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Covid-19 positive Johnson mingled with top officials

LONDON

TOP government officials in the UK including those critical in the fight against Covid-19 are faced with no option but self-quarantine after it emerged that they came into close contact with Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who tested positive for the virus yesterday.

Johnson becomes the second high-profile leader in the UK after Prince Charles who tested positive on Wednesday

The UK media reported that days before announcing his test results, the PM appeared much closer than two metres away from other people in public events, including Chief Scientist Sir Patrick Vallance and Chief Medical Officer Chris Whitty.

Westminster reacted to the news that Johnson has tested positive for coronavirus with former Tory Cabinet minister Mel Stride saying the PM had done the "right thing" to self-isolate and it is clear he "is very much still in charge" of the government and its coronavirus response.

Acting Lib Dem leader Sir Ed Davey wished the PM a "full and speedy

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Substandard sanitiser in Zanzibar shops removed



Tanzania Fire and Rescue Force officers engage much-needed resourcefulness yesterday in fumigating a multi-storey building standing on a downtown Dar es Salaam street. It was all in an effort to prevent the spread of Covid-19 infections. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

OFFICIALS from the Zanzibar Food and Drug Agency (ZFDA) were yesterday moving from shop to shop, removing a hand sanitizer brand found to be substandard.

The regulator also shut down Oil Cam factory, manufacturer of the disinfectant that laboratory tests carried out by ZFDA found to be too ineffective to kill Covid-19 and other viruses and germs.

The enforcement agents similarly raced against time to sensitize residents who had already purchased the product to dispose of it and buy other brands as Zanzibar tries to contain the spread of deadly coronavirus disease, with two cases confirmed so far.

The head of cosmetics regulation at ZFDA, Salim Hamad Kassim told reporters here that the ineffective disinfectant was widely supplied in the market after Zanzibar recorded its first Covid-19 case a fortnight ago.

"Unfortunately the product does not meet the required standards," he said.

Kassim further accused the factory of counterfeiting products packaged in labels of international brands.

ZFDA's quality and safety inspector Nassir Salum Buheti said a notice had been issued to owners of pharmacies and shops in the Isles not to put on sale the brand.

"We are also conducting public awareness so that people who are currently using the product throw it away immediately as it cannot



Kassim further accused the factory of counterfeiting products packaged in labels of international brands

protect them from Covid-19," he said.

He emphasised that the crackdown will continue to test the quality of disinfectants so as to protect Zanzibaris from the virus which has since been declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

"Since the first case of Covid-19 was confirmed, some unscrupulous entrepreneurs emerged selling poorly manufactured hand sanitizers. We are going after them," the official intoned.

This is no different with the Mainland where hand sanitizers have been sought like hot cakes in pharmacies, shops and supermarkets since 'patient zero' was announced in Arusha Region nearly two weeks ago.

Although authorities made impromptu visits to some pharmacies to rein in prices that were

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EA private sector for Covid-19 liaison plan

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame, Arusha

PRIVATE sector entities in the East African Community zone want the bloc to come up with a post-Covid-19 recovery strategy to stimulate damaged economies.

Chief executive officers of national private sector apex body associations in Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania and South-Sudan held an online meeting on Thursday to address preparedness and response measures in the EAC region so far.

In a joint communiqué released here yesterday, they advised the bloc to come up with a common rebounding plan for the region with a focus on intra-EAC trade



The communiqué also called upon the EAC region to ensure the borders remain fully operational and facilitate the free movement of goods and services across the EAC partner states

and investments.

"The EAC partner states need to replicate and learn best practices from each other towards containing the pandemic and its related effects, while on the other hand, the private sector should collaborate closely with the governments to combat the Covid-19 pandemic in the EAC region," the communiqué reads in part.

The statement was signed by Stephen Ruzibiza, who is chief executive officer of the Private Sector Federation for Rwanda (PSF); Godfrey Simbeye, executive director of the Tanzania Private Sector

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Police hold Dar couple over Covid-19 battle contempt

By Henry Mwangonde

POLICE in Dar es Salaam are holding a couple for allegedly circulating false information about Covid-19 while on a commuter bus, thus undermining government efforts in the fight against the disease.

Addressing journalists in the city yesterday, Dar es Salaam Special Police Zone Commander Lazaro Mambosasa named the suspects as



The remarks did not go well with fellow passengers who decided to take them to a police station

Boniface Mwita (49) and Rosemary Mwita (41) both residents of Tabata suburb in Ilala District.

The suspects were arrested a week ago when they were in a commuter bus from Tabata to the Muhimbili National Hospital.

"While in the daladala, the suspects started undermining efforts by the government, joking that the government was misleading to tell people that there was a coronavirus

danger," he said.

The suspects went further to say that the government has no money so it is closing schools and colleges so that it gets aid from the international community," the police chief intoned.

The remarks did not go well with fellow passengers who decided to take them to a police station, he elaborated.

"The passengers directed the driver to proceed to a police station

for further action, and upon arrival they were arrested and brought to the Central Police station where they are being detained up to now," he stated.

Investigation has been completed and a charge sheet was being prepared for them to be taken to court anytime from now, he said.

The RPC used the press conference

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recovery" and said his thoughts were also with his fiancée Carrie Symonds, who is expecting their first child.

James Forsyth, the political editor of the Spectator, said while the PM will not be able to "go to work as usual", he will still be able to lead the government using technology - pointing out that Johnson chaired a Cabinet meeting on Tuesday using the Zoom conferencing tool.

However, he said the PM had close contact with other key figures in the government, including the Chancellor of the Exchequer (finance minister) and the health secretary in recent days -

and there were concerns about what will happen if the infection spreads more widely in Whitehall.

Johnson becomes the second high-profile leader in the UK after Prince Charles who tested positive on Wednesday.

Clarence House announced that the 71-year-old heir to the throne was displaying mild symptoms "but otherwise remains in good health," a spokesman said, noting that the Duchess of Cornwall, 72, had been tested but did not have the virus.

Charles and Camilla were now self-isolating at Balmoral.

Buckingham Palace said the Queen last saw her son, the heir to the throne, on 12 March, and he was in good health.

The palace affirmed that the Duke of Edinburgh was not present at that meeting, and that the Queen was now "following all appropriate advice with regard to her welfare."

Clarence House said that in accordance with government and medical advice, the prince and the duchess are now self-isolating at home in Scotland.

The tests were carried out by the National Health Service (NHS) in Aberdeenshire, where they met the criteria required for testing, the statement added.

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skyrocketing hours after the announcement of the positive case, not much has been reported about quality checks on hand sanitizers, with fears rising that fake sanitizers could sweep the market as people go after quick cash.

Kagera Region has recorded its first case of coronavirus and Arusha recording the second case, bringing total confirmed cases to 13.

Figures released on Thursday by the Health ministry in Dodoma said Dar es Salaam region had eight cases, Zanzibar two cases, Arusha two cases and Kagera one case.



Prof Ibrahim Lipumba (L), national chairman of the opposition Civic United Front, addresses journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday on queries Controller and Auditor General Charles Kichere raised in Dodoma on Thursday in the National Audit Office of Tanzania's audit report for financial year 2018/2019. One of the concerns was that some of the money - in public funds - paid to the party was transferred to an individual's account. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

EA private sector for Covid-19 liaison plan

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Foundation (TPSF), Gideon Badagawa, executive director for the Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU), and Peter Mathuki executive director for the East African Business Council (EABC).

Others in the panel were Denis Nshimirimana, who is Secretary General for the Federal Chamber of Commerce Industries and Agriculture in Burundi (CFCIB), Carole Kariuki chief executive officer for the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA), Hamad Hamad, executive director for the Zanzibar Chamber of

Commerce (ZNCC); and Simon Deng, the Secretary General for the South Sudan Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Agriculture (SSCCIA).

The communiqué also called upon the EAC region to ensure the borders remain fully operational and facilitate the free movement of goods and services across the EAC partner states and that the EAC Council of Ministers needs to hold meetings more frequently for information sharing and collaboration.

As a priority measure, the EAC Partner States need to regulate recurrent expenditures and

focus on increasing budgetary allocation on health, social services and food security, allocate more funding towards the recruitment of health personnel to support combating the Covid-19 scourge, the panel recommended.

"The EAC Council of Ministers need to come up with harmonized fiscal incentives for businesses in the region due to the impact of Covid-19 and also come up with practical measures aimed at enhancing regional value chains to reduce over-reliance on imports," it asserted.

Private sector associations in Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania and South-Sudan must collaborate and share information on short term and long-term impacts of Covid-19 to inform the business post Covid-19 recovery strategy, it emphasised.

The business panel similarly advised that the EAC need to ensure food security, promote agro-processing and urban farming to cater for food provision in our urban setups.

Fast tracking and enhancing an EAC framework for e-commerce is needed to ensure ease

and access to essential goods within the region and facilitation of easier access to inputs and intermediate products for industries, it stated.

In addition, the EAC region must reduce port and transport fees, levies and charges affecting the competitiveness of operations, the panel noted, urging the development partners to support EAC and private sector initiatives of combating the Covid-19 outbreak. They should also initiate donor round tables to support priority areas, the communiqué added.



Dar es Salaam Special Police Zone commander Lazaro Mambosasa shows journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday some of what he referred to as stolen items recovered by police in recent days. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

Police hold Dar couple over Covid-19 battle contempt

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to warn people on such behavior saying the coronavirus is killing people all over the world and thus the government has issued directives to be followed by everyone in the country.

The arrest of the couple comes at a time when the vi-

rus has caused apprehension and panic around the world with governments tightening controls on information with some going further to threaten those who spread questionable reports.

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta last week warned people spreading fake news

on the coronavirus situation in that country, saying that they will be dealt with in accordance with the laws.

Kenya directed law enforcement agencies to pursue and arrest such individuals.

Experts have warned that fake news and myths were getting into the way Africa is

responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Most African countries have reported coronavirus cases, with South Africa having the highest number by far. The first detected cases were traced to people returning from Europe, but South Africa is now seeing local transmission. The

number of confirmed cases has increased exponentially, reports affirm.

Spreading fake news and disinformation about Covid-19 was categorised as a criminal offence when South Africa declared that a national state of disaster is in place, they added.

Coronavirus: Positive cases remain 31 as curfew set to kick in

NAIROBI

Health Cabinet Secretary (minister) Mutahi Kagwe has announced that people who have tested positive for Covid-19 in Kenya remain at 31.

Kagwe said yesterday that two of the patients are admitted at the Aga Khan Hospital in critical condition - a French national and a Kenyan, both male.

He said that 156 samples have been tested in the last 24 hours and all have tested negative and, therefore, the total confirmed cases remain 31.

He said the cases are spread out across five counties where Nairobi has 21 cases, Kilifi (six), Mombasa (two), Kajijado (one) and Kwale (one).

Of the positive cases, 19 are male and 12 are female.

He added that 136 people have been discharged after completing the mandatory 14-day follow up, while five at Mbagathi Hospital are waiting test results, saying 752 people have been tested so far.

The CS also announced that the government will embark on mass testing of more than 2,000 persons who arrived in the country last Sunday and are under mandatory quarantine.

This will be done along WHO guidelines and in accordance with one's arrival date.

At the same, Kagwe said will be only one channel of communication on matters coronavirus to avoid causing confusion.

Meanwhile, the nationwide curfew

announced Wednesday will start this evening with the CS saying no new positive cases doesn't mean we should relax.

Kagwe said curfew will cause inconvenience and it's regrettable but necessary.

Inspector General of Police Hillary Mutiyambai said the curfew will apply to entire country every day from 7pm until 5am until further notice.

All persons present in Kenya shall remain indoors within said period with the exception of those proving 20 essential services as outlined in the Kenya Gazette.

The order prohibits public movement individuals or groups with those found violating the curfew to be arrested and charged in court.

The police will be in operation this evening and will put roadblocks across the country.

They will require IDs from personnel to confirm they are on legitimate and on duty.



All persons present in Kenya shall remain indoors within said period with the exception of those proving 20 essential services as outlined in the Kenya Gazette



Arusha district commissioner Gabriel Daqarro pictured yesterday launching the fumigation of long-distance commuter buses at Arusha city central bus terminal as a precaution against the spread of Covid-19 infections. The campaign is courtesy of the Tanzania Bus Owners Association (TABOA) and other transport stakeholders. Photo: Correspondent Woinde Shizza

Disaster management committees to join teams working in fight against Covid-19

By Guardian Correspondent

PRIME Minister Kassim Majaliwa has instructed regional and district disaster management committees to join other teams working to fight against the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Majaliwa issued the directive in Dodoma on Thursday during a meeting with the national committees against (COVID-19). The session also involved delegates from Zanzibar.

The Prime Minister also directed Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children to deploy specialists in high-demand areas such as airports, bus stations and ports.

He urged Tanzanians to continue observing protective guidelines given by health authorities which include practicing self-isolation and avoiding unnecessary gatherings.

"Our goal is to make sure that the country remains safe, my plea to Tanzanians is for them to continue taking precaution measures," he said.

He also wanted the committees to monitor all immigrants to find out their travel history within 14 days so as prevent the spread of the disease.

The premier tasked the committees and authorities to coordinate the quarantine exercise and make sure that all the arrivals are given opportunity to choose hotels from the set list.

He added that the government also makes efforts to allocate free more quarantine areas to provide relief to the public.

The Prime Minister also hailed media houses in the country for their contribution in educating the public on how to protect themselves from corona virus.

Last week, the Prime Minister formed three committees to lead the battle against COVID-19 in the country.

He said the first committee will be headed by the Prime Minister and its members will include some ministers, permanent secretaries and the chief government spokesperson, according to the statement.

The second committee comprising permanent secretaries from relevant ministries will be headed by the chief permanent secretary and the third committee comprising of experts will be led by the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, the Elderly and Children.

2000 practitioners secure employment opportunities via Mkapa Foundation

By Guardian Reporter

OVER 2000 medical practitioners in the country have managed to secure employment opportunities through the support from Benjamin Mkapa Foundation (BMF), the organisation's chief executive officer Dr Ellen Mkondya-Senkoro has said.

According to her, the experts

are now providing services in various dispensaries, health centres and hospitals across the country.

She noted that their collaboration with the government has brought positive impact in health services delivery.

"Since we commenced operations 14 years ago, we have employed more than 2,181 medical practitioners, who are serving in

public and religious health facilities countrywide," she stated.

Dr Senkoro said that in collaboration with the government, they are finalizing employment logistics for additional 80 health workers who will be deployed in regional, zonal and referral hospitals countrywide.

She urged for more and continued government's close working

relationship with civil society organisations in order to bring the much expected socioeconomic development among communities. She said that the foundation has managed to do so following close support from the Global Fund on HIV/AIDS, malaria and Tuberculosis (TB), Irish Aid, Norway government and Abbott Fund.

"There are 307 health person-

nel who will be deployed in eleven regions which are in dire need of the staff, this also will further strengthen health service provision in the country," she noted.

She also vowed to continue working closely with the government and stakeholders in the fight against Covid-19 pandemic.

In her remarks, Minister for Health, Community Develop-

ment, Gender, Elderly and Children Umyy Mwalimu said the new workforce of 307 personnel include nurses, clinical officers, and the laboratory technicians among others. They will serve in the following regions; Mwanza, Shinyanga, Mara, Simiyu, Geita, Kagera, Katavi, Tabora, Dodoma, Arusha and Kigoma.

The minister advised non-gov-

ernmental organisations to supplement government's healthcare initiatives, and work in line with its priorities.

Mwalimu further urged the NGOs to divert their attention from capacity building workshops and seminars and pay special focus to the ongoing fight against coronavirus outbreak and other priority areas.

New Covid-19 epicentre US encourages citizens to leave TZ ...as China extends lockdown

By Guardian Reporter

THE United States which is the new epicentre of the Covid-19 after confirming the highest number of cases in the world encourages its citizens residing in Tanzania to return home "now".

A health advisory released by US embassy in Dar es Salaam yesterday cited the slight increase of case in Tanzania to 13 and the country's department of state's global Covid-19 advisory.

This comes as yesterday's global figures indicated that the US was the new epicentre of the pandemic ahead of former most-affected countries Italy and China. According to figures collated by Johns Hopkins University, the US had over 85,500 positive tests, overtaking China (81,782) and Italy (80,589).

While China managed to reduce new cases to zero mainly by implementing lockdowns—discouraging even its citizens abroad to come home and foreigners residing in the country not to leave—the US wants its citizens back home.

"The Department of State is currently not organizing an evacuation of American citizens from Tanzania. However, in the event that opportunity becomes available, we are asking you to let us know now if you are interested in being contacted," reads the advisory.

The US's 'come back home' appeal comes while China which has successfully defeated the spread of the virus, is closing its border to most foreigners amid fears of imported cases that can cause a second outbreak in the country where the infection was first detected.

In a statement released late Thursday, the government said that "in view of the rapid spread of Covid-19 across the world, China has decided to temporarily suspend the entry into China by foreign nationals holding visas or residence permits" as of March 28.

Anyone wishing to enter the country will have to apply for a new visa at their local Chinese embassy or consulate. The announcement did not say how long this would take.

The decision to effectively seal off the country to foreigners is the latest in a series of moves intended to safeguard against infection from international travel, after more than 500 imported cases of the coronavirus were confirmed.

On Monday, Beijing city authorities announced that all international arrivals would be quarantined and tested for the virus at designated government facilities. Other cities have implemented stringent home quarantine requirements on international arrivals. Last week, a Chinese Australian woman was deported after neighbours recorded her breaching isolation controls to go jogging.

The number of new domestic infections has slowed to a trickle in recent weeks. While Wuhan, the city previously at the epicenter of the outbreak, remains on lockdown, much of the rest of the country is returning to normal.

There are fears imported cases could lead to a renewed outbreak. Hong Kong, a semi-autonomous Chinese city, already had to backtrack on relaxing restrictions after a spike in new infections, many of which were imported by international travelers.



A health advisory released by US embassy in Dar es Salaam yesterday cited the slight increase of case in Tanzania to 13 and the country's de-



Juma Ali Khatib (L), Vice Chairman of the opposition ADA-TADEA, administers a sanitiser on the hands of Assistant Registrar of Political Parties Sixty Nyahoza as a precaution against the spread of Covid-19 infections. This was shortly after the latter arrived at the party's offices in Zanzibar yesterday for verification purposes. Photo: Rahma Suleiman

'Close borders to contain spread of coronavirus'

By Guardian Correspondent Dodoma

LEADERS from official opposition camp have challenged the government to close borders to contain the spread of new cases of Coronavirus.

Moreover, they urged President John Magufuli to be the main speaker on informing the country over spreading of the killer disease. They said having too many officials giving statements on the state of the disease will result into the public being misled.

Giving a press briefing to jour-

nalists yesterday, shadow health minister, Secilia Pareso (Chadema) said there is also a need for the government to set and announce indicative prices for sanitizers and masks—the crucial items in fight against Coronavirus.

"Many business persons have hiked prices of sanitizers to the tune of 20,000/- instead of 7000/- which is not patriotic and acceptable at this peculiar time," she expressed.

Apart from hailing the fifth government for so far efforts made

to fight prevalence of the disease, they observed that it was prudent for more public awareness to negate the disease's new cases, from grass roots levels.

At least 30 countries across Africa have now reported cases of coronavirus, including four that reported their first new cases on Monday in Benin, Liberia, Somalia and Tanzania.

Health minister Umyy Mwalimu earlier announced some steps to halt the spread of the virus in the country, including using media outlets to educate the

public over how best to treat infection of the virus.

President John Magufuli postponed the Uhuru torch ceremony scheduled to start on April 2nd in Zanzibar directing funds allocated for its cost be sent to the Health Ministry for preparation against Corona virus disease (Covid-19) should it enter the country.

The government spokesperson, Dr Hassan Abbas said last week that isolation centres had been established in every zone in case of any reported coronavirus

case. He said in preparedness to tackle any cases of the virus, the government through the ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elders and Children has set up isolation centres in every zone, but he declined to name the hospitals.

However, the government advised all citizens to postpone non-essential travel to countries with reported COVID-19 cases. And officials advised public places such as schools, hotels, churches and mosques to install hand sanitizers.

ILO welcomes G20 commitment in response to coronavirus crisis

By Guardian Reporter

INTERNATIONAL Labour Organisation (ILO) director general Guy Ryder has welcomed the commitment of the G20 leaders as an important first step in constructing a truly global response to the unprecedented challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

He said: "The G20's strong and clear commitment to do whatever it takes to overcome the intertwined health, social and economic impacts of the pandemic is a very welcome first step. Their decision to spare no efforts to protect people, jobs, incomes and enterprises is extremely important".

Ryder insisted that this is the time for global solidarity, especially with the most vulnerable people in societies, and with the emerging and developing world.

"We must also offer our full support to the health workers who are in the front lines of the medical response," he added.

Ryder also stressed that the COVID-19 pandemic has quickly turned into a global economic crisis that could easily become a global recession, and called for specific measures to support workers, jobs and incomes.

These measures include extending social protection, supporting employ-

ment retention (such as short-time work, paid leave, other subsidies), and financial and tax relief, including for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

"In the 2008/9 financial crisis, the world came together and the worst was averted. We have the chance to do the same now, and to do it better. But we must act now so that the 2020s are not a rerun of the 1930s," he said.

Ryder called for the use of social dialogue - engaging with workers and employers and their representatives - as a vital way for building public trust and support for the type of measures that work to overcome a crisis.

Ryder joined the G20's extraordinary virtual summit on the virus pandemic, which was hosted by Saudi Arabia via video conference.

"The G20 must work with the United Nations to deliver the necessary actions globally and on the scale required. We have the means to do it, we just need the political will to look beyond national boundaries," he said.

A preliminary ILO assessment of the outbreak's effect on the global world of work, published on March 18th found that it could increase global unemployment by almost 25 million, and push millions of people into underemployment and working poverty.



EYESORE: It's curious but helpless looks all around as garbage lies abandoned at Mbezi Mwisho market in suburban Dar es Salaam yesterday, endangering public health and causing other inconveniences. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

Stakeholders drill 20 water wells for primary schools in Zanzibar

By Guardian Reporter

A charity organization 'Time To Help' in collaboration with Feza schools and the Ministry of Education in Zanzibar have launched a grand water project which will include drilling of more than 20 deep water wells for primary and secondary schools in the archipelago.

The project which its implementation is expected to commence this year will cost more than 150m/-.

The launch of the project was conducted yesterday in the Isles by deputy minister for Education and Vocation Training, Simai Mohamed Said.

The function was also attended by other officials including

deputy permanent secretary in the ministry, chairperson of the SABIL who are the owners of Feza schools Zanzibar, head teacher of Feza school Zanzibar Ali Nungu and chairperson of Time To Help Ramadhani Praph.

Time To Help chairperson, Ramadhani Praph said in the past two years, the organisation in collaboration with Feza schools

managed to complete construction of 30 water wells for primary and secondary schools in both Unguja and Pemba islands.

Praph added that this year they will drill 20 deep water wells. He said they had already identified areas where the water wells will be drilled, saying so far they had completed four water wells at Muanda and Wete secondary

schools as well as Pujini and Mizingani primary schools.

"Construction is ongoing for other three wells at Sebeni, Mgambo and Kijumbani primary and secondary schools", he added. He said they are implementing the projects to supplement government efforts in improving water services at schools.

Deputy minister for Education,

Simai Mohamed Said congratulated Time To Help and Feza schools for their contributions towards ensuring availability of clean and safe water for students. Simai said the assurance of clean and safe water would increase student's academic performance and reduce the time they were spending in search of the precious liquid.

Deputy permanent secretary in the Ministry of Education, Abdulla Abdulla urged the organisations to continue supporting the schools.

"We need this spirit of collaboration to be extended to other sectors. You are doing a good job to support those in need, we appreciate your contributions", he noted.



Rose Sulle of Dongobesh ward in Mbulu district Manyara shows journalists on Thursday livestock she said she has managed to buy with funding from the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF). Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

Firm donates materials for construction of dormitory

By Guardian Reporter, Tabora

THE Alliance One Tobacco Tanzania Limited (AOTTL) has donated construction materials worth 23.9m/- to support construction of girls' dormitories and toilets in Tabora and Uyui districts.

Speaking during the handing over ceremony here, AOTTL director of production David Mayunga said that the support involved 270 iron sheets, 320 iron bars and 300 bags of cement.

He said that female students in the two district will soon forget all the hurdles especially walking a long distance to school.

Various reports point out that favourable and supportive learning and teaching environment was vital in improving children's performance in schools.

According to Mayunga, Tabora district had received 200 cement bags and 240 iron bars worth 8.6m/-. "The materials will be used to construct dormitories in Itojan-da and Ndevelwa secondary schools in Tabora Municipality."

Uyui district has received

250 iron sheets, 100 bags of cement and 80 steel bars to support dormitories construction in Idete and Nsimbo secondary schools.

Tabora regional commissioner Aggrey Mwanri directed district commissioners to supervise proper utilisation of the donations so as to achieve the intended goals.

He said that the government will not hesitate to take stern measures for any official who would try to misuse the materials.

For his part, Komanya Kitwala extended appreciation to AOTTL for their support which among other things will enable girls in the schools

provide the most conducive learning environment for the students.

Gift Msuya, Uyui district Commissioner said "the support has come at the right time when the government is campaigning to ensure that female students have enough dormitories to keep them in school...we have already commenced the construction of dormitories so the donated materials will compliment the ongoing work."

Parliamentary committee commends agro-bank's efforts to revive KDCU

By Guardian Correspondent, Kagera

THE Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture, Livestock and Water has commended the role played by the Tanzania Agricultural Development Bank (TADB) in reviving Karagwe District Cooperative Union (KDCU), to boost coffee production in the lake zone region.

Members of the committee made the remarks recently here when they visited the union.

One of the committee members, Emmanuel Papijan, lauded the agro-bank for unlocking KDCU challenges.

Papijan who is MP for Kiteto requested for the bank to extend the

services to other cooperative unions in Tanzania.

He said: "We congratulate KDCU for being an example for reviving coffee production. TADB intervention is commendable."

The MP advised the bank to use the same model in order to revive many other agricultural projects across the country.

The committee urged KDCU to set aside empowerment fund to assist farmers in need or bridging finances during off season in order to mitigate 'Butula'.

Butula is a common term used for farmers selling their coffee through informal conduits.

In order to tackle the challenge,

Deputy minister for Agriculture Hussein Bashe directed KDCU to set aside empowerment fund to facilitate farmers during off seasons.

Bashe said that the cooperative union will be protected and advised that any private buyer wishing to buy cherries should do so through AMCOS and should offer competitive prices.

He further said that government will determine whether it will review fees and determine whether unions should pay fees. He also directed for union to publish outturn ratios at the AMCOS notice boards.

KDCU manager Oscar Dominick said the cooperative union was on verge of collapsing because of

heavy non-performing loan (NPL) from the one commercial banks in the market, however with TADB interventions KDCU is now reputable, performing and paying farmers on time.

While commended the commitment of the TADB on its mission to support coffee farmers and increase production and of the country as a whole, the committee advised KDCU, KCU and TADB to make sure that farmers' payments are honoured in 2 days' time instead of the current practice of 7 days.

Karagwe District Cooperative Union (KDCU) is TADB's largest borrower, has 117 AMCOS based in

Kagera and Kyerwa districts, this is to say over 64,000 small holder farmers are positively impacted by this performing facility.

KDCU is an organization of small-scale coffee growers dealing with purchase, processing and marketing of coffee on behalf of farmers. These AMCOS have received a number of benefits such as loans, capacity training including commercial cultivation, investment and post-harvest management techniques.

TADB intervention was done by a major investment made in coffee transaction in Kagera between the years 2018 and 2019 in Karagwe District Cooperative Union (KDCU),

Kagera Cooperative Union (KCU) and that of Ngara farmers' Cooperative Society (NFCS). The bank transformed their accounts from non performing, reviving coffee production, consequently creating more than 5,000 jobs and improved the capacity of productivity in the region, including access to better pricing and marketing. TADB has invested more than 40bn/- in coffee sub-sector in Kagera.

Coffee is a major source of income for millions of smallholder farmers worldwide and is a significant source of export earnings to many nations including Tanzania. Coffee is one of Tanzania's primary export crops representing about 5

per cent of total export, 24 per cent of traditional crops and generating exporting earning averages US\$ 100 million per annum over the last 30 years (TCB, 2011). Despite being the primary crop, coffee farmers in Tanzania was constrained with different production and marketing challenges which lower profit, including limited yields of the existing seedlings with average produce due to outdated harvesting technologies.

TADB's deliberate strategy is to increase coffee production from the current 50,000 MT per annum to around 100,000 in the medium term. To date, KDCU is proud that, AMCOS had increased efficiency.



Small traders cash in on the coronavirus outbreak by selling buckets for use in the washing of hands, as captured at a section of Dar es Salaam's Ali Hassan Mwinyi Road yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

Diamond recovery from rock waste starts at Mwadui Mines

By Guardian Correspondent, Shinyanga

SMALL diamond miners in Kishapu District in Shinyanga Region have started to benefit from the recovery of diamonds from waste rock heaps at Williamson Diamond Mines following directives from President John Magufuli allowing the miners to do so while taking precautions against Covid-19 disease.

Speaking, mid this week to journalists Mercy Shirima, the supervisor of Masenga Miners group said their group has succeeded to recover three small pieces of diamonds and called upon the miners to continue with the work for more diamond recoveries.

Speaking to the miners the Kishapu district Commissioner Nyabaganga Taraba called on the miners to take precautions against Covid-19 such as avoiding close assemblies, and washing hands with soap every time.

The first day of the exercise was plagued by water supply cut and poor rock waste transported from the Mwadui Mine.

"They should involve us as we are experienced because it is not easy during all this time to recover nothing and my advice to the authorities is to involve us to select the rock waste for the exercise to be beneficial," one of the small miners Jayunga James said.

Meanwhile small miners from Maganzo town in Shinyanga District have started to benefit from the diamond recovery exercise and have hailed the government for its decision.

The government already made amendments to the Mining Act by prohibiting export of rock waste which is now seeing local miners benefit from minerals recoveries for their economic wellbeing.



They should involve us as we are experienced because it is not easy during all this time to recover nothing and my advice to the authorities is to involve us to select the rock waste for the exercise to be beneficial

Dar workers praise TPSF stand on job security in face of Covid-19 crisis

By Guardian Reporter

DAR ES SALAAM workers yesterday saluted the Tanzania Private Sector Foundation (TPSF) for defending firmly the worker's right to secure employment during the ongoing turbulent times.

Jackson Lijawa said in a random interview that the foundation protected its image and honour by defending openly the right of workers to secure their employment during this period when some employers were tempted to fire workers arbi-

trarily. "The Covid-19 pandemic is not the creation of workers. Why should they be victimised? TPSF deserves praise for seeing this truth and defending workers' rights," he reasoned.

He said Tanzanian workers belong to extended families, explaining that sacking one worker without justification would cause misery to many people who depend on the salary of a sacked worker. He called on Tanzanian workers to work hard to reciprocate TPSF's and government's stand on protecting workers from unfair sackings.

Martha Thomson said employers must ensure workers were protected from contracting the disease.

"While we salute the TPSF and the government for the timely stand on secure employment, employers must make sure workers do not contract the disease at their places of work. It is good to remain in employment. It is even better to remain in employment without picking the disease from fellow workers," she quipped.

She said the private sector should use its financial lever-

age and use the mass media to increase public awareness on the disease countrywide. "The private sector has a big stake in a safe Tanzania, especially during this time of the pandemic," she argued.

Michael Muganga called on the TPSF to use its influence to ensure workers get protective gear against corona.

"While we thank TPSF for siding with workers, we appeal to the foundation to ensure workers get protective gear so that they do not pick the disease at their places of work and spread

it to their families. Safe workers will do their work professionally and happily," he argued.

He said the TPSF should think of upcountry entrepreneurs who, he said, were complaining of lack of knowledge on the pandemic. "Reports from upcountry show that people do not have sufficient information on the disease. TPSF should also think about these people," he suggested.

Seif Almas said workers were doing their work with a peace of mind because of the common stand of the TPSF, the Asso-

ciation of Tanzania Employers (ATE), and the government relating to secured employments of Tanzanian workers during this trying period.

"I am proud to be a Tanzanian because the TPSF, ATE and the government are all agreed that workers must not be cunningly fired and their benefits should not be encroached upon because of the Covid-19 pandemic. It makes this nation united," he reasoned.

Neema Joram said TPSF's stand on workers' employment was timely. "Some of us are in

a tricky industry. We produce building materials. There are very few specialised industries of this nature. The kind of work we do here is not found in many places in Tanzania because it is highly specialised," she said.

Recently, in a meeting jointly organised by the TPSF and ATE, the TPSF official, Angelina Ngalula appealed to employers in the private sector to refrain from firing workers using corona pandemic as an excuse. The stand was supported by the ATE managing director, Dr Aggrey Mlimuka.

Agriculture PS calls upon staff to work hard to attain country's food sufficiency

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

PERMANENT Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture Gerald Kusanya has called on the ministry's management to work hard while adhering to professionalism in the implementation of directives from President John Magufuli in ensuring the country is food sufficient.

He made the call at a function to take over the office from the former Permanent Secretary Eng Mathew Mtigumwe held at the Ministry's headquarters at Mtumba in Dodoma.

Early this month, President John Magufuli appointed Kusanya permanent secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture after he chaired the 13-man probe team formed last year to investigate the fall of the sisal crop in the country and presented the report to Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa.

Kusanya said the ministry is supposed to ensure Tanzanians are assured of food by ample production of quality food crops.

"Every ministry official must ensure he works hard and professionally to realise targets set by the country's president in making sure the country is food sufficient," he said.

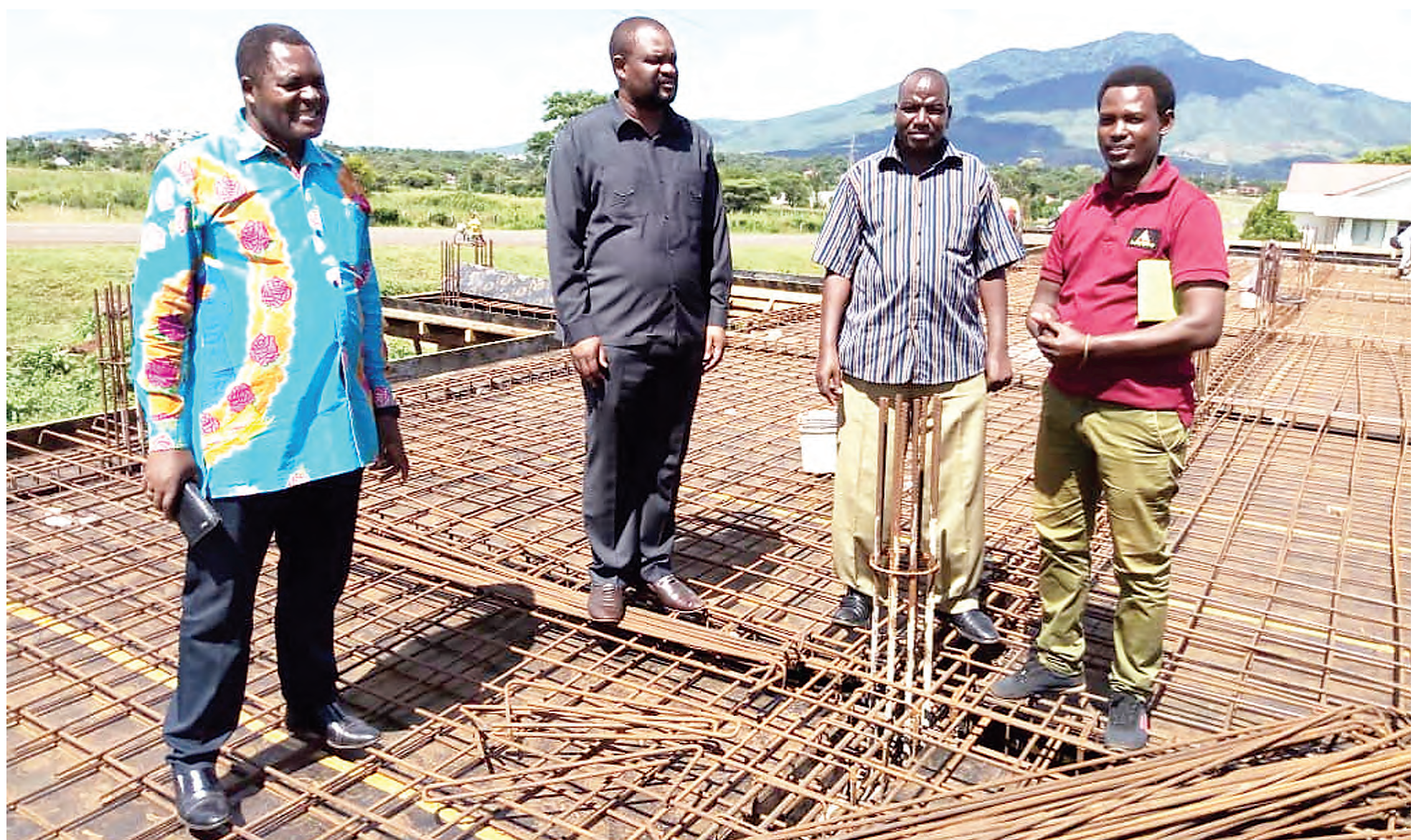
He thanked Eng Mtigumwe for the good work done by the ministry during his leadership including his initiation of several changes in the departments and other institutions at the ministry.

Eng Mtigumwe conveyed thanks to all ministry workers and staff for the cooperation given to him during his tenure and that he feels good to see the ministry and its institutions are performing well, and mentioned the cooperatives and irrigation sectors that need great push for the ministry's image to be in good form.

"Cooperatives sector is still a challenge that I am leaving to you even though we had started the process in its improvement of its laws, you have to continue with that so that Tanzania farmers reap fruits from their sweats," he added.

Speaking on behalf of fellow workers, the Director of Better Land Planning for Agriculture, Paulo Tarimo thanked the former Permanent Secretary Eng Mtigumwe for the cooperation and sound directives during his tenure.

On behalf of the ministry's management and the staff Tarimo promised to offer even more cooperation to the news PS so that the nation's targets are realised.



Manyara regional commissioner Alexander Mnyeti (2nd-L), Babati Town Council director Fortunatus Fwema (L) and CCM officials in the region inspect the ongoing construction of the party's regional office building on Thursday. Photo: Correspondent Gift Thadey

Quarantined South African woman 'kills herself' in Kenya

NAIROBI

A 27-YEAR-OLD South African woman, who had been placed on a 14-day mandatory quarantine in Nakuru, was yesterday morning found dead in her room.

The body of the victim was found dangling from the rooftop of a hostel room at the Kenya Industrial Training Institute (KITI), officials said.

Nakuru County Health execu-

tive Gichuki Kariuki confirmed the death but did not give more details.

Health workers, who went to the institution Friday to check on those quarantined, say Ms Elizabeth Holloway committed suicide using a piece of cloth.

The woman had on Thursday complained that she had been quarantined in deplorable conditions, a source told the Nation.

"She called some officials and requested to be transferred," the

source said.

The victim, an employee of a local firm, was placed on forced quarantine after officials found out that she recently arrived in the country and was not self-isolating.

At the Nakuru college, she was quarantined alongside three others including Samuel Ruto, an Eldoret-based athlete, who arrived in the country on Sunday.

Residents who had interacted with the South African woman

before her death described her as jovial.

John Ombati, a local, said he bumped into her once outside the hostels while she was looking for food.

Meanwhile, hundreds of workers in the hospitality industry in Kenya's Western tourism circuit have been sent home after hotels in Nyanza and Western regions started shutting down their operations this week due to adverse effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

Kamel Park in Kisii, the biggest hotel in South Nyanza region, was among the first ones to suspend all operations, followed on Wednesday by the Grand Royal Swiss Hotel, one of Kisumu's prime hotels, as well as ACK Guesthouse managed by the Anglican Church of Kenya in Homa Bay County.

Another big player in Kisumu County, Sovereign Hotel, closed down earlier in the week on Monday.

Cooperatives sector is still a challenge that I am leaving to you even though we had started the process in its improvement of its laws, you have to continue with that so that Tanzania farmers reap fruits from their sweats



Capt Christopher Shalua, a senior official with Tanzania Shipping Agencies Corporation in Tanga Region, briefs journalists in Tanga city on Thursday. He announced the barring of all marine vessels not inspected and issued with a certificate of quality from operating. Photo: Correspondent Dege Masoli

Court sets free two former CHADEMA leaders charged with unlawful assembly

By Guardian Correspondent, Songea

THE Resident Magistrates Court in Songea, Ruvuma Region on Thursday set free nine suspects, including two former leaders of Chadema - Dr Vicent Mashinji and Cecil Mwambe after the prosecution side failed to prove their charges.

Dr Mashinji who was Chadema's Secretary General crossed to CCM and Ndanda MP, Mwambe joined the ruling party last month.

Senior Resident Magistrate, Cleofasi Waane said the court has listened to the claims by state prosecutors and the four witnesses that in un-identified dates committed an offence by organising unlawful assembly at Mbamba-Bay area in Nyasa District.

The magistrates claimed that on July 15th 2017 all the suspects organised a meeting without permit from relevant authorities. He alleged that the leaders also motivated motorbike and vehicle drivers to conduct demonstration to the meeting venue while knowing it was against the laws.

He said that the suspects were later arrested and dragged to court being

charged with the count but they all pleaded not guilty.

The prosecutor's side led by an advocate from the office of the Attorney General in Songea zone, Amina Mawoko claimed that the ruling was unfair and was planning to file for referral.

In the ruling, Magistrate Waane said that in different times, the suspects told the court that they went to the Mbamba Bay town for the aim of conducting the party's member meeting but were later denied and then arrested while they adhered to all key procedures required prior to the meeting through the Officer Commanding District (OCD) of Nyasa.

Earlier, prosecutor Mawoko named all the nine suspects as Dr Vicent Mashinji, Cecil Mwambe, Zubeda Sakuru-Special Seat MP, Filbert Ngatunga, former secretary of South Zone, Ereneusi Ngwatu, former chair of the party in Ruvuma and Delfin Gazia the party's former secretary in Ruvuma.

Others are Charles Cathbert, a Lipingu ward councillor and Sang'uda Manawaa party's official from Dar es Salaam.

DC stresses need for farmers, pastoralists to participate in wildlife conservation

By Aisia Rweyemamu

IRINGA District Commissioner Richard Kasesera has underscored need for inclusion of farmers and pastoralists in wildlife promotion, conservation and protection.

He noted that the group should not be left behind since they are the most important partners as they reside near the national parks.

The DC said farmers and pastoralists particularly those who live near the parks are good instrumental in security issues and promotion of wildlife conservation activities.

Kasesera urged the relevant authorities and stakeholders in the sector not to ignore such group, instead include them in various conservation plans.

The DC added: "By consid-

ering the positive contribution of pastorals and farmers, we have allocated special areas for pastoral activities, this makes them settle in one place and establish permanent residence".

The DC made the remarks recently when briefing journalists who were in a field visit in the region. The tour was organised by Journalist on Environment Tanzania (JET) through

the project on Promoting Tanzania's Environment, Conservation and Tourism (PROTECT) funded by the USAID.

He said the decision to allocate special areas for grazing has enabled the region to control migratory pastoralism and unnecessary disputes between farmers and pastoralists.

"Since they now have permanent residences, pastoralists have been able to enroll their

children to schools," he noted.

Kasesera added that in order to ensure the group is settled and actively participates in development activities; the district ensures that the designated areas have access to all basic social services including water.

Frank Lihwa from Southern Tanzania Elephant Programme (STEP) said in order to strengthen the security and

operation activities at Ruaha National Park they have been working with GPS and special cameras which greatly increase the efficiency of the operation.

Lihwa said they have enough soldiers who daily patrol in accordance with the training they received before the commencement of the mission.

He added that they have improved their patrol system

where they are currently patrolling by plane, cars and by foot.

STEP is an elephant conservation programme based in southern Tanzania, is working across southern Tanzania in the critical elephant ecosystems of Ruaha, Udzungwa and Selous, these areas are home to about half of East Africa's elephants.

Authorities in Songwe hold 3 people allegedly for assisting 6 aliens to filter into the country

By Guardian Correspondent, Songwe

AUTHORITIES in Songwe Region are holding three people from Ileje district allegedly for assisting six aliens to enter into the country through the Tanzania, Malawi common land border.

Songwe Regional Immigration Officer Wilfred Marwa, told this paper that the suspects were nabbed when attempting to assist the Malawian nationals to cross to Tanzania using motorbikes. He warned residents from using the 150 kilometers common land borders between the two countries to invite people into the country especially during this period when Tanzania is facing the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic.

Marwa thanked Ileje residents who tipped off police on the incidence insisting on close collaboration between the police force and citizens to control illegal entry as well as smuggling of goods.

Ileje District Commissioner, Joseph Mkude urged the residents to stop assisting foreigners to cross the border as stringent measures will be taken against anyone involved in the deal. He said security organs in the district were conducting daily patrols at the border as well as other areas to ensure security of residents.

"We will arrest any person who will be said to assist foreigners from neighbouring Malawi to enter into the country. The government is working to prevent the spread of coronavirus hence the need to safeguard our borders," said the district commissioner.

Early this month, the immigration department in Songwe nabbed 73 illegal immigrants from nine foreign countries-Somalia, Kenya, USA, India, Congo, Burundi, Ethiopia, Malawi and Zambia.

According to authorities the illegal migrants came from neighbouring countries including 30 from Malawi, Zambia (19), Congo DRC (6), China (6), Ethiopia (6), Somalia (3), USA (1), Burundi (1) and Kenya (3).

In February this year, Shaaban Hatibu, Head of Immigration Department in Mbeya region said 71 illegal immigrants from different countries were arrested by immigration authorities following a one-week operation.

Hatibu said the aliens were found working in the country's southern highlands region of Mbeya without valid residence and work permits.

Hatibu said six Tanzanians were also arrested during the operation for helping the aliens to enter into the country without valid permits.

He said some arrested illegal immigrants will be repatriated to their countries of origin, others will be fined, and some of them will be charged in courts for illegal stay.



Construction of a trench gets under way beside Martin Luther Road at Swaswa in Dodoma, as captured yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

Municipal embarks on chemical spraying to control spread of coronavirus

By Guardian Correspondent

KINONDONI municipal council in collaboration with other health workers from Dar es Salaam Region yesterday carried out a chemical spraying exercise in the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) stations to control the spread of coronavirus.

The exercise was also held in various areas including residential areas, places of service provision such as

markets churches and others.

Speaking to journalists after the exercise, Mayor for Kinondoni Benjamin Sitta said the exercise was being done to kill viruses that spread the disease.

Mayor Sitta said the municipal was prepared to counter the spread of disease which has now becoming a threat to the whole world. He said the spraying will be done to all the wards within the district.

"In total we are participating fully in the fight against the pandemic, together we are mobilising our resources to ensure that all the areas are reached out," he said.

He said the main point was to take precautions before the situation gets worse, that is why we are doing all we can to ensure that this calamity does not reach us," he added.

The mayor further added that Kinondoni was prepared as a municip-

pal to contain the disease at the same time hailed the efforts by the government to fight the disease.

In his remarks, Dar es Salaam Region Malaria Coordinator, Dr Ford Chisongela said the region was taking no chances over the virus.

She further explained that in fighting the disease, Dar es Salaam city has decided to use vehicles from the Field Force Unit (FFU) to increase capacity to the exercise because the vehicles have

high capacity calling upon residents not to panic when they see them in streets. Coronavirus has been spreading rapidly across the world, affecting more than 175 countries and claiming more than 24,000 lives.

There are more than 537,000 confirmed cases worldwide, with the US now recording more cases than any other country, including China. Southern Europe has also seen a surge in cases.



We will arrest any person who will be said to assist foreigners from neighbouring Malawi to enter into the country. The government is working to prevent the spread of coronavirus hence the need to safeguard our

South Africa records first two coronavirus-related deaths

CAPE TOWN

HEALTH Minister Zweli Mkhize said in a statement that South Africa has now recorded first two deaths resulting from Covid-19.

"These two deaths occurred in the Western Cape. One at a private hospital and the other at public hospital," he said.

He added that more details would be revealed later on Friday morning as the number of confirmed coronavirus cases have increased and have tipped 1000 mark.

On Thursday night President Cyril Ramaphosa warned that South Africa could have more than 1,500 confirmed coronavirus cases within the next few days.

The president, who was dressed in full SANDF gear, was speaking to the nation

while giving final orders to the troops who will be deployed to the streets from Thursday midnight.

Ramaphosa said government was keeping the majority of the population indoors and it was the task of the SAPS and the SANDF to help curb the rising Covid-19 infection rate.

"We are placing confidence and trust in all of you. In a few days, we could be at over 1,500. Our task is to minimise the infection rate," he told the soldiers.

"Our task is to give life back to the people of South Africa, to make sure we save lives, to make sure the people of South Africa are safe and to make sure the country is in a state we can bounce back and come back to life. You are going to make that possible," Ramaphosa said.



Abdulla Abdulla (standing), Deputy Permanent Secretary in Zanzibar's Education and Vocational Training ministry, speaks in Zanzibar yesterday at the launch of a water project targeting primary and secondary schools in the Isles yesterday. Implementation is jointly sponsored by Feza Schools and Time to Help, an NGO. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Solar-driven water desalination system for Maasai villages

By Guardian Correspondent and

Agencies

Together with nine other European project partners, Phaesus is developing innovative purification systems based on electrodialysis technology as part of the European Union (EU) development and innovation project REVIVED Water.

In February 2020, a pilot plant was installed at a saline well in the Tanzanian Maasai village of

Ndedo and supplies the population with 2000 litres of drinking water per day.

The plants are complete systems in which the water is cleaned of dirt particles, bacteria and viruses in a preliminary stage and treated with self-generated chlorine in a post-treatment stage for sterile storage in a water tank. The core of the system is based on the membrane process of electrodialysis.

In contrast to conventional desalination technologies (ther-

mal or reverse osmosis), electrodialysis is particularly low-maintenance and is well suited for solar power supply due to its low energy consumption.

Thus, a completely self-sufficient system could be developed, which does not require any additional infrastructure or power supply.

Florian Martini, project engineer at Phaesus, carried out the installations in Tanzania.

"It was wonderful to see how modern technology fits into

the traditional way of life of the Maasai," says Martini. "A great advantage is that, unlike other desalination technologies, no waste products are produced and no diesel is needed to operate the systems. The clean water is highly appreciated!"

The contact to the Maasai village came about through the MissionEineWelt of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria. Eberhard Westhauser from MissionEine Welt has maintained close contacts with the Maasai

people in the steppes of Tanzania since many years and supports water supply projects in this region.

He reports: "When it rains enough, large catchment basins ensure a sufficient water supply for the Maasai and their herds of cattle until the dry season. However, the groundwater is salty and due to prolonged dry periods in recent years, the Maasai have had to resort more and more often to salty groundwater."

The plant in Ndedo is the seventh system installed within the REVIVED Water project. The previous pilot plants supply schools, temples and private households in East Africa and India with drinking water.

With the plant in Ndedo, a water kiosk model is implemented for the first time. The village inhabitants pay for the water a small fee, so that a local watchman can be paid to operate the plant.

Through this model, the plant

is maintained on site in an exemplary manner and operation is ensured in the long term.

Phaesus tracks the performance of the plant by modem via a remote monitoring and control system and can change settings on the system, for example if the salinity of the groundwater fluctuates.

The REVIVED Water project runs until May 2020, then Phaesus will offer the desalination system in its product portfolio.

Children in countries affected by conflicts, natural disasters at greatest risk of coronavirus, says UNICEF

By Guardian Reporter

THE United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said children especially those from poorest families in countries affected by conflicts and natural disasters are at the greatest risk of coronavirus insisting to support basic health care and immunization needs in the worst affected countries.

UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore said in a statement that it is working hard to ensure adequate vaccine supplies are available in countries that need them.

She said the fund is in close communication with global vaccine suppliers to ensure production is not disrupted and supply is managed in the best possible manner under the difficult circumstances.

"We are also providing greater support to governments to continue the supply of vaccines during this pandemic.

"We are particularly concerned about countries that are battling measles, cholera or polio outbreaks while responding to Covid-19 cases, such as Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, the Philippines, Syria and South Sudan.

At a time like this, these countries can ill-afford to face additional outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases.

Around the world, the Covid-19 pandemic is overstretching health services as health workers are diverted to support the response.

"Medical goods are in short supply and supply chains are under historic strain due to transport disruptions. Flight cancellations and trade restrictions by countries have severely constrained access to essential medicines, including vaccines," she stated.

Fore said as the pandemic progresses, critical life-saving services, including immunisation, will likely be disrupted, especially in Africa, Asia and the Middle East where they are sorely needed.

Accordingly to her, in coming days governments may have to temporarily postpone preventive mass vaccination campaigns in many places to ensure the delivery of immunization services does not contribute to Covid-19 spread, and to



Joseph Sokoine (L), Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Vice President's Office, presents an inclusive green growth toolkit to Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT) Centre CEO Geoffrey Kirenga after a launch held in Morogoro on Thursday. The kit is a guiding tool meant to ensure that agro-investments under the SAGCOT partnership are socially inclusive and environmentally friendly. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

follow recommendations on physical distancing.

"UNICEF strongly recommends that all governments begin rigorous planning now to intensify immunization activities once the Covid-19 pandemic is under control. These vaccination activities must focus on children who

will miss vaccine doses during this period of interruption and prioritize the poorest and most vulnerable children.

To successfully roll-out vaccines against Covid-19 when they become available, we need to ensure that our immunization programmes remain robust and can reach those that will

need these vaccines the most", she noted.

Immunisation remains a life-saving health intervention. As the world's biggest buyer and supplier of vaccines, UNICEF will continue to play a pivotal role in supporting governments' current and future immunisation efforts.

Singida Region farmers told to venture into horticulture farming to lower malnutrition, stunting levels among children aged under 5

By Beatrice Philemon

IN efforts aimed to reduce acute malnutrition and stunting among children in Singida and Ikungi districts, small holder farmers have been advised to intensively engage in horticulture farming so as to feed their children with essential nutrients for better growth.

According to estimates, Tanzania has more than 2.7 million children aged under five who are stunted. Another, 430,000-plus children suffer from acute malnutrition, with 100,000 of them diagnosed as having severely acute malnutrition.

Abdi Said who is the mentor of small holder farmers at Ntondo village in Msihi ward, Singida region made the appeal yesterday when briefing journalists on measures taken by stakeholders and villagers to reduce stunting and ensure provision of nutritious food to children below two years and above.

He said that through the support from a not-for profit organisation- Research, Community and Organisational Development Associates (RECODA), some farmers are currently embarking on vegetable farming.

He said that RECODA implements a vegetable farming project in 85 villages which mostly target pregnant Women and breastfeeding mothers in both districts.

He pointed out that nutrition awareness was still low among communities thus needing collective efforts to address the gap.

"Under the programme, smallholder farmers in both districts are trained on how to employ animal manure practices in their farming activities by agricultural experts from RECODA, grow different vegetables including nutrition issues and young children feeding practices," he said.

He said that the training is offered free of charge by RECODA so that farmers can produce high quality vegetables that will address barriers to child nutrition and helps them to access huge market because right now organic farming is preferred in many areas across the country including overseas.

So far amaranth, spinach, collard greens, Chinese spinach and 'msusa' vegetables have been planted in those villages to reduce stunting rates and help people generate income.

"This programme has brought positive impacts in the district, before the programme commencement in our district stunting rate stood at 36 percent, but I am sure that the rate will decline as time goes by," he said.

Right now women and men are very competent in nutrition issues, they give their babies and children vegetables that are rich in nutrients and best for children's health and stunted rates has declined by 87 percent.

According to him, through the programme, Ntondo village has managed to form a farmers' group that comprises of 60 members who are engaged in vegetable farming.

"They save funds they get from selling vegetables in the Village Community Banks (VICOPA) that in turn helps them to access loans services to improve their farming and economic activities," he added.

Established in 2000, RECODA is an NGO rooted strongly in Tanzania with the aim of bridging technology gap in development through research, consultancy, capacity building and facilitation of community-based projects.

The goal of the organisation is to make poverty and food insecurity history in Tanzania through ensuring the poor communities have developed socially and economically sustainable livelihoods that can uphold their living.

The Guardian

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Taking A New Look
At The News
ESTABLISHED IN 1995

Supporting small farmers deserves pride of place among our priorities

AGRIBUSINESS is the business of agricultural production. The term is a portmanteau of agriculture and business and was coined in 1957 by John Davis and Ray Goldberg. It includes agrichemicals, breeding, crop production (farming or contract farming), distribution, farm machinery, processing, and seed supply, as well as marketing and retail sales. All agents of the food and fiber value chain and those institutions that influence it are part of the agribusiness system.

Within the agriculture industry, agribusiness refers to the range of activities and disciplines encompassed by modern food production. However, the term agribusiness most often emphasises the interdependence of these various sectors within the production chain.

The World Bank Board of Executive Directors in 2016 approved \$70 million in new financing to support Tanzania's agriculture sector and strengthen it by linking smallholder farmers to agribusinesses for boosting incomes and job-led growth.

As part of its national development strategy the government is currently implementing the Southern agricultural growth corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT) programme which seeks to promote agribusiness partnerships to tackle low farm productivity and limited market access that are impeding development of the country's agricultural sector.

The newly-approved SAGCOT investment project is financed by the International Development Association (IDA) and seeks to develop income opportunities for 100,000 smallholder farming households by providing them new technologies and marketing practices and expanding partnerships with lucrative agribusinesses in the Southern Corridor of Tanzania. Once implemented, the project will directly benefit over

half a million people and engage 40 agribusiness operators, with emphasis on including women in successful commercial value chains.

Indeed the SAGCOT Investment Project has the potential to be transformational as it will provide them with crucial access to capital and new technology needed to invest in higher value production, promote their livelihoods and meet their nutritional needs.

Over 80 per cent of the poor and extreme poor live in the rural areas with limited opportunities to establish links with productive value chains and higher value crops. As a result, Tanzania's otherwise remarkable economic growth rate of 7 per cent over the past decade has left behind most of the poor in the rural areas.

We are certain that the SAGCOT investment project will link them by encouraging greater investments by agribusiness firms partnering with smallholder farmers through providing matching grants that they can use for capital and operational costs directly related to expanding smallholder participation in competitive agricultural supply chains.

The two new public-private-partnership institutions created by the government should lead sound implementation of the SAGCOT programme - the SAGCOT centre as a focal point for planning and advertising the wider SAGCOT programme; and the SAGCOT catalytic trust fund, which supports early stage investment in the corridor by providing matching grants.

The World Bank-financed project will achieve its objectives by channeling support through those two entities as well as improving the operations of the Tanzania Investment Center (TIC) which is tasked with preparing and promoting investment projects and attracting private sector investments.

Accurate weather forecasts have big role in countries' socio-economic development

METEOROLOGY is a branch of the atmospheric sciences which includes atmospheric chemistry and atmospheric physics, with a major focus on weather forecasting. The study of meteorology dates back millennia, though significant progress in meteorology did not occur until the 18th century. The 19th century saw modest progress in the field after weather observation networks were formed across broad regions.

It was not until in the latter half of the 20th century that significant breakthroughs in weather forecasting were achieved. An important domain of weather forecasting is marine weather forecasting as it relates to maritime and coastal safety, in which weather effects also include atmospheric interactions with large bodies of water.

According to the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) the performance of the Tanzania Meteorological Authority (TMA) now meets international standards with increased accuracy in weather forecasts and other services.

Indeed it is the authority's good work that has made it rank highly among others on the continent and beyond, earning Tanzania a lot of respect. We should give a virtual high-five to TMA for shrewd stewardship that had enabled the institution to gain a formidable reputation.

The election of the authority's leader to the office of third vice president of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) testifies to the dedication, hard work and cooperation of workers. TMA is one among few institutions that have maintained good performance and earning respect among peers regionally and beyond.

We call upon the government to continue empowering TMA to improve

accuracy in weather forecasting, since TMA reports are vital in environmental expectations and planning at same time urging the government to solve challenges facing TMA in regard to its performance and workers' welfare.

In the same vein, we urge the public to utilize TMA reports in an effort to adapt to climate change effects. Tanzania has earned a lot of respect in meteorological services with Bukoba and Songea stations being recognized for having long term data, stretching 100 years back.

President John Magufuli has put TMA on the spotlight with the recent installing of weather radars in Mtwara, Kigoma and Mbeya boost national weather forecast, hence there is need for the government to consider improving its financial capacity.

After the three new radars, Tanzania will have a total of five weather forecast radars, making the Tanzania Meteorological Authority (TMA) to have the ability to see 70 per cent of national meteorological airspace.

It is against this backdrop of weather forecasts that Tanzania is committed to improve meteorological services in effort to help curb climate challenges facing the nation. While Tanzania leads other countries in the region in meteorological services, there is need to improve further.

It is therefore worth noting that Tanzania has surpassed the global minimum meteorological accuracy of 70 per cent, reaching a world-class performance of between 88 and 96 per cent.

This year's WMD's theme of "Climate and Water" is a reminder to Tanzania and the rest of the world to take serious measures to control water sources as well as taking matters of climate seriously. Fresh water is vital for life, essential for the production of food, virtually for all goods and services and for the environment.

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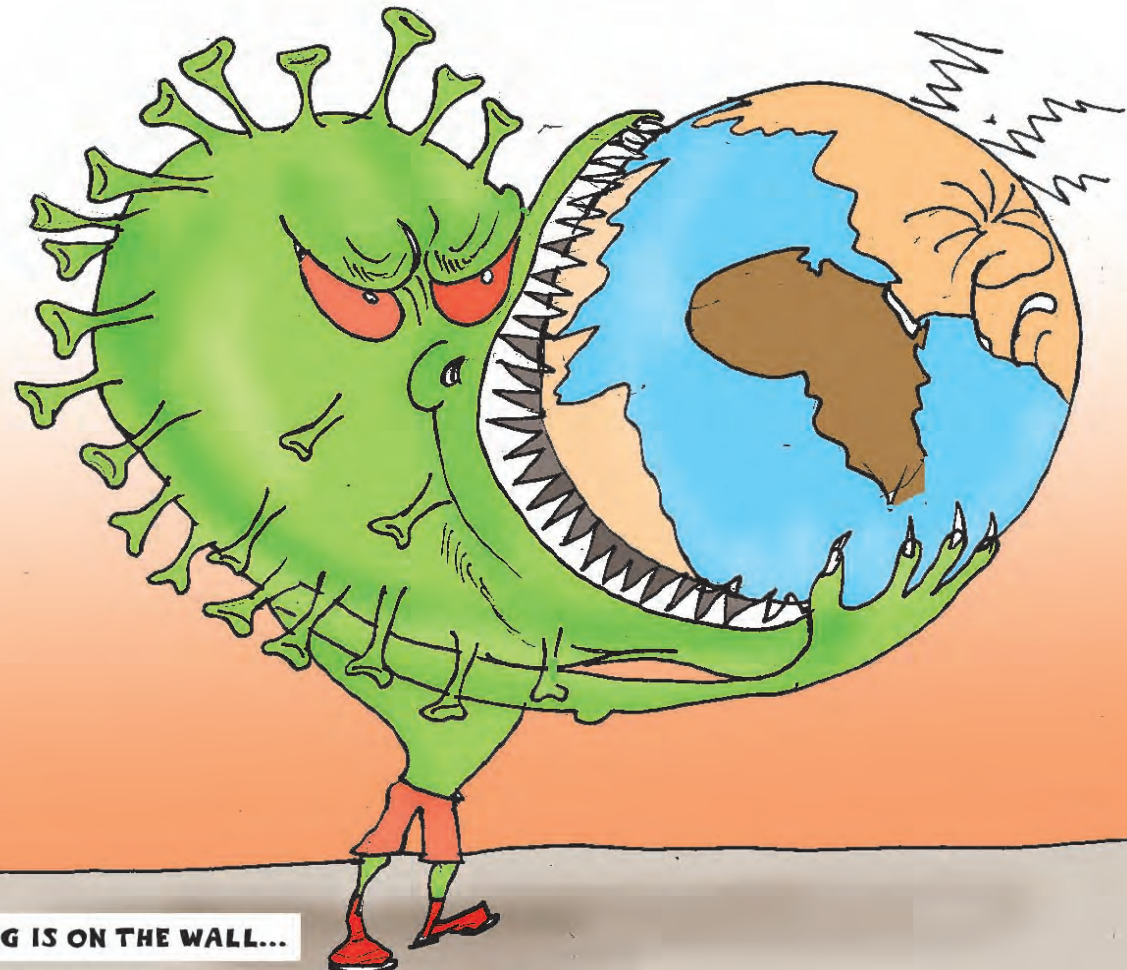
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COVID -19: THE WRITING IS ON THE WALL...

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As dark as coronavirus crisis seems right now, the fact is it could get much worse

By Ricken Patel

FIRST the virus hit China. Then, it swept across Europe and North America. But the third wave - when it hits poor countries in Africa, Asia and South America - could be the deadliest yet. And without debt relief, the wave could be a tsunami.

Rich countries have been absolutely ravaged by coronavirus - healthy populations, strong economies, and the world's most advanced and well-funded healthcare systems all brought to their knees in a matter of weeks.

Imagine then what will happen when it rips through countries plagued by malnutrition, HIV/AIDS, unemployment and poverty; where 3 billion people can't even wash their hands with soap and water, according to UNICEF.

Several countries in Africa spend more on servicing their debts than on healthcare and education. Countries like Angola and Ghana spend 55% of government revenue repaying debts! We can't expect these governments to stop a pandemic while hemorrhaging all their precious resources.

And they could be just days away from disaster. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director general of the WHO, has said: "The next two weeks will decide the fate of the African continent in terms of COVID-19."

It makes absolutely no sense for countries with struggling healthcare systems preparing for an oncoming pandemic to be crippled with unpayable debts right now.

What they need is to be able to inject cash into their healthcare systems, and help their people stay at home, so they can stop this virus spreading. Not only is that moral, during a global pandemic, it's effective.

Pakistan and Ethiopia have already called for debt relief, and the World Bank has asked G20 leaders to consider the option so that the world's poorest countries can spend their precious resources on fighting the virus.

This is exactly the kind of unexpected catastrophe for which debt relief was designed. Rich countries have a fighting chance but the poorer

ones are staring into an abyss if they don't get help now.

And let's not forget that leaders have agreed to this before. In 2005, the G8 cancelled the debt of the world's 18 most heavily indebted countries to the tune of \$40 billion. After Ebola, the IMF cancelled \$100m in debt for the world's worst-hit places.

Rich countries have thrown everything they've got at this crisis, just to stay afloat. Without debt relief we'll be leaving some of the poorest people in the world to sink.

Across the developed world we've seen mortgage and rent payments paused, bailouts being packaged for businesses and corporations, and checks written for individuals who are facing unemployment.

These are the essential strategies for every country looking to both curb this virus and stem an economic meltdown.

It may seem like rich countries have enough on their plates already. So many countries are struggling to contain the virus at home, let alone offer help abroad. But this is a global pandemic. Either we beat it together, or we will all lose this fight.

Umberto Bacchi reports that the coronavirus pandemic has pushed governments globally to impose draconian lockdowns, travel bans and tighter border controls in a bid to stem the spread of the contagious virus.

From China to Russia, containment measures have often come with heightened surveillance, as authorities use artificial intelligence (AI) and big data to keep tabs on the population, alarming human rights activists and privacy experts.

Here is a rundown of governments rolling out technology to track and contain the outbreak:

CHINA

Authorities across China have rolled out "big data" measures, adding to a host of monitoring tools already being used, such as facial recognition and phone data tracking.

These include apps monitoring the daily temperature of students preparing to return to school or assigning people colour codes based on their travels, time spent in outbreak

hotspots and exposure to potential carriers of the virus.

SOUTH KOREA

In South Korea, private software developers have set up websites and apps to help people track cases and shun places where infected people have been.

Identities were not published but the information that was enabled web developers to build detailed maps tracking the movements of patients.

INDIA

People suspected of having the coronavirus in India have received hand stamps and are being tracked using their mobile phones and personal data to help enforce quarantines.

Government officials are also pulling out citizen and reservation data from airlines and the railways to track suspected infections.

SINGAPORE

Singapore, which has been using police investigators and security cameras to help track suspect carriers, launched a contact-tracing smartphone app to allow authorities to identify those who have been exposed to people infected with coronavirus.

Records of the encounters will be stored locally on each phone and the data will be encrypted. The app will not access other information, such as a user's location, and its functionality will be suspended after the epidemic subsides.

HONG KONG

Hong Kong has been handing electronic wristbands to overseas arrivals put under quarantine.

A QR code in the bracelets is meant to pair with a smartphone app to identify those who break the 14-day isolation period.

THAILAND

Thailand has rolled out a mobile app that anyone arriving at an airport must download to help monitor where they have been in the event that they test positive for the virus.

TAIWAN

Taiwan is using location data from smartphones to ensure

that people who are quarantined stay in their homes. The system alerts police when people move away from their address or turn off their phones.

RUSSIA

Police in Moscow have used facial recognition technology to catch more than 200 people who violated the terms of their self-isolation or quarantine.

BULGARIA

The Bulgarian parliament has granted the army the right to help curb movement of people in large groups and allowed the authorities to use mobile operators' traffic data to track those put under quarantine.

FRANCE

Police in the French Riviera city of Nice are using a drone to blare health warnings to residents walking the streets.

Armed with a loudspeaker, the drone whirrs above some of the city's most popular locations, reminding citizens of the government's order to stay indoors except to buy food, go to work or seek medical help.

ITALY

In Italy, mobile carriers have offered authorities anonymous and aggregated data to monitor people's movements, while respecting Europe's privacy laws.

The hard-hit Lombardy region is using the data to see how many people are observing a strict lockdown.

GERMANY

Germany, like Italy, is using aggregated data donated by Deutsche Telekom to get insights into whether people are complying with curbs on movements.

AUSTRIA

Austria's largest mobile phone company is sharing with authorities results from an application using data to map the movements of groups of people.

Originally developed to study traffic congestion and people flows around busy tourist sites, the tool is now in use to assess the effectiveness of lockdowns and other social distancing measures to fight the virus.

ISRAEL

The Israeli government deployed cellphone-monitoring technology enabling the Shin Bet security service to tap into cellular data to retrace the movements of the infected.

The data, customarily used for anti-terrorism, will be used by the Health Ministry to locate and alert those who have been in their vicinity, the government said.

UNITED STATES

Google sister company Verily launched a website inviting adults in northern California to answer questions about their recent health and travel that could result in their getting a free coronavirus test.

Verily said people's responses would be kept in an encrypted database and shared with healthcare authorities.

BRAZIL

Brazilian wireless carrier TIM Participacoes SA said it has partnered with Rio de Janeiro's city hall for data analysis that will help authorities track displacement and concentration of people in areas affected by the outbreak.

This should allow the city to identify mobility trends across neighbourhoods and ultimately assess whether the population is respecting social isolation measures taken to contain the disease.

The real danger of the coronavirus is failure to block the virus of fear

By Fiona Cameron Lister

ITALY is locked down. But there's a greater danger facing us all. I am sitting here in our apartment in Florence, Tuscany, feeling both scared and defiant. The normally bustling street is quiet.

After an extraordinary few weeks which has profoundly shocked Italy, the world is catching up. The news everywhere is dominated by the potential impact of coronavirus.

Over the past four weeks, the mood has shifted many times. The government and health officials initially attempted a calm and reassuring stance, realising that panic and misinformation could have catastrophic effects on the national psyche.

In the first week, the country's president, Sergio Mattarella, called for the "irrational and motiveless fear" to stop. The Italian Society of Psychiatrists (SIP) issued guidelines on how to cope with "coronavirus stress and anxiety".

Enrico Zanalda, president of the society, talked of the "violent impact" on daily life. Fear of the virus has caused "the cancellation or postponement of thousands of small but important events in people's lives - from birthdays to baptisms".

"Fear of an epidemic is as old as humankind itself. In this case its effect is amplified by incomplete, even false, information which has caused public confidence in our institutions to collapse," said Zanalda. Wise words.

In the early hours of March 10 things took a dramatic twist. Italy is now in total lockdown to try and contain the spread of coronavirus. People are being told to stay at home and that "there is no red zone, just Italy".

Schools and universities throughout Italy are closed and public gatherings, funerals and weddings are banned throughout the country.

All religious gatherings have been stopped, although churches can have their doors open for private prayer.

Only food shops and pharmacies are open, plus a few other exceptions, but most shops are closed.

Travel between towns is allowed only if essential and you have to show a form giving the reasons for your trip.

Many are praising the prime minister's "brave decision". I don't think he had a choice, with media and political pressure, and the alarming rise in cases in the north.

But to me, it also sends the message that fear now rules and calm seems a lifetime away.

Italy was the first European country to announce the death of a national from coronavirus. It's now the most affected country after China and the death rate has surpassed that of China. No-one knows exactly why yet, although I have a theory I have written about here.

Travel plans are now in tatters for millions. Most airlines have suspended flights to Italy. Those currently visiting for work or social reasons should have no trouble leaving, in theory, but there are many cancelled flights and they may face checks or self-quarantine for 14 days when they arrive at their destination.

These figures are from the Health ministry website and I update them after the daily 18:00 press conference. As of this Thursday (March 26) there were 80,539 positive tests.

A whole 8,165 of those have died and 10,361 have recovered. Twenty-one regions plus Vatican City are affected. Tuscany, where I live, has got 3,226 confirmed cases of the virus. Most of the positive cases do not need hospital care and are in self-isolation at their homes.

Knock-on effect

In this iconic city of Florence, so reliant on tourism, businesses are reeling. Hotels are empty. They say the effect on the economy is worse than 9/11. I can believe it.

Everyone, from the restaurants, designer shops and five-star hotels to tour guides, wedding planners and villas in the hinterland, has been affected.

My husband is the chaplain of St. Mark's Anglican church in Florence. There is now no public worship allowed, but he is keeping the doors open at the usual times for private prayer. If ever there was a time when a vicar is needed, this is it.

The chaplain has written some special prayers for people afraid of the coronavirus. You can find them here.

The sense of fear and uncertainty is greater every day. Students from American universities were the first to leave. British universities followed suit. Florence is now empty. Everyone is afraid. And that is the key.

The real virus

One thing has become chillingly clear over the last surreal weeks: the power of fear is a far greater threat than any virus.

There has been a panicked reaction from governments seemingly caught on the back foot who have no excuse for lack of preparation.

Organisations such as the World Bank have been campaigning for a planned response for years, saying: "We know that it is only a matter of time before the next pandemic hits us."

Their 2017 report says: "For far too long, our approach to pandemics has been one of panic and neglect: throwing money and resources at the problem when a serious outbreak occurs; then neglecting to fund preparedness when the news headlines move on."

"The result has been too many lives lost, too much damage to human livelihoods." (From Panic and Neglect to Investing in Health Security - World Bank International Working Group on Financing Preparedness, 2017).

For the media, whose lifeblood is a dramatic story with minute-by-minute developments, the coronavirus is a gift. There are special programmes on Covid-19. Outside testing centres, journalists deliver their reports with masks on. The papers show alarming pictures of patients in intensive care.

Abroad, meanwhile, headlines like those in the UK Daily Mail screaming: JAIL FOR REFUSING QUARANTINE closely followed by "over-70s face four-month lockdown".

For those commenting on this piece and saying "don't read those kinds of papers then" - I don't. Millions do.

I just got a message from a friend in the UK who is a strong independent lady aged over 80. She had read the above, and wrote: "I can't cope with being inside for four months, Fiona; I will definitely be mentally and physically ill by that time. I am panicking about what on earth is happening here. I think the problem when a serious outbreak occurs; then neglecting to fund preparedness when the news headlines move on."



nitely be mentally and physically ill by that time. I am panicking about what on earth is happening here. I think the problem when a serious outbreak occurs; then neglecting to fund preparedness when the news headlines move on."

Is that really what we want? To terrify people? Theories abound on the internet. Is it a plot to cut population numbers? A massive deception to distract us from some other problem they don't want us to know about? Did the virus originate in a laboratory near the Wuhan (China) fish market? Is there something big they're not telling us? Are we all doomed?

This is where mass hysteria can so easily take hold. The greatest fear is that of the unknown. It is a primal terror that can make neighbour turn on neighbour and can make us racist, selfish and irrational.

It doesn't take much to start a panic - and we are teetering on the brink. That is what I am really afraid of - that this situation and its exaggerated, apocalyptic reporting has now become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

We already know that a rumour, say about a possible water shortage, can cause a stampede on bottled water which in turn results in a real crisis. All over the world there are pictures of people clearing supermarket shelves in preparation for a lockdown.

ing supermarket shelves in preparation for a lockdown.

Getting things in perspective

What we are lacking at the moment, I think, is some kind of context for the numbers. In an attempt to gain more understanding, I looked up the statistics for influenza in Italy. They are a revelation.

At this moment there are over 500,000 people in bed with flu ("normal" flu, not coronavirus). The average death rate from flu-related illness over the last five years is 8,000 a year.

The devastating flu epidemic of 2016/2017 in Italy resulted in 24,981 excess deaths, according to a study published in the International Journal of Infectious Diseases in August 2019.

I know Covid-19 is not like normal flu. I have read the statistics like everyone else. I understand that in a worst-case scenario public health systems will be overwhelmed. The north of Italy has a nightmare situation at the moment to prove exactly that point.

I am in lockdown, following the rules, and only going out to buy food. My husband has stayed in Florence while I am now at our home an hour away, on my own. So don't tell me about the need to socially isolate. I am living it now. I understand the logic.

We all understand that there is danger in underestimating a threat. But there is danger in overestimating one too. If we published hour-by-hour figures of flu deaths and it was

our only topic of conversation, we would soon have public hysteria.

I am advocating a realistic, calm assessment of the current situation, carefully navigating that fragile area between fact and emotion.

Italy has an ageing population. The average age of those who have died is 79.5 years, according to the Health ministry, which also stated that over 99 per cent had at least one pre-existing health condition. This is tragic for the families.

I am in no way minimising how awful it is to lose someone of whatever age. It is significant in terms of fatalities for a disease. However, most people unlucky enough to be affected by the virus will recover.

I'm not a doctor, but from what I have read, if you have a strong immune system, you will probably be fine. If you wash your hands regularly and take sensible precautions, you should minimise any risk of catching the virus.

What is not being discussed much is the effect of fear on our bodies and minds. People can literally scare themselves to death. Fear and worry suppress the immune system by flooding us with various hormones, including cortisol and adrenaline.

The mind and immune system are in a delicate balance. Stress, whether chronic or sudden, can make us ill or even kill us.

The coronavirus will definitely affect you if you succumb to fear. Writing this, I know it has already affected me. I have a little knot in my solar plexus. I woke up at 3 am this morning thinking about it.

This has to stop. I need to take control of my brain and not indulge in obsessive scanning of the internet or other fear-inducing activity.

control of my brain and not indulge in obsessive scanning of the internet or other fear-inducing activity.

I know the immune system is strengthened by healthy eating, exercise and laughter. So I am going to take positive action. I resolve to watch a comedy programme rather than Sky News.

Additionally, I will change the subject if people start engaging in gossip or anxiety-based rumours; I will eat well and sleep as long as I can; I will walk for half an hour each day; and I will try to remember that Italy's population is 60.48 million and that I should get things in perspective.

Since I wrote this article, I have been accused of being "a danger to the public", "stupid", "reckless" and an "idiot" just because I am urging people to stay calm and not waste the only time one can have (the present moment) in obsessive worry.

People have pasted statistics and links to prove their argument, missing the whole point of what I am saying. I am not a "coronavirus denier". I am saying that frightening people, especially the vulnerable ones we are trying so hard to protect, is not a good approach.

Ultimately, we will not really be able to do much about the outcome of the coronavirus. We can do something about the other, far more dangerous and contagious one: the virus of fear. It's time to take back control.

• **Fiona Cameron Lister is a British writer, editor, ghost writer based in Tuscany, Italy.**

Covid-19: Economic impact on East and southern Africa

By Nina Callaghan and Mark Swilling

THE rate and global spread of infections by Covid-19 - and the related sense of panic across a globalised financial, political and social architecture - sets this particular pandemic apart from any other in modern times.

To date (26 March 2020), the total number of confirmed infections has reached over 416,686 in 197 countries with 18,589 deaths. In a matter of two months, Covid-19 has reshaped our ideas about being socially connected, economically entangled and existentially unprepared for radical change.

Quarantine and social distancing measures, travel bans and restrictions, closed regional and national borders, and health communications have been ratcheted up globally to reduce the chance of exposure as Covid-19 infections and fatalities continue to rise.

As China has demonstrated, only stringent aversion behaviour is able to control Covid-19's spread. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has criticised some governments' slow early response, especially those of advanced economies. They accuse these countries, especially in Europe and North America, of not understanding the science and the pattern of Covid-19, calling their early efforts at managing a public health emergency "too little, too late" (Oqubay, 2020).

Europe has now become the new epicentre of the virus after China's measures to contain and control its spread show promising signs. Since March 2020, new cases of Covid-19 in China have dwindled to less than 1% (Oqubay, 2020).

Covid-19 in Africa

The WHO says just over 2,455 positive cases of Covid-19 have been recorded in Africa (WHO, 26 March 2020). Twelve countries in Africa are now experiencing local transmission and with vastly different population demographics, the shape and impact of Covid-19 in Africa could look very different from Europe, Asia and North America.

Testing kits and medical supplies have been shipped to several countries on the continent, enabling 45 African nations to now test for the virus, as opposed to just two at the start of the outbreak in January 2020. WHO has also been supporting government health ministries across Africa, training 36 Rapid Response Teams. The training aims to improve their surveillance and contact tracing abilities along with data collection, reporting and diagnosis (Wang, 2020).

Africa's health vulnerabilities

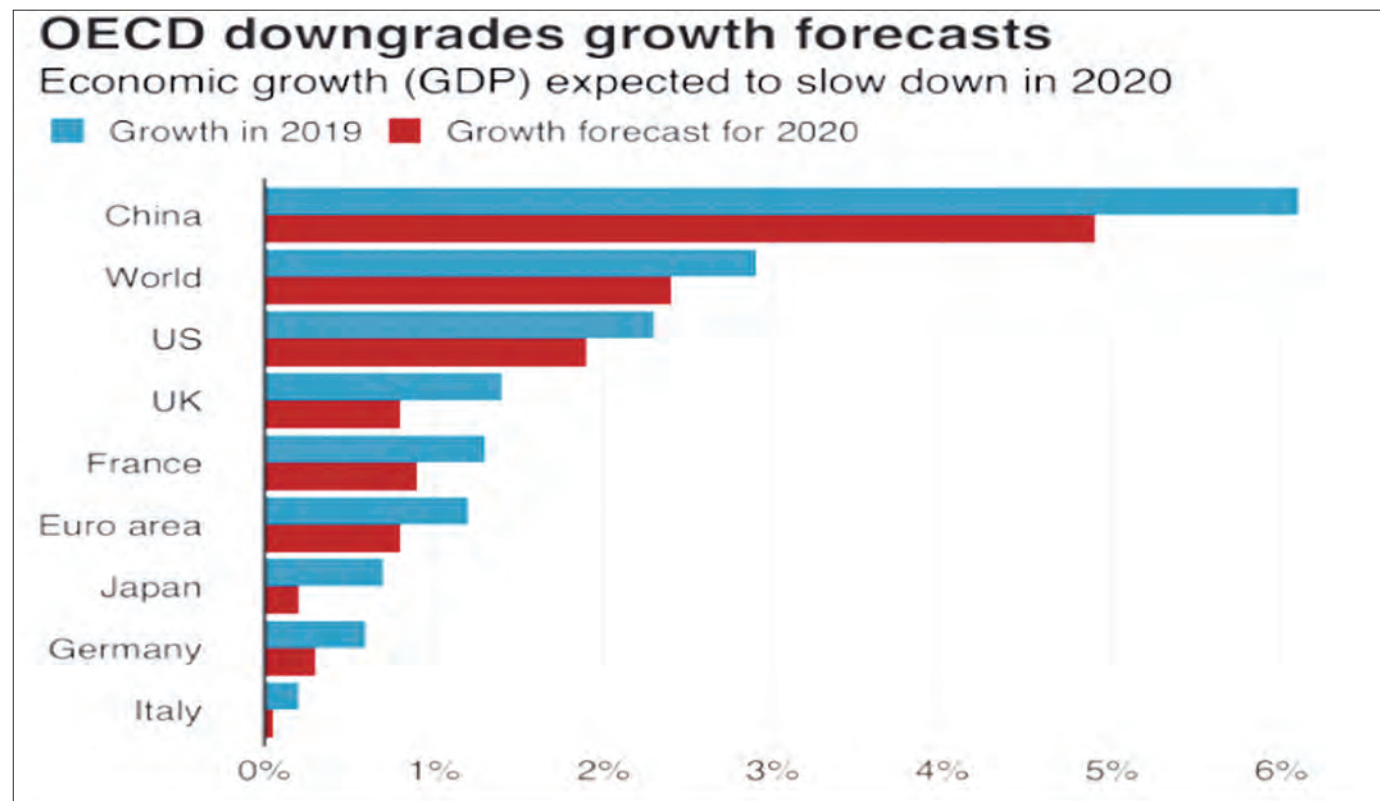
Covid-19 is said to affect the elderly more, but this is cold comfort for Africa, which is a world region that has the youngest population compared to other world regions. Vulnerability to Covid-19 in Africa is more related to underlying health conditions, of which Africans have a disproportionate share.

The WHO estimates there are 26-million people who are HIV positive in the region, a condition that compromises the body's immunity. Over 58-million children in Africa are malnourished and suffer from stunting, making it entirely plausible that younger people in Africa could be much more susceptible to Covid-19 than other world regions.

Health systems in Africa are also already stretched in dealing with ongoing disease burdens like malaria and Ebola. Effects of the Ebola outbreak in 2014-16 in West Africa resulted in fewer resources dedicated to endemic conditions as well as fewer people seeking treatment for maternal health, hypertension and diabetes (Wang, 2020). Health authorities fear the same trend with regional Covid-19 outbreaks.

Global economic fallout from Covid-19

Initially, global leaders imagined a sharp, but short hit to the world economy, presuming the Wuhan-originating outbreak would largely be a localised problem for China with



some knock-on effects.

Now, towards the end of March 2020, a V-shaped recession in the first half of the year, followed by a recovery in the next half looks unlikely (Elliot, 2020). The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has warned that the virus poses the biggest danger to the world economy since the 2008 financial crisis.

Measures to contain the virus, including national lockdowns, social distancing, factory closures and travel restrictions have crippled supply chains, reduced output, hit commodities and sent confidence on a downward spiral. Covid-19 is a health emergency that is fast becoming an economic crisis, with both a supply- and demand-side shock.

There are both long- and short-term effects on the pandemic as the diagram below shows. "Aversion behaviour" is understood to be all the actions taken to avoid infection, be they on a global, national or personal scale. It is the most likely category of actions that will lead to longer-term economic consequence, stemming from state restrictions on social and business activities, leading to business and school closures, resulting in lost payment for workers, which eventually translates into less spending and social activity (Evans and Over, 2020).

Economists and analysts calculate that the long-run effects will lead to reduced global growth. In the figure below, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), has revised down growth forecasts to hover around 2% to 1.5%, which is half the projected rate before the Covid-19 pandemic (OECD, 2020). This low growth would erase \$1-trillion off the value of the world economy (Hutt, 2020).

Volatile world markets have compounded aversion behaviours since the coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan, China in December 2019. It has caused oil and stock prices to tumble with a few historic levels recorded in March 2020.

Oil

China is the world's biggest oil importer and with much of the country still in lockdown, combined with several other countries just enforcing lockdown and states of emergency to contain Covid-19, the International Energy Agency (IEA) has predicted the first drop in global oil demand in a decade (Hutt, 2020).

The IEA's monthly report for March 2020 puts the year-on-year slump at 90kb/d. The current price of oil, as of 23 March 2020 at \$22.43 a barrel is close to record lows during the Asian Financial crisis in 1998/9 (World Oil, 2020).

Analysts have predicted that the price war between Russia and Saudi Arabia has been catastrophic for OPEC, the world's most successful cartel. In March 2020, the Saudis abandoned their 2017 output agreement, flooding the market with cheap crude oil. The move was in response

to Russia's refusal to effect deeper production cuts to help prop up prices in the face of declining demand due to Covid-19 (Fortune, 2020).

Oil price volatility has deep impacts for African oil-producing and exporting countries like Libya, Algeria, Nigeria, Angola and Ghana. The oil price drop in 2014 impacted significantly on the continent, which saw a decline in GDP growth for the sub-Saharan region from 5.1% in 2014, to 1.4% in 2016 (Brookings, 2020). Compared to 2014, the oil price fallout during the Covid-19 pandemic has plummeted over a shorter time, declining 54% in just three months.

African oil-producing countries rely heavily on oil earnings to fund national budgets. They have pegged national earnings on a much higher oil price of around \$60 per barrel (Bloomberg, 2020).

Ghana's hopes of earning at least \$1.5-billion off new oil discoveries this year have been dashed not to mention Nigeria's and Angola's projections, the continent's first, and second-biggest producers and exporters respectively. China is Angola's largest oil importer and with demand low, Angola's economic resilience to weather a global economic recession is poor, this at a time when it is experiencing its fourth year of recession (SET, 2020).

Fragile and volatile markets look to be the order of the day, with key indices decidedly down on 23 March 2020. Uncertainty around when the pandemic disruptions would cease has prompted investors to sell even good stocks with fundamental value (Bloomberg, 2020). The big winners are those who anticipated the crash and bid short.

The Africa/China connection

Since 2009, China overtook the US as Africa's biggest trading partner. Now, during this time of virus-induced panic, analysts are looking to China first for indicators of knock-on economic

impact. China's cities are still in lockdown, its production sectors have slowed dramatically, travel internally and to the rest of the world has all but ground to a halt, and commodity prices have plunged.

A slowed-down super-power means that low- and middle-income countries dependent on trade and tourism with China will feel the sting of the virus, even if Covid-19 infections in those countries don't spike on the global graph.

Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative has funded a range of infrastructure projects across the Eurasian continent and beyond, from roads and railways to power plants. Construction on the 2,000km crude-oil pipeline and the almost-complete Lagos-Ibadan railway has ground to a halt, the Chinese workforce not having been on site since just before the Chinese Lunar New Year in February 2020 (Kitimo, 2020).

Africa/China trade and commodities

Besides oil, Africa's other commodities are also closely linked to China's fortunes. Depreciations in industrial commodities are hitting resource-dependent economies hard.

The Congo's commodity exports amount to 70% of GDP with exports to China accounting for 50% of total GDP (Smith, 2020).

Copper prices are down by 7%, which in turn will lower the value of exports from major suppliers - Zambia, the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Africa's copperbelt region produces 70% of the world's cobalt and supplies a large percentage of global demand for lithium and other rare minerals.

China is the biggest importer of cobalt and rare minerals, being the world leader in the production of mobile phones, electric car batteries and hi-tech components (Smith, 2019). China also has sig-

nificant investments in mines in the copperbelt region, exercising their control over value chains in the mining sector. With the overall China downturn, investments in these ventures have also slowed.

Chrome, manganese and iron ore make up two-thirds of South Africa's total exports to China. Less demand for these metals has caused listed shares of these mining companies to tumble (Times Live, 2020).

Soft commodities like coffee, tea, rose flowers and cocoa are also suffering due to subdued Chinese demand. The slowdown affects Rwanda, Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya and the Ivory Coast (Okoth, 2020). South Africa's fisheries industry took a knock after China stopped all animal imports in January 2020. 95% of the country's rock lobster harvest is usually sold on to China.

According to researchers at SET, the estimated lost revenue of sub-Saharan exports to China could reach around \$420-million. Angola, Congo, Sierra Leone, Lesotho and Zambia have been named as the most economically exposed through exports and tourism (SET, 2020).

Supply chains

China's record of favourable pricing and efficient logistics has made it a critical player in global demand and supply chains. Many African states have become dependent on Chinese imports like textiles, electronics and household goods.

Kenya's port of Mombasa has become a regional transport and supply chain hub, receiving goods from Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan (Okoth, 2020). Since February 2020, Mombasa has recorded its lowest arrivals of cargo ships to date, with 37 cancellations and a further 104 scheduled dockings still uncertain - most of them from China. This has sent ripple effects across borders and down the supply chain, impacting the rail freight service that operates from the port (Kitimo, 2020).

Thousands of small- to medium-sized enterprises on the continent have been forced to shut down after disruptions to supply chains and an inability to store large stocks. China is Kenya's biggest source market, accounting for up to 40% of all imports. Kenya Importers and Small Traders' Association say they've lost \$300-million since the Covid-19 outbreak (Kitimo, 2020). A fourth of all Ugandan imports come from China as well as 60% of all South Africa's clothing and textiles (Evans and Over, 2020).

Several state-owned Chinese industries are returning to work after Covid-19 cases drastically reduced, but it is privately-owned industries and smaller companies that are really China's economic engine. They produce toys, textiles and consumer goods and have not regained momentum with workers still idle due to lack of materials and enduring quarantine measures. (Evans and Over, 2020).

Travel

The airline industry has been a major Covid-19 casualty, decimating business across the globe due to containment measures. At the start of the outbreak, much of the

loss was attributed to the diminished Chinese tourist market, but the global spread of the virus with Europe now the epicentre, has collapsed all demand in the sector.

Covid-19 has erased up to 15% of global airline capacity, prompting all carriers to take drastic measures just to stay afloat. (Bloomberg, 2020). The graph below indicates airline capacity, illustrating just how much travel has been curtailed in certain regions, mirroring the aversion regulations countries have put in place to stop Covid-19 infection rates.

The following is a list of the draconian measures global airlines are taking:

- Deutsche Lufthansa AG, Europe's biggest carrier, will ground 700 planes and cancel 95% of seats

- State-owned Dubai airline, Emirates, will ground most of its passenger fleet, reducing destinations from 145 to 13 and cut wages to half

- British Airways is set to cut back 75% of operations over the next two months

- Australia's carrier, Qantas Airways, will stop all international operations in March 2020, slash domestic operations by 60% and temporarily lay off up to 30,000 staff

- Delta Airlines in the US is reducing its operations by 70%

- Abu Dhabi-based Etihad is grounding its Airbus A380 fleet along with an entire premier class of service called "The Residence"

- Virgin Atlantic is to reduce 80% of its flights and staff requested to take eight weeks of unpaid leave

- Irish carrier Ryanair has cut capacity by 80% and is considering grounding its entire fleet (Bloomberg, 2020)

On the African continent, airlines have taken similar measures to avoid bankruptcy. The sector has already lost \$4.4-billion in revenue since the start of the pandemic. According to data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA), there has been a 20% decline in international bookings and a 15% drop in domestic travel in Africa for March and April 2020.

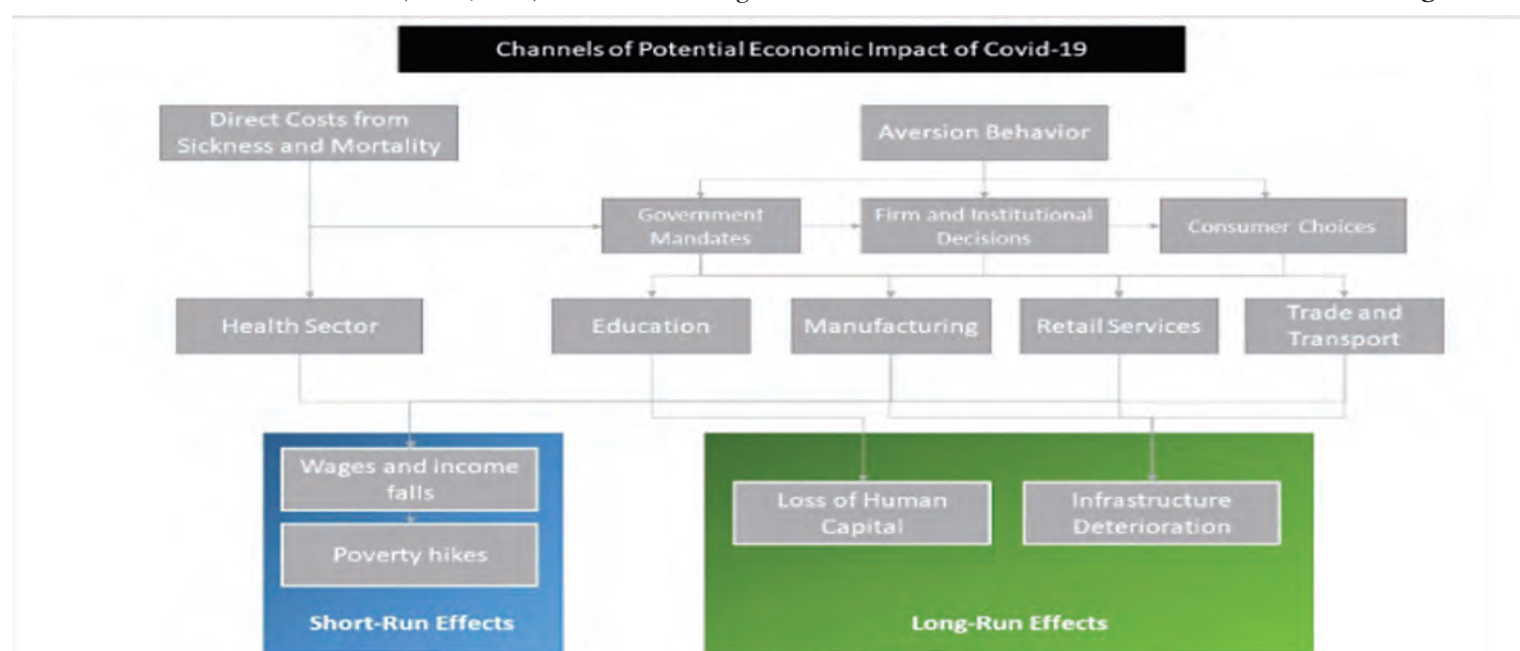
South African Airways (SAA) has cancelled all international flights until the end of May 2020 in response to the government declaring a State of National Disaster in South Africa as Covid-19 cases surpassed 400. A further 124 regional flights were also grounded (Omarjee, 2020).

The beleaguered South African state-owned airline was placed under business rescue in December 2019 to avoid bankruptcy after years of mismanagement and corruption that accumulated a \$1.6-billion loss.

Kenya Airways was also facing a battle for survival before the Covid-19 impact, after years of increasing debt and allegations of state corruption (Kuo, 2020).

Royal Air Maroc, Air Tanzania, Air Mauritius, EgyptAir, RwandaAir, SAA and Kenya Airways have all suspended flights to and from China. On the other hand, for Africa's most profitable carrier, Ethiopian Airlines, it is business as usual for its China routes. The airline countered calls to suspend its 35 weekly flights to China, arguing that the measure would not slow the spread of Covid-19 (Logupdate Africa, 2020).

Agencies



Doing without sea coast, why could Ethiopia be busy trying to put together navy again?

By Special Correspondent

IN April 2018, when Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) took control of the leadership of the nation and while addressing the Armed Forces for the first time; it was at that point in time that he revealed his plan that Ethiopia will have a Navy. There after the Ministry of Defense started working on the Re-establishment of the Ethiopian Navy; assigned the Commander of the Navy - a dynamic Flag Officer who currently is working diligently to reestablish a meaningful naval force.

Later, from his vision of establishing the Economic Integration of the Horn of Africa, it is presumed that his final goal would be Political Integration which will supervise the possibility of access to the sea and the creation of a Navy capable of protecting the Horn of Africa.

Talking about regional integration it has remained a political and economic priority for Africa ever since the aftermath of colonization. The creation of the Africa Union in its mandate included promoting unity, solidarity and strengthening cooperation for development among African nations. Various successive efforts after the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and later the AU have reinforced this commitment. Most recently, regional integration agenda is a projecting aspect of the AU's Vision 2063, with an aspiration of being an integrated continent with free movement of people, goods, capital and services and infrastructure connections.

Why regional integration?

In the 21st century, there are more than 200 international borders around the world. Borders are necessary for nation states to survive, govern, and grow.

Sovereign states make political and economic choices in terms of the levels of integration they would want to have with other sovereign states. Countries that have integrated regionally benefit from growth spillovers, larger markets, and scale economies in production benefiting producers, investors, and consumers.

Going forward, the nature and pace of integration in Africa would also be defined by wider economic opportunities and challenges.

In particular, there are likely to be four key economic drivers of regional integration:-

First, nature of economic growth and macroeconomic stability could be an important factor for integration.

Second, the ongoing demographic boom and rapid urbanization could be another important factor for integration.

Third, an accelerated pace of structural reforms, which leads to improvements in competitiveness and consequent opportunities for agglomeration and specialization among countries, could be another driver for integration.

Finally, advances in technology and its falling costs are likely to be another driver of integration.

The Prime Minister wants Ethiopia to become an evocative international



trade competitor. Ethiopia will need to protect its trade routes in the years ahead something that demands a maritime display of force. A future Ethiopian Navy would also play a part in regional economic and political integration in the Horn of Africa, a key strategic goal of the Premier.

Ethiopia is the Horn of Africa's key player thanks in part to its growing economy and a population of over 100 million. But it is also concerned at its lack of sea access. Eritrea gained its independence in 1991 and Ethiopia lost her sea coast and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) government immediately closed the country's Navy. Since then, Ethiopia had no reason to reexamine its choice, but now times are changing and Prime Minister Abiy has his own concept on the maritime security of the Horn.

In line with Ethiopia's growing economic potency, the Prime minister wants to make his country a significant actor in international trade, but doing so will oblige Ethiopia to protect its trade routes in the future. Actually, establishing a Navy will help convince investors that the Horn of Africa is a secure environment guaranteed by the HORN MARITIME POWER.

The Prime Minister has been leading ambitious efforts to integrate the country, both economically and politically, with its neighbors around the region, including Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia and others. The move also comes after decades of weakening wars and other problems that have inundated the region. He has gained support from his regional counterparts thanks

to his efforts to foster greater stability through integration. Now by pushing for a Navy, Ethiopia is adding a maritime component to this overall drive. Nevertheless, this state of affairs gives Ethiopia several benefits:

First, Ethiopia has reliable allies with great resources both in the West and East. Her political regional significance and own fast growing economy along with the 100 million population which is a readily available market will have a substantial say in the drafting of regional maritime development strategy.

Second, it will allow Ethiopia to develop the competences of its neighbors while employing their ports.

Finally by achieving its regional Economic Integration the Prime minister will substantiate its vision of Political Integration of the Horn which will be a welcome addition to the region. Political unity of the Horn Region will open the flood gate of integration particularly for Eastern Africa and finally to the rest of the regions in the continent.

When the Prime Minister announced his plan of setting up a Navy he was emphasizing on the role of the navy in the birth of a united Horn of Africa. A robust maritime force is a requirement for having a strong integrated economy on the Horn. When we look at the security posture of the region a strong and indomitable maritime force is a necessity. The Horn must not depend totally on the presently available foreign powers when it comes to its maritime security. It is true that the Horn of Africa has neither ship building

yard nor the robust economy that the industry demands. However, whatever the state of affairs, our maritime security primarily must be controlled by our own forces and not by outsiders whose prime objective is maintaining their own national interest and of course with the secondary objective of assisting the host nations. These foreign powers have sincere desire to assist the Horn nations but not indefinitely. Hence the Horn Nations must be able to have their own integrated maritime force to safe guard the interest of the nations in the region.

Why is the Horn of Africa today a platform for scuffle for antagonism and authority?

Because of lack of a strong regional Navy in the area the incident of Piracy since 2008 at the coast of Somalia has threatened the safe passage of merchant ships in the region. The Bab El Mandeb is a passage for 5 million barrels per day of crude oil and refined petroleum products

The civil war in Somalia and Yemen have become the natural springboard of radical muslims and other contenders in the region there by resulting instability in the region.

To wrap up, according to Prime Minister Abiy the reason for the rebirth of the Ethiopian Navy was not simply of emotion and extravagant but it is a honest desire from the side of the Prime minister to add an assertive component to his desire to see a unified Horn of Africa economically stout and militarily self-contained.

For that to happen, the Horn primarily has to integrate economically which is the first faith to the grand plan of Political Unity. For all that to materialize the Horn of Africa Nations have to safeguard their maritime security by their own maritime force capable of withstanding any threat from the sea. It is with that in his mind that the PM said Ethiopia will have a Navy.

How to navigate our businesses and lives through this unprecedented crisis

By Mike Abel

OUR attitude will either make us or break us. We can either succumb to all being lost and fall into depression or dig deep and see how we can pull together and innovate towards surviving.

When theologian Reinhold Niebuhr wrote these words, never could he have imagined how powerful and pertinent his "prayer" could have been for the strangest of times within which we now find ourselves.

And whether you are religious or agnostic, the words are equally important, because they speak entirely to our attitude and thought processes.

"(God) Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to accept the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference..."

I well recall lying on a beach in Plettenberg Bay over the December holidays and reading about this virus for the first time. We have all watched enough movies like Outbreak and the subsequent slew of pandemic-porn related series and offshoots to know that what happens in one part of the world will take but days or weeks, with global air travel, to happen elsewhere in the world.

And so, I pondered this news report, being a lifelong, self-confessed germophobe, possibly a bit longer than most. But I thought, surely the World Health Organisation would clamp down on it really quickly if it indeed posed major risk - and as we all know bad news sells, so perhaps it wasn't as dreadful as the tweet suggested.

Being in the marketing and communications industry, I can also see many different ways the coronavirus could have been introduced to the world. Flu, after all, is also caused by a virus, yet we never hear people talking in hushed, dramatic tones about the influenza virus despite it killing tens of thousands annually. It reminds me of the days when my grandmother would whisper to my mom that a friend had "cancer" or the Big C.

Now, not for a second should you misinterpret these observations as me remotely underplaying the very real perils of this virus. The death toll in Italy and China alone point directly to how dangerous it is, but the communication by the media and many governments thus far have taken it to the absolute extreme limits - much as you'd expect reading about the spread, heaven forbid, of an entirely lethal Ebola-type illness. It's all about deaths and infections. There is little focus on survival and recovery.

The iconography and imagery used by television channels showing rapidly multiplying red virus cells as a background picture is intended to spread dread in our hearts and have our eyeballs glued to their channels. It is sadly, pure gold for their revenue streams which are based on sizes of audiences.

Politicians similarly are benefitting from their new-found relevance as scandals, dodgy histories and looming elections fall into the background, and now being the country captain elevates them to becoming saviours and knights in shining ar-



mour. The ghoulish media and political machines are not going to dial down the panic. It's not in many of their best interests in the short term. And both play the short-term game.

We'll have to get our objective advice from trusted experts such as the now-awakened WHO, our local medical doctors and leading epidemiologists - when they agree.

So, going back to Niebuhr's quote, the things we cannot change are the legislation that has been put in place to prevent transmission and "to flatten the curve" so as to prevent our hospitals being overwhelmed by a tsunami of ill citizens. The things we cannot change are the elderly and immune-compromised being at far greater risk than the young and healthy.

The things we cannot change are many (not all) of the direct and dreadful consequences for the hospitality and travel indus-

tries and their supply chains. Bricks and mortar business, like high street shopping and centres will be hugely impacted and many of our companies will start feeling pressures and slowdowns in unforeseen areas.

We will all be affected. We are all in this together, and while wealth will no doubt provide a buffer for many, it won't deliver a "get out of jail free card" for anyone. We saw yesterday how former Real Madrid president Lorenzo Sanz died at 76. A national celebrity and Spanish VIP.

It's also the first time I can recall where the plight of 5-10% of the population in terms of a mortality rate, will impact the other 90% of the population in terms of consequence. The decisions that the WHO and governments have taken to protect an immuno-compromised and elderly population is highly commendable and is, on the surface, incredibly humane. The flip side of that same coin is total

unemployment, poverty and all the related health and social ills. And there will be a definite lag effect, post-Covid-19, that is yet to be determined. When life and the economy return to a new normal.

So, what can we do?

My wife Sara taught me a saying over 25 years ago. "A problem shared, is a problem halved" and although simplistic on one level, it is equally profound. The fact is that we are all in this together. We are all fighting a new common enemy:

- The virus itself.
- The impact on our businesses and our clients' businesses.
- Unemployment and the related concerns for our staff and the country.
- The social impact on ourselves and our families.

None of these problems is unique to any individual - it's our collective burden. One to share. It's a time to lean on one

another for emotional support.

But, here's the thing. Our attitude will either make us or break us. It's as brutally simple as that. We can either succumb to all being lost and fall into a depression, or to dig deep and see how we can pull together and innovate towards surviving.

Companies need to focus right now on two things:

- Survival
- Retaining as many of their staff as is possible.

Bottom-line profits are no longer of primary concern. That is until we are well out of these stormy waters. Shareholders will understand the unprecedented nature of these times.

Winston Churchill was famously quoted as saying "never let a good crisis go to waste" and other than perhaps some of the media, politicians (both touched on above) and pharmaceutical companies, it's hard to determine who exactly stands to benefit from this particular situation. Very few.

I am not one to try to re-frame the harsh realities of any crisis. I do not enjoy the poems that call for solitude and listening to birds while in isolation or admiring the crystal blue water and seemingly fictitious dolphins which have returned to the Grand Canals of Venice.

I did not enjoy quiet time with my family during load shedding or doing puzzles and playing Pictionary by candlelight, and if others do, they are lucky and I genuinely respect the rose-tinted lenses through which they choose to see the world.

My suggestions are perhaps a little less emotive.

We need to be creative, proactive and resourceful. We need to identify the real issues confronting our businesses and families and seek solutions which work. If cashflow is a huge concern due to events being shut down, for example for a wedding planner, talk to your bank and see how they can assist you with asset-based finance solutions.

Maybe you could offer distance training courses on how to throw events - or look at related industries that could benefit from your expertise?

If you are a sit-down restaurant, see how you can do delivery or take-aways. How you can offer convenience and value to survive.

I recall when I was running the M&C SAATCHI Group in Australia during the global financial crisis, some restaurants allowed customers to determine what they could pay for a meal as opposed to set pricing. In many instances, people paid over the former set price.

Some people tipped handsomely. There is nothing wrong with a restaurant asking for a voluntary staff tip for takeaways. Many know and understand the waiters cannot survive without tips. We are all in this together. Offer value meals - most people are going to be cash-strapped.

We need to apply this to all our own businesses. How can we be more useful? Where could our products find fresh application? How can we collaborate and help other businesses and in doing so, protect our own?

Renewable energy development vital for better realisation of sustainable development globally

By Correspondent Crispin Gerald

RENEWABLE energy development is emphasised for sustainable development goals accomplishment and the better realisation of sustainable development globally.

Tanzania, like other developing countries, is striving to adopt different ways of ensuring affordable and accessible energy supply to its socioeconomic and political sectors to achieve renewable energy development.

To secure affordable and accessible energy in the country, renewable energy is termed as an alternative energy source because it is environmentally friendly.

If renewable energy is produced and utilised in a modern and sustainable manner, it will help to eliminate energy problems in Tanzania.

A well established energy system supports all sectors, from businesses, medicine and education to agriculture, infrastructure, communications and high technology.

Access to electricity in poorer countries has begun to accelerate energy burning carbon fuels produces large amounts of greenhouse gases which cause climate change and have harmful impacts on people's well-being and the environment.

In sub-Saharan Africa, an estimated 573 million people still lacked access to electricity. Without electricity, women and girls have to spend hours fetching water, clinics cannot store vaccines for children, many schoolchildren cannot do homework at night, and people cannot run competitive businesses.

The health and well-being of some 3 billion people are adversely impacted by the lack of clean cooking fuels, such as wood, charcoal, dung and coal, which causes indoor air pollution.

The world needs to triple its investment in sustainable energy infrastructure per year, from around US\$400 billion now to US\$1.25 trillion by 2030. Regions with the greatest energy deficits like sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia need our help to improve energy access.

That includes pushing harder to find clean, efficient, and affordable alternatives to health damaging cook stoves.

Countries can accelerate the transition to an affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy system by investing in renewable energy resources, prioritizing energy efficient practices, and adopting clean energy technologies and infrastructure.

In Tanzania, application for renewable energy is still at low rate, due to lack of prior-

itisation and investment by the responsible authorities.

Despite the fact that Tanzania is blessed with sources of energy, the government has been allocating more investment in non-renewable sources of energy which are not safe for environment, while the renewable sources are given minimum or no funds.

Project coordinator for the Forum for climate change (Forum CC) Euphrasia Shayo said there is a need for the government to revisit the policy framework, noting that the available policies do not offer a clear support on alternative and clean energy.

"Most of the donor funds are channeled to develop non-renewable energy while little is kept for renewable energy," she explained.

In Tanzania, major sources of power are natural gas, petroleum, and hydro power. Out of the total installed power capacity of 1,264 megawatts (MW), 568 MW is from hydroelectric power, 685.4 MW is from thermal power, and other renewable energy contributes less than 82.4 MW.

More than 85 percent of the population uses traditional fuels as household energy sources.

According to Bureau of Statistics and the Rural Energy Agency report, only 32.8 percent of communities in Tanzania has access to electricity, whereby urban areas have more access to electricity (65.3percent) than the rural areas (16.9 percent).

She added that there is an overlap between available policies and guidelines in the energy sector, for instance encouraging investment on solar energy products but at the same time pooling out the tax exemptions on the products.

"We are advocating for the use of renewable energy because it is one among the sources of energy which is friendly to the environment rather than non-renewable sources of energy," Shayo said.

The initiative of the forum is part of the two-year project implemented to encourage the government to invest in the generation and development of renewable energy in the country, basing on the fact that renewable energy has proved to be friend of the environment.

The initiative is supported under the fund from Netherlands based organisation called Hivos, together with Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PaCJA).

There are several civil society organisations (CSOs) in the country that has been advocating for the use of renewable energy; some include the initiative by Tanzania Renewable Energy Association (TAREA) that works with communities to replace kerosene lamps with solar lanterns, whereby more than 400 households were reached.

In Miyuyu village of Newala district, Lindi, the WWF Tanzania has provided 189 improved cooking stoves and 45 solar systems to schools, village offices and households.

In their joint report titled; Tanzania Civil Society report on the sustainable development goals (SDGs), released last year, the CSOs mentioned several challenges facing the country towards effective utilisation of re-



Tanzania needs to build and expand its power generation system to be almost entirely new in order to increase the energy access rate to 100 per cent. Building new power plants no matter the technology will require new infrastructure, such as power grids, spatial planning, a stable policy framework and access to finance.

newable energy, including, lack of appropriate technology and infrastructure, whereby they said there is a challenge in getting the right human resources for implementing of renewable projects in Tanzania.

Lack of consistency on good or appropriate energy use guideline in the government systems high initial capital for investment leading to unaffordability of renewable energy to potential customers.

"But also, lack of prioritisation and strategic plans especially on which kind of renewable energy to capitalise on, in which area and for how long," it said.

The report recommended the following: The regulatory risks on small power production (SPPs) should be reduced to ensure certainty in the protection of their investment and in the long run, return on their investment.

"But also, the government should ensure policy coherence in the support of renewable energy as well as private partnership in energy."

"Reducing capitation cost in the renewable energy projects, government should minimise lengthy administrative process by establishing a one-stop center as well as building capacity and interest of financial institutions to understand renewable energy sector as one of the opportune sectors for investment," the report explained.

Energy security is a socio-economic and political factor that contributes to sustainable development in any nation. Access to reliable, affordable, sustainable, and modern energy to all people is

one of the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Energy resources can be a non-renewable or renewable; however, currently, the world is dominated by the usage of non-renewable energy such as fossil fuels.

The use of non-renewable energy is considered the principal provider to climate change, which is about 60 percent of the total greenhouse gas emissions; therefore, decrease of carbon concentration is a key goal in long-term climate objectives.

Energy glitches are currently serious in developing countries, especially in Africa where the electrification rate is very low.

Despite the fact that African countries are rich in renewable energy resources, only a low amount is harvested for domestic use.

In Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries, only 25percent of the population access electricity.

According to the New Research Works, Africa's massive potential for renewable energy could supersede the continent's projected electricity demand in 2030.

About 85 percent of primary energy supply in SSA nations is from traditional biomass energy, while less than 8 percent of the rural population has access to modern energy technologies.

These sources are important for decentralized renewable energy technologies, which nurture the isolated nature of the settlements and are environmental friendly. Despite their necessity, renewable energy sources are given low priority by both government and households.

They are important to users in local households in the countryside, where most people depend on the use of charcoal, firewood, and cow dung as their major sources of energy. This affects their health and contributes to climate change problems, which are alarming in developing countries.

Each developing country is encouraged to expand its infrastructure and upgrade technologies to offer clean energy as a basic goal that can inspire socio-economic and political growth and environmental enhancement.

Furthermore, renewable energy is expected to increase direct and indirect employment opportunities from 10.3 million in 2017 to 24 million in 2030.

According to the Institute for sustainable futures (ISF), Tanzania needs to build and expand its power generation system to be almost entirely new in order to increase the energy access rate to 100 per cent. Building new power plants - no matter the technology - will require new infrastructure, such as power grids, spatial planning, a stable policy framework and access to finance.

Tanzania is blessed with vast solar and wind resources, and renewable generation costs are generally lower with increased solar radiation and wind speeds.

However constantly shifting policy frameworks often lead to high investment risks, and therefore higher project development and installation costs, for solar and wind projects relative to countries with more stable economy.

Dedicated support instruments are required to ensure a dynamic development, in particular for renewable technologies for cooking, buildings and renewable process heat production for increased industrial process heat requirements.

In the basic renewable scenario, renewable already provide 90 percent of Tanzania's total heat demand in 2030 and 100 percent in 2050.

Energy efficiency measures help to reduce the currently growing energy demand for wood fuel for cooking stoves and shifts 100 percent modern sustainable biomass, solar and geothermal heating as well as electric cooking and heating by 2050.

Is it time to postpone 2020 Climate Summit?

NEW YORK

WITH the coronavirus pandemic sweeping the planet and the governments of both wealthy and poorer nations overwhelmed by the demands of managing a response, the scheduling of this year's critical UN

Climate Summit is suddenly in doubt.

COP26 (formally, the 26th annual Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) is planned for Glasgow, Scotland (UK) from 9-20 November. It will be the culmination of five years of negotiations since the historic 2015 Paris Climate Agreement.

More than 100 presidents and prime ministers are expected to present their nations' plans for carrying out the sweeping environmental, economic and energy changes necessary to keep the Earth's warming to survivable levels.

In all, over 30,000 government delegates, inter-governmental officials and stakeholder representatives are preparing to attend.

The agenda of COP26 is deep and urgent. Besides reporting how they plan to reduce oil, coal and gas production and increase renewable energy to limit global temperature rise to below 2°C (and preferably 1.5°C), governments must agree how to calculate whether each is fulfilling its pledges, what steps to take to deal with those which haven't, and whether the total reductions agreed to are sufficient to avoid catastrophic climate impacts (so far they're not).

At Glasgow, governments must also fulfill the commitment of the \$100 billion a year they promised to help developing countries. Those funds are to cope with the devastating impacts of sea level rise, intense storms, extended droughts, erratic cold and heat waves that have already begun to disproportionately affect poorer nations - and to help shift those nations' energy production to renewables.

Governments must decide what role private business and the financial sector play in contributing climate funding. And they must approve the so-called 'Paris Rulebook' on implementation guidelines for zero emissions and climate resilience by 2050.

Progress on all of these issues is lagging far behind schedule.

Last year's COP25, in Madrid, was expected to agree on a formula to resolve key issues. Instead it became the longest COP conference ever, failed to resolve virtually any issue, and passing them on to an already pressured COP26.

Meanwhile, the pace of the climate crisis continues to accelerate, with another year of record temperatures, catastrophic hurricanes, and unanticipated rapidly melting glaciers in Antarctica and Greenland. And the public demand for action to meet the urgency escalated as well, led by a resurgent environmental youth movement inspired by

Greta Thunberg.

The argument for a November meeting

So it would seem more necessary than ever to follow through with the November COP26 schedule.

For a world already decades behind the optimal carbon-reduction calendars suggested by environmentalists in the 1990s, the risks of further delay are huge. We may already be on the verge of irreversible feedback loops like runaway deforestation in the Amazon, unstoppable desertification in China and the Sahel, massive shifts in thermal ocean currents that moderate the winters in Europe, and decalcification that could crash the populations of the world's sea life.

With major fossil fuel corporations digging in to avoid action, taking the pressure off governments is an opening to fatal procrastination. As the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has calculated and Ms. Thunberg has tirelessly pointed out, the world only has eight years left in its allowable 'carbon budget' if it continues to emit about 42 gigatonnes of CO2 every year. So drastic reductions are necessary. Now.

The argument for postponing COP26

And yet. The world faces a sudden major pandemic that will impact all countries and affect all citizens. Millions will likely become ill and thousands will likely die. The focus of all countries is on containing the COVID 19 virus - as it should be.

Governments everywhere are enacting policies that would never have been imagined. Financial markets are crashing. The US Treasury Department has suggested a potential 20 percent unemployment rate.

Massive restrictions on public movement are being imposed and trillions of dollars in financial stimulus and subsidies are being spent. Public and private scientific expertise is being marshaled to solve medical emergencies.

The responses to the pandemic will impact the negotiations on climate. With only seven weeks to go before a key two week preparatory meeting in Bonn, virtually all flights to Europe are cancelled. It may be only a matter of weeks before Bonn itself is postponed, or at best conducted virtually - which is a far more cumbersome process.

THE GUARDIAN SIMPLE WORD FIT // THE GUARDIAN CROSSWORD =075=

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

WORD FIT

12 letters: HUNGER STRIKE
 11 letters: TOUGH MINDED
 10 letters: TANGANYIKA
 8 letters: EDGE HILL, MATRICES, STEDFAST, PEDICURE
 9 letters: KAGERA WAR, UNDER WING, INSENSATE
 7 letters: RECESS, ASEPTIC, SEMAIC, ESTATES,
 6 letters: AGREED, RECESS
 5 letters: MOAT, TASK, ALOE, DENT, SNOW, EVIL, NORI, ISLE
 4 letters: TAO, SOT, EDE, ALA, TED, ERA, RAW, ATE, REP, FOE

CROSSWORD

CLUES: ACROSS
 1 Bad taste (9)
 6 Chemical element of atomic No.2 (6)
 9 Chief city of UK (6)
 11 and others, abbreviation (3)
 12 Tiny amount (7)
 14 Abandon (8)
 15 Mass lobby (4)
 16 Sharp mountain ridge (5)
 17 Articles of faith (5)
 18 Small peg of wood (3)
 19 The whole (3)
 20 Breaking point (5)
 22 Liege (4)
 24 Fall suddenly (6)
 25 Vulgar (5)
 26 Large expanse of salt water (3)
 27 Cause to appear as if by magic (7)

CLUES: DOWN
 1 Accessible (10)
 2 Pedigree (7)
 3 Topic (5)
 4 Hairy manlike creature said to live in the highest part of the Himalayas (4)
 5 The area on the outer surface of a ship's hull (5)
 7 Used for climbing up and down (6)
 8 One (4)
 10 Wealthy (7)
 12 Battle (8)
 13 Adorn, decorate (9)
 17 Accuse (6)
 21 Grieve (5)
 23 Map out (4)

Comments: 0789 43 73 09

BUSINESS

ALERT

Are people with blood type A more vulnerable to contracting coronavirus?

BEIJING

According to a recent study, people with type A blood may have a higher chance of contracting the new coronavirus.

The study, which can be viewed on medRxiv, was carried out by a group of 19 Chinese researchers and examined 2 173 patients with Covid-19. The patients were from hospitals in Wuhan and Shenzhen.

The researchers then analysed the distribution of blood types in the normal population in each area and compared it to their sample of patients with the virus, also in each area, reports Science Alert. The authors concluded:

"People with blood group A have a significantly higher risk for acquiring Covid-19 compared with non-A blood groups," their report reads, adding: "Whereas blood group O has a significantly lower risk for the infection compared with non-O blood groups."

How reliable is this information?

The team mentions that their study is a pre-print and has not been peer-reviewed. This means it has yet to be evaluated and should therefore not be used as clinical guidance. According to the study, Wuhan's normal population has the following blood type distribution: 31% type A; 24% type B; 9% type AB; and 34% type O. By comparison, those with the virus were: 38% type A; 26% type B; 10% type AB; and 25% type O.

To put it into further context, the

study also states that 85 out of 206 patients who died of Covid-19 in Wuhan had blood type A - this was 63% more than people with blood type O who died. The preliminary study notes that similar differences were observed in Shenzhen and found that age and gender do not play a major role.

Lead researcher Wang Xinghuan wrote: "It might be helpful to introduce ABO blood typing in both patients and medical personnel as a routine part of the management of SAR-CoV-2 (the Covid-19 virus) and other coronavirus infections to help define the management options and assess risk exposure levels of people."

According to the study, there could be a link between people with blood type A's higher susceptibility of contracting the Covid-19 virus and the presence of natural antibodies in the blood, but added that more studies were needed to prove the link.

The comparison above therefore points out that although there are slight variations in figures between the normal population and those with Covid-19, it's premature to conclude that people with blood type O are entirely immune to contracting the virus, nor does it mean that everyone who contracts the virus will be type A. However, the researchers urged governments and medical professionals to consider this factor when treating infected patients.



Employees check novel coronavirus testing kits at the production facility of a biotech company in Taizhou, Jiangsu province.

INNOVATION

Ncumisa starts a pathology lab that is ready to test for Covid-19 in East London

EAST LONDON

Pathology services have become increasingly crucial as the medical fraternity races to flatten the curve of coronavirus infections and find a vaccine.

As if by premonition, Ncumisa Adams decided to open a pathology laboratory in East London late last year, and only a few months later, reports of a virus threatening the livelihoods of residents of Wuhan, China started to surface.

Unbeknownst to Ncumisa (and the whole world), pathology services were about to become a highly sought after service as the virus, which we now know to be Covid-19, holds the world's population hostage until a vaccine is found.

Until then, women (and men) like Ncumisa will be the dotted line between life and death for those who need coronavirus testing. Ncumisa's lab, EconoPath, may be relatively new; however, this medical technician in clinical pathology has been testing bloods for diagnosis of various ailments long before she decided to start her private lab. From the onset, her mission

was to "help the sick, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds."

Initially, she had planned to study medicine, but not being accepted to medical school presented a detour that gave her an opportunity to pursue her passion from behind the scenes. She had the option to either study towards any other Bachelor of Science degree or biomedical technology, and she chose the latter.

It took a profound experience with a loved one to steer her towards her career choice. "I had a relative who was very ill and needed blood tests, but unfortunately, she succumbed to her illness while waiting for the results. I felt that if she had been diagnosed sooner, her life might have been saved," Ncumisa says, recalling the incident that made her realise the challenges of access to pathological services.

As a result, she decided to study biomedical technology at Nelson Mandela University, and later qualified as a medical technologist in clinical pathology at Pathcare Academy. Ncumisa has worked as a clinpath tech for various labs, including Pathcare and Ampath.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Would you try to trademark coronavirus in your brand? Some SA companies have

CAPE TOWN

The coronavirus pandemic reached South African shores in early March, and some companies have already applied to have coronavirus-related brands registered.

The South African Trade Marks Office has received applications for the brands Covidban, Corona Guard and Corona Care, according to Bernadette Versfeld, who specialises in intellectual property law at Webber Wentzel.

"This is not a complete surprise. There are always opportunists rushing to register a trade mark and this time they are seeking to benefit from the biggest news story of our time," says Versfeld. All three marks have been applied for in the pharmaceutical goods category and one is described as an antiviral sanitiser.

The trade marks register is normally in the public domain, though at the time of publication, the trade marks office had closed until the end of April due to the lockdown. In Versfeld's view, the use of the terms corona or covid are actually examples of a weak trade mark. This is because they are entirely descriptive of the goods the businesses are seeking to market.

"No one can claim a monopoly to these words, certainly not in relation to these types of products in any event," she says. Furthermore, given that SA is still in the reasonably early stages of the pandemic, she foresees that further applications of this nature are likely to be filed. For her it would be interesting to see how the examiner at the Trade Marks Office deals with these applications.

"Of course the incorporation of the Corona trade mark for pharmaceutical products and subsequent use, raises the question as to whether Constellation Brands, the owner of the beer label Corona will oppose the trade mark applications given that Corona is well known in relation to beer," suggests Versfeld.

"We can only hope that more inventive and distinguishable brands than



Bernadette Versfeld, who specialises in intellectual property law at Webber Wentzel.

'Covid' are created for products being made to combat Covid-19." She told Fin24 on Thursday that the point of having a brand is so that you can distinguish your goods and services from others. So, the more distinct the better. For example, no-one would think of registering a trade mark "apple" if they sell apples. Yet, using it for a product not normally being associated with the word, an electronics company, is brilliant in her view.

She often finds that people want to register entirely descriptive marks - like "excellence" for training and education services. "If you want to build brand

value and spend so much on marketing, packaging, social media and more, the brand must at least be able to stand the test of time," she says.

"Why would you want to develop a brand and put so much money into it when one day, when the coronavirus pandemic is over, the brand can have a negative connotation?" In her view, the trade marks office will likely refuse to register the corona-related marks applied for in SA, because, if, for instance the manufacturer wants to insinuate that a product will kill the virus, how will they prove it?

In any event, the Trade Marks Office

already had a backlog before the coronavirus curbing 21-day lockdown was announced. The office will only reopen on 1 May. Versfeld expects these corona-related marks will likely only be examined in 10 to 12 months' time due to the backlog. However, nothing stops someone to start using a name once it has put in an application to have it registered.

South Africa is not the only country to have seen applications of this kind in recent weeks. Late in February, a US publication reported that an application for a Covid-19 trademark had been branded "opportunistic" and unlikely to succeed.

WAY-OUT

Africa needs its biotech space to rise to coronavirus challenge

JOHANNESBURG

The coronavirus pandemic is leaving a trail of devastation across the world, with the continents of Asia, Australia, Europe and North America particularly affected. And now Africa is increasingly finding itself in the cross-hairs of Covid-19.

As of now, a handful of countries in the "Mother Continent" have ordered total lockdowns, such as Rwanda and South Africa, while others are closely monitoring the situation within their borders, having announced partial measures, including travel bans, quarantine orders and the promotion of social distancing.

There are a number of very serious concerns if the virus spreads across a landmass that is home to more than 1.3 billion people. These include dense population clusters, weak public health infrastructure, deeply ingrained social and cultural norms, issues of governance and a lack of funds.

Yet, in the field of biotechnology, there appears to be a sliver of hope that the continent - particularly the eastern region - could actually be better-positioned to cope with the pandemic than prophesied by the doomsayers. It is a sector that began shaping up at the turn of the 21st century, and which, two decades later, has become of fundamental importance. After all, we live in a time of ecological armageddon and frightening pandemics, sparked by unheard of viruses and widening socio-economic disparities.

Indeed, the biotech industry is leading the way in taking on these challenges. On the front lines are companies such as Africa Biosystems, Thermo Fisher Scientific, Roche and Qiagen,



A health official gives a thumbs up after conducting a screening test on a traveller carrying a baby in South Africa.

which are assisting with testing and research for the Covid-19 pandemic. But even before reaching their current status as "front-liners" in battling the spread of the coronavirus, these entities have been chalking up several milestones. For instance, they have revolutionised how DNA technology is applied in various fields across Africa today.

Health care is a case in point, with the technology being used to identify and treat infectious diseases besides benefiting research into HIV, tuberculosis, malaria - and now Covid-19. It is also helping many African nations cope with the rise of non-communicable diseases, including

cancer, hypertension, diabetes and renal disease. Life science technology is being used to test for anti-microbial resistance, which improves patient management. In addition, technology delivered to fertility clinics has been something of a boon for those set back by reproductive health challenges. To be sure, the benefits are not restricted to health care alone.

DNA forensic applications have helped security forces in combating terrorism and other crimes. State-of-the-art DNA extraction and analysis systems have helped to identify and convict terrorists and criminals. In fact, one area where DNA science has made a major impact

is in producing indisputable evidence used by prosecutors in court to deliver justice in rape cases. It is notable that even conflict-ridden Somaliland has recently acquired technologies to identify and convict rapists, joining the rest of the region's biotechnology push.

In the field of environment and wildlife conservation, too, DNA technology has helped identify poachers who leave genetic identifiers at scenes of crime but, more important, help trace gem trophies to countries of origin at advanced application. This has greatly improved rates of convictions of poachers and curbed the illegal game trade.

Achieving an efficient interbank market

By Victor Boroma

The Zimbabwean government announced that it was going to introduce a managed floating exchange rate system in a bid to contain exchange rate volatility.

The move is also aimed at bringing transparency and efficiency to the interbank market, which has been dogged by liquidity challenges since its February 2019 launch. As of December 2019, only US\$1.5 billion had been traded on the interbank market versus local demand exceeding US\$7 billion per year.

To achieve efficiency, an electronic foreign currency trading platform based on the Reuters system will be put in place. It is envisaged the platform will allow banks and bureaux de change to trade foreign currency freely while restricting the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) role to monitoring and intervening only when necessary.

Despite liberalising the interbank market, the government gazetted General Notice 583 of 2020, an exchange control measure suspending the fungibility of all dual listed shares trading on the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange (ZSE). The latest exchange control directive will affect the exchange of Old Mutual (OMU), PPC (PPC.zw) and SeedCo International (SCIL) shares. However, the directive will not apply to trades done on or before March

13, 2020 provided they are settled by March 18, 2020. The regulations are accompanied by a Securities and Exchange Commission (SECZ) audit on all transaction inflows for dual listed shares conducted on or before June 1 2019.

The suspension of fungibility on dual listed shares was once effected in May 2008 before the Zimbabwean dollar crashed to record levels in the months that followed. The latest move will somewhat halt the outflow of foreign currency through the official financial system but it falls short on ending the calculation of the Old Mutual Implied Rate (OMIR) which can still be calculated using relative share prices of the Old Mutual Counter.

The press statement by Treasury points that commercial banks will be market makers and the Reuters system will generate daily exchange rates as opposed to the current situation where the central bank determines the interbank rate and wields unfettered control on the allocation of foreign currency. The directive compels the central bank to terminate the gold incentive to local producers; to report all foreign currency inflows to the treasury and to release all surplus foreign currency onto the interbank on a daily/weekly basis.

Surplus being classified as any amount exceeding the requirements for servicing external debt and priority government uses. Further the central bank was



directed to gradually end quasi-fiscal activities of allocating foreign currency to various importers through letters of credit (LCs) and let all importers access foreign currency via the interbank market through their respective banks. The move by treasury is aimed at clipping central bank wings amid accusations by local producers that foreign currency is not being allocated efficiently and the shortages are being caused by sub-interbank rate privileges extended to selected importers on the local market especially petroleum companies.

In 2019, Zimbabwe received export earnings of over US\$4.2 billion, International remittances worth US\$1.2 billion and Foreign Direct Investments totaling US\$259 million. Of the export earnings figure, the central bank retained over 35% (US\$1.5 billion) and it is this portion of surrendered earnings that the treasury now wants accountability on. The central bank has been reluctant to let the interbank market to freely float as that would mean printing more money to cater for surrendered earnings while also fuelling inflation rate. A more sus-

tainable way to manage inflation is to end subsidies of various commodities that saw the central bank inject more than ZW\$5 billion into the economy in 2019 alone.

However it is unlikely that subsidies will be cut considering the political considerations behind their existence. Foreign currency demand will however remain high as local production plummets due to a number of supply side constraints. The local retailing of fuel and critical raw materials in foreign currency will further add pressure to the little foreign currency available on the interbank market. Zimbabwe's foreign currency woes have also been driven by growth in broad money supply (Over ZW\$34.5 billion as of December 2019) and decline in market confidence which forces local producers and consumers to seek shelter in either the US dollar or South African rand. As such reducing money supply growth is an efficient way of achieving stability on the interbank market.

Exchange control liberalisation is the panacea to the low confidence current-

ly prevailing on the financial markets. Zimbabwe operated under such a regime during the government of national unity (GNU) period of 2009 to 2013 and the benefits were abundant for the economy.

Despite running under a recurring current account deficit averaging US\$3.75 billion in those five years, Zimbabwe did not face any foreign currency shortages.

The shortages started after the 2013 elections as a result of capital outflows (confidence biased externalisation) and the subsequent money printing that ensued after the RBZ Debt Assumption Bill of August 2014.

In Sub-Saharan Africa; Zambia, Ghana, Botswana, Kenya and Rwanda are some of the countries that have liberal foreign exchange regimes which are backed by floating exchange rates, yet they do not face crippling foreign currency shortages affecting Zimbabwe.

Another way to achieve an efficient interbank market would be to allow exporters to keep 100% of their foreign earnings while repatriating all the export proceeds to the local financial market within a specified time (Say within 120 days). The move will ensure stability for the local currency provided the central bank terminates all consumption subsidies and implements measures to deal with extreme capital outflows. As of December 2019, foreign currency accounts (FCA) balances totalled US\$785 million.

It is estimated that over US\$1 billion was stashed in foreign banks by local exporters in 2019, while the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (Zacc) pointed that over US\$7 billion in cash and properties have been stashed in foreign countries by various government officials and private players. A freely floating exchange rate is one way to ensure that most of these stashed funds are repatriated back to the formal market and help grow the local economy.

It is fair to point that Zimbabwe's interbank market has always been managed by the central bank and its efficiency is very much dependent on the amount of foreign currency pumped into the market by the central bank going forward. Market determination of exchange rates is central to the gradual elimination of the powerful parallel market, which currently offers more than double the rate prevailing on the interbank market.

Ideally, the central bank should play no role in foreign currency allocation (independently or otherwise) and the government should meet its foreign currency needs via tax revenues which are partly being charged in foreign currency as well. A managed exchange rate means the central bank will continue to play a role on the interbank market while maintaining export surrender requirements. Nevertheless it would be beneficial if the central bank would be transparent in the allocation of its foreign currency while adhering strictly to dumping all the surplus foreign currency earnings on the interbank market on a daily or weekly basis as directed by Treasury.

The use of free funds to import various goods and services is yet another tacit admission to re-dollarisation as not many producers will hustle to get foreign currency and sell their stock in a depreciating local currency. Exchange rate liberalisation will definitely result in the spike of prices in the short term but it provides a sustainable way of market price discovery and channeling of all foreign currency to the formal market in the long term. After all, the 2009-2013 free market policies provide evidence that the market can self-regulate with limited central bank intervention.

Boroma is a marketer by profession, freelance economic analyst and holds an MBA from the University of Zimbabwe.

PANIC

South Africa's lockdown booze frenzy: Shoppers filling up carts



People queue outside Liquor City on Beyers Naude Drive just hours before the 21-day national lockdown starts at midnight.

CAPE TOWN

Being stuck in the house for 21 days - and in the process, dealing with two kids - will prove to be a challenge, and alcohol will be a necessity to make it easier.

This is according to a shopper who joined hundreds of others as early as 08:30 on Thursday morning to stock up on liquor and food at various stores ahead of the looming 21-day lockdown across the country.

The country has just a few hours to go before the national lockdown kicks in. The measure was announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus (Covid-19). Andrew Erasmus was among those to queue at Liquor City in Blackheath, Johannesburg to stock up on his favourite wine and beer.

When President Cyril Ramaphosa announced a nationwide lockdown on Monday, thousands of individuals and businesses, like the Nitida wine estate in Durbanville, started making preparations. "I heard there won't be any alcohol sold, so I just want to buy enough

to last a week or two," Erasmus said.

Erasmus said he wasn't panic buying, but that people just needed to get enough so that they could be able to stay at home and adhere to the regulations. Among his items was his favourite red wine, he said.

"I think it's good, if you have cabin fever and you just have a glass of wine, you'll feel better after staying 21 days with two kids in the house. For 21 days, you might need a drink or two," he said. It was the same story at Tops at Spar in Blackheath as anxious shoppers rushed to grab their favourite gin, beer and whiskey.

Adhere to rules

At Cresta Shopping Centre, the banking court was packed to capacity with people withdrawing cash, while others deposited money. Clothing shops were quieter and some, like H&M and Footgear, were already closed. An employee at the Edgars clothing store said they were also already preparing to close later in the day. She said she was excited, although she would not be doing much at home.

Chris Nicol said he was look-

ing forward to the lockdown and would be using the time to do gardening. He emphasised that it was important for people to adhere to the rules and regulations set up during the period so that, by the time it ends, the virus could be contained and hopefully done away with.

"It's a bit like an alien world at the moment. You got to make do. After the three weeks lockdown, we should be fine," he said. Erasmus said that, although he was also going to buy some beers and gin, he would have to deal with the consequences if he ran out before the end of the lockdown.

No store is allowed to sell alcohol during the 21 days and anyone who contravenes the regulations of the nationwide lockdown will be guilty of a criminal offence and will be liable to a fine or imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months, or both, Police Minister Bheki Cele warned during a media briefing on Wednesday. Liquor stores have already spread the message of their closures on their social media. Let's come out of this a better, stronger South Africa!

COVID-19

Iposita ventures into home delivery services for essential products

KIGALI

The National Post Office, famously known as Iposita locally, will now leverage its foothold in the market to deliver essential products to people in the City of Kigali, most of whom are locked down at home.

Iposita is an established logistics company, specialising in providing postal services. Patrick Safari, the Director of Commercial Unit, told The New Times that the home delivery service launched this week is part of response mechanism to the novel coronavirus outbreak.

"It is in response to the coronavirus which has devastated the lives of many people, because of the lockdown measures being implemented," he said. Iposita is now providing all its motorcycle couriers and all their cars and trucks, to deliver food and medicine orders and shipments of any size from local pharmacies and supermarkets to people at homes.

"The service is relevant because public transport services like motorcycles and vehicles are no longer operational," he noted. The Prime Minister's Office recently announced a two-week lockdown in a bid to stem the spread of coronavirus, banning unnecessary movement of residents across the country, except for essential services.

On Saturday, March 28, it will be exactly one week of the lockdown, something that has seen more people resort to virtual shopping. Iposita, which has been operating in Rwanda since 1922, sees the new service as humanitarian assistance to help people get food, medicine and other essential services delivered to them at an affordable rate.

"We understand that people need food and medicine in this period. This is why we took that initiative," Safari said. Iposita has started to collaborate with businesses who may want to deliver services to people but with limited logistical muscle to

do, but it also enables individuals to directly order products directly.

At the same time, this is an opportunity for the Iposita whose courier services have been halted by the spread of COVID-19. Like many postal services across the world, Iposita has stopped its mail delivery service as airline services have been suspended and countries imposed travel bans.

The Universal Postal Union (UPU), which monitors international postal exchanges in real-time, recorded a 10 per cent drop in tonnage and a 15 per cent drop in the number of postal items on the previous year during the period January 23 to March 23, 2020.

The decrease in volume amounts to at least 10,000 tons, UPU said on Wednesday. Postal items weighing less than 2 kg saw the most significant drop, with a 13 per cent decrease in tonnage and a 16 per cent decrease in the number of items sent.



An Iposita delivery truck in Kigali.

LOCK-DOWN

Looking after your mental health when staying indoors

DUBAI

As countries around the world encourage and enforce drastic measures to crack down on the spread of the coronavirus, more people are being urged to stay at home.



Whether or not you are a regular gym-goer, exercising is important when self-isolating as it helps keep you mentally alert and happy.

There are many tips on how to stay productive, at work and otherwise, but while spending our time confined within the same four walls may protect our physical health, it can lead to a strain on our mental well-being. The restrictions will result in complete isolation or leave many of us interacting with the same few people all day.

"Meaningful social connection is vital to every individual's sense of authentic well-being," says Dr Tara Wyne, clinical psychologist and clinical director at The LightHouse Arabia. "Loneliness can have

a tremendous influence on mental health - it increases the likelihood of negative outcomes in both our physical and mental health." As all spheres of life now unite, quite literally, under one roof, here is

some expert advice when it comes to looking after your mind, body and spirit, in a professional, social and physical set-up.

As much as a third of our day is dedicated to working - meaning our approach

to setting up office at home (without being able to break up the day with a trip to a coffee shop) is extremely important for both our effectiveness and psychological health. Teresa Douglas, co-author of

Working Remotely, Secrets to Success for Employees on Distributed Teams, says: "Structure is very important. When you don't have a place to go to do your work, you need to rely on your routine to balance your day." If you don't follow that, you run the risk of being "always on," which can be mentally draining.

Douglas advises setting up mental cues and rituals to get you in (and then out) of work mode, which can range from making a cup of tea and reading the news before you take to your desk to spending time setting up your workspace - even if heading to the office means pulling up a chair at the dining table. She recommends you "turn off your laptop and close the door to the office" at the end of the day to help you adjust your mindset once again.

Working remotely also doesn't have to mean leaving office culture completely

behind. Douglas advises checking in with colleagues every morning to stay focused and limit feelings of solitude. "Without regular social contact, we don't feel the lightening of our burdens," says Wyne, adding that it's through connecting with others that we can gain self-worth and perspective, and quieten self-criticism. Without bouncing off our colleagues for ideas, feedback and comfort, we run the risk of losing career confidence.

If you don't have colleagues to check in with, set up a network of freelancers or fellow industry insiders, and take virtual coffee breaks or hold group discussions to keep each other inspired and stimulated.

You may be cocooning, but not all of your social butterfly instincts need to be put to rest. "The risk when self-isolating is that we forget who we are in our daily lives

- we don't operate according to our normal compass or values," warns Wyne.

To fend off loneliness - which lowers life expectancy and has been linked to depression in studies such as the 75-year Harvard Study of Adult Development - it's crucial to fill out your social calendars like you usually would. Well, sort of. Switch meetings in cafes with a virtual balcony coffee with friends, set up games through apps, start a digital book club and schedule in long chats with family. Setting up regular social interactions to a time and date will hold you accountable, and stop you falling into the bingeing-in-bed trap.

For others, it may be the complete opposite problem that becomes detrimental to their happiness: sharing their small isolation space with the same person or people. "One of the biggest mistakes people make when

they transition to remote is not discussing boundaries," says Douglas.

While talking primarily about working from home, such advice can be applied across the board. Be politely upfront and don't let tensions build; implement schedules for shared and solo activities; be open about feeling fragile and needing space. Communication, after all, is key - as studies have shown that close, healthy relationships are essential in protecting our mental health, and those who have good communication skills have stronger relationships.

Finally, while all passions can't easily be transported indoors (horse riding and golfing will have to wait), use this time to take up a new hobby to keep you mentally stimulated - learn a language, set yourself a personal writing project, or practise your arts and crafts or carpentry skills.

INNOVATIVE

How an Italian start-up turned snorkelling masks into ventilators

ROME

Italian technology start-up Isinnova is helping hospitals facing a shortage of ventilator masks by producing a 3D printed adapter that converts a snorkelling mask into an oxygen therapy device - a critical treatment of the most serious coronavirus patients.

These 3D-printed masks are currently used by at least 10 hospitals in different parts of Italy. They can potentially address the shortage of masks due to the high infection rate in the country.

"Medical staff just need to connect this 3D-printed C-PAP [continuous positive airway pressure] mask with the oxygen source or cylinder and it will work just like a ventilator," Alessandro Romaioli, technical officer at the Brescia-based digital company Isinnova, said. So far, Isinnova has developed 500 pieces of the 3D-printed C-PAP masks and distributed them free.

Italy has the highest number of infections outside of China and accounts for the largest number of deaths worldwide, according to Johns Hopkins University, which is tracking the outbreak. More than 7,500 people have died in the country from the 74,380 who have contracted the disease. The pandemic has infected about 473,000 people globally and killed more than 21,300. Isinnova was first contacted by Dr Renato Favero, former head physician of the Gardone Valrompia Hospital in Brescia, a city in the northern region of Lombardy - one of the areas hardest hit by the virus.

"Mr Favero shared with us an idea to fix the possible shortage of C-PAP masks for sub-intensive therapy, which is emerging as a concrete problem linked to the spread of Covid-19 ... now we are making emergency ventilator masks by adjusting snorkelling masks already available on the market."

The company, which employs 14 people, has joined forces with French sporting goods retailer Decathlon to procure snorkelling

masks to develop the prototypes. "Decathlon was immediately willing to cooperate by providing the CAD [computer-aided design] drawing of the mask we had identified," said Mr Romaioli.

"The product was dismantled, studied and required changes were made and evaluated. Finally, a new component was then designed to guarantee the connection." However, the 3D-printed mask is not certified and its use is subject to a situation of mandatory need.

"The idea is designed for healthcare facilities and wants to help in realisation of an emergency mask in the case of a full-blown difficult situation, where it is not possible to find official healthcare supplies," Isinnova said in its blog.

"Usage by the patient is subjected to the acceptance of use of an uncertified biomedical device, by providing a signed declaration," it added. Isinnova is also using 3D technology to meet a scarcity of valves used in ventilators.

Made of plastic, the valves weigh 20 grams each and connect oxygen masks to ventilators used by coronavirus patients. They are called Venturi valves, named after the 18th-century Italian physicist Giovanni Battista Venturi. "This is a difficult time and we have to face it together as a team. We are not charging anything for our services and are open to sharing the technology with any other firm in the world ... this is our gesture to give back to the society" Cristian Fracassi, founder of Isinnova, said.

Although the case for replacing industrial manufacturing on a wider scale with 3D printing is unproven, the technology has great potential in many sectors, according to the ratings agency Moody's. Industries such as aerospace, medical devices, eyewear and automotive will benefit from this technology which rapidly builds a three-dimensional object that can be customised cheaply using a computer-aided design model, Moody's said in a report last year.



ISIDINGO MONDAY - FRIDAY STARTING 7:30 PM

ITV

<p>ITV</p> <p>SATURDAY 28 March</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:00 Habari 8:00 Al Jazeera 9:00 Watoto wetu 10:00 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost 10:45 Usafiri wako rpt 11:15 Shamba lulu rpt 11:45 Mapishi rpt 12:00 Chetu ni chetu rpt 12:40 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost 14:40 Igizo rpt: Mapito 15:15 Igizo rpt: Kibafute 16:00 Igizo rpt: Mizengwe 16:20 Igizo: Mtego 17:00 Shamsam za Pwani 17:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 Mapishi 18:30 Igizo: Mapito 19:00 Art and lifestyle 19:25 Jungu Kuu 20:00 Habari 21:00 Hawavumi lakini wamo 22:00 Kipindi maalum: Insta Moja 22:10 Kesho leo rpt 22:40 Isidingo rpt 01:30 DWTV</p> <p>SUNDAY 29 March</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:00 Habari 8:00 Al Jazeera 9:00 Watoto Wetu 10:00 Isidingo 11:40 Igizo: Mizengwe rpt 12:00 Bongo Movie rpt 14:00 Tamasha la Michezo 15:00 Mwangaza 16:00 The Great queen Seondok 16:45 ITV Top 10 17:30 Kipindi cha kikristo 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 Mapishi 18:30 Matukio ya wiki 19:30 Igizo: Mtego 20:00 Habari 21:05 Kipindi Maalum: Biko 21:10 Mizengwe 21:30 Mjue Zaidi 22:15 Bongo Movie: 23:45 ITV Top 10 00:30 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost</p> <p>MONDAY 30 March</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 Habari 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo 8:55 Habari za saa 9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo 9:30 Soap: Isidingo the need 09:55 Habari za saa 10:00 Watoto wetu 10:55 Habari za saa 11:00 Jagina rpt 11:30 Igizo rpt: Mtego 11:55 Habari za saa 12:00 Al Jazeera 12:30 Jungu kuu rpt 12:55 Habari za saa 13:00 Mjue Zaidi 13:45 Art and Lifestyle rpt 13:55 Habari za saa</p>	<p>14:00 Art and Lifestyle rpt 14:10 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost 14:55 Habari za saa 15:00 Meza huru 16:30 Watoto Wetu 17:00 The Base 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:10 Aibu yako rpt 18:15 Mapishi 18:45 Kesho leo 19:00 Afa ya Jamii 19:30 Isidingo 20:00 Habari 21:05 Dakika 45 22:00 Telenovela: Elena's Ghost 23:00 Habari 23:30 The Base 00:30 Al Jazeera 02:00 DWTV</p> <p>TUESDAY 31 March</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 Habari 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo 8:55 Habari za saa 9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo 9:30 Isidingo 09:55 Habari za saa 10:00 Watoto wetu 10:30 Shamsam za pwani 10:55 Habari za saa 11:00 Shamsam za pwani 11:20 Kesho leo rpt 11:55 Habari za saa 12:00 Al Jazeera 12:30 Afa ya jamii rpt 12:55 Habari za saa 13:00 Kipindi maalum: KTMDA 13:30 Shamba lulu rpt 13:55 Habari za saa 14:00 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost 14:55 Habari za saa 15:00 Meza Huru 16:30 Watoto wetu 17:00 The Base 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:10 Yu wapi 18:15 Mapishi rpt 18:30 Uchumi na biashara 19:00 Jarida la wanawake 19:30 Isidingo 20:00 Habari 21:05 Tanzania yetu 21:35 Chetu ni chetu 22:15 Telenovela: Elena's Ghost 23:00 Habari 23:30 The Base 00:30 DWTV</p> <p>WEDNESDAY 01 April</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo 8:55 Habari za saa 9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo 9:30 Isidingo 09:55 Habari za saa 10:00 Watoto wetu 10:30 Korean drama: The great Queen Seondok 11:00 Habari za saa 11:05 Uchumi na biashara rpt 11:55 Habari za saa 12:00 Al Jazeera 12:30 Jarida la wanawake rpt</p>	<p>12:55 Habari za saa 13:00 Dakika 45 13:55 Habari za saa 14:00 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost 14:55 Habari za saa 15:00 Meza huru 16:30 Watoto Wetu 17:00 The Base 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 Igizo: Mizengwe rpt 18:30 Igizo rpt: Mapito 19:00 Ijue Sheria 19:30 Isidingo 20:00 Habari 21:00 Aibu Yako! Hata wewe? 21:10 Kipindi Maalum: Uongozi 21:40 Kipindi Maalum: Tanesco 22:15 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost 23:00 Habari 23:30 The Base 00:30 Al Jazeera 2:00 DWTV</p> <p>THURSDAY 02 April</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo 8:55 Habari za saa 9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo 9:30 Isidingo 9:55 Habari za saa 10:00 Watoto 10:30 Igizo: Kibafute 10:55 Habari za saa 11:00 Igizo: Kibafute 11:15 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Uongozi 11:55 Habari za saa 12:00 Al Jazeera 12:30 Ijue Sheria 12:55 Habari za saa 13:00 Arts & Lifestyle rpt 13:55 Habari za saa 13:55 Habari za saa 14:00 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost 15:00 Meza huru 16:30 Watoto Wetu 17:00 The Base 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 Mapishi 18:30 Jagina 19:00 Usafiri wako 19:30 Isidingo 20:00 Habari 21:00 Malumbano ya hoja 23:00 Habari 23:30 The Base 00:30 DWTV</p> <p>FRIDAY 03 April</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:30 HABARI 8:00 Kumekucha Michezo 8:55 Habari za saa 9:00 Kumekucha Kishindo 9:30 Isidingo 9:55 Habari za saa 10:00 Watoto wetu 10:30 Hawavumi lakini wamo 10:55 Habari za saa 11:00 Hawavumi lakini wamo 11:30 Usafiri wako 11:55 Habari za saa 12:00 Al Jazeera 12:30 Kipindi Maalum rpt: Tanesco 12:55 Habari za saa 13:00 Jagina rpt 13:30 Chetu ni chetu rpt</p>	<p>13:55 Habari za saa 14:00 Chetu ni chetu rpt 14:10 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost 14:55 Habari za saa 15:00 Meza huru 16:30 Watoto Wetu 17:00 The Base 17:30 Ibada ya kiislamu 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 Mizengwe rpt 18:30 Shamba lulu 19:00 Kipindi Maalum: TMDA 19:30 Isidingo 20:00 Habari 21:05 Kipima Joto 23:00 Habari 23:30 The Base 00:30 DWTV</p> <p>SATURDAY 04 April</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:00 Habari 8:00 Al Jazeera 9:00 Watoto wetu 10:00 Mjue Zaidi rpt 10:45 Usafiri wako rpt 11:15 Shamba lulu rpt 11:45 Mapishi rpt 12:00 Chetu ni chetu rpt 12:40 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost 14:40 Igizo rpt: Mapito 15:15 Igizo: Kibafute 16:00 Igizo rpt: Mizengwe 16:20 Igizo: Mtego 17:00 Shamsam za Pwani 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 Mapishi 18:30 Igizo: Mapito 19:00 Art and lifestyle 19:25 Jungu Kuu 20:00 Habari 21:00 Hawavumi lakini wamo 22:00 Kipindi maalum: Insta Moja 22:10 Kesho leo rpt 22:40 Isidingo rpt 01:30 DWTV</p> <p>SUNDAY 05 April</p> <p>5:30 Uwanja wa Mazoezi 6:00 HABARI 6:40 Kumekucha 7:00 Habari 8:00 Al Jazeera 9:00 Watoto Wetu 10:00 Isidingo 11:40 Igizo: Mizengwe rpt 12:00 Bongo Movie rpt 14:00 Tamasha la Michezo 15:00 Mwangaza 16:00 The Great queen Seondok 16:45 ITV Top 10 17:30 Kipindi cha kikristo 18:00 Jiji Letu 18:15 Mapishi 18:30 Matukio ya wiki 19:30 Igizo: Mtego 20:00 Habari 21:05 Kipindi Maalum: Biko 21:10 Mizengwe 21:30 Mjue Zaidi 22:15 Bongo Movie: 23:45 ITV Top 10 00:30 Telenovela rpt: Elena's Ghost</p>	<p>09:00 Drive It rpt 09:30 Turning the Spotlight rpt 10:00 Culinary delight rpt 10:30 Innovation rpt 11:00 Out n'about rpt 11:30 Sports Gazette rpt 12:00 Usafiri wako rpt 12:30 Eco@Africa rpt 13:00 Business edition rpt 13:30 Korean Drama rpt: Iljmae 14:30 Telenovela rpt: (Dónde está Elisa?) Where is Elisa? 17:15 Tanzania Yetu rpt 17:45 Bundesliga kick off 18:15 Capchat rpt 19:15 Mizengwe 19:30 The Decor 20:00 Korean Drama: Kimchi Family 21:00 Out n' About 21:30 Movie: Ground Zero 23:00 Series rpt: The Secret 01:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>Sun 29 Mar</p> <p>08:00 CNN International 09:00 In good shape 10:00 Capchat rpt 11:00 Sports Gazette rpt 11:30 Korean Drama rpt: Kimchi Family 12:00 Jagina rpt 12:30 Bundesliga Kick Off rpt 13:00 In good shape rpt 13:30 Series rpt: The Secret 15:15 Aibu yako 15:30 Drive it 16:00 Dakika 45 rpt 16:45 Mizengwe rpt 17:00 The Decor rpt 17:30 Meza huru 19:00 Turning the Spotlight rpt 19:30 Cookery pgm: Culinary Delights 20:00 Korean Drama: Kimchi Family 21:00 Shift 21:15 Capchat live 22:15 Telenovela rpt: (Dónde está Elisa?) Where is Elisa? 00:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>Mon 30 March</p> <p>06:00 Al Jazeera 07:00 Morning Jam (Via Capital Radio) 09:00 Lete Raha (Via Capital Radio) 13:00 Telenovela rpt: (Dónde está Elisa?) Where is Elisa? 14:00 Club 101 (via Capital Radio) 16:00 Series rpt: The Secret 16:30 Tanzania Yetu rpt 17:00 Eco@Africa rpt 17:30 Meza huru 19:00 The Decor rpt 19:30 Shamba lulu 20:00 Series: The Secret 20:45 The Monday Agenda 21:25 Bundes Spot 21:30 Capital Prime News 22:00 Kipima Joto 00:00 Al Jazeera</p> <p>Tues 31 March</p> <p>06:00 Al Jazeera 07:00 Morning Jam (Via Capital Radio) 09:00 Lete Raha (Via Capital Radio) 13:00 Telenovela rpt: (Dónde está Elisa?) Where is Elisa? 14:00 Club 101 (via Capital Radio) 16:00 Series rpt: The Secret</p>
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Italian engineering and design start-up Isinnova shows its technical officer Alessandro Romaioli wearing a common snorkelling mask transformed into an emergency respiratory mask with 3D-printed valves.

WORLD

Xi tells Trump
China ready to
offer US help on
virus control

BEIJING

CHINESE President Xi Jinping yesterday said that he was following closely and was concerned about the development of the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States.

In a phone conversation with US President Donald Trump, Xi said he has noticed that Trump has rolled out a series of policies and measures in response to the outbreak.

China understands the United States' current predicament and stands ready to provide support within its capacity, Xi said.

Xi also called on the United States to take substantive action in improving bilateral relations.

He president suggested that the two sides work together to boost cooperation in epidemic control and other fields, and develop a relationship of non-conflict, non-confrontation, mutual

respect and win-win cooperation.

China is willing to work with the United States and other parties to continue to support the World Health Organization (WHO) in playing an important role, Xi said.

Xi called for concerted efforts to enhance sharing of information and experience on epidemic prevention and control, accelerate cooperation in scientific research, and improve global health governance.

China has been sharing information on COVID-19 in an open, transparent and responsible manner with the WHO and countries including the United States since the onset of the epidemic, Xi said.

Xi stressed that China wasted no time in releasing such information as the genetic sequence of the virus.

China, he added, has also been sharing experience on COVID-19 prevention, containment and treatment with

out reservation, and providing as much support and assistance as it can for countries in need.

China will continue to do so, and work with the international community to prevail over the pandemic, Xi said.

Epidemics know no borders or races and are a common enemy of humankind, Xi said, adding that only by making a collective response can the international community defeat them.

Meanwhile, Xi said that China hoped for the US side to take practical and effective measures to safeguard the safety and health of Chinese citizens in the United States.

Xi noted that there are currently a large number of Chinese nationals in the United States, including Chinese students.

The Chinese government attaches great importance to their safety and health, Xi stressed.

During the call, Xi also called for concerted efforts to strengthen macroeconomic policy coordination, in order to stabilize markets, maintain growth, safeguard people's wellbeing, and ensure the openness, stability and safety of global

supply chains.

For his part, Trump said he had listened closely to Xi's speech at the Extraordinary G20 Leaders' Summit on COVID-19, and appreciates Xi's views and proposals along with other leaders.

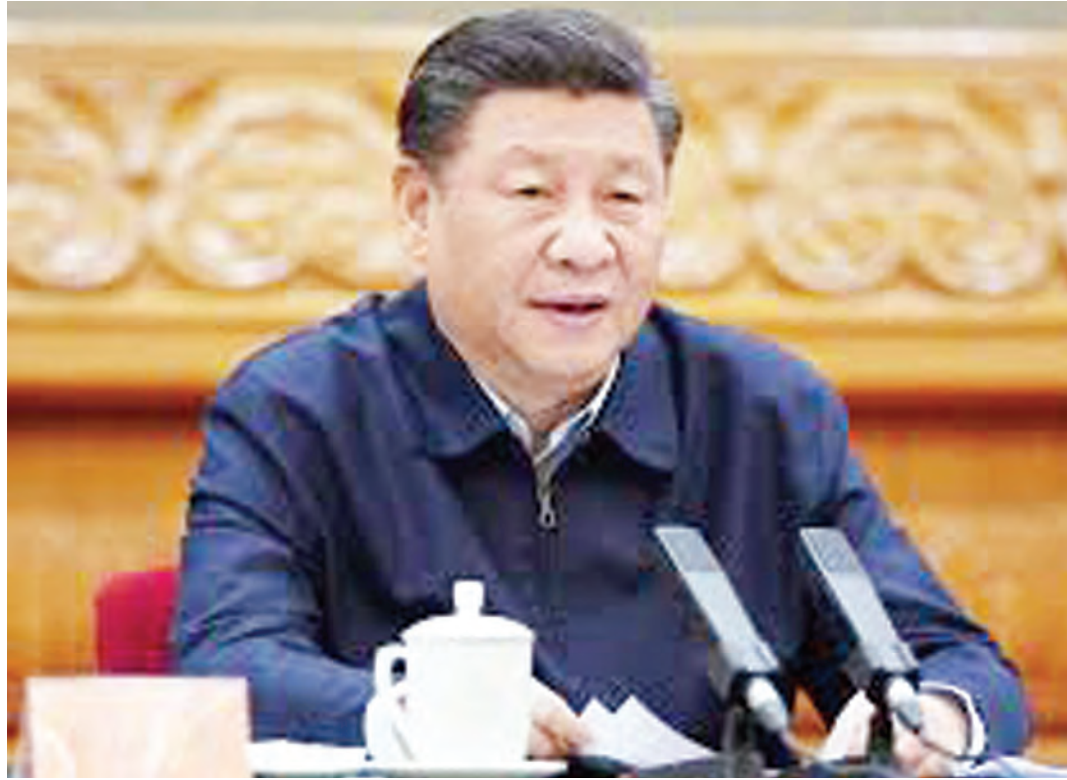
Trump said that China's experience on combating the COVID-19 epidemic was very illuminating to him.

Trump told Xi that he will make personal efforts to ensure that the United States and China can ward off distractions and concentrate on cooperation against the epidemic.

The United States is grateful for China's provision of medical supplies for its fight against the epidemic, Trump said.

The United States will protect Chinese nationals on its soil, including Chinese students, Trump said.

The US president said he has publicly made clear on social media that the American people respect and love the Chinese people very much and that Chinese students are of great significance to the US educational business. *Xinhua*



Chinese President Xi Jinping

UN chief asks for wartime
plan for COVID-19

UNITED NATIONS

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Thursday asked the Group of 20 (G20) largest economies of the world for a "wartime plan" to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We are at war with a virus -- and not winning it," Guterres told a virtual summit of G20 leaders. "This war needs a wartime plan to fight it."

It took the world three months to reach 100,000 confirmed cases of infection. The next 100,000 happened in just 12 days. The third took four days. The fourth, just one and a half, he noted.

"This is exponential growth and only the tip of the iceberg." Solidarity is essential -- among the G20 and with the developing world, including countries in conflict, he said.

He asked for a coordinated G20 response mechanism: efforts to minimize the social and economic impact, including stimulus packages; and a vision for sustainable development to ensure a healthier recovery of the world economy.

To suppress the transmission of COVID-19 as quickly as possible must be a common strategy, said Guterres. "It requires a coordinated G20 response mechanism guided by the WHO (World Health Organization)."

All countries must be able to combine systematic testing, tracing, quarantining and treatment with restrictions on movement and contact, aiming to suppress the transmission of the virus. And they have to coordinate the exit strategy to keep it suppressed until a vaccine becomes available, he said.

"At the same time, we need massive support to increase the response capacity of developing countries," he told G20 leaders.

"The G20 came of age in the 2008 financial crisis. The challenges before us dwarf those of 2008," he said.

"While the liquidity of the financial system must be assured, our emphasis must be on the human dimension. We need to concentrate on people, keeping households afloat and businesses solvent, able to protect jobs. This will require a global response reaching double-digit percentages of the global economy."

Guterres welcomed infusions of liquidity and social and economic support in developed countries -- with direct transfer of resources to people and businesses. But he also asked for a stimulus package to help developing countries with the same objectives.

Guterres asked for more resources for the International Monetary Fund and other international financial institutions, a meaningful emission of Special Drawing Rights, coordinated swaps between central banks, and steps to alleviate debt, such as a waiver of interest payments.

He also appealed for the waiving of sanctions that can undermine countries' capacity to respond to the pandemic.

Guterres asked G20 leaders to work together to set the stage for a recovery that builds a more sustainable, inclusive and equitable economy, guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

World should join G20 in anti-coronavirus fight

BEIJING

AT this trying time when the world is craving stronger global solidarity and cooperation, the Group of 20 (G20) has stepped up to the plate, seeking to take the lead again.

The message at the extraordinary G20 leaders' summit on Thursday has been an unmistakable one of unity and action as the leaders of the world's major economies have pledged an array of decisive multilateral responses, including a plan to inject over US\$5 trillion into the global economy, to fight off the raging coronavirus pandemic and the hovering prospect of a full-blown global economic recession.

The group had before championed the cause of helping put the global economy back on the track of recovery in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis.

But with both the health of humanity and the future prosperity of the world economy under threat, the job this time will be indisputably harder.

Against this backdrop, the wider world needs to join the G20 members and take substantial actions so as to win this epic battle.

A paramount task is to shore up confidence, instead of letting panic

reign.

The human race has been no stranger to highly lethal infectious diseases. Over the centuries, mankind has always managed to pull through when a deadly pathogen hit, and emerged much stronger and more experienced.

Also, the fact that China has already effectively managed to control the epidemic at home has proved that this previously unknown disease is containable and curable.

Thus if the international community can choose to come together and fight as one, victory will be within grasp.

To do that, governments around the world should join forces and give global cooperation a strong boost.

Solidarity as demonstrated by the G20, which accounts for over 80 percent of the gross world product and about two-thirds of the entire human population, has been so far the most powerful weapon to end the crisis.

Thursday's meeting has presented a comprehensive guideline to promote cooperation to share critical information, ensure adequate financing, expand manufacturing capacity to catch up with the rising demand in urgently needed medi-



Handout photo released by Brazilian Presidency showing Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro attending the G20's video conference meeting in Brasilia on Thursday. (AFP)

cal supplies, and build a global network of control and treatment. It is time to translate these proposals into actions.

The victory over the virus in one country is never a guarantee that the invisible microbe will not stage a comeback from other corners of the globe.

Therefore, the international community should also get ready to help developing and underdeveloped countries, notably those in Africa and small island states with rather vulnerable health

systems and economies, to overcome the challenge.

In this process, major international organizations like the United Nations and the World Health Organization (WHO) should play their uniquely important parts.

One other major mission for countries worldwide is to step up policy coordination, particularly in the economic and trade sectors.

Financial chiefs, central bankers and trade regulators across the world should join their G20 counterparts in coordinating

their stimulus packages like tax cuts, investment plans and loan guarantees, and facilitating global free trade so as to prop up struggling enterprises, steady the global supply chains, inject elements of certainty into global markets, and lay a solid foundation for a robust rebound when the pandemic is defeated.

Last but not least, countries worldwide need to trust each other, and stop politicizing the pandemic, as it would only encourage inaction and division, harm solidarity and put global cooperation at risk.

In their joint statement released after the summit, the G20 leaders vowed "to do whatever it takes" to overcome this common threat to humanity.

It is a call of duty not just to the world's top 20 economies, but to the entire global community. It is time to put everyone's hand to the plough.

*Xinhua*Tokyo residents stock up to
hunker down for the weekend

TOKYO

LARGE queues formed at supermarkets and stores in Tokyo yesterday as residents in the Japanese capital prepared for a weekend at home, after the city's governor called on them to remain indoors to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

Governor Yuriko Koike's plea on Wednesday to refrain from non-essential, non-urgent outings through April 12, and especially this weekend, prompted residents to stock up on everything from instant noodles and rice to toiletries and fresh produce, despite public-service warnings against hoarding.

Yuri Inoue, a 31-year-old graphic designer in Tokyo, said she was one of the "panic buyers", hoarding food for the next two weeks to allay concerns from her parents living outside Tokyo.

"If convenience stores and supermarkets will stay opened, people should stay calm. The government should emphasize that point more strongly," she told Reuters.

In one residential neighbourhood, more than a dozen people lined up for toilet paper at a local drug store. One of them, an elderly woman, leaned on her walker as she held a 10,000-yen (about US\$92) note in her hand.

Tokyo governor Koike asked for calm while repeating her pleas to refrain from weekend public gatherings.

"But I am saying you can go to supermarkets to buy food or medicines or go to hospitals," Koike said at a coronavirus meeting for the Tokyo government. *Agencies*

CHINA was praised by the international community for continuous improvement of its intellectual property (IP) system at a special meeting of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Coordination Committee held in Geneva, Switzerland on March 4 and 5.

The country's achievements in the sector has resulted in constantly enhancing quality, efficiency and international influence of its IP protection, contributing Chinese wisdom to global IP governance.

Statistics indicated that by the end of 2019, the number of invention patent applications in China had ranked first in the world for nine consecutive years.

Meanwhile, the number of international patent applications filed by Chinese applicants under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) rose to the second

World hails China for efforts on IPR protection

in the world.

China became the first country in the world that has applied a total of over one million invention patents in a single year and the third country holding over one million valid patents, after the U.S. and Japan.

WIPO Director General Francis Gurry recently described China's IP development as a remarkable journey and a remarkable story. He said China places IP at a strategic high level, pays attention to IP protection in all economic fields, and has made remarkable achievements in promoting the country's R&D and innovation.

China has made impressive efforts and progress in IP protection, said Alexandre Ribet, French patent engineer and intellectual property consultant in



A worker is cutting metal wearing a mask at a workshop of an iron-ware plant in Heshan, a county-level city of Jiangmen in the southern part of Guangdong province, Feb. 13. Photo by People's Daily

Europe.

He explained that the measures China has introduced in recent years, such as promoting utility model patents with tax

policy, are effective, and have set good examples for other countries.

China's achievements in IP protection are obvious to all,

said Awoumou, Chargé d'Affaires of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cameroon to United Office, the World Trade Organization and other international organizations in Geneva.

Awoumou stressed that China's efforts in the field should be acknowledged in a fair and objective way. The country has continually revised and improved relevant laws and regulations on IP protection and rolled out new policies to strengthen its capabilities in this respect, making rapid progress, he said.

In recent years, China has achieved a series of results in protecting the legitimate rights of foreign-funded enterprises, improving the quality and efficiency of intellectual property review as well as optimizing the punitive compensation system.

By strengthening the IP protection, the country has created a world-class business environment and is attracting more and more foreign enterprises.

China's ease of doing business ranking climbed to 31st in 2019 and the country is among top 10 improvers for a second consecutive year, according to Doing Business 2020, an annual report published by the World Bank.

The measures taken by the Chinese government have protected and stimulated enterprises' enthusiasm for innovation, which are helpful for both Chinese companies and foreign companies in China, said Hanaut Bresson, General Manager of European Financial Market Association in Paris.

Bresson pointed out that

China has continued improving innovation capability and provided more incentives and stronger support for companies than other countries did, which has attracted many international innovative enterprises.

The inter-enterprise cooperation on innovation has facilitated cooperation among cities, and further promoted the global scientific development and innovative cooperation, Bresson added.

Jayanath Colombage, Additional Secretary to President for Foreign Relations of Sri Lanka noted that China has strengthened international cooperation on IP protection by the joint construction of the Belt and Road Initiative in recent years. He believes that the country will play a bigger part in global IP governance.

People's Daily

US has most coronavirus cases in the world

WASHINGTON

THE number of US coronavirus infections climbed above 85,000 on Thursday, surpassing the national tallies of China and Italy, as New York, New Orleans and other hot spots faced a surge in hospitalizations and looming shortages of supplies, staff and sick beds.

The country reported 85,840 as of 11:47 pm ET on Thursday (0347 GMT Friday), according to the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University.

The nationwide tally grew after over 10,000 cases were recorded in less than five hours. The state of New York has become the epicenter of the country's outbreak with nearly 40,000 cases reported. New Jersey and California have reported 6,876 and 3,802 cases, respectively, according to the center.

Total COVID-19-linked deaths in the United States reached 1,296, while at least 281 of them occurred in New York and 100 in Kings County of Washington state.

President Donald Trump told governors Thursday in a letter that his administration will classify regions by levels of risk for COVID-19 in the next phase of response to the pandemic.

In the letter, Trump said expanded testing capabilities in the country would enable the federal government to label "high-risk, medium-risk and low-risk" counties with differentiated social distancing requirements.

Meanwhile, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo said the state's hospitals will be overwhelmed under almost any realistic scenario in the coronavirus, as the hardest hit state in the US reported an additional 100 deaths between Wednesday and Thursday.

Scarcities of protective masks, gloves, gowns and eyewear for doctors and nurses have emerged as a national problem.

Separately, US Navy officials said that all 5,000 personnel aboard the aircraft carrier Theodore Roosevelt will be tested for the coronavirus after the number of sailors on the ship who have tested positive for the virus



People stand at a distant from each other as they wait to enter a COVID-19 testing site at The Brooklyn Hospital Center, in New York, on Thursday. AP

increased.

As of Thursday, 280 US service members around the world had tested positive for the coronavirus, including 104 from the Navy.

The US House of Representatives will begin a two-hour debate on the US\$2.2 trillion coronavirus aid bill on Friday.

EU pledges close cooperation

The European Union (EU) pledged on Thursday close cooperation in response to the novel coronavirus pandemic, vowing to address issues ranging from medical supplies to internal market.

The EU is prioritizing maintaining open borders for goods to flow and the hunt for a vaccine against the coronavirus, European Council President Charles Michel said in a video conference of EU leaders.

Leaders of the EU and its member states issued a joint statement after the conference, recognizing the most acute priority as "ensuring urgent and adequate provision of medical equipment throughout the EU".

The European Commission was asked to explore ways to speed up the EU's joint procurement initiatives for personal protective equipment, ventilators and testing supplies.

The leaders also recognized increasing testing capacities as a matter of urgency, based on recommendations from the World Health Organization, according to the statement. **Xinhua**

Putin urges G20 to lift sanctions on essential goods due to COVID-19

MOSCOW

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin urged Thursday the leaders of the Group of 20 (G20) to lift all sanctions on supplies of essential goods until the COVID-19 pandemic is under control.

"It is important for the period of crisis to create the so-called green corridors, free from trade wars and sanctions for the mutual supply of medicines, food, equipment and technology," Putin said, addressing the G20 virtual summit, according to an official Kremlin transcript.

According to Putin, ideally, a joint moratorium should be introduced on restrictions on essential goods, as well as financial transactions for their procurement.

Putin said that problems associated with the new pandemic may result in more widespread shocks than the financial crisis of 2008-2009, and trade conflicts and sanctions exacerbate the recession.

He said G20 countries need a common plan of action to stabilize the situation, support economies and restore confidence in world markets.

Global international organizations do not have a mechanism for automatic stabilization in the event of a crisis, so it is necessary to reorganize them efficiently and as soon as possible, Putin said.

He said that it is necessary to ensure access to financing for countries that are hit by the pandemic and experiencing resource shortages.

For this purpose he proposed to create a special fund under the auspices of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), financed primarily by the central banks, which are issuers of currencies included in the IMF basket.

Then the right may be granted to any IMF member to borrow from this fund in proportion to its share in the world economy at a zero rate for the long term, Putin said. **Agencies**

Kremlin demands those who disseminate fake news on coronavirus must face legal punishment

MOSCOW

THE Kremlin supports the law enforcers' active struggle against false reports about the scale of the coronavirus spread in Russia, Russian presidential spokesman, Dmitry Peskov told the media.

"This is absolutely correct in a situation like this, because media rumors and fakes often trigger a rather painful reaction from the people and stoke tensions, which should be avoided," he said. "In such situations it must be punishable by law."

Peskov (pictured) added

that he knew nothing about excessively strict measures by the law enforcers. Commenting on an incident in which a social network user was fined 300,000 rubles (nearly \$4,000) for spreading allegations the authorities were purportedly concealing the real scale of the coronavirus infection in the region, the spokesman said that if it was an open account, then the incident should be interpreted as an attempt to spread false information in the world web.

"The law enforcers' measures were totally justified," he concluded.



Russia's Investigative Committee has created a working group for the prevention of attempts to spread false information about the coronavirus (COVID-19) situation in the country.

Dissemination of coronavirus fakes is chargeable under part 1 of article 237 of the Criminal Code (distortion of information about events, facts and phenomena that pose a threat

to people's life and health) and part 4 of article 128.1 of the Criminal Code (slandering statements that a person suffers from a disease posing a threat to others).

Whilst under part 1 of article 237 of the Criminal Code those responsible for spreading fakes might face a fine of up to 300,000 rubles to two years of compulsory works or imprisonment, the other article envisages a fine that is ten times larger.

Thus under part 4 of article 128.1 of the Criminal Code culprits may be fined up to 3,000,000 rubles (\$40,000) or

a three-year wage. Up to 400 hours of mandatory works is an alternative. An outbreak of the novel coronavirus-related disease in central China late last year has spread to more than 190 countries.

The World Health Organization has declared a pandemic.

According to the latest statistics, more than 549,200 people have contracted the virus around the world. The disease has claimed 24,860 lives. In Russia, 1,036 patients have been diagnosed with COVID-19. Forty five have recovered and been released from hospital. Three died. **Agencies**

Wuhan no longer at 'high risk' of coronavirus outbreak

WUHAN/BEIJING

WUHAN has had its coronavirus risk evaluation downgraded from "high risk" to "medium risk," a local health official said at a press conference yesterday.

The coronavirus risk evaluation for five districts of Xinzhou, Huangpi, Jiangxia, Caijian and Dongxiu have been further lowered to "low risk," said Liu Dongru, deputy head of the provincial health commission, who declared the transmission of the coronavirus epidemic in the main battlefield in Wuhan, the hardest-hit city by the virus, has been "basically blocked."

Wuhan only reported one newly confirmed case of the novel coronavirus disease since March 18.

The health commission of Hubei, where Wuhan is the capital, said yesterday the province also registered zero increase in new COVID-19 cases on Thursday.

Hubei saw 5 newly reported deaths, four of which were in Wuhan.

No new suspected cases were reported Thursday in the province.

Hubei so far reported a total of 67,801 COVID-19 confirmed cases, including 50,006 in Wuhan.

The province saw 530 patients discharged from hospital after recovery Thursday. Among the 2,896 patients being treated in hospital, 754 were still in severe



Staff members check the body temperature of a worker at a construction site in Wuhan, central China's Hubei province, on Thursday. XINHUA

condition and another 245 in critical condition, according to the commission.

Nationwide, the National Health Commission said Friday it received reports of 55 new confirmed COVID-19 cases on the Chinese mainland on Thursday, of which 54 were imported.

A new domestic case was reported in Zhejiang province, the commission said.

Of the imported cases, 17 were reported in Shanghai, 12 in Guangdong province, and four in Beijing and Tianjin respectively. The Inner Mongolia autonomous region, Zhejiang province and Fujian province each reported three cases. Shandong and Yunnan provinces both reported two.

The provinces of Liaoning, Jiangsu, Sichuan and Shaanxi

each reported one. By the end of Thursday, 595 imported cases had been reported, according to the commission.

Also on Thursday, five deaths and 49 new suspected cases were reported on the mainland, according to the commission.

On Thursday, 537 people were discharged from the hospital after recovery, while the number of severe cases decreased by 201 to 1,034.

The overall confirmed cases on the mainland had reached 81,340 by the end of Thursday, including 3,460 patients who were still being treated, 74,588 patients who had been discharged after recovery, and 3,292 people who died of the disease.

The commission said that 189 people were still suspected of being infected with the virus.

The commission added that 16,005 close contacts were still under medical observation. On Thursday, 837 people were released from medical observation.

By the end of Thursday, 453 confirmed cases including four deaths had been reported in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), 33 confirmed cases in the Macao SAR, and 252 in Taiwan including two deaths.

A total of 110 patients in Hong Kong, 10 in Macao and 29 in Taiwan had been discharged from the hospital after recovery.

Xinhua

Canada attacks 'damaging' Trump plan to deploy troops at border

OTTAWA/WASHINGTON

CANADA on Thursday slammed a US proposal to deploy troops along their undefended border to help fight the spread of the coronavirus, saying the idea was unnecessary and would damage relations.

The uncompromising comments were a surprise, since Ottawa has enjoyed smooth relations with US President Donald Trump's administration over the past 18 months. Last week, the two nations agreed to close the border to non-essential travel to ease the outbreak's strain on health systems.

The Wall Street Journal reported on Thursday evening that Washington had dropped consideration of the plan, citing an unnamed US official. Reuters could not immediately confirm the report.

Canadian Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland had made clear the Liberal government had no time for a plan to send hundreds of troops to the border to boost security.

"Canada is strongly opposed to this US proposal and we have made that opposition very, very clear ... this is an entirely unnecessary step which we would view as damaging to



Canada's Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland speaks during a news conference on Parliament Hill March 18, 2020 in Ottawa, Ontario. AFP

our relationship," Freeland told a news conference.

"The public health situation does not require such action," she said, noting Washington had yet to take a final decision.

Speaking at the White House, Trump appeared to lack details on the possible troop deployment and said he would look into the matter.

He said it would be "equal justice" since the US military had deployed to play a support role on the border with Mexico.

A US official familiar with the matter said that US Customs and Border Protection was stressed on the northern border because virtually all patrol officers and border crossing officials were shifted to the south-

ern border, where they are supplemented by a brigade from the 101st Airborne Division, a Marine battalion and National Guard personnel.

The Canada-US border stretches 8,891 km and is a crossing point for one of the world's largest bilateral trading relationships.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said earlier that Ottawa was in touch with US authorities and would adjust border security measures if needed.

The United States now has the most coronavirus cases in the world, with over 82,000 infections and more than 1,200 deaths.

Agencies

AS Chinese children's literature works and picture books are gaining more and more foreign readers in recent years, international awards in this field are no longer something new to the Chinese writers and illustrators.

Lately, the book *White Fox* by Chinese author Chen Jiatong was listed by *Financial Times* as one of the best children's books in 2019.

White Fox is the first Chinese children's book introduced to the UK by world-renowned publisher Barry Cunningham, the man who discovered JK Rowling and other excellent authors.

Cunningham spoke highly of the book, saying that it attracts readers from all over the world with the Chinese narrative, compelling content and exquisite character design, as well as the hu-

Chinese children's books get more overseas exposure

morous and warm description.

China has 367 million readers under the age of 18, and nearly 900 million books are printed every year. Chinese parents pay high attention to and have a huge demand for children's books, so the Chinese market has a big appetite for high-quality products, and the industry was massively introducing foreign children's books.

Bai Bing, editor-in-chief of China's Jieli Publishing House, said by importing copyrights, Chinese writers and the publishing industry have learned a lot and progressed quickly. Now, Chinese children's books have seen a huge improvement in quality, he added. In 2016, Chinese novelist Cao

Wenxuan won the Hans Christian Andersen Award. In June 2019, Chinese author Liu Xianping won the Honorary Award at the Bianki International Literature Awards with his novel *Lonely Elk King*.

In October the same year, Zhu Chengliang, a Chinese author and illustrator of children's books, won the Golden Apple Award at the 27th Biennale of Illustrations Bratislava (BIB) 2019 for his picture book *Don't Let the Sun Fall*, becoming the fifth Chinese author to win the world's earliest non-commercial international illustrators' award sponsored by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The BIB is sponsored by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). It is the world's earliest non-commercial international illustrators' award and Zhu is the fifth Chinese author to win the award.

Last year, a publishing house in Slovakia inked an agreement with the Encyclopedia of China Publishing House, agreeing to introduce the latter's encyclopedia of space for children. The Slovakian institute hailed the book for its solid and reliable content and high quality after it invited senior scientific publishers to review the book.

The success of Chinese chil-

ren's books relies on excellent writing and design, as well as diversified Chinese-foreign cooperation.

The Chinese children's book publishing industry has gained more confidence as a large number of high-quality works are being produced.

"Now, we fully follow internationally recognized copyright rules in introducing our children's books to overseas markets. We are ready to have our books tested in markets," said Ma Lina, director of the center on international cooperation of Encyclopedia of China Publishing House.

At international book fairs such as the Bologna Children's

Book Fair in Italy, Frankfurt Book Fair in Germany, and Abu Dhabi International Book Fair, exhibition booths of Chinese children's book publishers are attracting attention from more and more foreign exhibitors.

The Beijing-based Daylight Publishing House is now working with Norwegian publisher Svein Størksen on a China-Norway picture book co-creation project. Each side will invite three authors and three illustrators to work on the project.

The six people will work in pairs to create six picture books, which will be simultaneously published in the two countries.

According to Zhang Yuntao,

editor-in-chief of Daylight Publishing House, the cooperation helps them gain a deeper understanding of the Norwegian market and the needs of its readers, and they can also learn something from the foreign publisher's creation and operation.

"We have introduced our products to the foreign market, and now we need to go deeper," Zhang said.

By jointly creating picture books, the two sides can deepen exchanges and cultural cooperation.

This international cooperation could gather the advantages of both sides for deeper exploration of the international market, the Norwegian publisher said.

People's Daily



Kevin Durant

In sports, coronavirus shows no respect for stars or youth

PARIS

HIGH-LEVEL sports was one of the first social activities shut down by the coronavirus pandemic and many athletes, who play in front of crowds and train with team-mates, have been among the high-profile victims.

While only one sports personality, the 76-year-old former Real Madrid president, Lorenzo Sanz, has so far died, those infected spread across the age range and the sporting spectrum, with clusters in Italian football, the NBA and cycling.

The numbers could be higher because not all clubs are testing.

Valladolid in the Spanish Liga rejected test kits saying they should be used on those who need them.

The NBA's Golden State Warriors said they would only test players with symptoms.

"We're treating ourselves like people, which is what we are," said general manager Bob Myers. "We're just a basketball team."

Here, AFP Sport looks at some of the most high-profile cases.

-- Sanz, who died on March 21, was in charge of Real Madrid from 1995-2000, overseeing two Champions League titles.

"My father has just passed away. He did not deserve this ending and in this way," tweeted his son, Lorenzo Sanz junior.

-- On March 17, while the International Olympic Committee and local organisers were still insisting the Tokyo Games would go ahead as scheduled this summer, Japan Olympic Committee deputy chief Kozo Tashima said he had contracted coronavirus.

"I have a mild fever. Examinations showed a symptom of pneumonia, but I'm fine," the 62-year-old Tashima said in a statement, issued via the Japan Football Association, which he also heads.

-- Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta tested positive for COVID-19. The English Premier League was suspended the day after the Gunners announced Arteta had tested positive.

As a result of the Spaniard's diagnosis, the Arsenal squad were sent into self-isolation for 14 days.

-- Callum Hudson-Odoi, the 19-year-old Chelsea and England winger on March 13 became the first Premier League player to test positive.

The club said at the time that the teenager was "doing well."

-- Among other young, rising, stars to catch the virus is 20-year-old Brazilian tennis player Thiago Seyboth Wild who announced on Wednesday that he had tested positive.

He said he started feeling ill "about 10 days ago."

That came after a globe-trotting period typical of the tennis circuit.

On March 1, Seyboth Wild won his first ATP title in Santiago Chile. The following week he played in a Davis Cup tie in Adelaide, Australia.

"I really don't think he's the only player who has it," former player Lindsey Davenport told Tennis Channel. "We have

so many players all over the world."

-- Former NBA season MVP, Kevin Durant, a 31-year-old forward former NBA most valuable player, is one of four Brooklyn Nets players to have tested positive. The forward had been sitting out the season recovering from an Achilles injury.

-- Utah Jazz star Rudy Gobert tested positive for the virus. The Frenchman had to apologise after pointedly touching every microphone and voice recorder on a table in front of him at a media conference, only to then test positive for COVID-19.

-- Defender Daniele Rugani at Italian champions Juventus was the first player from Italy's Serie A to test positive.

Since then, team-mates Blaise Matuidi, a World Cup winner with France, and star striker Paulo Dybala have tested positive.

-- Former AC Milan defender Paolo Maldini, another World Cup winner, and his footballer son Daniel announced they were positive.

-- Six players at Sampdoria, Bartosz Bereszynski, Albin Ekdal, Morten Thorsby, Antonio La Gumina, Manolo Gabbiadini and Fabio Depaoli, along with team doctor Amedeo Baldari, have tested positive. But team-mate Omar Colley said reports that he had tested positive were wrong.

-- In Spain, centre-backs Ezequiel Garay from Argentina and Frenchman Eliaquim Mangala are among five cases.

-- In Germany, Luca Kilian is among four known cases in the Bundesliga but the news is good for the 20-year-old Paderborn defender. The club's sporting director, Martin Przdondzono, told German media Kilian "had two days of real trouble, with fever and chills, but he's better now."

-- 'Understand the bump'

-- Sean Payton, the long-time head coach of the New Orleans Saints in the NFL, announced March 19 that he has coronavirus.

"If people understand the curve, and understand the bump, we can easily work together as a country to reduce it," 56-year-old Peyton, who led the Saints to their only Super Bowl victory in 2009.

-- Another iconic coach, Fatih Terim, 66-year-old manager of Istanbul football giants Galatasaray, has tested positive.

-- Belgian midfielder Marouane Fellaini, the former Manchester United and Everton midfielder who is with Shandong Luneng Taishan in China also reported that he had tested positive.

-- Former England cricketer Alex Hales self-isolated after showing symptoms. Two other England cricketers, Tom Curran and Jade Dernbach, who had gone out to play darts with Hales to celebrate Curran's 25th birthday, also self-isolated.

-- The first sportspeople to be hit by the virus were at cycling's UAE Tour in late February. One of the victims, Colombian rider Fernando Gaviria tweeted on March 12: "I'm okay and I'm feeling good". But as recently as Monday, cycling media were reporting that he was one of eight people still quarantined in a hospital in Abu Dhabi.

AFP

Weeks of anguish and a 'black box' - Inside Tokyo's decision to delay the Olympics

TOKYO/LAUSANNE

OFFICIALS in charge of staging Tokyo's Olympic Games crowded around a low table inside Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's residence late Tuesday, wincing as they spoke by phone with the head of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

Minutes later, Abe emerged to inform a gaggle of reporters that he had just spoken with Thomas Bach, the IOC's president, and that they had agreed to officially delay the Tokyo Olympics.

The evening call between Abe and Bach concluded days and weeks of negotiations between Tokyo and Lausanne, where the IOC is based, and came after repeated public denials by Japanese officials that a pandemic might derail the Games.

Through interviews with more than a dozen people involved in the process over recent weeks, Reuters has pieced together an account of the frenetic days that led to Tuesday's announcement.

It was an extraordinary turnaround for an Olympics that was expected to be held without major issues by a country known for public safety and economic stability. It also revealed a fatal miscalculation by Japanese and IOC officials of public sentiment at a time of heightened fears over the coronavirus.

In the days leading up to the decision, organizers of the Games were under pressure from major players in global sports: sponsors wanting updates on event plans, powerful sports federations worried about athlete safety, and Japanese officials seeking to maintain a united front to support the 2020 Games.

But ultimately, it was the growing chorus of concerns from famous athletes and nations under lockdown that sunk Tokyo's hopes to hold the Olympics as planned in July, according to senior officials at the IOC and on Tokyo's organising committee.

Japan's government did not respond to an emailed request for comment.

BREWING TROUBLE
The first inkling of trouble came in February as the coronavirus began to spread outside of China, where it emerged late last year.

When asked on Feb 14 about the rising number of cases in China, John Coates, a member of the IOC's Coordination Commission for Tokyo, brushed off questions from reporters about contingency plans, saying the country had been able to monitor its athletes "since day one". Most of them had been preparing for



FILE PHOTO: Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, President of the Tokyo 2020 Organizing Committee Yoshiro Mori, Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike, Olympic Minister Seiko Hashimoto and Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga attend a telephone conference with International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach (not pictured) at Abe's official residence in Tokyo, Japan March 24, 2020, in this photo released by Japan's Cabinet Public Relations Office via Kyodo. Mandatory credit Japan's Cabinet Public Relations Office via Kyodo/via REUTERS

the Games overseas and would therefore not need to be quarantined on arrival in Japan, he said.

A few weeks later, after Abe had taken the unprecedented step of closing schools across the country, Yoshiro Mori, the head of the 2020 organising committee, spoke in unusually blunt terms when asked by a reporter about making changes to the Olympic schedule.

"I'm not God so I don't know," he said on March 4.

But behind the scenes in early March, government and central bank officials in Japan were already weighing the risk of cancellation as they drafted projections for this year's economic outlook, sources with direct knowledge of the matter said.

Japanese corporate sponsors who had spent a record \$3 billion (2.46 billion pounds) to participate in the Olympics were also growing increasingly anxious as the number of virus cases ticked upward, according to multiple sources at various companies.

Those corporations, already holding regular meetings with organizers to discuss the evolving situation, privately voiced concern about flip-flopping public messages coming from officials, representatives from half a dozen sponsors said.

Various sponsors involved in the talks felt hamstrung in the chaotic situation, saying they had not been given assurances about what would happen to funds they had contributed to the Olympics if there was a cancellation or postponement, they said.

"We've already spent a lot of money on Olympics-related marketing campaigns and pre-Games events, and we are not going to get the money back," said one source at a major Japanese sponsor. She said employees involved in the event were "floored" upon hearing Abe's remarks.

A representative at another Japanese sponsor said they still had not heard specifics about the

delayed Games.

Another official at a top-tier Japanese sponsor said it seemed as if decisions were being made in "a black box".

In an emailed response to Reuters' questions, Tokyo 2020 organizers said they were unable to disclose details of individual contracts with sponsors for confidentiality reasons.

"We are reviewing all individual aspects of the postponement of the Games and will announce information as soon as possible," the committee said.

On March 16, Abe held a video conference with leaders from the Group of Seven nations and used it to lay the groundwork for a postponement of the Olympics, a government source close to Abe said.

Abe had already spoken to U.S. President Donald Trump after the American leader referred to a one-year postponement.

By that time, Japanese Olympic officials had realized the event could not go on as planned in July, but they could not talk about it publicly, a senior official at the organising committee told Reuters.

Two days after the G7 call, it was announced that the deputy head of the Japanese Olympic Committee tested positive for the coronavirus.

Kozo Tashima, who also heads the country's football association, attended a meeting with Mori and other influential leaders of Tokyo 2020 a week prior.

"It was definitely the moment it all became real for us," a Japanese national committee official said.

By mid-March, the number of deaths caused by the coronavirus had more than quadrupled to 7,980 worldwide from a month prior. The death toll is now over 22,000.

Meanwhile in Lausanne, sources familiar with deliberations within the IOC said Bach and other officials had underestimated

the tide of public opinion turning against the event.

When asked for comment from Bach, the IOC's press office did not respond to specific questions and directed Reuters to a transcript of a recent conference call in which he said that the decision to postpone the Games was based on "the developments with the dynamic spreading of the coronavirus".

The IOC asked various national Olympic committees over the weekend to open up training centres so their athletes could prepare for Tokyo, the sources in Lausanne said, even as countries like Germany and Spain were sealing borders and ordering large-scale lockdowns.

Representatives from some of the countries had tried explaining to Bach how it wasn't possible for their athletes to train, citing travel restrictions and curfews, they said.

"But Bach was only thinking about holding the Games in July as planned," one of those sources said.

Bach, who was a lawyer by profession before ascending to the top IOC position in 2013, told The New York Times on March 19 that the Olympics were four and a half months away, and that speculation on alternate plans was "premature".

But on Sunday, the sources said the IOC called an emergency meeting of its executive board after more athletes began voicing health concerns.

The IOC initially hoped the board meeting might "buy it a bit more time," one of the sources said.

A Canadian IOC member, Dick Pound, said Tokyo and the Olympic committee weren't ready to make the decision until they saw the "logarithmic increase" in cases in the United States and elsewhere, which contrasted with more settled conditions in Japan and China.

REUTERS

Tendulkar digs deep for India's coronavirus fight

MUMBAI

BATTING great Sachin Tendulkar has contributed 5 million rupees (54,967.59 pounds) to India's fight against the coronavirus outbreak, a source close to the former cricketer has confirmed.

Tendulkar, who also took part in Australia's bushfire charity game in February, contributed 2.5 million rupees each to his state government of Maharashtra and the Prime Minister's relief fund, the source told Reuters.

The 46-year-old remains the world's leading run-scorer in tests and one-day internationals, with more than 34,000 runs and 100 centuries. His 24-year career ended in 2013.

India has confirmed 724 infections, of which 17 have died. Glob-

ally, over 24,000 have died from the virus, according to a Reuters tally.

India has announced a lockdown of 21 days until April 14 to fight the virus, which emerged in China late last year and has brought sporting events around the world to a halt.

The fate of the popular Indian Premier League Twenty20 tournament, which was scheduled to be held at the end of the month, remains unclear. It has already been postponed until April 15 at the earliest.

While India's cricket board (BCCI), the richest cricket organisation in the world, has yet to announce any donations to the fight against the outbreak, its state units have come forward to help

the national and regional governments.

The Mumbai Cricket Association gave 5 million rupees, the Saurashtra Cricket Association donated 4.2 million while the Cricket Association of Bengal contributed 2.5 million.

"Mumbai Cricket Association will support the Govt. of Maharashtra in any way possible in its fight against this pandemic," the association said.

BCCI chief and former captain Sourav Ganguly has promised to provide free rice worth 5 million rupees to those in need.

A number of Indian cricketers, including national team captain Virat Kohli, have also reached out to their followers on social media, urging them to not leave

their homes for three weeks as mandated by the country's government.

Kohli and actress wife Anushka Sharma have a combined 142 million followers on Twitter and Instagram.

"These are testing times and we need to wake up to the seriousness of this situation," Kohli said in a video message.

"Please let us all follow what's been told to us and stand united, please. It's a plea to everyone. Stay at home and save your family from coronavirus."

Athletes from other disciplines have also made financial contributions while some have pledged their salaries to the government to provide relief measures.

REUTERS

Club sacks players who refused coronavirus pay cut

BRUSSELS

SWISS side FC Sion have sacked nine first-team players after they refused to take a pay cut due to the coronavirus outbreak, with the head of the Swiss players' union (SAFP) calling the club's the decision "outrageous".

Like football around the world, the Swiss league has been brought to a standstill, depriving clubs of much of their income for possibly several months.

Sion dismissed nine players, telling Reuters in an email that they had refused to be put on part-time work in accordance with government directives.

"It's not acceptable to behave like that," SAFP president Lucien Valloni told Reuters.

"If a crisis appears, you have to look after your employees and not put a gun to their head and tell them they have 24 hours to decide on a [wage] a reduction or not, and then if they say no -- which is their right -- they are sacked. That is really outrageous."

Valloni said it was premature to consider salary cuts and that clubs should look for more wide-ranging solutions.

"I think it was a bad sign, a wrong sign, and not a sign for solidarity," he added. "Even before Sion did that, we were looking to find a solution for everybody and players were ready to help the clubs but

salary reduction is premature."

Club president Christian Constantin said after the sackings that "there is no point in me keeping players who don't want to make an effort when everyone else has to make an effort."

"I told them that their [reduced] wage is practically the salary of two or three nurses working hard to save lives today," he added.

Constantin has employed around 40 coaches since he took over the club in 2003, including himself for a short stint.

Sion were kicked out of the Europa League in 2011 for fielding an ineligible player and banned from European football for a year in 2018 over a transfer debt with another club.

In the same year Constantin was banned for 14 months, later reduced to nine, for slapping a television pundit.

"I was shocked and the players were shocked as well, even though it is Mr. Constantin and FC Sion.... this was something which topped everything we have seen before," Valloni said.

He pointed out that players were still working even without playing matches.

"They have individual training programmes, so they work from home...but they are still working, so why should they not be paid?" Valloni added.

(Agencies)

Bernabeu, Maracana used to combat coronavirus

MADRID

MADRID's Santiago Bernabeu stadium and Rio de Janeiro's Maracana sports complex are being used to their respective countries' efforts to stem the coronavirus crisis.

Real Madrid's home stadium will be utilized as a makeshift storage facility as Spain faces an uphill battle against the pandemic, the club announced on Thursday in conjunction with the country's Superior Sports Council.

Following confirmation that Real Madrid will donate much-needed medical equipment to hospitals in the Spanish capital, the club has handed control of the Bernabeu to the Higher Council for Sports (CSD), which will manage the stadium's use as a storage centre for medical equipment and supplies during the crisis.

"Thanks to the close collaboration between these two institutions [CSD and Real Madrid], the stadium will become an adapted space to store donations of healthcare supplies destined to fight this pandemic," the CSD said in a statement.

Home to Real Madrid since 1944, the Bernabeu has hosted the 1982 World Cup final and several UEFA Champions League finals.

Spain is second only to Italy in numbers of deaths due to the virus, with the toll passing 4,000 on Thursday. Over 56,000 people have so far tested positive for the coronavirus in the country. The lockdown in Spain is expected to be extended once the initial 15-day measure is completed this weekend.

Meanwhile, Brazilian authorities will use the Maracana, which includes the world famous football stadium, as a temporary hospital to help fight coronavirus.

(Agencies)

No more €100m transfers after virus - Hoeness

BERLIN

FORMER Bayern Munich president Uli Hoeness has said football will never be the same following the coronavirus crisis and suggested there will be no transfers in excess of €100 million in the near future.

Like almost every league around the world, the Bundesliga is bracing for the economic impact of the coronavirus crisis. The two top flights are suspended until early April, but with the clubs likely to follow a recommendation of the league's chair, the suspension is set to be extended until April 30 at a general meeting next week.

The income of German clubs stands on three pillars -- ticketing, broadcasting and sponsoring -- with the former making up 12.9% of the total revenue according to the DFL economy report 2020, published in February. Sponsoring and broadcasting add up to 57.9% and numbers could significantly drop as football has come to a standstill.

"It all stands and falls with the fact if we can play again this season," Hoeness, who left his post as Bayern president in November, told kicker. "Games without fans still guarantee the distribution of TV income and if that happens there will not be any existential problems for the 2019-20 season.

Lessons from China as coronavirus-hit football faces difficult return

SHANGHAI

WITH nagging concerns about coronavirus sweeping through teams and players scattered across the world, unable or hesitant to return, China is finding that restarting football is no simple matter.

The problems faced by China, one of the first countries to suspend football and the epicentre of the pandemic, could be a glimpse into the future for other leagues called off around the world.

The Chinese Super League (CSL) was a harbinger of the collapse of global sport when officials announced in January that the February 22 start date had been indefinitely postponed.

Last week there were claims that with the peak of coronavirus -- which emerged in China in December -- seemingly over in the country, the CSL could start on April 18. May 2 was also mentioned.

But then came the first confirmed coronavirus case in Chinese football, a Brazilian in the second tier, one of a wave of imported cases that has put China on alert for a second virus emergency.

And on Sunday former Manchester United midfielder Marouane Fellaini, now with Shandong Luneng, said he had tested positive, becoming the first known case in the CSL.

On Thursday the respected Soccer News said the season has now been pushed back to late May or early June.

However, tough government restrictions announced later Thursday that partially seal off China,



The Chinese Super League has been suspended indefinitely (AFP Photo)

reducing international flights and barring foreigners, throw even those dates into question.

Suggestions that basketball, the other major sport in China, could restart in early April have also fizzled out, dealing a blow to government attempts to portray China as getting back to normal.

"If more cases occur in the future, the date of the Chinese Super League restart will be postponed again," Soccer News warned.

Both Fellaini -- one of the biggest names in Chinese

football -- and Brazilian forward Dorielton tested positive for the coronavirus after returning from abroad.

Bakambu's baby dilemma -

Foreign leagues suspended by coronavirus will be watching how the CSL fares in getting off the ground, but the lingering threat of infections is not the only barrier.

Chinese teams are training for the new campaign but numerous foreign players and coaches are still in their home nations and face

being locked out of the country.

Late Thursday, China slashed the number of international flights and said that even foreigners with valid visas and resident permits will be blocked from entering after midnight Saturday.

Some of the CSL's most expensive players, including the Brazilians Oscar, Hulk and Paulinho, face a race against time.

With global travel badly disrupted, wealthier clubs could charter planes to fetch their foreign stars. But it appears inevitable

that some will miss the Saturday deadline.

Those that do return will then need to go into isolation for a fortnight in case they are infected, adding another delay.

They would then need time to get fit for the rigours of a condensed campaign.

Congolese striker Cedric Bakambu gave an insight into the dilemmas players confront balancing their professional and personal obligations at a worrying time.

The 28-year-old has been ordered back to CSL runners-up Beijing Guoan, which would mean leaving his heavily pregnant wife behind in France.

Bakambu said that even though China is now considered safer than Europe, overseas players in China face the prospect of not seeing their families for several months if they go back -- he risks missing the birth of his second child.

"Knowing that I must leave without knowing when I can come back to see my son and my wife, who is due to give birth in a month, this is what is most difficult to live with," he told L'Equipe.

AFP

How Belarus is fighting the coronavirus: Vodka first, football second

BY ARTUR PETROSYAN, ESPN.COM WRITER

BELARUSIAN football is not something even the most fanatical game lovers across the globe have been following over the years. Belarus is ranked 32nd out of 56 UEFA member associations, between Liechtenstein and Israel, while the national team -- ranked 87th, between Haiti and Zambia, in the FIFA World Ranking -- has never qualified for any major tournaments. (The best effort: finishing third in their World Cup qualifying group, two points shy of reaching the play-offs... in 2002.)

Yet it does get into the world's news feed from time to time, albeit for different reasons. Like, in 2012, when Brendan Rodgers' Liverpool travelled to play a Europa League tie against FC Gomel, the players, staff and traveling fans were advised to abstain from drinking tap water, as the city of Gomel is 70 miles north of Chernobyl and certain actions could still have consequences. Or, in 2018, when Diego Maradona was paraded in a huge military vehicle at the stadium before being unveiled as the new Dinamo Brest chairman.

These days, Belarus has centre stage, drawing the attention of any football fan from all over the world. The reason is simple: Belarus is the only country on the European continent that continues to play football during the coronavirus crisis. Why? Because Aleksandr Lukashenko, the president of the country and a man often referred to as the "last dictator in Europe," said so. (The other leagues still in action, for now, are Nicaragua, Turkmenistan, Burundi and Myanmar.)

"[Coronavirus] is just another psychosis, which will benefit some people and harm others," he said last week. "The civilised world is going nuts. It is absolute stupidity to close state borders. The panic can hurt us more than the virus itself."

To add to that, he suggested that instead of panicking "like those in Western Europe," one should have 40-50 grams of vodka daily, go to a banya [Russian sauna] two to three times a week and keep working on a farm, as "tough work and a tractor can cure anything."

There was not much doubt that in a country where people follow the president's instructions -- they have little choice -- everything went on as usual and the 2020 Belarusian Premier League season began last Thursday as planned, with Energetik-BGU defeating BATE Borisov 3-1 in the highlight of



The Belarusian Premier League kicked off the 2020 season defiantly last weekend, earning the dubious honor of being one of just five leagues in action across the globe. (Agencies)

the round.

"On the one hand, of course, we are all wary of this, seeing what is happening in the world," FC Isloch head coach Vitaly Zhukovsky told ESPN. "But on the other hand, in our country of 10 million people, during all this time there have only been 86 infected and not a single fatal outcome. You have to agree that these figures are pretty impressive and cannot be compared to other countries."

"I do trust our health care system," Valery Isaev, one of the top football agents in the country, told ESPN. "I trust it way more than those of neighbouring countries, including Russia and Ukraine. Of course, I do worry about my family, my players [15 in the Belarusian Premier League]

and their families, but we've been assured there is no critical situation and no state of emergency in Belarus, and I trust this information."

Among the players, however, the attitude is slightly different from the one mentioned above.

"There is no panic in the team, but surely all of us hear and see what's happening in the world and it does get in our heads," said Isloch midfielder Sandro Tsveiba, son of the former Soviet star Akhrik Tsveiba, the only person who played for four different national teams (USSR, CIS, Ukraine and Russia).

"Not much has changed on the pitch, but we no longer shake hands, just fist bump each other. Oh, and we cough and sneeze in the dressing room, just for

fun."

Meanwhile, Belarusian football has seen an enormous rise in interest, not just in the country but also from abroad. Russia's Match and Ukraine's Futbol 1 TV companies have acquired the rights to broadcast the Belarusian Premier League until the end of the season, the first time in history anyone from outside Belarus has done so.

"It is indeed a nice feeling that the whole world is watching," Tsveiba said. "All of us can benefit from it, not just the players but Belarusian football as a whole. I'm happy to be playing while most of my colleagues around the world are killing time sitting at home. But once again, our health and the health of our families and

loved ones is still above everything."

"The funny thing about it all is that Belarusian fans have started to watch our football," Yuri Dovnar, head of Pressball and one of the top journalists in the country, told ESPN. "Of course, everyone was watching English Premier League or Spain's La Liga, which you can do for free in Belarus, and didn't pay much attention to the local game, especially when kick-off times clashed. Now it's all changed and our football surely benefits from it."

According to FC Ruh head coach Andrey Ferapontov, who spoke to sports.kz, continuing to play has become a political battle between Belarus as a country and its European peers, including UEFA.

"There are many reasons [why the Belarusian league hasn't been suspended], and one of the main ones is the political will of our leaders," he said. "Our league has started to be broadcast on many popular sports TV channels in neighboring countries, and that gives [them] an excuse to continue holding games. The tournament attracts increased attention, bookmakers are happy, and in general this situation popularises Belarusian football."

Gwiji by David Chikoko



Muumin drops nickname

SPORT

Lessons from China as coronavirus-hit football faces difficult return

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19

Buttler, Stokes training with mid-April IPL start in mind

LONDON

BEN Stokes and Jos Buttler have both said they are training as though the IPL will start in the second half of April, despite both suggesting that a further delay to the tournament's start date is likely due to the COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) pandemic.

On March 13, the BCCI had postponed the IPL until April 15 although it was understood the tournament itself would not start before April 20. However, even that prospect looks remote now with the Indian government imposing a nationwide 21-day lockdown until April 14.

The pandemic, which has infected close to half a million people worldwide, has brought cricket to a standstill, and was the reason England aborted their Sri Lanka tour recently, days before the two-Test series was due to commence.

Nonetheless, both Stokes and Buttler said they were continuing with their normal training routines to be mentally ready in case the IPL does take place. "At the moment my next competitive cricket is going to be the IPL, because that hasn't changed yet," Stokes told BBC Radio 5live on Wednesday. "So I have to think that I'm going to be playing cricket on April 20."

"I have to get my head around that I am playing, even though in the back of my mind I know I'm probably not. I still have to build up and get myself physically in a position that if it does happen, I'm good to go, because I can't just take three weeks off and expect everything body-wise to get going again for April 20. It doesn't work like that."

When asked if he would be willing to travel to the tournament in time for the mooted start date, Stokes said: "I don't know. There would be a lot of advice thrown around and given to us if it was an option to go, and I would have to make the sensible [choice]."

"But as I say, taken everything else aside, I just have to think that I'm playing cricket on April 20 because it potentially might happen, and if it does, I don't want to be behind."

Buttler, who has been posting videos of pilates sessions with his wife Louise, told a Sky Sports podcast that it was hard to see how the tournament could start on time, but that he hoped a shortened season would be a possibility.

"We saw that initially it was going to be postponed until April 15, but I think at the moment everything seems very indefinite, doesn't it?" Buttler said.

"It's very hard to see this [situation] changing in the immediate future, so I don't see that as a possibility at the moment. But as we know, things can hopefully change for the positive quickly as well."

"That's such a massive tournament for world cricket, so hopefully it becomes a situation where some of it [can be played] or it can become a shortened tournament, or something can go ahead."

Buttler also suggested that while the circumstances were "unfortunate", it was refreshing to spend time at home after a hectic year in which opportunities to rest have been minimal.

"Throughout the calendar, it's always so busy and you're looking for times when you can get a bit of a break. But actually trying to use the time as a positive - of course, it's really unfortunate circumstances and it's tough for everyone - but it's very rare that in your professional career you get the chance to have a proper break, and an enforced break for everyone at the moment."

By Correspondent Sabota Kasika

PROMINENT Tanzanian dance musician, Mwinjuma Muumin, has disclosed he no longer wants to use the nickname 'Kocha wa Dunia', as he had popularly been known in



Mwinjuma Muumin

the past.

Muumin pointed out he can not use the nickname because he is not as successful as he was

in the past.

He disclosed he has lost his popularity and for that matter he no longer feels he wants to keep on using the nickname, which made him quite popular in the domestic dance music circle in the past.

"I have, as a matter fact, not been in action in dance music for a long time, therefore, I don't feel I can use the nickname 'Kocha wa Dunia'," he added.

The musician disclosed he nevertheless is certain he will successfully make his way back in dance music because he has formed new band, known as Shadai.

He had expected to launch the band in Dodoma today but the event has been canceled due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

"To people who had been closely following my progress in dance music they must have listened to my new song, titled 'Nimefulia', which also carries Shadai Band's album title, the track narrates the way I have experienced several challenges," he disclosed.

The musician pointed out challenges he has experienced

outside domestic dance music circle have made it necessary for him to opt out of using the 'Kocha wa Dunia' nickname.

He disclosed he will consider using the nickname after winning back fame.

Muumin, who had in the past made headway in dance music with his band known as Double M Sound, was adamant he will once again become successful in dance music through his new band.

The musician pointed out domestic media should strongly back the dance music so the genre and its musicians can enjoy success.

Muumin noted he and fellow director at Shadai Band, who is currently outside the country, are keen on seeing to it the band makes headway in dance music and win the genre's fans.

"Shadai Band is well prepared to make its presence felt in dance music, for that matter, I'm sure I will again be popular," he disclosed.

"But, with challenges I have gone through, why should I keep on being nicknamed 'Kocha wa Dunia'?" he queried.

Malawi FA boss provides guidelines for clubs in time of Coronavirus

LILONGWE

FOOTBALL Association of Malawi (FAM) president Walter Nyamilandu has presented clubs in the country with guidelines on how they should train during the coronavirus pandemic.

The league is suspended in Malawi, but clubs are continuing to train in order to keep fit for when matches can resume.

The FAM guidelines are good advice for clubs around the Southern African region who are continuing with their training efforts, and are detailed below.

Training sessions must be conducted behind closed doors in the absence of supporters.

Training sessions should be conducted in an environment of not more than 50 people.

Training sessions shall only be conducted in the presence of a team medical personnel who should check the body temperatures of players before training commences.

Coaches should avoid conducting sessions that put players in very close contact.

Avoid shaking hands and hugging. Clubs shall provide water and soap or sanitizers for washing hands before and after training.

Players and coaches should practice hygiene by covering mouth and nose with tissues or sleeve of flex elbow whenever coughing or sneezing.

When sick with fever, cough or difficulty in breathing, seek medical help.

Do not share training kit and bathing towels.

Continue to monitor and constantly assess the situation, get advice and guidance from government and health officials and put contingency plans in place to respond to any emerging trends to Covid-19.

All fans from around the region are urged to adhere to the guidelines laid out by the World Health Organization in the bid to combat the coronavirus outbreak, which include:

Wash your hands frequently: Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.

Maintain social distancing: Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.

Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth: Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and can make you sick.

Practice respiratory hygiene: Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.

If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early: Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance. Follow the directions of your local health authority.



Football Association of Malawi (FAM) president Walter Nyamilandu.



Madope Athletics Club's athlete, Veronica Mlonganile, participates in training session at Sabasaba Stadium in Njombe recently. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

Flexibles by David Chikoko

IF YOU HAD THE CHANCE TO TELL ME THE TRUTH, WHAT WILL YOU TELL ME?

THE TRUTH!

