days. She was still very sick, but she was holding her own. All of the sudden, she became severely short of breath and was gasping for air. Despite getting multiple interventions, including going on a

ventilator, she suffered cardiac arrest and died. We were all devastated.

What I've learned taking care of these patients: This disease is unlike anything we have ever seen. COVID-19 has confounded critical care specialists the world over. It has upended decades of critical care gospel, and it has left very smart clinicians, scientists, researchers and regular bedside doctors - like me - scratching their heads.

Each patient acts differently to the virus, and we need to treat each patient differently. What works for one may not work for another, and this is different from what we have been used to. This is ultimately a good thing, and it will make all of us better clinicians in the end.

Not every patient needs a ventilator right away. Early on, clinicians taking care patients with COVID-19 were recommending "early intubation", which means placing patients on a ventilator if conventional oxygen treatment did not work. They were not wrong.

At the same time, we have learned that some patients can avoid going on a ventilator if we can treat them with high amounts of oxygen with high flow rates. We have had great success using this treatment modality in keeping multiple patients from requiring a ventilator.

In addition, we have found that, if patients can lie on the stomach themselves, this has helped many of them avoid having to go on a ventilator. A lot of research is being conducted on this treatment, but we have found good success with it in our patients.

While a ventilator can be life-saving and I would not hesitate to use it on any patient who can't breathe, it can also damage the lungs, and it is important to try everything in our arsenal first before we place someone



on a ventilator. Indeed, multiple guidelines have now come out saying the same thing.

We need to aggressively correct any dehydration. It has long been a teaching that the patients with the severe lung disease called ARDS, or Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome, need to get as little fluid as possible.

This is appropriate, because too much fluid in the body can cause the lungs to fill up with fluids and make the respiratory failure worse. At the same

time, patients with COVID-19 typically come into the hospital and ICU very dehydrated. They have had fevers for several days, which causes dehydration itself, and they are not really eating and drinking (because they are sick).

So, if we do not give them fluids, we are setting them up for kidney failure. As a result, we have been more liberal with fluids - all while not giving too much - and we have been very successful in preventing kidney failure.

We REALLY need to discuss goals of care with all patients admitted with COVID-19. This disease can kill. It can leave you needing a ventilator for a

very long time, if not forever.

Do you want this? Yes, of course, we try to "do everything" for all of our patients. The thing is that "doing everything" may not be consistent with someone's wishes and values.

Do you want to live the rest of your days on a ventilator? Do you want to die on a ventilator? Do you want to die with the team pounding on your chest?

Whatever the answers are to those important questions need to be communicated to the doctors taking care of patients with COVID, BEFORE the patients go into respiratory failure. Having me, as a critical care medicine spe-

cialist, ask these questions is too late. It needs to be done sooner.

Like I said, I have never seen anything like this before in my career. This pandemic will have long-standing consequences on the medical profession, hospitals, the healthcare system and society at large.

I pray they are not all negative, and that - when this is all over...some day - we will all be better and stronger than we were before.

The opinions expressed in this blog are the blogger's own and do not reflect those of anyone else.

The economic impact of covid-19 on developing countries

By Daud Khan and Leila Yasmine Khan

WHAT is likely to be the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on developing economies? In the first of this two part article we looked at possible short term disruptions and discussed actions by the private sector and Governments.

These included mobilizing available public resources to augment what private citizens are doing to help the poor and vulnerable; working on some of the national macro-economic levers to sustain businesses; and discussing with international creditors about cancelling - or rescheduling - repayments, of some of their debts.

This second part will look at possible medium to longer term developments.

Clearly, it is too early to say how long this first phase of infections will last; if there will be return waves; how many people will be infected; and how many will have mild or severe symptoms. Most likely we will not get a precise number even for deaths.

Whatever its medical trajectory, the fear and anxiety it has generated is unprecedented and will most likely mean the end of globalization as we know it. It will very likely also accelerate the isolationist trends in the USA and Europe.

This is partly due to a lack of accurate data, especially from developing countries that often lack adequate testing facilities; and partly as many victims may have pre-existing conditions, and establishing the primary cause of death is difficult.

However, we need to stay positive and believe that the COVID-19 outbreak will run its course as other pandemics have done. Resources are being allocated to cure the sick, and both Governments and private companies are working together to find a cure, improve diagnostic tests and develop a vaccine.

Moreover, lessons from previous pandemics, as well as lessons from the

current pandemic coming from China, South Korea and Singapore about early containment and social distancing are being mainstreamed in all countries. And there is a lot of international cooperation on all fronts.

Provided that countries take the right steps, the number of deaths is likely to be much smaller than the three great pandemics of the 20th century - the "Spanish Flu" in 1918-1919 (20-50 million deaths); the "Asian Flu" in 1957-58 and the "Hong Kong Flu" in 1968 (1-4 million deaths each).

A first guess is that the death toll, at least for this year, could be similar to that for the 2009 "Swine Flu" pandemic which caused between 100,000-400,000 deaths worldwide. But whatever its medical trajectory, the fear and anxiety it has generated is unprecedented and will most likely mean the end of globalization as we know it. It will very likely also accelerate the isolationist trends in the USA and Europe.

There is little doubt that the pandemic will result in a very large cut in international trade as a result of falling global demand, both for consumption as well for investments. Sectors such as travel, tourism and construction would be particularly hard hit.

There may be some recovery as Governments in the USA and Europe launch expansionary fiscal and monetary interventions to counter the expected recession, but the positive impact of these interventions on international trade may be limited.

A key factor is that expansionary measures would likely favor domestic production and employment. In particular, Government support funds would be focused on employment intensive activities which have been hardest hit, such as the retail trade, catering and entertainment - which have limited import needs.

Trade will also be affected by changes in production patterns. Over the last two decades the thrust for improved efficiency and productivity has driven manufacturing, as well as many



service industries, towards minimizing costs.

Two key elements of this have been just in time delivery which meant firms holding minimum stocks and inventories; and outsourcing to reduce costs, which meant long supply chains. The crisis has brought to the fore the vulnerability of both these processes.

With disrupted supply chains and low stocks, firms are already finding it hard to maintain operations. As time goes on, supply shortages will become a major constraint in Europe and USA.

As firms make future investment decisions in the post-COVID world, diversifying risk is something that they will be obsessed with and this will mean a strong push to reduce dependence on suppliers in other

countries. The countries most likely to be hit hardest by the changing international trade patterns are China and India, who are major suppliers of components and services to the international markets.

However, a number of other countries, irrespective of whether they are exporters of raw materials or finished good, from Viet Nam to Bangladesh, and from Nigeria to Mexico, will suffer as a result of lower export revenues and balance of payments difficulties.

These trade problems will be exacerbated by developments on the monetary side. Falling sales and liquidity shortages are beginning to hit companies around the world. Many risk having to lay off workers or even close down completely.

Central banks everywhere are trying to push money into the system

and cut interest rate. However, its impact may be limited in the USA and Europe where base interest rates are already close to zero, and further cuts may not be enough to overcome pessimistic market sentiments.

Nevertheless, banks and other lenders may maintain or expand lending as a result of Government guarantees or pressure, or a combination of the two. However, they will almost certainly curtail lending to firms in developing countries who may see even normal lines of credit being restricted and foreign direct investments drying up. The combination of trade and monetary problems emanating from Europe and the USA will put severe strain on Governments in developing countries which are already battling with soaring medical costs, pressing demands to provide emergency as-

sistance to the poorest sections of the population, and assistance to bail out faltering firms.

It will also put tremendous pressures on banks and firms in these countries. With their backs to the wall, there is a serious risk of defaults.

External debts of developing countries, by both Government and the private sector, have risen sharply in the last decade as a result of low interest rates, high commodity prices and availability of credit due to quantitative easing by developed countries.

For middle and low-income countries external debt (excluding China) now stands at around US\$6 trillion - more than the combined GDP of France and UK. The poorest countries (those with Gross National Income per capita of below US\$1,175) have doubled external debt since 2008.

Many challenges for female African journalists covering coronavirus

By Edwin Naidu

THROUGHOUT Africa, female journalists are given a raw deal. The Sunday Independent scoured parts of the continent, getting personal accounts from media in several countries, all sketching a gloomy picture of working under challenging conditions. These are some of their stories as told to Edwin Naidu.

Like every journalist, female reporters fear exposure to infection from the novel coronavirus because of the many contacts they interact with, said Kenyan journalist Vereso Mwanga.

"Another challenge is that the majority of journalists (not just women) have evolved into health reporters overnight because of the Covid-19 pandemic. This means that they are learning how to cover coronavirus related stories on the job. While organisations such as the World Health Organization have been

resourceful in giving guidelines on best terminologies to use, many journalists would have benefited more if there was capacity building on how to cover the disease when it first broke out," she said.

Mwanga said the majority of mainstream media houses in Kenya, except the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, have announced pay cuts of between 5% to 30%, citing economic challenges brought about by Covid-19.

Karen Walter, journalist and mother of two, aged 8 and 13, in Mauritius, said women dominated in her newsroom, with 16 females compared to 11 men. "Both men and women are more or less assigned the same tasks. For the last general elections, for example, women covered political meetings until late at night. In general, we can carry out our duties smoothly," she said.

But there are exceptional cas-

es where the outcome is not as expected in the field. An example, Walter said, related to when a woman colleague covered a political meeting in the capital Port-Louis before the 2019 general elections.

"Her assignment was to bring impressions from those men as well as women attending the meeting. When she came back to the office, she related how the women present were reluctant to share their impressions in the media, even to a woman journalist. That explains the absence of women commentaries for gender balance.

"Being a spouse, mother and journalist is not always an easy task. Time and task management are crucial, but the fact remains that we just can't perform things as we would have liked to. There are sacrifices, like spending less time with our children, even when working from home since the outbreak of Covid-19,"

she said.

Freelance science and technology writer Esther Nakkazi, who lives in Entebbe, Uganda, said working during Covid-19 was difficult as media houses had slashed budgets and the poor quality of internet connections made working a challenge, as she had to rely on webinars as a main source of story ideas. "We also have power issues, and with data proving expensive, one hurdle after another.

"I am suffering, losing out on income as opportunities are drying up. In the past, I would pitch to some and leave out other outlets I used to send. Now you have to pitch to everybody who can take your story, no choice but you have to survive," said Nakkazi, a mother of one who lives with an extended family.

Mercy Adhiambo, a features reporter focusing on health and human interest for The Standard in Nairobi, said she and staff

on the newspaper were given a 25% pay cut due to Covid-19.

"Right now, we are working from home to reduce the spread of the virus. Before corona, we were able to get around easily, but with the curfew, movement is restricted, meaning that we must use our data more quickly. What would help is if we got more data at this unprecedented time," she said.

Ugandan journalist Kitubu Martin said gender equality in Uganda was open to discussion. "I work with The New Vision, the leading, oldest, and biggest media house in Uganda. The story is different here. We have more female photojournalists than the male. Also, we have more female managers than male. At our media house, I have seen a number of female colleagues being promoted in a space of four years," he said.

Martin said several female journalists were not risk-tak-

ers. "Those that are, are getting better opportunities than their male counterparts. Also, some are sidelined by certain editors to undertake the excuse of health, etc. I have seen female journalists turning down opportunities to cover riots, strikes because they are associated with violence," he added.

On World Press Freedom Day, Fayriha Mohamed, chairperson of the Somali Women Journalists Organisation, said it was generally hard for women to work in Somalia's media atmosphere as the male-dominated society believes that journalism is not for women.

"These cultural barriers have led to a big gap between the number of men and women in media, the position of women in organisational structures, working conditions and recruitment process. Women journalists are significantly under-represented in Somali

media houses.

She added that female journalists were treated differently than men, reflecting the diminished role of women in society. "Men, especially the media managers, view women as incompetent of serious reporting, covering news, discovering the facts, thinking rationally rather than emotionally. As a result, most media organisations - radio and television, limit women in all programmes."

Mohamed said female journalists complained about harassment in the workplace as well as in the field and faced social stigma. "There is no equal job opportunity in the sector. The cornerstone of this inequality at the workplace, and even during the recruitment process, originates from bad and negative stereotypes within the community which the female journalists bow down to."

Rwanda's Akagera park thrives thanks to community-led anti-poaching drive

By Maggie Andresen

THE first time Busingo Gaspard illegally entered Akagera National Park in Rwanda, he was 10 years old. With no fence separating the now 112,200-hectare (277,300-acre) protected area from the agricultural plots of community members, families in the neighboring villages frequently grazed livestock past the park limits, sharing grass with impala, zebra and other protected wildlife.

While grazing a herd of cattle, Gaspard and his friends were startled by a bush-buck, an antelope native to the region. Together the children stoned the animal to death, acting mostly from a kind of misguided childish curiosity.

"At that time I was at a bad age," Gaspard says. "I was young, so I found that fun."

Gaspard grew up in Nyankora village on the outskirts of Akagera park. Now 40 years old, he has worked as a chief builder for construction projects in the park for the last nine years. His father, Nayo Landuard, settled the family there in 1973. A father of 11, Landuard says he felt he had little choice when he began poaching meat in order to keep his family from starving.

"I was a good poacher," Landuard remembers, sitting with his family outside their home in the late afternoon sun. "I used to do that for my babies, for my kids."

Although occasionally apprehended by park rangers and punished with severe beatings, Landuard was not deterred. "It was like my restaurant where I could get food for my kids," he says, adding he only stopped in 2001. "By the time I was getting older, my wife told me to stop or else our kids would follow my way, and would be poachers like me."

Gaspard remembers the beatings his father would give him to stop entering the park as an adolescent, though they didn't always work. "I used to go with some other crazy kids who were the same age as me," he says. "My dad used to tell me to stay home."

Akagera National Park was established in 1934; the original size of more than 250,000 hectares (618,000 acres) accounted for nearly 10% of the land area of modern-day Rwanda.

Violence permeated the protected area and its surrounding communities during Rwanda's civil war, from 1990 to 1993. People and wildlife alike became casualties as the rebel-led Rwandan Patriotic Front and national army of Rwanda's former dictator, Juvenal Habyarimana, clashed in firefights.

To accommodate thousands of repatriated refugees returning from Uganda and Tanzania following the 1994 genocide, a massive resettlement project undertaken in 1997 shrunk Akagera's surface area by two-thirds. Conflict between people and wildlife increased as animals destroyed newly planted agricultural plots, and casualties from lions, hippos and leopards fueled discontent in communities at the park's periphery.

"Some people would poach just when they wanted to get meat, but some other people were going there taking revenge because the animals would kill their people," Gaspard remembers of the chaos at that time.

"There was no law and order here," says Jes Gruner, Akagera's park manager for the past 10 years. Gruner is a representative of African Parks, a nonprofit organization partnering with governments and local communities for long-term park management and rehabilitation in 17 national parks across the continent. In 2010, a for-profit partnership named the Akagera Management Company (AMC) was established between African Parks and the Rwanda Development Board, made to steer Akagera back to prosperity.

In 2013, AMC erected a park fence to limit the frequent and devastating conflicts between people and wildlife. That year, a total of 1,997 snares were confiscated inside the park. A year later, the number dropped to 595. In 2019, 25 snares were recorded, seized either in transit to the park by local authorities, or found within its limits.

"We had a lot of poachers," says Ntirunkunduye "Deputy" Sylvestre, Akagera's deputy head of law enforcement. Sylvestre has worked with Akagera National Park since 1999, recalling significant arrests in his early years as a ranger. He's seen acute changes in the park's anti-poaching response over the past two decades, citing access to resources such as a well-trained K9 unit, advanced GPS infrastructure, and a helicopter as crucial for securing baseline order in the park.

"We manifested a lot of change in the materials for the rangers," he says, guiding a path around piles of confiscated snares, bicycles, machetes and fishing nets collected near the park headquarters law enforcement station. "It facilitates us to arrive in action immediately."

In Cyarubare village, near Akagera's gates, a small marketplace hosts vendors selling a variety of meats, vegetables and fruits. One woman begins wrapping what's left of her fish stocks, finished with the day's sales.

Zanika Savera has been a member of the Copabarwi fishing cooperative for the past five years. She serves as the cooperative's adviser, coordinating with her



Kandida Mukagasikare feeds the chickens involved in the farming project at Akagera Park's community center earlier this year.

fellow members to hire local fishers to work under security supervision, casting in Akagera's lakes and selling their catch in Kigali, the Rwandan capital. The fish are also sold in the local community for a reduced price.

"This used to be for rich people," Savera recalls of the time only poachers fished in the park. "Now we are good, we are getting them all the time."

Savera says the legal pathway to long-term financial gain offered through community cooperatives also serves as an incentive for poachers to stop entering the park illegally. She says she considers it an imperative of her cooperative to prevent poachers from depleting the park's fish stocks, and takes action when she can.

"I found people who were trying to poach," Savera says. She encountered them at a location where she would pick up the day's catch from supervised fishermen. "I told them, 'Please make a cooperative, I'm in a cooperative and I'm working with the community liaison officer from the park. I will inform them to also organize something for you. You can get fish as well as I do. And then you can sell them in different places, then you get money instead of poaching.'"

The infusion of direct and indirect support to the communities on Akagera's periphery has sparked an informal community-led process of reporting potential poachers to park law enforcement and local authorities.

"We have that good community who has a good will of keeping the park safe," says Boaz Washika, a 36-year-old ranger and kennel manager of the Akagera K9 unit for the past four years. "You find they really work hand-in-hand with law enforcement to keep the place safe."

"You don't go out searching for informers," Gruner says. "They sort of reveal themselves. It doesn't have to be a former poacher. It can be an old lady selling something in the market, it could be somebody owning a bar. That shows community buy-in."

Gruner says a financial reward is provided to community members for tangible, evidence-based information that leads to the thwarting of poachers, and that about 40% of the information collected from community informers ends up being true. The continuing incentive, however, is in the long-term community investment born of the park's relationship with the neighboring community.

"If you do find poachers or illegal activities," Gruner says, "it's the people who are actually coming from 20 or 30 kilometers away," about 12 to 19 miles. "They're not people who live on the park periphery."

Former poacher Landuard hasn't entered the park illegally to hunt animals in 19 years. He says his influence in recruiting others to start poaching years ago was essential in helping to curb the practice and to keep his

peers involved in reporting other potential poachers as well.

"I was the poacher, I used to encourage other people to poach," Landuard says. "I was one who came up with the idea, I was the really serious one. So if I'm the one who told you to poach, you should also stop when I tell you."

The metrics of impact and success that coalesce in community conservation efforts are difficult to measure definitively, and fuel much debate among researchers and conservationists.

"Any metrics that can be used to define whether or not something is beneficial to both wildlife and communities living adjacent to protected areas, must at the very core ... be defined through the eyes and the understanding of communities," says Elizabeth Gitari, a conservation lawyer, expert and chairperson of the East African Wildlife Society. "Whether or not they feel that they are bona fide participants in conservation, or that they're just looking by on the sidelines ... with zero benefits."

The pillar of community partnership in the African Parks model is essential to its goal of sustainable long-term park management. According to park officials, 80% of Akagera's full-time contracted staff are recruited from the communities surrounding the park.

More than \$180,000 per month is spent on staff salaries alone. There's also a national policy that combines

10% of the individual tourism revenues from Rwanda's four national parks - Akagera, Volcanoes, Nyungwe and Gishwati - and divides and disburses the total directly back to the communities living alongside those protected areas for community infrastructure projects.

"On top of that we have our own programs," Gruner says. "If we accumulated that in our community budget, together we're spending over three-quarters of a million dollars on community work annually."

In the past five years, lions and rhinos have been successfully reintroduced to Akagera's ecosystem. The buffalo population has grown from 500 in 2010 to more than 3,500 today, according to Gruner. As economic opportunities for communities on the park's periphery have expanded in recent years, wildlife in Akagera has thrived.

"Poachers are the minority, communities actually feel they get more benefit from the park," Gruner says. "We're going to secure this place for the majority."

Gaspard, who has dedicated his career to serving the park he once poached from, speaks to this best.

"I'm thankful that our community has understood why we should stop poaching the animals," Gaspard says. "I have also seen the value of the park for the community people, for Rwanda, for Africa, and for the world. And that made me change."

Ramaphosa's historic opportunity amid Covid-19

By Mandla Lionel Isaacs

OUR economy is broken. We have seen, not just over the past decade, but over the past 60 years, that our economy as currently structured cannot create prosperity for the majority of South Africans.

It can be difficult to put our economic stagnation in perspective. We've become accustomed to high unemployment. As the then-Minister of Planning, Trevor Manuel, said way back in 2011, too few South Africans work. We've become accustomed to unemployment levels which would bring down governments in many democracies: 29 per cent at the end of 2019, 41 per cent if you include discouraged work-seekers. That is almost 10 million South Africans unable to find work.

A comparison with other developing countries provides perspective. To get a sense of how our economy has failed to generate prosperity relative to other countries, I compared GDP per capita growth (purchasing power parity, in constant 2011 US dollars) against several developing countries with high growth rates. I compared 2006, the last full year before the global economic crisis of 2007-2009, to 2018, the last year for which data was available for all countries.

Over these 13 years, the average income per South African increased by just 6 per cent, or only 0.5 per cent per year on average. Over the same period, income per person increased by 153 per cent for Chinese, 126 per cent for Ethiopians, 90 per cent for Indians, 82 per cent for Vietnamese, 74 per cent for Rwandans and 63 per cent for Indonesians. The average annual increase for these countries was 5.8 per cent, more than 11 times our own growth rate.

Thais, only 5 per cent richer than us in 2006 (earning \$562 more per person), are now 39 per cent richer (earning \$4,760 more), having increased their income by 41 per cent over the period.

That increased income translates into economic freedom for citizens to improve their quality of life: to afford a bigger house, pay for their children's education or save more money for retirement. Small businesses thrive with more customers with increasing disposable income.

By contrast, our GDP per capita has actually been contracting for the last five years, as the economy has grown at just under 1 per cent annually while the population grows at around 1.5 per cent.

We were limping our way to more of the same this year before the shock of the Covid-19. Now, a virus 800 times smaller in width than a human hair, in addition to killing more than 181,000 people globally in four months - a grim toll growing by five to ten thousand souls per day - is likely to lead to South African job losses in the hundreds of thousands if not millions, and GDP contracting by as much as 7 per cent or more this year.

And yet, despite the own goals and missed opportunities of the last decade, our growth problem is not new. Taking the long view, economic research shows that South Africa has been one of the worst-performing developing countries on economic growth over the past 60 years, and arguably has been deindustrialising continuously since 1982 (the year manufacturing jobs peaked).

As the political adage goes, however, never waste a crisis.

Our economy was already broken before Covid-19 hit us, and government shouldn't let this crisis go to waste. As the

full scale of our economic challenge hits us - likely the largest GDP contraction in many decades, stretching a drained fiscus exhausted after more than a decade of economic stagnation - all of society is looking to government to chart a direction to prosperity. This is a unique opportunity for an economic reform programme.

So while the immediate economic and social response measures announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa are necessary and encouraging, the most important aspect for me was his signalling - echoing similar sentiments from Finance Minister Tito Mboweni in recent days - that in charting a course out of the pandemic, he will pursue structural reforms and a new social compact to get our economy to where it needs to be, not where it was.

Exports, exports, exports

If there is one single answer to our economic problems, it is that we do not export enough.

"To maintain overall growth and employment, the country will need to rapidly increase its exports."

This was the prophetic message - delivered in 2008 - from the panel of top international development economists, led by Harvard Professor Ricardo Hausmann, who gave us a comprehensive set of recommendations on how to achieve and sustain job-rich growth. The panel pointed to our poor export performance over several decades, as the single biggest contributor to our high unemployment levels and poor growth. They identified the fast growth we enjoyed in the mid-2000s as the exception, not the norm.

Export-led growth has been the roadmap followed by virtually all late-developing countries that went from poor to rich, as well as the bigger group of countries that have risen up the income ladder without yet reaching the top. Our export growth over 44 years from 1960 to 2004 was dreadful, the panel noted: the real value of our exports grew by only 34% (about 0.7% per year), compared to 238% for Australia, 385% for Brazil and 439% for Malaysia, for illustration.

What you export also matters. It is better to export more sophisticated products, as this grows your industrial capabilities and allows you to produce different types of products. Increasing product sophistication makes it easier to build and retain competitive advantage and to achieve higher profit margins. It is intuitive. If you produce sugar, coal and T-shirts, you're a price taker competing against dozens of countries. If you produce precision machinery and semiconductors, you can charge high margins and compete against a handful of countries.

Also, if your only competitive advantage is cheap labour enabling the production and sale of simple, inexpensive products, you will lose that advantage as you become successful and your workers begin to command higher wages.

We've done well to build a sizeable car manufacturing sector, albeit heavily subsidised by government. We exported \$11.2-billion (R155-billion at R13.9 per USD at 2017 average exchange rates) worth of automotive products in 2017 (the most recent available year from the Observatory of Economic Complexity which offers cool visualisations of export data). Let's compare transportation product exports (includes cars and ships) with South Korea as the benchmark - a country which was poor 60 years ago but has become rich - and two relative peers, Thailand and Malaysia.

Against our \$11.2-billion (R155-billion), South Korea exported \$106-billion (R1.5-trillion), Thailand \$26.4-billion (R366-billion) and Malaysia \$3.6-billion (R50-billion). As you can see, we are far behind the leader, but we are in the hunt relative to peer countries.

Now let's compare exports of "machines". This includes everything from high-tech electronics to precision tools: semiconductors, centrifuges and ball bearings. Against our \$6-billion (R83.2-billion), benchmark South Korea does \$250-billion (R3.5-trillion) - rich country stuff - while Thailand does \$84.8-billion (R1.2 trillion) and Malaysia \$130-billion (R1.8-trillion). Remember the income growth comparison we did earlier? Interestingly, in 2006 our machine exports were \$6.5-billion, meaning we've shrunk slightly - at least in dollar terms - while Thailand's grew from \$56-billion (51% total growth) and Malaysia from \$109-billion (19% growth).

The conclusion is obvious. Part of the reason our economy isn't growing and 10 million South Africans who could be working are not, is that there are missing industries. The above indicates one of these missing industries is a R540-billion advanced manufacturing industry. This is the potential GDP contribution a 2015 McKinsey Global Institute report argued South Africa could achieve by 2030.

The constraints to export growth

Why aren't we exporting more? There seems to be a consensus that policy uncertainty, unreliable electricity availability, high logistics costs and skills constraints limit our growth potential. Treasury's August 2019 strategy document - which seems to be gaining political momentum - highlights these in calling for structural reforms.

Make no mistake, there are big political battles underlying all of these.

Among others, Ramaphosa and Mboweni will have to convince the ANC - and powerful interest groups in and outside of the alliance - that it can have big SOEs with monopolies over electricity generation and logistics operations, or it can have a growing economy, but it can't have both.

But I'd like to highlight an area which requires far more attention and discussion: monetary policy. Investec's Michael Power has argued - very convincingly in my view - that the root cause of our inability to grow labour-intensive manufacturing over several decades is that our currency has historically been too strong. Power explains that this is great for the small urban elite, but devastating for the poor and unemployed whose labour is made too expensive - on balance, as an input into export goods - as compared to other developing countries (especially fast-growing Asia).

Our currency has historically been propped up by our mineral resource exports, while countries such as Japan and China exported their way to riches partly with the help of weak currencies.

This is alongside the issue of the real cost of capital, which Power estimates is twice that of our Asian competitors. Many on the left also argue the need for cheap, patient money to fund developmental investments, which is one of the arguments for a new state bank.

This could explain the missing R540-billion advanced manufacturing sector we talked about earlier, the need to so heavily subsidise the auto manufacturing sector we do have, and why manufacturing has been in decline for decades



President Cyril Ramaphosa

despite the best efforts of generations of policymakers.

The Hausmann panel seemed to concur with this line of argument, saying: "The fact that the country has a large current account deficit and high unemployment indicates that the only way to achieve both external balance and full employment is with a more competitive real exchange rate."

Could this be the missing variable which explains our growth puzzle? It certainly seems to be a big part of the answer.

Minerals still matter

While our focus remains on exporting increasingly sophisticated products, as Peter Bruce has argued, you can still go a long way by being among the best in the world at exporting raw minerals. The poster child for this model is Australia, which trails us slightly in export of machines (R82.7-billion to our R83.2-billion), exports only a quarter of the value of cars that we do (R40.2-billion to our R155.2-billion), but more than makes up for it by exporting \$142.1-billion (R2-trillion) worth of minerals and metals annually, four times our total of \$33.1-billion (R459-billion), with 40% our population.

Country exports by product, 2017. (Source: The Observatory of Economic Complexity)

Being really good at digging up and exporting minerals - especially to the nearby, rising China - has gone a long way to making Australia one of the world's richest countries, with an economy which has grown for a record 29 straight years.

Here at home, the Minerals Council says mining "is not flourishing" and is declining in terms of its GDP contribution. What is most worrying for our discussion on expanding exports, is that greenfield exploration investment in South Africa has ground to a halt, the trickle that remains constituting only 0.1% of global greenfield exploration expenditure. This means investors are voting with their money against SA as an attractive place to start a new mine. No new exploration investment means no new mining operations, no new jobs in those non-existent operations and no new exports.

Moonshot goals

Let's come back to the export of sophisticated products. An important recent economic study sought lessons for developing countries based on the success of the "Asian miracles": a handful of countries which were alone in reaching high-income status between 1960-2012 without discovering large quantities of oil or joining the European Union. The Asian miracles include Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan.

The authors - Reda Cherif and Fuad Hasanov, both IMF economists - argue that the core ingredient to the success of the Asian miracles was the application of "Technology and Innovation Policy" or "True Industrial Policy" (TIP). TIP is an industrial policy which: intervenes to create new capabilities in sophisticated industries; is export-oriented; and includes intense competition (domestically and externally) and strict accountability. TIP

has three gears based on productivity growth, export sophistication and innovation.

What set the Asian miracles apart, the authors argue, is their successful application of the fastest growth gear: the moonshot approach. The moonshot approach pursues ambitious goals and radical changes, including in industries and sectors which are "wicked hard" to enter, where "much of the required skills and infrastructure might not even exist".

The Asian tigers sought to produce and export sophisticated products which the country had no track record in. Writing about South Korea, for example:

"Hyundai (which was a construction company at the time) built the largest shipyard in the world (and simultaneously its first ship); and finally, the same company moved to the auto industry with no prior experience, and early on decided to build a factory the annual capacity of which would exceed the total annual sales of the whole country and set up its own networks of dealerships in the U.S., the largest and most competitive market in the world."

What might a South African moonshot approach look like?

South Africa produces globally competitive armoured combat vehicles and helicopters (the Rooivalk), but no homegrown passenger cars. The minibus taxi is used all over Africa, the industry in South Africa alone is worth R50-billion a year.

What if the DTI took some aspiring industrialists from its Black Industrialists programme, and with cheap, patient money from the IDC and PIC, technical support and minority ownership from Denel, this consortium built the first African-designed and produced minibus taxi? The engineers could innovate based on design thinking, leveraging user feedback from taxi drivers and passengers.

We could emulate the European Airbus model and work with leading African countries - as a flagship project under the new African Continental Free Trade Area - to share component production and assembly throughout the region to some degree.

We could implement a related project to produce batteries for electric vehicles. With Africa's population expected to grow from 1.3 billion people today to 2.4 billion by 2050, the minibus taxi is likely going nowhere. Will those machines - and the parts to operate and maintain them - be produced in Africa or Asia?

A way forward

Ramaphosa has a historic opportunity. Covid-19 has rocked South Africa and the world, but has strengthened his hand. South Africa has appreciated his steady leadership and rallied behind him the way societies typically only do in wartime. The idea that he could fall victim to a party coup - overblown before the pandemic in my view - is fantasy today.

The pandemic has floored our already broken economy, and the president has shrewdly signalled his intention not to work to restore what was, but to build something better and stronger. In Tuesday's address on

government's evolving response to the pandemic, he spoke of the need to "forge a new economy", which requires a new social compact. He will never have more political capital to deploy to this effort than he has today.

As soon as is feasible, I would encourage the president to do something radical. Book a conference centre indefinitely, and announce that government, business, labour and all relevant stakeholders are invited to forge a plan for export-led inclusive growth - using Treasury's strategy document as a base - which will help us achieve high-income status in one generation.

Do it at the University of Johannesburg's Soweto campus. Let the greatest of our spatially unjust bedroom communities, birth the vision which will fundamentally transform our society.

Make clear, there are no sacred cows. Our economy is broken. We have seen, not just over the last decade, but over the last 60 years, that our economy as currently structured cannot create prosperity for the majority of South Africans.

We cannot keep doing the same things and expect a different result. We don't need tweaks and new policy papers here and there. We need fundamental, structural change.

Thus, one of the problem statements which will guide the conference will be: what changes are required for us to dramatically increase our exports of goods and services by no less than 6% per year annually into the future while increasing black ownership?

Six percent is the magic number offered by Nobel economics laureate, Sir Arthur Lewis, according to Power. The President's Economic Advisory Council can advise on whether this is the right number.

The need for black participation in ownership should be self-evident: South Africa cannot grow if 90% of the population is largely excluded from wealth creation.

All stakeholders will have to answer this question. Does Transnet's operation of rail and ports enable us to dramatically increase our exports? Does this or that labour demand enable us to dramatically increase our exports? Do our real exchange rate and inflation targeting regime enable us to dramatically increase our exports?

Sacred cows will need to be slaughtered, or humanely put down.

The president should be clear that no economic cluster minister must leave that conference centre until we have a plan on how to dramatically increase our exports. Because what are you doing as an economic cluster minister if you can't tell us how we will grow?

I leave you with the words Korean President Park Chung Hee spoke to a group of migrant Korean miners in Germany in 1964 (courtesy of Cherif and Hasanov):

"Looking at your tanned faces, my heart is broken. All of you are risking your lives every day as you go down thousands of meters underground to make ends meet... What poor people you are! You go through these trying times just because Korea is so impoverished..."

PROGRESS

Tanzanian Gold appoints SGS-Lakefield to confirm design of processing plant

By Guardian Reporter

A COMPREHENSIVE metallurgical testing on the primary of sulphide gold mineralization that will pave way for a final flow sheet for the design of a large gold processing plant at Buckreef Gold Project in Geita will be undertaken by SGS Canada Lakefield.

In a statement last week, Tanzanian Gold Corporation announced that its board of directors picked SGS Canada Lakefield to soon start the exercise that will be the basis for the final feasibility study of the Buckreef Project.

Tanzanian Gold has already shipped fresh core from three metallurgical test holes drilled last year to the SGS Lakefield site to confirm a conceptual flow-sheet that includes either gravity separation with gravity tailing cyanidation, or gravity separation, followed by sulphide flo-

tation of the gravity tailing.

Tanzanian Gold Corporation's Executive Chairman, James Sinclair said, "Today's announcement that one of the world's premier metallurgical facilities will be confirming a new flow sheet is a direct result of our prior announcement that the company has more than doubled its mineral resources."

Sinclair further noted that, "With the addition of the new sulphide plant, the Buckreef Project could have two ore treatment plants producing at the same time." The company's statement further added that the flow-sheets constitute low cost and attractive alternatives for the project.

The current round of testing is expected to take approximately five to six months, following which some additional sampling and variability testing may be required that would arise from the design of a new open



Drills on site at Tanzanian Gold's Buckreef gold project in Geita. Photo courtesy of TGC website.

pit which will be initiated shortly.

It named SGS Canada Lakefield, James MacDonald who is a Senior Metallurgist who has reviewed historical reports and recommended the flow-sheet testing options based on the historical

review. In March 2019, the company announced a doubling of mineral resource hence proposed a preliminary design criteria for the sulphide plant to treat up to three million tonnes per year, which is approximately three times more than

the amount processed by the plant that was the basis of the 43-101 pre-feasibility study of June 26, 2018. The new sulphide processing plant could produce in the range of 150,000 to 175,000 ounces of gold per year, the statement noted.

COVID-19

China-Africa trade drops by 14% in the first quarter of 2020

BEIJING

TRADE between China and Africa plummeted by around 14 per cent estimated at \$41 billion in the first three months of 2020 compared to the same period in 2019, according to official figures released by China's General Administration of Customs.

The Chinese economy shrunk by 6.8 per cent in the first quarter of the year as the country was on lockdown. With factories and ports closed, in line with the global response of COVID-19, manufacturing output reduced significantly in February across the country due to

the coronavirus pandemic decreasing Africa-bound exports from China by 10.5 per cent.

China-bound exports from Africa, mostly raw materials for industry, such as oil and metals, also fell by 17.5 per cent in the quarter to US\$19.8 billion. As it stands, China is the world's largest oil importer but demand for the fuel from suppliers in African countries like Congo-Brazzaville slumped in line with the economic slowdown, and its price fell on international markets.

Since its creation by China in 2013, the large-scale infrastructure and connectivity project

Belt and Road initiative have expanded trade links to the Asian Nation. It has also helped to diversify the China-Africa commerce relationship to include telecommunications and machinery.

However, raw natural resources such as oil, copper and iron still dominate the trading relationship. So far, Africa has over 30,000 confirmed coronavirus cases and governments have banned movement and gatherings as the central measure to contain the spread of the virus.

Different African countries "Have varied trade relationships with China. But the response

to COVID-19 must be the same, to upgrade trade relationships with China," Hannah Wanjie Ryder Chief Executive of Beijing-based Development Reimagined told the media.

Ryder further pointed out "China-Africa trade is heavily imbalanced with a large deficit and the coronavirus should force countries to rework the nature of the relationship by adding value to their exports and using Chinese expertise to open more factories on the continent."

Trade slump likely to worsen during the second quarter Even though China started

to come out of the worst of the coronavirus at the end of the first quarter, as industries finally allowed back in operations, many African countries began the second quarter of 2020 in lockdowns and curfews, and it is still uncertain when they will be lifted.

With most airports and borders across the continent closed coupled with low domestic spending during the lockdown, the second quarter will likely follow the downward trend in trade volumes not only with China but with the rest of Africa's trading partners.

Thus, experts predict that,

trade between China and Africa is expected to further slump in the coming months as new cases continue to rise in other parts of the world. In its "Africa Pulse" report, the World Bank said that sub-Saharan countries' high levels of trade and connectivity with China left them highly vulnerable to the impact of the global health crisis.

China-Africa bilateral trade has been steadily increasing for the past 16 years, according to John Hopkins University, reaching \$185 billion in 2018 up from \$155 billion in 2017.

Likely economic impact of the trade fall

Economies in Sub-Saharan Africa could lose between \$37 billion and \$79 billion in output losses in 2020 due to the pandemic, according to a new World Bank regional economic analysis. For instance, the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak has led to the first recession in the Sub-Saharan Africa region in 25 years, with growth forecast at -5.1 per cent in 2020 from a modest 2.4 per cent in the previous year (2019), leaving the sub-Saharan countries highly vulnerable, according to the latest Africa's Pulse, the World Bank's bi-annual analysis said.

Additionally, COVID-19 has

PESSIMISM

S. Africa risks losing 7 million jobs, reaching over 50% unemployment

CAPE TOWN

A tough road lies ahead for the SA economy, with job losses potentially reaching up to seven million as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, according to projections by National Treasury. This would take the country's already record unemployment rate as high as 50%.

In a briefing to members of the finance, appropriations and public accounts committees on Thursday, Finance Minister Tito Mboweni and Treasury Director General Dondo Mogaane painted a dire picture of the state of the South African economy.

The domestic economy was already taking strain before Covid-19 hit SA shores, Mboweni lamented. The ratings downgrades by Fitch, Moody's and, more recently, S&P, have not helped the situation either. "It is a sad day for me and for South Africa. If we are out of the JP Morgan Index by tomorrow, it is bad news," Mboweni said of the S&P downgrade, further into junk status, which was announced late last night.

According to a presentation circulated among members of the Parliament committees, Treasury is projecting a contraction in the economy by 6.4%. Various forecasts show that the pandemic will force a downturn in the economy, followed by a sharp recovery in 2021, but that's if we do things correctly, Mboweni said. Treasury has outlined three scenarios the economy's recovery path could take following the lockdown - but

regardless whether there will be a quick, slow or long recovery; retracements are inevitable.

If the virus can be contained quickly and if the economy can bounce back, then job losses will come to just under three million. A slow recovery period will see over five million job losses. And in the worst case, where it will take longer to contain the pandemic followed by a slower economic recovery - more than seven million jobs will be lost. This will push the unemployment rate to over 50%. During the last global recession in 2008-09, SA lost one million jobs.

Treasury's projections show the manufacturing, construction, trade, catering and accommodation and financial and business services sectors will be worse affected. Shocks to salaries and wages would also be larger for lower educated workers.

Economic standstill

"The fact is that the lockdown had brought economic activity to a standstill," Mboweni said. This has had implications for tax revenue collections, which will add pressure to government expenditure. Mboweni said that tax revenue might decline by nearly a third (32%).

The only way to close the gap is to borrow more and to re-prioritise expenditure, which has warranted that Treasury table an adjusted budget much earlier this year, instead of October. Mboweni said that government will be looking to

do away with "bells and whistles" and focus on what is needed to continue functioning. He did not rule out the sale of state-owned enterprises. "I can't promise no sales of SOEs. There will be sales of poorly functioning SOEs," he said.

Government is still in talks but has not yet finalised a \$4.2 billion facility for Covid-19 support from the International Monetary Fund. "My understanding is no conditions will be attached," said Mboweni. The country is also finalising a \$1 billion loan from the New Development Bank. Government is still in talks with the World Bank about securing support of \$50 million.

Prioritising health

Although the economy is taking a knock, Mogaane pointed out that health interventions need to be prioritised. Government is following a three-phased approach over the next 18 months. The first phase, expected to last six months, will focus on increasing health spending, supporting vulnerable households and provide fiscal support accompanied with monetary policy measures as well as the conclusion of the lockdown.

The second phase is focused on recovery, which would include a continued health response as well as an economic focus on supporting employment and investment. The final phase or pivot phase, will be focused on positioning the economy for higher growth.



Alan Mukoki, CEO of South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry

RELIEF

RDB extends deadline for filing annual returns and accounts

KIGALI

RWANDA Development Board (RDB) has extended the deadline for filing annual returns and annual accounts due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Due to lockdown and measures put in place to contain the spread of COVID-19, companies that have been unable to meet the deadline to submit returns and accounts have been given three more

months, until July 31st, 2020. The extension was made to facilitate businesses that have been affected by the pandemic and lockdown.

Initial deadline

Under the law governing companies in Rwanda, every company has an accounting reference date. In principle, the company is free to decide any date as its accounting reference date provided

that it has such a date in each calendar year.

From the accounting reference date, a public company has four months to file its annual returns and accounts with the Registrar General from RDB while for a private company it is seven months. In practice, according to the Registrar General of RDB, Richard Kayibanda, most companies choose the 31st December.

This means that, as per compa-

ny law, the public companies that have 31st December as their accounting reference date are supposed to file their annual returns and annual accounts by April 30.

Annual returns are yearly statement filed with the Registrar General which contains the information about the company including its shareholding, company address, management (directors), capital structure and financial statements.

OPTIMISM

Carbon tax is going up - and plastic straws may soon be taxed as well

JOHANNESBURG

CARBON Tax, which first came into effect in June 2019, is set to go up by 5.9% this financial year and generate R1.75 billion over the next few months.

Announcing this in his Budget speech, Finance Minister Tito Mboweni said the tax would be complemented by more focused spending in fighting climate change. According to the Carbon Tax Act, the levy must be increased annually based on the consumer price index inflation rate for the preceding tax period, plus two percent

age points for the first phase of the carbon tax up to December 2022.

In another measure aimed at protecting the environment, the National Treasury said it plans to consult on extending the current levy on plastic bags to all single-use materials, such as plastic straws, utensils and packaging, in changes which will be implemented in 2021. Government proposes to raise the plastic bag levy from 12 to 25 cents per bag effective 1 April 2020.

The plastic shopping bag levy was introduced by then-minis-



South African Finance minister Tito Mboweni.

ter of environmental affairs and tourism Vallie Moosa in 2004,

as a mechanism to manage the problem of plastic bags. The current levy will be reviewed, including a clarification of the tax treatment of compostable bags.

Government also intends to consult with affected industries on the introduction of export taxes on scrap metal, which could replace the current price preference system. This follows a Budget proposal to introduce export taxes on ferrous metals, in a move aimed at improving the availability of quality scrap metal at affordable prices for domestic foundries and mills.

They are set to apply to ferrous metals at the rate of R1 000 per tonne, aluminium at R3 000 per tonne, red metals at R8 426 per tonne, and other waste and scrap metals at R1 000 per tonne. "Consultation will begin today, to be concluded by the end of May 2020, for consideration in the annual tax bills," according to Budget documents.

The US in 2018 imposed a 10% ad valorem tariff on imports for aluminium products and a 25% ad valorem tariff on imports for steel. South Africa is one of the countries which were not granted an exemption on the steel

and aluminium tariffs, despite strong government lobbying.



Government also intends to consult with affected industries on the introduction of export taxes on scrap metal, which could replace the current price preference system.

OUTSTANDING

Orca Exploration Group profit grew by 48pc thanks to Songo Songo natural gas production

By Guardian Reporter

ORCA Exploration Group Inc posted a staggering 48 percent revenue growth last year thanks to strong performance by Songo Songo natural gas fields and a corresponding domestic market.

The British Virgin Islands based company said in its 2019 results that its revenue grew by 48 percent to US\$85.6 million (over 197.9bn/-) thanks to increased gas sales Tanesco and Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation.

"2019 saw Orca's strongest financial performance since the business was founded. Orca achieved revenue growth of 48 percent to \$85.6 million, enabling us to finish the year with \$107 million (over 247.4bn/-) in working capital," said Nigel Friend, who is Orca's CEO.

The annual report further noted that under the new long-term gas sales agreement, a greater percentage of profit share and a positive current income tax adjustment led to higher

revenues. Gas deliveries for 2019 increased by 58 percent over the compared to 2018 thanks to increased nominations of gas volumes by TANESCO and TPDC through the National Natural Gas Infrastructure.

"This strong financial position allowed us to declare dividends of US\$6 million in 2019 and to conduct US\$42.2 million of share buybacks including the substantial issuer bid in March 2020. Given the strength of our balance sheet, solid production at Songo Songo and the fixed price we receive for our gas, insulating us from the recent price volatility, we are well placed to weather the uncertainty currently gripping the market," Friend added.

The company further noted that the increase in volumes was partially offset by a decrease in the weighted average gas price of 15 percent for the year and 16 percent for the fourth quarter of 2019 compared to the same prior year period.

Net income attributable to shareholders increased by 86 percent to US\$24.7 million for 2019 and by 349

percent to \$12.3 million for the fourth quarter of 2019 over the comparable prior year period. The increases are primarily due to the increase in revenue partially offset by the increase in depletion expense due to increased gas volume deliveries.

Net cash flows from operating activities for 2019 increased by 21 percent to \$34.9 million and 26 percent to \$5.2 million for Q4 2019 over the comparable prior year period. The increases are primarily a result of the increase in net income and the positive impact on cash flow when adjusting net income by the increase in depletion being offset by the changes in non-cash working capital primarily due to the increase in prepayments and a decrease in trade and other payables when compared to the same prior year period.

Adjusted funds flow from operations for 2019 increased by 124 percent to US\$43.2 million and by 112 percent to US\$13.6 million for Q4 2019 over the comparable prior year period. The increases are mainly due to



Orca Exploration Group Inc. CEO, Nigel Friend

the increase in net cash flows from operating activities adjusted for the change in non-cash working capital, the 2019 report stated.

The company exited 2019 in a stable financial position with \$107.0 million in working capital (December 31, 2018: \$84.2 million), cash and short-

term investments of \$138.7 million (December 31, 2018: \$131.5 million) and long-term debt of \$54.1 million, the report added.

BOOST

Zimbabwe economy could shrink by 20% without coronavirus aid - finance minister

HARARE

ZIMBABWE'S finance minister, Mthuli Ncube, has issued an impassioned plea to international finance institutions, laying bare the country's battered economy and saying it faces "catastrophe" if it does not access critical bailout funding to fight the combined impact of crippling drought and the coronavirus pandemic.

In a leaked letter, the authenticity of which has been confirmed by a senior government official, Ncube wrote to the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other international institutions, saying the country faced record poverty levels.

Ncube said without a transformative arrears clearance and re-engagement plan, Zimbabwe could "suffer a health and economic catastrophe" and the economy could contract by as much as 20%. "This is a massive contraction with very serious social consequences," that could "raise poverty to levels not seen in recent times," reads part of the letter.

Zimbabwe, which cleared its debts with the IMF, still owes other international lenders more than US\$9 billion, and has, since 2009, struggled to restructure these debts.

No support forthcoming

The debt arrears have contributed to Zimbabwe being unable to access any global funding to combat the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. At this year's spring meetings, IMF Director: African Department, Abebe Aemro Selassie, told a press conference that Zimbabwe was not eligible for international support.

"Unfortunately, Zimbabwe continues to have arrears to the World Bank and AfDB which is a constraint on our ability to lend to the country," Selassie said.

Not enough money locally

In his letter, however, Ncube said domestic resources to mitigate the impact of the pandemic were insufficient. This is at a time the Covid-19 pandemic is expected to have a devastating health, humanitarian and economic impact on Zimbabwe, he added. Ncube said there was simply no fiscal space to intervene, meaning there could be a drastic increase in already-unmanageable inflation rates, and the exchange rate



Zimbabwe's finance minister, Mthuli Ncube

could be destabilised.

Promise of reforms

In an unexpected move, he acknowledged that there are necessary reforms

President Emmerson Mnangagwa's government must undertake, including contentious political reforms.

In return, Ncube is hoping for a debt rescheduling of 15 years, or cancella-

tion of all official bilateral arrears. The eventual normalisation of financial relationships will make Zimbabwe eligible for various support facilities available to fragile countries.

LITIGATION

Covid-19: West Africa risks big increase in child labour

ABIDJAN

Ivory Coast and Ghana should be on alert for a spike in child labour due to the coronavirus, experts said, with schools closed and monitors unable to access villages in cocoa harvest season.

The two West African countries together produce about 65% of the world's cocoa and child labour has been a long-standing problem in the sector, despite pledges from chocolate companies including Nestle and Hershey to reduce it.

Fairtrade Africa said it had received reports of possible cases in Ivory Coast's eastern and western regions in recent weeks and flagged them to the government. Government spokesmen for Ivory Coast and Ghana could not immediately be reached for comment.

"In normal circumstances children are already vulnerable, and now they are not going to school," said Anne-Marie Yao, regional cocoa manager for Fairtrade Africa.

"We don't have access to those villages, we don't know exactly what is happening, and we know that this is the mid-season harvesting period," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

They do not have staff on the ground because of the pandemic, and the shelters where rescued children are normally taken have closed, she added.

More than 2 million children work in the cocoa sector in Ghana and Ivory Coast, an increase from 10 years ago, according to a draft of a U.S. government-sponsored report seen by Reuters this month.

Some children work for their parents while others are trafficked from abroad, according to activists. "We have not yet seen any evidence that child labour has increased, but it is still early," said Nick Weatherill, executive director of the International Cocoa Initiative, a Swiss-based foundation working to eliminate child labour.

"If the current situation continues an increase in child labour is very likely," he added. Early action such as cash transfers to households could help, Weatherill said, since economic losses due to the pandemic will also be a risk factor forcing children to work. Teachers are often the first to spot child abuse, said Yao, who suggested the state could instruct them to somehow keep in touch with their students and not all leave the communities.

Ivory Coast's national anti-trafficking committee released a statement last week reminding parents that child labour is punishable by law.

"The harvest season and the closing of schools must not be an excuse for violating children's rights," said Ivory Coast's first lady Dominique Ouattara, who heads the committee.

WORLD

WHO congratulates Wuhan on clearing all COVID-19 cases

GENEVA

THE World Health Organization (WHO) on Friday welcomed the news that there are no more hospitalized COVID-19 patients in Wuhan, China, praising its people's "tireless efforts" to combat the pandemic.

After more than three months of arduous fight, Wuhan, the central Chinese city once hardest hit by the coronavirus outbreak, cleared all COVID-19 cases in hospitals on Sunday.

"That's very very welcome news to hear that there are no more severe cas-

es, no more patients in Wuhan," said Maria van Kerkhove, technical lead for the WHO's Health Emergencies Program at a virtual press briefing here.

"So congratulations on this achievement," she said.

Dr. van Kerkhove appreciated the "tireless efforts" of the people in Wuhan -- "not just the healthcare workers but the individuals who stayed in their homes, who adhered to the public health measures."

"We take our hats off to you, and we thank you for your commitment and your service, and for sharing with us in



Medics from the Peking Union Medical College Hospital thumb up before leaving Wuhan, capital of central China's Hubei province, April 15, 2020. (XINHUA)

the world what you've been able to do," she said.

As one of the China-WHO joint experts who visited China in February for a field study, Dr. van Kerkhove said "China has worked very hard to bring the outbreak under control."

"I was there for two weeks and working directly with ministry officials, and officials from all different sectors, from hospitals, through communities, to really see what was put in place to bring those

numbers down," she recalled.

The doctor also asked the Wuhan people to "remain vigilant," should new cases appear.

"The world has learned from China," Dr. van Kerkhove said, "and we need to continue to learn from Wuhan on how they are lifting those measures, how they are bringing society back to normal, or a new normal, in terms of how we're going to live with this virus going forward." **Xinhua**

Hardest-hit countries in Mideast see continued slowdown in COVID-19 epidemic, with cautious ease of restrictions

CAIRO

TURKEY on Saturday reported 1,983 new COVID-19 cases, the first time the figure has dropped below 2,000 since March 30, while 65 new fatalities were recorded in Iran, pushing up the death toll from the novel coronavirus in the country to 6,156.

The total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Turkey has climbed to 124,375, while the death toll surged to 3,336 after 78 more were added, Turkish Health Minister Fahrettin Koca tweeted on Saturday.

So far 58,259 patients have recovered from the viral respiratory disease in the hardest hit country in the Middle East, according to Koca.

It is worth noting that some Turkish business owners are planning to resume operations amid the latest downward trajectory in the curve of COVID-19 cases, especially after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (pictured) earlier said the government would ease the limitations and measures at the end of May.

Iran, now the second hardest hit country in the Middle East, has also witness continued slowdown in the epidemic, where only 802 new coronavirus cases were con-

firmed on Saturday, bringing the total number to 96,448, including 77,350 recoveries.

In Saudi Arabia, 1,362 new coronavirus cases were recorded on Saturday, raising the tally to 25,459 in the kingdom, while the death toll increased by seven to 176.

To mitigate the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Saudi Finance Minister Mohammed al-Jadaan said on Saturday that his country "must reduce expenditures," noting both oil and non-oil revenues will see further drops in the coming quarters.

Also in a continued improvement in coronavirus epidemic, Israel reported merely 84 new cases on Saturday, bringing the total number in the country to 16,185.

According to the Israeli health ministry, 437 recoveries were recorded on Saturday, more than five times higher than the number of new patients, raising the total number of recoveries to 9,593.

The Israeli government has decided to partially re-open schools starting Sunday, when the government is also expected to discuss the re-opening of other facilities including shopping malls, parks and universities.

In Palestine, three new coronavirus cases were reported in and around East Jerusalem, raising the



total number in the Palestinian territories to 520.

The Qatari health ministry on Saturday announced 776 new infections of the novel coronavirus, taking the total number of confirmed cases in the country to 14,872, including 1,534 recoveries and 12 fatalities.

As the first among the Gulf countries to report COVID-19 cases, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) announced 561 new COVID-19 cases, bringing the total number in the country to 13,599.

On Saturday, the UAE also confirmed 121 fully recovered and eight died from COVID-19, bringing the number of recoveries and death toll to 2,664 and 119 respectively.

Egypt recorded on Saturday

298 new COVID-19 cases and nine new deaths, bringing the total confirmed cases to 6,193 and fatalities to 415.

The Egyptian government has recently started to ease restrictions and reopen services and offices that have been closed over the past six weeks, amid a coexistence plan of carrying out preventive measures while resuming services and economic activities.

In Morocco, 160 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 were reported in the past 24 hours, bringing the total number of cases to 4,729 in the North African country, with 173 deaths and 1,256 recoveries. Kuwait on Saturday reported 242 new cases of COVID-19 and three more deaths, bringing the total infections to 4,619 and the death toll

to 33, the health ministry said in a statement.

On Saturday, Algeria reported 141 new cases of COVID-19, raising the total number of infections to 4,295, including 1,872 recoveries and 459 deaths.

The Omani health ministry announced on Saturday 36 new confirmed cases of COVID-19, bringing the total number in the country to 2,483.

In Iraq, 66 new COVID-19 cases were confirmed in the past 24 hours, bringing the total number in the country to 2,219.

On April 26, a Chinese team of medical experts left Iraq after 50-day stay to support the Iraqi health system to contain the pandemic. In Lebanon and Sudan, the number of COVID-19 cases on Saturday rose by four and 91 respectively to 733 and 533.

Lebanon has started reducing general mobilization measures with some shops having opened since two days ago, while the Sudanese police have been intensifying steps to prevent violation of curfew in Khartoum State, the worst-hit area in Sudan.

War-torn Yemen recorded on Saturday three new confirmed COVID-19 cases, bringing the total number in the country to 10 including two deaths. **Xinhua**

Survey shows no community transmission of COVID-19 in Rwanda - minister

KIGALI

A countrywide health survey shows that there is no community transmission in Rwanda, thus the recent decision to partially lift the lockdown imposed since March 21, Rwandan Health Minister Daniel Ngamije has said.

Over 4,500 people, including those who had sought medical attention with COVID-19-like symptoms, in over 30 percent of Rwanda's health centers as well as essential services providers -- such as market vendors, bankers and employees in telecom-

munication companies who continued to work during the lockdown in the capital Kigali -- were tested during the survey, and they all tested negative for COVID-19, Ngamije told a television news program.

Rwanda early on Friday announced looser measures against COVID-19 starting on May 4, while the number of new confirmed cases is increasing. On Friday the country reported six new cases, bringing its total to 249.

Analysis shows that Rwanda will be able to contain the epidemic with the new measures. The landlocked



country has been seeing a rise in COVID-19 cases among cross-border truck drivers in its daily COVID-19

update since April 24. Vedaste Ndashindwa, an epidemiologist and lecturer at the School of Public Health at the University of Rwanda, told Xinhua that Rwanda is at the stage of "sporadic transmission" with some imported cases, whereby authorities are able to identify the chain of transmission.

It would face a major challenge if "community transmission" occurs, whereby the chain of transmission is unknown, according to the expert.

However, "we know where new COVID-19 infections are coming from, especially cross-border truck

drivers, and they are easily traceable. We are in a good position to handle the cause of new cases without spreading into the population," Ngamije said.

Rwanda also has the capability to conduct mass testing on all those who have shown COVID-19 symptoms as well as contacts of the confirmed cases, he said. Preventive measures against COVID-19, such as social distancing, hygiene practices and the use of masks, are adequate, he said, adding the public has been following these measures. **Xinhua**

COVID-19 impact could be 'disastrously high' in poverty-stricken Malawi, says UN

UNITED NATIONS

IN Malawi, one of the world's poorest countries, with a fragile health system, the United Nations is bracing for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which, it is feared, could be severe, UN News reported on Saturday.

"COVID-19 is known to be particularly dangerous for those with underlying health conditions and, in the African Great Lakes nation, a significant proportion of the population fall into that vulnerable category," it said.

Around one million adults are living with HIV/AIDS, and approximately the same number of children have been orphaned by the disease.

Many others are suffering from a range of infectious diseases, such as hepatitis A, malaria, rabies, schistosomiasis (a disease carried by freshwater snails), and typhoid.

Maria Jose Torres is UN resident coordinator in Malawi, the senior UN development official there. She warned that COVID-19 could have a disastrously high toll: "Even a fairly low number of cases could overwhelm the health system, cause food shortages, and reverse the path of progress the country has been on in recent years."

Torres said that a "systematic approach" is needed to avoid that scenario. "We've got to make sure that people have the supplies and knowledge they need to stay safe."

UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), with support from partner UK Aid and others, is working to deliver water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) supplies, so communities are prepared.

So far, over 24,000 units of chlorine powder drums, water buckets, water testing kits, laundry soap, hygiene education materials, and portable toilets have been distributed to emergency treatment units in four districts, according to UN News.

However, educating the population is just as important as providing the supplies, as Torres explained: "WASH supplies are beneficial only if people use them properly."

That is why the UN in Malawi is working to make sure people learn exactly what they need to do to keep themselves, their families, and their country, safe."

Printed information about COVID-19 is being distributed throughout rural Malawi by UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and other UN agencies, with support from the European Union and UK Aid.

To address the immediate need, the World Food Programme (WFP) has distributed cash to almost 350,000 vulnerable people in the country's most food-insecure districts.

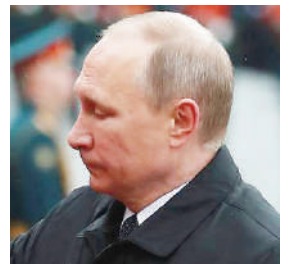
The United Nations in Malawi - which is working with the ministry of health and community leaders to decide on the best ways to share prevention messages - insists that strong partnerships with community groups play a vital role in the fight against the pandemic.

"The UN can't do it alone," said Torres. "Government can't do it alone. People need to hear messages from those they know and trust." **Xinhua**

Putin to lay flowers to Eternal Flame in Moscow and address nation on May 9

MOSCOW

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin is expected to lay flowers to the Eternal Flame in central Moscow on May 9 and address the nation, Putin's press secretary Dmitry Peskov said on Saturday.



"We expect that on May 9 the president will lay flowers to the Eternal Flame and will address the nation from that site," he said in an interview with the Moscow Kremlin. Putin program. A fragment of the program was posted on the Instagram account of its host, Pavel Zarubin.

At a meeting with the permanent members of the Russian Security Council on April 16, Putin said that large-scale public events, including the Victory Parade on Moscow's Red Square, to mark the 75th anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory in the Great Patriotic War (the Eastern Front during WWII where Russia fought against Nazi Germany) had been postponed amid the coronavirus epidemic.

The president pledged the parade and the Immortal Regiment march would be organized as soon as the infection threat was gone. On April 28, Putin announced an air parade and salvos on May 9. **Agencies**

COVID-19-related stigmatisation a dangerous 'political virus'

THE latest statistics released by Johns Hopkins University revealed that the U.S. is the most-affected country by the COVID-19 pandemic around the world. The situation strikes a chord with the Chinese people half a world away as they can feel the misery currently being felt by the Americans.

They expressed their willing to offer as much help as possible on the internet, saying the world is a "small village" where insecurity for one is insecurity for all. Such warmth reflects the genuine bond that binds people together.

However, some U.S. politicians are acting on the opposite side, which angers many. Life is invaluable, but they never see the urgency to address the health crisis, even with people crying, body bags being transferred in trucks, and people dying at

home. What they are interested in is to shift their due responsibilities through political games.

U.S. media commented that some U.S. politicians focused on two things when the virus was rampant - blaming media and blaming China. Boston Globe said they have "blood" on their hands.

The stigmatization of China damages international justice. China has made open and arduous efforts in the fight against the epidemic, which is obvious to all and will never be denied by the few who smear the country's contribution.

Secretary-General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres expressed his gratitude to all the people in China who are sacrificing many aspects of their normal lives to prevent the virus from spreading to oth-

ers. Chief of the World Health Organization Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus also hailed that the high speed and massive scale of China's moves are rarely seen in the world. The quick containment of COVID-19 in China is impressive and "sets an encouraging example for other countries," said The Lancet in a recent editorial.

China's efforts at all costs have successfully curbed the spread of the virus and saved numerous lives. However, such efforts are slandered by irresponsible politicians who only shift blames. Where is the justice?

The stigmatization of China won't save lives. The novel coronavirus challenges people's right to life and health. At present, it's crystal clear that saving lives is more important than shifting responsibilities,

and cooperation remains more significant than groundless accusation. However, it is not what happens with the U.S. politicians who believe making incantations like wizards can help people survive, rather than proper treatment.

The Atlantic said in an article that the White House did not take forceful containment measures at the beginning, which was a major reason for the current explosive spread.

"China did a lot of things right at the beginning, like any country where a virus first shows up," said Bill Gates, co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. "It's sad that even the US, where you would expect to do this well, did this poorly," he added.

The stigmatization of China impedes global efforts to contain the pandemic. As

the world's top power of economy and science, the U.S. boasts abundant economic resources, strong R&D capability and leading medical science.

It should have taken more international responsibilities and helped vulnerable countries and regions while taking effective control measures at home. However, the awkward practices of some U.S. politicians would only destroy the global efforts to fight the pandemic, the consensus of building a community with a shared future, and mutual assistance.

China has always adhered to the vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind, offering assistance for other countries within its capability. Russian President Vladimir Putin pointed out that China has set a good example for

the international community by lending a helping hand to other epidemic-hit countries in a timely manner.

What lies behind the stigmatizing tricks is vicious political manipulation, and this is conspicuous for both the U.S. and the international community. New York Times said that in the U.S., the response to the coronavirus is "heavily overlaid with political calculations."

Jim O'Neill, the chair of U.K. think tank Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs recently published an article titled Blaming China Is a Dangerous Distraction. "For many governments, naming and shaming China appears to be a ploy to divert attention from their own lack of preparedness." **People's Daily**

Washington fans anti-China rhetoric to shift responsibility for COVID-19 crisis

WASHINGTON

WITH COVID-19 cases and deaths mounting daily, the U.S. government has intensified attempts to fan the flames of anti-China rhetoric to divert attention from its direct responsibility for the crisis.

The number of COVID-19 deaths in the country reached 66,369 as of Saturday night, with total infections at 1,132,539, according to the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University.

Instead of doing everything they can to save as many Americans as possible, President Donald Trump's administration and its supporters in Congress are working furiously to frame Beijing as the original culprit and use China as a scapegoat for its own missteps.

"Don't defend Trump, other than the China Travel Ban -- attack China," a detailed memo sent by the National Republican Senatorial Committee to GOP campaigns has advised, urging Republican candidates to address the COVID-19 pandemic by aggressively attacking China.

The 57-page strategy document, ob-

tained by Politico recently, includes advice on everything from how to tie Democratic candidates to the Chinese government to how to deal with accusations of racism.

The April 17 memo is focused on three main lines of assault -- China caused the virus "by covering it up," Democrats are "soft on China," and Republicans will "push for sanctions on China for its role in spreading this pandemic," Politico summarized.

Citing current and former U.S. officials, The New York Times reported on April 30 that senior Trump administration officials pushed intelligence agencies to hunt for evidence to support a theory that a lab in Wuhan was the origin of the outbreak as the president escalated a public campaign to blame China for the pandemic.

But many scientists argue that the evidence tilts firmly toward a natural transmission -- a still-unknown interaction in late fall that allowed the virus to jump from a bat or another animal to a human.

There is "no scientific backing" for the two claims floated recently by some U.S. politicians and media outlets that COVID-19 could be hu-



A firefighter conducts disinfection at the Wuhan Tianhe International Airport in Wuhan, central China's Hubei Province, April 3, 2020. (Xinhua)

man-made and have escaped from a laboratory, said a report by Buzzfeed citing interviews with several scientists on April 22.

Vincent Racaniello, a professor of microbiology and immunology at Columbia University, told Buzzfeed that he wasn't even comfortable calling the idea that the lab was the source of the outbreak a theory. "A theory is

based on results," he said. "I think it's driven by politics, frankly."

Jeremy Konyndyck, a senior policy fellow at the Center for Global Development, said there is currently no evidence that the coronavirus originated in a lab -- either as a deliberate creation or an accidental release.

World Health Organization (WHO) spokesperson Fadela Chaib told a

news briefing on April 21 that "all available evidence suggests the virus has an animal origin and is not manipulated or constructed in a lab or somewhere else."

The U.S. intelligence community "concur with the wide scientific consensus that the COVID-19 virus was not manmade or genetically modified," the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) said in a statement on April 30.

Jeffrey Sachs, a professor and director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University said in a recent opinion piece that the White House "will continue to fulminate against WHO and China and any other targets to distract attention."

"Yet the record is clear: China got the epidemic under control while the U.S. did not. China implemented a strict national lockdown while the U.S. did not. China deployed its top technologists and companies to do the job. In fact, Trump repeatedly praised China during February, only turning on China when the situation got tough in the U.S.," Sachs wrote.

Xinhua

Spain reports lowest numbers of new deaths, new cases since March 15

MADRID

SPANISH health authorities on Sunday confirmed the lowest numbers of new deaths and new infection cases in a 24-hour period since the country was placed under a State of Alarm on March 15.

A total of 164 people had died of COVID-19 in the 24-hour period until 21:00 hours local time on Saturday, the lowest 24-hour toll since Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez imposed the State of Alarm.

The total number of victims from the coronavirus in Spain now stands at 25,264, although the health ministry does advise caution due to possible delays in collecting data over the weekend.

There was also a significant fall in the number of new COVID-19 cases, with the Spanish health ministry confirming 838 new infections, considerably fewer than Saturday's 1,147.

The total number of confirmed infection cases in Spain now stands at 217,466. A further 1,654 patients recovered from COVID-19 in the 24-hour period, taking the total number of recoveries to 118,902.

Sanchez said on Saturday that he will ask the parliament next week to extend the State of Alarm that was imposed since March 15 for a further 15 days when it expires on May 9.

If the request was granted by the Congress, the lower chamber of Spanish Parliament, it would be the fourth extension.

A State of Alarm is the first of three emergency levels a Spanish government can apply under exceptional circumstances.

It grants the government special powers to limit the movement of citizens, control the means of production, use private assets if needed and also use the military to carry out essential logistical and supply jobs.

Xinhua



Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez

Attempts of certain Westerners to come between China, Africa doomed to fail

THE year of 2020 bears great significance for China-Africa relations, as it not only marks the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), but will also shine in history for witnessing the joint efforts launched by the two sides to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

Currently, the number of confirmed cases in Africa is spiking when the virus rages through the world. To cope with the situation, China has offered timely emergency aid to the continent despite the strains it has encountered at home, offering huge amount of medical supplies through various channels to the African Union (AU) and African countries, sharing its experiences, dispatching medical teams and assisting African countries to purchase medical supplies in China.

The joint efforts reveal the fine tradition of the two parties

sharing weal and woe, serving as an epitome of the China-Africa comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership and China-Africa community of a shared future.

However, "political virus" is something more dangerous than COVID-19. Instead of focusing on the exacerbating situation in their own countries, some Western politicians and media outlets stigmatized China and even incited the international public opinion to demand "reparations" from it, regardless of the efforts China has made to defeat the virus.

In this regard, the international society, including the African countries, has kept a clear head and strongly objected to connecting the virus to politics or specific countries.

Guangzhou, south China's Guangdong province was recently caught by a false accusation that misinterprets the city's containment measures imposed for local citizens and

foreign nationals as discriminatory against Africans in the city.

Some Western major countries made hypes on this matter and stirred things up. They even discredited the achievements of China-Africa cooperation to drive a wedge between the two sides for political goals.

In fact, their plot to snatch political interests out of the pandemic has challenged the bottom line of morals and is doomed to fail.

Africa knows the truth and has its own judgement. Chinese State Councilor Wang Yi recently spoke over the phone with Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the Commission of the AU, while Chen Xiaodong, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, met with African diplomatic envoys to China. Besides, Chinese embassies in African countries are also actively contacting African governments.

As a result, Guangdong adopted advices from the African side and further improved its



On April 18, medical supplies donated by the Chinese government arrive in Conakry, capital city of Guinea. (Photo courtesy of the Chinese Embassy in Guinea)

health regulation for foreigners.

The importance placed by China on the matter is evident to Africa. The continent believes that China will not adopt racially discriminatory policies against Africans, said Moussa. Africa and China are friends and comrades-in-arms, and nothing can change or damage

the friendship between them, the chairperson pointed out.

Many African governments and envoys to China believe that countries are tightening measures to prevent and control the pandemic at present and the policies rolled out by Guangdong province are understandable as they are for the sake of both the Chinese

and foreigners' health.

The achievements of China-Africa cooperation won't be erased and Africa will make its own choices. Since the 21st century, China-Africa relations, building on past achievements, have made comprehensive and leapfrog progress.

China has remained Africa's largest trading partner for ten consecutive years, and China-Africa cooperation is one of the highlights in the joint construction of the Belt and Road.

As of December 2019, more than 30 percent of the countries that had participated in the Belt and Road construction were a large number of flagship projects in Africa under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), such as the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway and the Mombasa-Nairobi Standard Gauge Railway, have been completed and put into operation, infusing impetus to the economic and social development of African countries. *People's Daily*

Kenya intensifies efforts to protect women, girls

NAKURU

THE COVID-19 pandemic has heightened risks that Kenyan women and girls are facing during their normal lives.

Fortunately, key stakeholders are consolidating efforts to lower the vulnerabilities by providing legal, medical, psychosocial and logistical support to the female gender.

The stay-at-home order, partial lockdown in five counties, the dusk to dawn curfew and closure of many businesses has negatively affected women and girls as sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) has spiked, women are dying with their infants due to complications associated with delivery since they cannot reach hospitals in time while girls are exposed to transactional sex for survival.

On April 2, Kenyan Chief Justice David Maraga raised concerns over the increase of sexual offenses since outbreak of the disease in Kenya on March 13.

The cases accounted for 35.8 percent of the crimes committed since the first COVID-19 case was confirmed in Kenya.

Rape, sexual assault and defilement are among the serious crimes

that the courts are giving priority as directed by the Chief Justice.

"We are worried about the many girls and women who are undergoing sexual and gender-based violence but can't open up or report due to fear," Kwamboka Oseko, Legal Associate with Coalition on Violence against Women (COVAW) told Xinhua during a recent interview.

"We have more than 50 community activists across the country and on a daily basis, we receive two to three cases reported from their areas," she added.

Her organization has stepped in to counsel the survivors for free through its network of counselors. It has also engaged lawyers to help them get justice at no cost. "We are encouraging the women through our community activists to reach out to us.

If need be, we refer them to our partners who assist them especially if it involves someone who needs to be urgently rescued," said Oseko.

To protect the girls' sexual and reproductive health rights during the COVID-19 crisis, Amref Health Africa is distributing 16,000 pads to 5,333 girls in four counties. Mette Kinoti, group programs director at Amref



Kenyan Chief Justice David Maraga

Health Africa, said that COVID-19 predisposes girls to transactional sex to afford menstrual products further risking their lives.

The provision of sanitary pads will ensure young girls enjoy their menstrual health while keeping safe during the pandemic. The pads were donated to Amref Health Africa by Procter and Gamble on April 23.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Women have already warned of COVID-19 disrupting sexual and reproductive health services and urged countries to integrate them in their fight to contain the disease.

The UN agencies appealed to countries to include the provision of menstrual products to vulnerable

women and girls to safeguard their dignity. Even before the COVID-19.

The number of Kenyan girls in need of sanitary towels were already high with UN statistics indicating that more than 2.6 million girls in the country need support to access these critical commodities.

Both public and private entities have partnered to give expectant women a new lease of life amid the risk of viral respiratory disease.

The Wheels for Life initiative launched on Tuesday offers a logistical solution to pregnant women during the curfew hours.

The initiative which currently benefits women locked in Nairobi links the women to a cab transporting them for free to a hospital or connects them to a doctor offering free consultancy.

Ministry of Health and Nairobi Metropolitan Services are also part of this noble initiative to promote the health of pregnant women.

The Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) has also enlisted in this initiative. Carole Karuga, chief executive officer of KEPSA, said the initiative responds to the crucial needs of pregnant women during this period of restricted movements. *Xinhua*

US builds nuclear shield to deliver surprise nuclear strike on Russia – General Staff

MOSCOW

THE United States is deploying missile defense systems near Russia's borders with the goal of obtaining the potential to deliver a surprise nuclear strike on Russia, First Deputy Chief of the Russian General Staff's Main Operations Department Lt. Gen. Viktor Poznikhir said.

"The deployment of missile defense systems near our borders creates a powerful strike potential for the US enabling it to deliver a surprise [the attacked party won't be able to strike in response] missile and nuclear strike on Russia," the general told the Moscow Conference on International Security.

By developing the global missile defense system Washington also seeks to gain the potential to deliver such a strike without a response against any undesirable country, he noted.

In his report, the general explained that the US had developed a concept of pre-launch

interception and planned to destroy intercontinental ballistic missiles of Russia, China and other countries while they are still in launchers. Those missiles, which will be able to blast off, are to be eliminated by missile defense systems.

The general warned the states, which now host or will host elements of the US missile shield, that these facilities will become priority targets for destruction.

He also noted that using missile defense systems against missiles with nuclear warheads is linked to threats of a long radioactive contamination of the territory.

"Therefore, the countries taking part in implementing the Pentagon's anti-missile plans may suffer," he explained.

Measures against the US global missile shield

Russia has taken adequate measures against the US global missile shield by creating Sarmat and Avangard weapons

with the increased capabilities of breaching this system, according to Poznikhir.

As defensive and offensive armaments are being deployed near the Russian borders on a large scale, Russia has to take "adequate counter-measures," the general stressed.

These measures were outlined in the addresses by Russian President Vladimir Putin to the Federal Assembly, he said.

"They, primarily, include arming the strategic offensive forces with cutting-edge missile systems with the increased capabilities of overcoming the missile shield, such as the Avangard and Sarmat weapons," Poznikhir said.

The general recalled the Russian president's words that Russia was not interested in the strategic arms race "and is urging the United States to return to the negotiating table for a constructive dialogue on the issues of missile defense and the search for mutually acceptable solutions." *Agencies*

HUMAN beings must stay calm and march toward the right direction as the war against the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has entered a critical moment.

Over the past few days, governments, politicians and heads of international organizations have expressed their support for the World Health Organization (WHO) in playing an important role in fighting COVID-19.

At this critical moment, the world is increasingly aware of the urgency and necessity of adhering to multilateralism and deepening international cooperation. It is increasingly recognized that supporting the

Make the mansion of multilateralism more stable

WHO is supporting multilateralism and maintaining the unity of the international community in the fight against the pandemic.

Viruses are a common enemy of mankind, targeting at all human beings, countries and regions. Therefore, the sharpest weapon against it is solidarity.

Strengthening solidarity, coordination and cooperation under multilateral frameworks is the only solution for the international community to jointly conquer the challenges posed by the pandemic

and safeguard the world.

As a specialized agency responsible for public health affairs within the United Nations system, the WHO upholds a science-based, objective and impartial position and actively guides and assists countries in responding to the pandemic, making important contributions to promoting international cooperation in combating the pandemic, and building a professional multilateral platform for all countries to help each other through cooperation.

Fighting the pandemic requires the WHO to play its due role.

Therefore, the organization must be supported. This is an international consensus and conforms to the common interests of all countries. Solidarity and cooperation are the most powerful weapon for the international community to overcome the pandemic, and they can't be overemphasized.

At a recent special summit of the ASEAN Plus Three (China, Japan and the Republic of Korea) on COVID-19, participating leaders agreed

that countries should work closely with the WHO and the international community to jointly safeguard global public health security.

The Group of 77 coalition of developing nations and China issued a statement on April 19, acknowledging the leading role of the WHO in responding to the pandemic and calling on the international community to strengthen solidarity and enhance their support for the WHO.

Other organizations such as the UN General Assembly, the European Union, the African Union,

and the Alliance for Multilateralism have also recently voiced support for the WHO in coordinating the international community to fight the pandemic.

Most of the countries in the world can see it that only a more stable mansion of multilateralism can bring more hope to finally defeat the virus.

When the shared future of mankind meets severe challenges, all human beings shall take their responsibility together. There is no reason to pass the buck, and every

country must work to tackle the challenges.

All parties shall uphold the vision of building a community with a shared future, maintain and safeguard multilateralism, and cope with the pandemic with confidence, unity, and cooperation.

At the critical moment when human destiny is facing severe challenges, China always upholds the concept of building a community with a shared future for mankind, advocates and practices multilateralism, and actively carries out international cooperation to fight the pandemic.

People's Daily



In this March 30, 2020, file photo, cars line up at a drive-thru coronavirus testing site in front of Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, Fla. Nobody can say with precise certainty how many coronavirus tests that the NBA, NHL and Major League Baseball would need before those leagues can resume playing games. (AP Photo)

For sports, coronavirus testing remains a major hurdle

MIAMI

POLITICIANS, players and owners are trying to figure out a way to get baseball, basketball and hockey going again, not only for economic reasons but as a welcome diversion for a social distancing nation facing uncertain times.

But to do so would require commandeering thousands of test kits each week for millionaire pro athletes and support staff, something many view as unseemly, especially when ordinary Americans are waiting in line.

Leagues know it would be a terrible look for them to jump the testing line. Acutely aware of the potential backlash, commissioners and owners are saying that, until the public has more access to testing, they don't want to secure tests for players. The NBA even told teams in a memo Thursday that it would be inappropriate to test asymptomatic players and coaches for now – but the league does expect to have testing available when it's time to return to practices and games.

The NBA plans to allow teams to reopen some facilities May 8, but only for voluntary workouts and in cities where local governments allow. And there is no timetable yet for a return to practices and games, in large part because the testing issue remains unsolved.

"We would have to ensure that testing is widely available and front-line health care workers have access before we begin talking about regular testing in the context of professional sports," NBA spokesman Mike Bass said.

The economic impact of sports not happening is beyond enormous: From athletes – NBA players alone stand to lose roughly \$850 million in salaries if this season doesn't resume – to the thousands of part-time workers around stadiums. Broadcasters have lost millions and furloughed thousands of workers, and sports books saw nearly 80% less action this March than they did in March 2019. All of the above reduces tax revenue to local governments.

President Donald Trump wants sports back for both economic and morale reasons, knowing that once games start getting played again, Americans will have something to cheer for – whether fans are in the stands or not. Sports leaders have met with the White House multiple times to discuss that goal. Trump has been told testing availability is critical to any restart plans, a person with direct knowledge of those talks told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because few details of the conversations were to be publicly shared.

"I don't want people to get used to this because this virus is going to be gone," Trump said in a White House coronavirus briefing. "And when it's gone, you want to get back to normal."

Harvard researchers say the U.S. should be testing at least a half-million people daily, while the White House estimates about 200,000 tests are being administered each day.

Some teams were sharply criticized for getting their players tested when the pandemic was beginning to take hold in March. The leagues want to avoid a similar blowback.

"The threshold question is the health question.

That's where we're spending the most time," MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred said. "The ones that are the most worrisome are the ones that are beyond their control."

According to Major League Baseball, 3,000 kits would need to be available for players, staff, broadcasters and others for every round of testing to get its season going and keep it going. Even if the NHL and NBA return with just 16 postseason teams on the ice and courts, those leagues would likely require tests for a minimum of 1,000 players and staff. And there's no telling how often – Daily? Every few days? Weekly? – the tests would be required to be administered.

With tests still in short supply, that's not a great look.

"We know that 50% of people are asymptomatic and we need to catch them before they spread the disease," Dr. Vincent DeGennaro, the CEO of rapid-test maker Abacus Pharma International, told Miami television station WFOR this week. "And by testing everybody and having those tests here, we should be able to start to get back to some semblance of normalcy and talk about opening up."

Some health care officials have said an equally problematic issue is a shortfall of personal protective equipment – masks, gowns, gloves and the like – that are needed by the people tasked with administering the tests.

"We don't want to use a disproportionate number of testing resources if it's limited," NFL lead counsel Jeff Pash said. "We want to make sure that we're testing people in an appropriate way if we do it and have clear and consistent standards. I think that we very much would take our guidance on that from the medical and public health experts."

Dr. Rebekah Gee, Louisiana's former health secretary and CEO of Louisiana State University's health services division, said reopening of sports should not be considered until the country gets a handle on the sickest people through testing and contact tracing.

"I'm a huge (New Orleans) Saints fan and I want to go to the Superdome too," Gee said. "But am I willing to risk my life for this? No, I'm not. We've got to be smart and shouldn't be giving people false reassurances."

The PGA Tour said it is reviewing what it will need from a testing standpoint before its scheduled return to play without fans in June. NASCAR is returning later this month, also without fans – and without COVID-19 testing. Temperatures of everyone accessing the track will be taken and other strict precautions will be in place, but for now coronavirus tests are not part of the restart plans.

The NBA, NHL and MLB likely won't have that luxury, for the simple fact that athletes in those sports are often in extremely close contact with one another during play.

"Those tests remain in short supply," NASCAR vice president of racing operations John Bobo said. "Getting results can take two to three days. Really, those tests should be targeted for people most in need."

AP

Yanga's transfer headaches assessed

By Correspondent Michael Mwebi

ACCORDING to media reports in light of missing the Mainland Premier League title once again, Young Africans (Yanga) are likely to axe at least eight first-team players.

Yanga head coach Luc Eymael is planning an overhaul of his squad during the off-season and intends to bring in four to five new players to the Jangwani Street-based club.

Some members of the squad are on the wrong side of 30 and look set to make way for new arrivals as they are fast approaching the twilight of their careers.

Players including center back, Kelvin Yondani, and midfielder, Mrisho Ngassa, are over 30 years.

In the goalkeeping department, the club completed three deals that satisfied everyone.

They were able to offload Klaus Kindoki, who was seen as 'patriotic' signing by his fellow countryman, Mwinyi Zahera.

They brought in Faroukh Shikhalo and Metacha Mnata while keeping Ramadhan Kabwili who is regarded as one for the future.

Kenya international Faroukh Shikhalo was seen as the undisputed No. 1 but he appears to have lost his place in the side to Mnata.

Shikhalo has played in only three of Yanga's last fifteen matches. Having a foreign goalkeeper warming the bench is not a good look for anyone especially with the raging debate of decreasing the number of imports in the league.

The Belgian coach has been reported to hint at the signing of another goalkeeper which means either Shikhalo or Kabwili would be culled. If Eymael doesn't fancy Shikhalo, the club will have to take losses as the well built goalkeeper has a running contract till the end of next season.

The defense department will likely see some changes too. Lamine Moro and Juma Abdul are guaranteed to stay.

The likes of Said Juma 'Makapu' and Ally Mtoni 'Sonso' are also likely to remain while Ally Ahmed, who turned down a loan deal and opted to remain home, is as good as gone.



Yanga midfielder, Bernard Morrison (front), celebrates with teammate, Mapinduzi Balama, after the former had netted for the squad in this season's Federation Cup's clash with Prisons, which was held in Dar es Salaam. PHOTO: COURTESY OF YANGA

Kelvin Yondani's contract is up this season but he is not expected to leave as he has good backing from the club hierarchy who admit much as it is true it has been apparent for some time now that he is past his best, he remains an important player to have in the squad.

While Jaffary Mohamed is safe from a cull, there is a need for a natural left full back to be signed.

Adeyem Ahmed who was signed in the December-January transfer window is yet to fully convince the technical bench and it will not be a surprise if he is let go.

The right full-back has the experienced Abdul and his understudy Paul Godfrey whose season has been frustrated by injuries.

The biggest headache is in the midfield where the trio of Mrisho

Ngassa, Patrick Sibomana and Deus Kaseke could be the big names to be shown the exit door. Raphael Daud exit is a foregone conclusion.

Ngassa is Yanga's faithful servant and remains a respected player. However does he lead by example, is he a commanding figure of authority, a guaranteed starter? Far from it.

The problem for Ngassa and Yanga is that the 31-year-old is out of contract.

Kaseke has often been a figure of frustration for Yanga fans and coaches past and present. While he has the work rate needed, his performance is a see-saw affair at best.

Yanga's attack is under the spotlight. Fans rubbed their hands at the beginning of the season when Uganda Premier League top scorer, Juma Balinya, was signed alongside

David Molinga and Sadney Urikhob.

All those forwards have either exited the clubs or are in delicate situations having failed to shine as expected.

Balinya and Urikhob are gone while Molinga will be very lucky to survive the cull despite being the club's top scorer with 10 goals to his name so far.

Yanga's squad is in desperate need of a complete overhaul, culling the players who are not performing at the standard of a title winning side is going to be a business that is likely to end with some shocking decision from the club's hierarchy.

They have spent heavily in recent transfer windows and the 20 players they signed this season only serve to highlight the lack of direction and planning leaving them lagging behind their rivals, Simba.

Stars deliver inspirational messages in Call to Unite event



In a photo provided by The Call to Unite, Oprah Winfrey speaks during the 24-hour live event, which was transmitted Friday, May 1, 2020. (AP)

LOS ANGELES

DIRECTOR Lee Daniels talked about past drug use and urged people not to give into the temptation to abuse drugs during the coronavirus pandemic, saying "You are not alone." Actress Eva Longoria said the pandemic is giving the world a chance to reset itself, and praised health workers for their huge sacrifices. LeAnn Rimes sang "There Will Be a Better Day."

The messages were both universal and personal on Saturday as the Call to Unite livestream, a 24-hour event, stretched into its second day.

President Bill Clinton and Oprah Winfrey were among those who

participated Friday night, and Quincy Jones, Jennifer Garner, Common, Maria Shriver, Questlove, Yo-Yo Ma, were also participating in the event, being livestreamed at unite.us and on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Twitch, LinkedIn and SiriusXM Stars.

Daniels, in an emotional message, talked about his past drug use during the AIDS epidemic in the '80s. He talked about the pain of losing friends to the disease, which he said decimated the African-American gay community. And he urged people not to resort to drug use during the current pandemic. "You're not alone," he said. "Stay in the moment. Don't use. Be safe."

Longoria cited the teachings of Gandhi as she urged people to "be the change you want to see in the world."

"We're in a moment where we have a chance to reset and start anew," she said. She praised nurses and doctors especially for risking their lives to save others, and therapists donating services to tend to people's mental health.

On Friday evening, Winfrey said she keeps updated with coronavirus news, but has often focused her attention more on positive "acts of valor."

The event, organized by Tim Shriver, was launched to help inspire people to endure and overcome the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic.

President George W. Bush said: "Even at an appropriate social distance, we can find ways to be present in the lives of others to ease their anxiety and share their burdens." Clinton delivered the message that "we can get through this together."

Sean Combs said the pandemic was giving humanity a chance to unite. "We don't have to wait until the pandemic is over," he said. "This can come true right now." He urged people to "give someone an extra mask, check on an elderly neighbor."

The event kicked off with a performance by the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Instead of performing collectively, each member clapped and danced individually in various places from inside their apartment, rooftop or park to the tune of Ailey's "Rocka My Soul in the Bosom of Abraham."

AP

Biden backs women's soccer team after lawsuit setback

WASHINGTON

PRESUMPTIVE Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden on Saturday voiced his support for the U.S. women's soccer team, a day after it suffered a setback in its gender discrimination lawsuit against the United States Soccer Federation.

The team's claims for equal pay were dismissed by a court on Friday, handing a victory to U.S. Soccer.

"Don't give up this fight. This is not over yet," Biden wrote in a tweet to the team.

"Equal pay, now. Or else when I'm president, you can go elsewhere for World Cup funding," Biden added to the federation.

The former vice president is looking to unseat incumbent Republican Donald Trump in November's U.S. presidential election.

The World Cup-winning team's long-running feud with U.S. Soccer has been a very public and bitter battle and the players had been seeking \$66 million in damages under the Equal Pay Act.

On Friday, Judge R. Gary Klausner of the United States District Court for the Central District of California threw out the players' claims that they were under paid in comparison with the men's national team.

The court allowed complaints of unfair medical, travel and training to proceed to trial, which is scheduled to begin June 16.

"The WNT (Women's National

Team) has been paid more on both a cumulative and an average per-game basis than the MNT (Men's National Team) over the class period," the court said in its summary judgment.

U.S. Soccer on Friday said it wanted to work with the team to "chart a positive path forward to grow the game both here at home and around the world."

The players have said they plan to appeal the court's decision.

Billie Jean King, who famously battled for equal pay in tennis, also offered words of encouragement to the team on Saturday.

"This is a setback, but it is not the end of the fight," she wrote on Twitter.

"The pursuit of equality is a marathon not a sprint, and this lawsuit has generated a meaningful conversation about the treatment of women in sports," she said.

"One ruling does not diminish its impact."

Last month U.S. Soccer president Carlos Cordeiro resigned over language used in a court filing suggesting women possess less ability than men when it comes to soccer.

The language prompted an on-field protest by players, who wore their warmup jerseys inside out to obscure the U.S. Soccer logo prior to a game, and a critical response from several of the team's commercial sponsors.

(Agencies)

FIFA vice-president ponders calendar year season in Europe

ROME

FIFA vice-president Victor Montagliani has said that moving the European soccer season to the calendar year is a "possibility to be discussed" in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic which has brought football to a standstill around the world.

In an interview with Italy's Radio Sportiva, Montagliani, who is seen as a close ally of FIFA president Gianni Infantino, said the move would fit in with the 2022 World Cup being played in Qatar in November and December.

The head of world soccer's governing body himself has said that football will be totally different when it restarts and that the current stoppage could be a good chance to overhaul the overloaded calendar which is due to run until 2024.

"We have the opportunity because the World Cup in Qatar in 2022 will be played in November/December and that could be the idea," said Montagliani, who is president of the CONCACAF confederation.

"Here in the Americas, the season is already played according to the calendar year, perhaps it is a solution that could also be used in Europe and Africa, it is a possibility to be discussed at national

and continental level," he said.

"It is not an idea to be discarded, it can be a solution in view of the next two years and this winter World Cup".

A number of European leagues, including Italy, Germany and England, still hope to finish their seasons but doing so could force the start of the 2020-21 campaign to be pushed back. UEFA also wants to finish the Champions League and Europa League.

"We had already started thinking about how to set a new calendar from 2024, now with this crisis we need immediate answers," added Montagliani.

The idea of a calendar-year season has been put forward before including by Karl-Heinz Rummenigge when he was chairman of the European Club Association (ECA).

"Everywhere, be it Germany, France or England, summer is the best period of the year. And that is the season we don't play," he told France Football magazine in a 2013 interview.

"In deepest winter, when it is very cold and snowing, we play nearly all the time in conditions that are disagreeable for both players and spectators. It is not logical."

REUTERS

FC Cologne infections raise questions over safety of league restart

BERLIN

THE COVID-19 infection of three people at German top-flight soccer team FC Cologne has raised questions about the safety of a possible Bundesliga restart amid the coronavirus pandemic.

With the Bundesliga battling to convince the government that the season should restart in May, and with daily infection figures dropping, Cologne announced the positive tests on Friday.

"Likely two players, one staffer infected," wrote Karl Lauterbach, senior lawmaker with the Social Democrats, junior partners in Chancellor Angela Merkel's coalition, on Twitter on Saturday.

"The rest (of the squad) continues to train. Whoever trains with COVID-19 risks damages to lung, heart and kidneys," added Lauterbach, who is a professor of health economics and epidemiology.

"I am surprised that players are allowing this," he said in reference to Cologne's training continuing with the rest of the squad instead of them all being quarantined as a precaution. "Football should be a model example and not 'bread and games'," he said.

Cologne had said all three cases

were symptom free and the individuals were placed in a 14-day quarantine but the club did not confirm any names out of respect for the privacy of those concerned, nor did it say whether players were involved.

While Bundesliga clubs have returned to training in small groups in the past weeks after the league was suspended in mid-March, they must wait another week to find out about a possible restart to the season.

The German government on Thursday delayed any decision over a league resumption amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The cash-strapped clubs and league had been hoping for the green light to end the two-month suspension so the league can contractually finish by June 30.

The German Football League has also submitted a health safety plan for games without spectators that foresees regular testing of players but no quarantine for entire squads in cases of positive tests.

Chancellor Merkel has said any decision on if and when sports could resume would be taken on May 6.

Germany has suffered over 6,500 deaths from coronavirus with some 162,000 people infected.

REUTERS

Premier League prepares, but player concern must be addressed

By Ian Darke, ESPN.com writer

AS the coronavirus continues to affect all aspects of life, the English Premier League said on Friday that it will return "when safe and appropriate to do so." But "when" is uncertain and what is "safe," especially as a star like Manchester City's Sergio Aguero says the players are "scared"?

The imperative to restart is clear from a business perspective -- a report earlier this month said that voiding the rest of the season could cost £1.37 billion, £762 million of which is tied up in TV broadcasting contracts -- but if I am reading the mood correctly on social media and radio phone-ins, the nation does not yet have an appetite for football's return. As a Football Supporters' Association statement said last week, "health comes first."

After Friday's video conference of all 20 clubs, there was no commitment to a specific resumption date, but the weekend of June 13 is the reported target for "Project Restart" (UEFA requires a plan by May 25). Is that a realistic proposition? For the 71 clubs outside the Premier League, the problems are even more critical because of their greater dependence on gate money, of which there will be none until who knows when. It is probable that some would not survive.

There are five weeks until mid-June and U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Thursday that the country "is already past the peak of the pandemic" with the rate of death and hospital admissions falling. Next week could see some easing of the lockdown, which began on March 23, and the mood might have changed considerably by the start of next month.

It is clear that the government is in favour of the Premier League returning to TV screens next month. It would certainly lift the morale of fans across the nation and keep people indoors on light summer evenings, with matches having to be played behind closed doors and in up to 10 neutral stadiums.

The plan is to keep these venues a secret until the last minute to avoid fans congregating, but information is sure to leak. Indeed, Liverpool Mayor Joe Anderson has said a resumption is a "non-starter," citing fears that fans of Jurgen Klopp's champions-elect will party in their thousands outside any ground the title is won, at the expense of social distancing protocols.

The clubs might not like the prospect of losing home advantage, but will have little choice if the remaining 92 games are to be played in a 56-day stretch. More of a problem are the valid concerns of players, without whom there can be no games; ESPN reported this week that many have reservations, and Aguero is the highest-profile star to speak out publicly.

"The majority of players are scared because they have family, they have children, they have babies," he told a Spanish TV station.

"If we continue to play and there is danger, and we ignore that while people are dying somewhere in the world," Chelsea defender Antonio Rudiger said on German TV, "I don't know if that would sit right on my conscience."

Could they refuse to play? What happens if one of



The Premier League plans to return, but it remains to be seen if the 2019-20 season can be completed. (Agencies)

them falls ill? Assurances will be needed to convince them that every possible safeguard is in place and risks are minimal. Another factor, according to Brighton's Glenn Murray, is that football should not place unnecessary strain on the emergency services.

Beyond meticulous plans to isolate teams in hotels and wrap the hundreds needed at each stadium on game days in a sanitised bubble, masks and snoods would be worn in training and thousands of tests required to ensure nobody was either incubating or carrying the virus.

Physiotherapists wearing protective equipment would treat players, but even then there are no guarantees the virus would not spread. What of the risks in a contact sport from tackling, marking at corners and the formation of defensive walls? Sweat, saliva and blood could all present potential danger.

You can see why FIFA medical committee chairman Michel D'Hooghe said this week that no football should be played before September, and seasons in the likes of France and Netherlands have been abandoned.

But Germany, Spain and Italy -- like England -- believe it is no crime to at least try to get the show back on the road and provide the season with an authentic ending.

Would it be disrespectful to those who have lost their lives, as well as the heroic doctors and nurses on the front line? I don't think so.

Brighton, Watford and Tottenham are among the clubs that have given up their grounds for use by the National Health Service. Manchester United are providing 60,000 meals for health workers. Chelsea have given free use of owner Roman Abramovich's hotel.

In addition to the league-wide #PlayersTogether initiative, there are numerous examples of kindness and generosity from individual players like Marcus Rashford, who is paying for meals for needy children in Manchester, and Liverpool's Andy Robertson, who has donated to food banks in Glasgow.

As a commentator for BT Sport, one of the rights holders in England, it would be a strange experience to cover a game in the conditions being discussed, possibly wearing a mask and maybe with no co-commentator, fewer cameras and sanitised equipment. Banter in the press room or chat with managers would be out; instead, it will be a case of going straight to the booth upon arrival, covering the game and then going home.

In March, we did not travel to Austria for Man United's Europa League win against

LASK, due to concern about the virus spread, and it was a soulless, surreal occasion, with players' shouting audible and no roar to celebrate goals. It was a reminder that football without fans cannot work for long.

It might not be what we know, but the game must go on, if it can. Nobody can accuse football of not being sensitive to the unfolding tragedy or failing to realise that it really does not matter when the world is in the grip of a pandemic, but it is also true that millions love and miss the game greatly.

Until there is a vaccine, it will not be completely safe to participate in any activity and it may be that the game is fighting a losing battle and the season will have to be declared null and void. That would be a pity, given most teams have only nine matches to play and nobody can know when next season will start.

For now, the smart money says the Premier League will be back in five weeks' time, so long as the players are on board. With every possible safeguard in place and risks cut to the bare minimum, football -- like any other business -- should do all it can to save itself. The alternative is that there might not be much of a game to come back to.

Super Eagles footballers do their part in Nigeria's coronavirus relief efforts

LAGOS

FORMER Nigeria captain John Obi Mikel is one of many Super Eagles players who have pitched in with donations of all kinds as their country grapples with the coronavirus pandemic.

Nigeria's large population has been hard hit by the nationwide lockdown, announced by the government in mid-March and recently extended by President Muhammad Buhari.

Mikel, who owns a farm that includes a poultry, distributed crates of fresh eggs to families in the area, saying on Instagram: "Helping people to survive in these difficult times, my team distributed 1800 crates of fresh eggs to some of the poorest areas in Nigeria close to the farm."

"Let's all try to help one another in this global crisis in any way possible."

Others to help out have been Super Eagles captain Ahmed Musa, Nantes forward Moses Simon, Kelechi Iheanacho of Leicester City, and Manchester United striker Odion Ighalo, along with Samuel Kalu, John Ogu, Henry Onyekuru, and Ogenyi Onazi.

Moses Simon was the first to get the ball rolling. The former Levante man, who was born and raised in the northern city of Kaduna, took to social media to give away cash donations of N5000 each to randomly selected residents of the city.

That amount, N5000, works out to roughly 13 US dollars, which doesn't seem like much. But in Nigeria, that is roughly a third of a month's minimum wage salary. N200 can buy a person a meal at a cheap restaurant.

He told ESPN: "I was getting messages on social media with people telling me about how they were suffering there."

"And I have lived there, my parents are there so I know how hard it can be for the most needy people. My original plan was to give N5000 each to 400 people. I ended up giving more."

"I called them in Kaduna and they told me that what they received from the government was three small packs of noodles. And I saw a video of a woman picking rice from the ground."



Nigeria's population has been hard hit by the nationwide lockdown, preventing many people from earning a living, thus requiring donations from the Red Cross, as well as a number of sports stars. (Agencies)

"I felt it in my heart. Most of these people live from hand to mouth on their daily sales. If they can't go out to do business [due to the lockdown], how would they eat?"

Musa, who is already well known for his philanthropy, donated hundreds of bags of rice that were distributed to people in Kano, one of Nigeria's northern cities.

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Premier League prepares, but player concern must be addressed

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Jason Roy

ECB, CWI hold 'positive' talks on rescheduling WI tour

LONDON

REPRESENTATIVES from England and West Indies, including Test captains Joe Root and Jason Holder, have been involved in "positive ongoing discussions" about rescheduling their forthcoming series, the ECB has said.

West Indies were due to arrive in the UK this month ahead of a three-Test tour, but that has now been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The English season is currently on hold, with no cricket planned before July 1 and the ECB working on contingency plans to try and fulfil its international fixtures once lockdown restrictions are lifted.

CWI chief executive Johnny Grave has previously outlined how the series could be moved to July. That would have involved a clash with the Hundred, but the ECB has subsequently put back the launch of its new tournament until 2021.

Any moves to put on Tests behind closed doors will need the approval of the UK government, however. Meetings with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport were held during the week, with the ECB understood to be taking a lead role in assessing the viability of "bio-secure" venues for the resumption of professional sport.

On the cricketing side, Root and England's coach, Chris Silverwood, took part in a video conference with their West Indies counterparts, Holder and Phil Simmons.

"Positive ongoing discussions with the ECB and CWI continued on Friday," an ECB spokesperson said. "Both boards were represented including captains, coaches, administrators and the chief medical officers from the respective boards."

"Discussions were wide-ranging including dialogue around revised schedules and COVID-19 medical and biosecurity planning."

"Meetings will be ongoing over the next few months to reach an outcome of when international cricket could potentially return. This is a long and detailed process and is very much in the early stages of planning. The guidance from the government will emphasise what we can do."

CWI has also kept the West Indies Players' Association (WIPA) in the loop on the England tour. CWI and WIPA had a call on Wednesday and both parties committed to have more discussions on the possibility of the tour going ahead.

Speaking in a recent interview with Caribbean TV channel CNC3, Holder said that all sides were involved in a "waiting game" but hopeful of a positive outcome despite ongoing worries about the coronavirus.

"We're still sitting back and waiting. I just think it's a situation where we're all monitoring the situation over in England, particularly in Europe as well," Holder said. "I've seen a few things in other sports where they've pushed the schedules back and not having fans... but it's a waiting game. We can only sit tight and hope and pray we resume some type of normalcy in the not-too-distant future."

AGENCIES



Yanga midfielder, Bernard Morrison (2nd L), negotiates his way past Mbeya City FC defenders in a recent Vodacom Premier League clash which took place in Dar es Salaam. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

Magufuli contemplates granting Premier League resumption

By Correspondent Adam Fungamwango

PRESIDENT John Magufuli has said he is thinking of granting resumption of the 2019/20 Mainland Premier League.

The domestic top flight competition and the remaining sporting events in Tanzania, as it is the case for other parts of the world, have been suspended in a bid to contain the Covid-19 pandemic.

Magufuli issued the comments after swearing in Minister for Constitutional and Legal Affairs, Mwigulu Nchemba.

Nchemba has been appointed for the post after Ambassador, Augustine Mahiga, that had been holding the post had passed away last week.

The President disclosed he is waiting for an advice from his advisers on the better way Mainland Premier League should take place.

"Tanzanians must keep on with their daily activities, we must work whilst taking precautions and honestly I'm even thinking of granting the Mainland Premier League resumption," Magufuli said.

He asked people to opt out

of living in fear, maintaining people can continue living in harmony.

"Players should get back to the pitch, fans should watch matches on Televisions. We ought to set up better procedures because I know there is no any sportsman that has been affected by this disease," he added.

"This proves it is not easy for people who take part in training to fall prey to infection. Preventing them from playing amounts to leaving them prone to infection."

The President's statement might turn out to be good news

to soccer officials, players, and the sport's supporters in Tanzanians that had for almost a month not watched a sports event because of the pandemic.

The same could be said of other sporting activities, among others, athletics, boxing, and volleyball that were as well put on hold.

Prime Minister, Kassim Majaliwa, had on March 17 issued a government order, saying all sporting events in Tanzania should be suspended for one month because of the Covid-19 spread.

England's 'stir-crazy' Roy happy to play behind closed doors

LONDON

ENGLAND'S Jason Roy is ready to play in empty stadiums if the post-coronavirus situation demands so, said the opener who got a taste of it in his last outing.

Roy played a Pakistan Super League match on May 7 which took place behind closed doors in Lahore just before the pandemic halted international sports across the globe.

"There was no atmosphere, simple as that," the Durban-born batsman, a key figure in England's World Cup winning squad last year, told British media.

"It was very strange. As a batsman when the bowler's running in you learn to block out the crowd, but as soon as the ball is done you can hear them going absolutely berserk."

"(In Lahore) there was just dead silence. You could hear your mate calling ones and twos, so you don't just have to work off each other's body language. It was hard to get up for it. But it was something we knew we had to deal with."

Playing without fans has been suggested as one possible way to resume cricket as soon as the pandemic subsides and Roy was ready to adjust.

"I'm more than happy to play behind closed doors. It would just be nice to get out there. I feel like a kid again," he said, adding he was "going a bit stir crazy" in the shutdown.

The global health crisis and the restrictions it has forced have clouded the outlook for this year's Twenty20 World Cup scheduled in Australia.

"If players aren't able to prepare in the right way and are unable to get over to Australia, then it makes sense to postpone it," Roy said of the tournament scheduled in October-November.

"But if it goes ahead and we're told we have three weeks to prepare all the boys will be putting in the hard yards to make sure we're ready."

REUTERS

TONIGHT @ 9:30

EATV MONDAY

11:00 DADAZ LIVE
14:00 Wanawake Live (r)
14:30 Bongo Hits
15:00 Funguka
15:30 Copa Coca-Cola (r)
16:00 Akili & Me (r)
16:30 #HASHTAG
17:00 S5ELEKT
17:55 Kurasa
18:00 eNewz
18:30 Music/Soap
19:00 EATV SAA I
19:45 MJADALA
20:00 DADAZ (r)
21:00 UJENZI
21:30 5SPORTS LIVE
22:30 Bongo Hits

5Sports
The week's local and international sporting events as well as in-depth analysis of the biggest sporting highlights of the week are covered on 5sports.

eastafrika RADIO

06:00 Supa Breakfast
10:00 MAMAMIA
12:00 Kipenga Xtra
13:00 Planet Bongo
16:00 EA Drive
20:00 Kipenga
21:00 The Cruise

88.1FM DAR ES SALAAM

Flexibles by David Chikoko



It was very strange. As a batsman when the bowler's running in you learn to block out the crowd, but as soon as the ball is done you can hear them going absolutely berserk.