

Govt pays up 75m/- for building of dormitory

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

THE government, through Tanzania Education Authority (TEA) has provided 75m/- for the construction of girls' dormitory for Einoti Secondary School in Kisongo ward in Arumeru District.

The school's headmistress, Justine Swai yesterday said the construction of the dormitory will alleviate problems facing girl students who walk long distances to the school as well as reducing instances of child pregnancies.

She added that the dormitory will also see increase of passes at the school in examinations as well as

minimizing some of pastoral customs and traditions at the school.

"In the pastoral communities, education for girls is not a priority, they are normally prepared to be married off and sometimes lack time for homework while at home," she said.

She said due to pregnancies and child marriages, the school decided to make two classrooms as hostels for girls from the pastoral communities, and the arrangement was quite successful by increasing the level of passes for girls.

She thanked the government for seeing the importance of building a girls' dormitory at the school as the girls were facing hazardous environment when they had to walk long distances

to the school.

Arusha District secondary education officer Menard Lupenza said they expect the dormitory will bring about positive results for girl students as they will live and study while at school.

The said amount of money has built one dormitory with 22 offices, the matron's office, toilets, bathrooms and a place for laundry.

He added that it can accommodate 80 students and construction work will be completed in September this year.

Einoti Secondary School has 763 students, 276 boys and 485 girls and in 2018 it grabbed second position in National Form IV examinations in Arusha District.



Participants of a seminar on ways to prevent and combat corruption in Tanzania's legal system follow remarks by Chief Justice Prof Ibrahim Juma, as he opened it in Dar es Salaam yesterday. They include High Court Judges and representatives of the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau, Police and Tanganyika Law Society. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Germany commits to providing ARC with 19m Euros in drought insurance

By Luke Gallin

IN the light of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the German government has committed to assume premium payments of approximately €19 million for the drought insurance offered by the African Risk Capacity (ARC).

Farming in Africa a recent video message, Maria Flachsbarth, Parliamentary State Secretary at the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BNZ) and Co-Chair of the InsuResilience Global Partnership, stressed that Germany will provide its partners in Africa with assistance in light of the broad social, economic, and financial challenges from COVID-19.

The African Risk Capacity (ARC) has been providing drought insurance protection, structured as a parametric contract, to African states since its launch.

Purchasing an ARC insurance policy provides member states with valuable protection against the negative effects of a drought. However, and as noted by ARC, it can be a challenge for member states to finance annual insurance premiums, an issue that has become more acute during the current crisis.

In response, the German government has responded with its emergency COVID-19 support programme. Under the arrangement, Zimbabwe and five West African countries, which are due to renew their cover in June, will be provided with €8.5 million for premium payments under ARC Replica.

As a result, the World Food Programme and the START Network will be able to take out ARC parametric insurance policies for Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, and Zimbabwe.

In addition, the BMZ is to provide a further €10.5 million for premium

subsidies to countries in the south and east of Africa, where the insurance protection will not be taken out until H2 2020 owing to the later planting season.

"Firstly, we are deliberately creating liquidity for our partners' particularly urgent COVID-19 measures. Secondly, we are ensuring that the drought insurance, which is of vital importance to so many people, is not lost in the already difficult situation. And thirdly, we are contributing towards stability for ARC member countries," said Flachsbarth.

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Chairperson of the ARC Governing Board, has said that Germany's assistance will "help avert a situation of compounded effect of the Coronavirus pandemic and drought in any of the beneficiary countries thereby saving the continent from extended negative health and socioeconomic problems."

New contract with nature needed to keep drought and deserts at bay

NEW YORK

THE UN Secretary-General has called for "a new contract for nature" to address ongoing global challenges connected to land degradation, such as forced migration, hunger and climate change.

António Guterres made the appeal on Wednesday in a message to mark the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought. "Through international action and solidarity, we can scale up land restoration and nature-based solutions for climate action and the benefit of future generations. By doing so, we can deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals and leave no one behind", he said.

Desertification, or the degradation of land in arid areas, is caused primarily by human activities and climatic

variations, with more than three billion people routinely affected.

Drylands cover more than a third of the planet's land surface. They are extremely vulnerable to overexploitation and inappropriate land use, such as through overgrazing or bad irrigation practices.

This year's observation puts the spotlight on sustainable production and consumption.

With 'Food. Feed. Fibre' as the slogan, the aim is to get people everywhere to reduce food waste, shop at local markets, and swap clothes instead of always buying new items.

The head of the UN office which oversees a global treaty on preventing land degradation said that although the COVID-19 pandemic may have temporarily curtailed some freedoms, such as travelling at will, people still

have freedom of choice.

"In our globalized world, the food we eat, the feed for our livestock and the fibre for clothes, impact land thousands of miles away," said Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary at the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.

"Each of us holds the power to protect the land for each choice we make in our daily lives. And we can still choose to protect nature. By doing so, we in fact protect our future."

The Secretary-General pointed to efforts to reverse land degradation, such as the Great Green Wall in Africa's Sahel region, launched by the African Union in 2007.

Through the initiative, trees are being planted from Senegal to Djibouti, to restore land and boost food security, transforming lives and livelihoods along the way.

Maryland Global Initiatives Tanzania Limited advertisement for printing tools (books/forms). Includes subject: REQUEST FOR QUOTATION (RFQ) FOR PRINTING TOOLS (BOOKS/FORMS), RFQ No: MGIT/01/06/200, ISSUED DATE: JUNE 19, 2020, and a detailed table of technical specifications for 16 different lots of books and forms.

Mutharika's last stab at the judiciary before elections

BY PETER FABRICIUS

NEXT Tuesday's re-run presidential election in Malawi, like that of last May, is turning out to be more of a contest between the judiciary and President Peter Mutharika's government than between the president and the political opposition.

It was the Constitutional Court, supported by the Supreme Court of Appeal, that was responsible in the first place for the holding of the 23 June presidential election at all. These courts ruled earlier this year that incumbent Mutharika's election victory last May, though endorsed by the Malawi Electoral Commission, was illegal and unconstitutional.

This was based on credible charges of extensive rigging. The charges were laid by the second- and third-place candidates Lazarus Chakwera and Saulos Chilima respectively, and included blatant alteration of ballots through whitening out results and replacing them with others. The courts ruled that the election should be held again.

This is only the second time in African history, it seems, that a court overruled the election of an incumbent. It also ordered that the victor in the new elections must secure a majority, because it said Mutharika's election by a mere plurality - of 38.5% - had been unconstitutional. And so if no candidate wins 50% plus one vote in Tuesday's elections, a second election between the top two candidates will have to be held.

Even with the rigging in the last elections, Mutharika's main rivals together got more votes than he did.

But as it turned out, that was not to be the judiciary's last word on the subject of the elections. Because in the meantime Mutharika's administration has tried to remove from the bench two senior judges who participated in the annulment of last year's election.

Last week it tried to place Chief Justice Andrew Nyirenda on immediate leave pending his compulsory retirement at the age of 65 in December 2021. The government said he had over 572 days of leave owed to him. Significantly, it was Nyirenda who led the court that annulled Mutharika's election win. Mutharika's chief secretary tried a similar tactic with Supreme Court Justice Edward Twea who was due to reach retirement age at the end of April next year.

These decisions provoked a storm of criticism. The judiciary flatly rejected them, saying this was a judicial not a government matter, and that 'the Judiciary asserts that the Chief Justice and Justice of Appeal shall continue to discharge their functions as per their constitutional mandate.'

The Malawi Law Society similarly condemned Mutharika's government for 'purporting to send the Chief Justice



Attempts by Malawi's president to put two independent judges on early leave encounters firm resistance. File photo

on leave hot on the heels of the Supreme Court's decision on the elections.' A group of local and international jurists proclaimed that, 'These actions constitute an unprecedented assault on judicial independence in Malawi.'

Politically motivated violence against the opposition, human rights activists and journalists has spiked.

In South Africa Nicole Fritz, Chief Executive of the legal watchdog body Freedom Under Law, applauded the Malawian judiciary, the legal professions and civil society for resisting these attacks on judicial independence. Then the judiciary intervened again, as the High Court suspended the forced retirement of the judges, pending a full hearing on the decision.

Mutharika has made no secret of his animus against the judiciary. As the same group of jurists said, his government had made 'coordinated attempts to undermine the judiciary, including statements by President Peter Mutharika falsely accusing the judiciary of having staged a coup against his government and claiming that Parliament is supreme in Malawi and an attempt by the government to repeal the two judgements in Parliament.'

The government and ruling Democratic Progressive Party have apparently also resorted to brute force to retain power. There's been a spike in politically motivated violence against opposition politi-

cians, human rights activists and journalists since May, with no arrests of those allegedly responsible, the Malawi Human Rights Defenders Coalition reports.

It's hard to avoid concluding from Mutharika's industrious attempts to neutralise the independence of Malawi's judiciary just before elections, that he expects the judges to be called on once again to resolve the outcome of the poll.

Malawi's judiciary is displaying courageous independence in the face of enormous political pressure.

Because on the face of it, he does not look like he's winning the elections, fair and square. In the last elections, even with all the rigging, Mutharika's two main rivals together registered more votes than he did. Chakwera of the Malawi Congress Party won over 35% of the vote and Chilima - Malawi's vice president - secured just over 20%.

These two have now joined forces to form the Tonse Alliance. And according to an opinion poll just concluded by the Institute for Public Opinion and Research, that alliance is 'likely to be a clear winner' - by a margin of about 51% to 33% - i.e. in the first round.

This is not surprising, since the survey also found that 'All told, three quarters of Malawians (75%) had a negative view of government performance in handling what they said was the most impor-

tant problem, against 22% who had a positive assessment.'

It is heartening to see a judiciary displaying such courageous independence in the face of enormous government pressure to kowtow. It is only in Kenya where African judges have shown the same courage, in annulling incumbent President Uhuru Kenyatta's election victory in 2017, despite similarly strong political pressure and even intimidation.

Ideally though, politics should be decided at the hustings and not in the courts. When the political process is subverted, it is of course just as well if the courts are ready to be a safety net to catch falling democracy. Yet one can't help suspecting that Malawi's democracy will only be truly secure when it does not have to lean so heavily on the judiciary for its survival.

Agencies

Meritocracy legitimises, deepens inequality

KUALA LUMPUR

HOW often have you heard someone lamenting or even condemning inequality in society, concluding with an appeal to meritocracy? We like to think that if only the deserving, the smart ones, those we deem competent or capable, often meaning the ones who are more like us, were in charge, things would be better, or just fine.

Meritocracy's appeal

Since the 1960s, many institutions, the world over, have embraced the notion of meritocracy. With post-Cold War neoliberal ideologies enabling growing wealth concentration, the rich, the privileged and their apologists invoke variants of 'meritocracy' to legitimize economic inequality.

Instead, corporations and other social institutions, which used to be run by hereditary elites, increasingly recruit and promote on the bases of qualifications, ability, competence and performance. Meritocracy is thus supposed to democratize and level society.

Ironically, British sociologist Michael Young pejoratively coined the term meritocracy in his 1958 dystopian satire, *The Rise of the Meritocracy*. With his intended criticism rejected as no longer relevant, the term is now used in the English language without the negative connotations Young intended.

It has been uncritically embraced by supporters of a social philosophy of meritocracy in which influence is supposedly distributed according to the intellectual ability and achievement of individuals.

Many appreciate meritocracy's two core virtues. First, the meritocratic elite is presumed to be more capable and effective as their status, income and wealth are due to their ability, rather than their family connections.

Second, 'opening up' the elite supposedly on the bases of individual capacities and capabilities is believed to be consistent with and complementary to 'fair competition'. They may claim the moral high ground by

invoking 'equality of opportunity', but are usually careful to stress that 'equality of outcome' is to be eschewed at all cost.

As Yale Law School Professor Daniel Markovits argues in *The Meritocracy Trap*, unlike the hereditary elites preceding them, meritocratic elites must often work long and hard, e.g., in medicine, finance or consulting, to enhance their own privileges, and to pass them on to their children, siblings and other close relatives, friends and allies.

Gaming meritocracy

Meritocracy is supposed to function best when an insecure 'middle class' constantly strives to secure, preserve and augment their income, status and other privileges by maximizing returns to their exclusive education. But access to elite education - that enables a few of modest circumstances to climb the social ladder - waxes and wanes.

Most middle class families cannot afford the privileged education that wealth can buy, while most ordinary, government financed and run schools have fallen further behind exclusive elite schools, including some funded with public money. In recent decades, the resources gap between better and poorer public schools has also been growing.

Elite universities and private schools still provide training and socialization, mainly to children of the wealthy, privileged and connected. Huge endowments, obscure admissions policies and tax exemption allow elite US private universities to spend much more than publicly funded institutions.

Meanwhile, technological and social changes have transformed the labour force and economies greatly increasing economic returns to the cognitive, ascriptive and other attributes as well as credentials of 'the best' institutions, especially universities and professional guilds, which effectively remain exclusive and elitist.

As 'meritocrats' captured growing shares of the education pies, the purported value of 'schooling' increased, legitimized by the bogus notion of

'human capital'. While meritocracy transformed elites over time, it has also increasingly inhibited, not promoted social mobility.

A different elite

Thus, although meritocrats like to see themselves as the antithesis of the old 'aristocratic' elite, rather than 'democratize' society through greater inclusion, meritocracy may even increase inequality and further polarize society, albeit differently.

While the old 'aristocratic' elite was often unable to ensure their own children were well educated, competent and excellent, meritocrats - who have often achieved their status and privileges with education and related credentials - have often increased their significance.

Hence, a meritocratic system - seemingly open to inclusion, ostensibly based on ability - has become the new means for exclusion, which Chicago University Professor Raghuram Rajan attributes to the digital revolution.

Meritocrats have increased the significance of schooling, with credential attainment legitimizing growing pay inequality, as they secure even better education for their own children, thus recreating and perpetuating inequalities.

Recent public doubts about, and opposition to rising executive remuneration, MBA education, professional guild cartels and labour remuneration disparities reflect the growing delegitimization of ostensibly meritocratic hierarchies and inequalities.

High moral ground

To add insult to injury, meritocratic ideology suggests that those excluded are undeserving, if not contemptible. With progressive options lacking middle class and elite support, those marginalized have increasingly turned to 'ethno-populism' and other 'communal' appeals in this age of identity politics.

Unsurprisingly, their opposition to educational and economic inequalities and marginalization is typically pitted against the ethnic 'Other' - real, imagined or 'constructed' - typically seen as 'foreign', even if domestic, as the 'alien within'.



THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
MINISTRY OF WORKS, TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION
TANZANIA SHIPPING AGENCIES CORPORATION
TASAC



PUBLIC NOTICE:

GOVERNMENT NOTICE NO.386 PUBLISHED ON 22/5/2020:
THE TANZANIA SHIPPING AGENCIES (SHIPPING BUSINESS)
REGULATIONS, 2020

The Tanzania Shipping Agencies Corporation (TASAC) is pleased to inform its shipping business customers and the general public on the publication of the **Government Notice No. 386 on the Tanzania Shipping Agencies (Shipping Business) Regulations, 2020**. These Regulations were published in the Gazette of the United Republic of Tanzania No.21. Vol.101 dated **22nd May, 2020** and therefore became **effective from the date of publication**.

The purpose of this Public Notice is to inform our esteem customers and the general public on the effectiveness of the Government Notice No. 386 from 22nd May, 2020.

The **Tanzania Shipping Agencies (Shipping Business) Regulations, 2020 (GN. No. 386)** is available online and can be accessed through TASAC website **www.tasac.go.tz**

Should you need further clarifications, please do not hesitate to visit our offices or contact us using the address provided below.

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Tamwa pushes for behavioural change to curb child abuse in Zanzibar

By **Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar**

THE Tanzania Media Women's Association (Tamwa, Zanzibar) has called on the public to change their mindsets and respect women and children by discouraging such uncouth behaviors in Isles.

Dr Mzuri Issa, Tamwa Zanzibar director made the call here when speaking on the just-concluded International African Child Day, themed: "Access to a Child-Friendly Justice System in Africa".

According to Dr Mzuri (pictured), the issue of gender based violence is a behavioral and societal issue; hence there is a need to change that for betterment of women and children in the country.

Over the course of society's

formulation, a narrative became embedded which provided people with justifications for gender based violence.

She said: "It's high time this unwelcoming behavior to change so that women and children enjoy their rights as enshrined in the mother law."

There are people in the society who have been taking gender-based violence (GBV) incidents as normal issues, something which needs more efforts to pin down perpetrators, she said. "Time has come for the community to change behaviors in regard to child rising as well as recognizing their importance."

Tamwa Zanzibar project manager, Asha Abdi also viewed change of behavior among the perpetrators as solution to end GBV incidents, which have refused to go in Zanzibar.

Reports have it that increasing incidences of violence and humiliation against children in Zanzibar has been associated with poor parenting from parents and guardians, whereby some parents are also not aware of the humiliation acts hence not taking efforts to protect their children.

Dr Sikujua Omar Hamdan, a lecturer from Zanzibar University, once quoted as saying Zanzibar has recorded 1,049 incidences of violence from 2017 to date in both Unguja and Pemba.

Only 404 cases were ruled at courts between 2017 and 2020 while 704 cases are yet to be ruled pending investigations. She said that suspects who were involved in 266 cases were set free after the court found them not-guilty, linking the increased incidences of violence and hu-



miliation against children with poor parenting from parents and guardians. She said some parents are also not aware of the humiliation acts hence not taking efforts to protect their children.

She claimed that some parents have been allowing the children to go for learning sessions during night, the thing that should be limited to day time.

"Allowing children to go for tuition or other learning sessions with their friends during night poses risk to them since it

is difficult for parents to closely monitor them during night," she said.

According to Omar Makungu, state attorney from the office of Director of Public Prosecutions, more than 100 people have submitted letters to the office of DPP with the intent of withdrawing cases related to violence against women and children in Zanzibar.

It is astonishing to see all the ongoing efforts to address GBV issues evaporates in thin air, leaving perpetrators roaming around in streets without being tried in courts. This demoralizes all people who are behind GBV fight, he said.

Makungu said that some of the cases have all the evidences, but suddenly, people who filed the cases come up and withdraw the cases in court.

"This is a challenge, which if left unattended incidents of child abuse will continue to affect the innocent children in the society," he said, calling for collective efforts to address the vice.

Bringing all the needed evidences is an important aspect when it comes to proceeding child abuse related cases, said Khamis Juma, an official from DPP office.

Juma cited witnesses as another challenge hindering the fight against child abuse as there is a growing tendency whereby witnesses not appear in court and "if they appear they don't talk anything and sometimes they provide information in favour of the accused."

"Several times I met with such cases, whereby the victim defend the man who abused her

and some say that she was her partner and she wasn't ready to put him in trouble," the official said.

But, the Zanzibar law is very clear that a witness who fails to appear in court or deny providing evidence is to be remanded for eight days, he said.

Deputy Registrar of the Zanzibar High Court Salum Hassan suggested the need for the community to change their mindsets on GBV related issues as some families weren't involved in those cases.

"In some cases you find the case is taken to court without taking information from the victim, something which is not right," he noted, adding: "Some victims are not well prepared to speak before the court, the situation that end up losing their cases."

The unwavering stance of scientists and experts

By **Marie Camara**

THE seventh annual Global Forum on Nicotine - GFN - took place on June 11th & 12th and was organised by "Knowledge Action Change Limited (KAC)", headed by Professor Gerry Stimson, Public Health social scientist from the United Kingdom.

Usually held in Warsaw, Poland, this year's event took place virtually due to Covid-19. Under the theme "Science, ethics and human rights", more than thirty experts/scientists from the public health sector, tobacco industry, tobacco control sector, and consumers, discussed various topics including the relevance of science versus ideology, the importance of a patient centered approach, the potential of vaping in low-income countries, and prohibited scientific alternatives to conventional tobacco.

For years now, numerous scientific studies have revealed that alternatives to traditional tobacco do less harm than conventional cigarettes. Despite those studies, a number of policy makers at national and international level, notably World Health Organization, promote very strict regulatory measures that don't take evidence of risk reduction potential in non-combustible products. Clive Bates is Director of The Counterfactual, a consulting and advocacy practice focused on a pragmatic approach to sustainability and public health in the United Kingdom. For him, these regulations are "punitive measures, coercion, restrictions, stigma, denormalization. There has been a failure in doing what good policy makers should do which is to do proper impacts assessments, and scrutinize. There is a massive failure of policy making, at all levels, governments, legislature, and international organizations like the World Health Organization".

By **Guardian Correspondent**

EVERY June 13th the world celebrates an international albinism awareness day aiming to raise awareness and educating the public on issues concerning persons with albinism.

This is a fifth year since the General Assembly of the United Nation adopted the resolution proclaiming that with effect from 2015, June 13th will be recognized as an International Albinism Awareness Day.

Albinism is an inherited genetic condition that reduces the amount of melanin pigment formed in the skin, hair and or eyes. Albinism occurs in all racial and ethnic groups throughout the world.

Both the father and mother have to carry the gene for it to be passed on even if they do not have albinism themselves.

Recent studies show that some types of albinism can be inherited from only mothers and phenotypically are observable. The condition results in little production of pigmentation in the hair, skin and or eyes.

This causes vulnerability to sun exposure and bright light hence risks to skin cancer and photophobia respectively. All people with albinism are visually impaired, with the majority being classified as 'legally blind'.

Albinism prevalence, in North America and Europe it is estimated that 1 in every 20,000 people have some form of albinism.

In Tanzania, and throughout East Africa, albinism is much more prevalent, with estimates of 1 in 1,400 people being affected. The term "person with albinism" (PWA) is preferred to the term "albino" as it puts the person before the condition.

People with albinism face multiple forms of discrimination worldwide. Albinism is still intensely misunderstood socially and medically.



For the experts who participated in the conference, safer nicotine products have definitely a role to play in reducing smoking related diseases. They blame the institutional obstacles that have been set up for years which, according to them, benefit the status quo and do more harm than good:

"Everybody who looks at the history of innovation and industry of science and technology sees that.

There are a lot of people interested in the status quo. Cigarette companies make a tremendous amount of money out of the status quo. And there is also a tremendous amount of funding of this status quo. Sweden, Iceland, Norway have the lowest smoking rates in the world. And now Japan, where a third of the cigarette market disappeared in a short period of time because they got access to alternatives. Consumers

move to alternatives when they get an option" said David Sweanor, Chair of the Advisory Board of the Centre for Health Law in Canada.

Mark Tyndall, professor and infectious disease specialist from Canada, is, as well, very firm on the topic of scientifically proven alternatives to traditional tobacco: "I've always considered that smoking cigarettes was a form of harm reduction for people who use drugs. However, in the same time, it was painfully obvious that cigarettes were killing people more than HIV, more than hepatitis C, and even more than the catastrophic overdose epidemic that has been devastating North America. Death from cigarettes is slow and insidious. Until vaping appeared in 2012, there were not so much to offer. Most professionals encouraged people to stop smoking. At the best, we of-

ferred people nicotine patch or some gum, and told them it may help them to stop. Eight years later, who would have thought that throwing a lifeline to cigarettes smokers would be so contentious. It should have been a slam dunk. By now, leading public health authorities around the world should have launched global campaigns to rid the world of cigarettes through vaping."

Moreover, many experts underscored that consumers and patients are at the core of health systems and that, they should know about alternatives and feel free to choose which one is better for them. Clarisse Virgino, a vape consumer from the Philippines, is pushing for the fair regulation of electronic cigarettes in her country: "It is the consumer, in the end, that will suffer if prohibitionist policies are put in place as these will deprive people who smoke to do the switch. It is basic human rights. Prohibition will also affect those who have already made the switch. It will force them to return to smoke regular combustible cigarette. Which is, quite frankly, very counterproductive. The alternative products are able to curb, if not eradicate smoking. These are less harmful products which can help people quit a bad habit that do not only affects smokers but also people around them. It is unfair and wrong at so many levels. As one says, there is nothing about us without us."

The tobacco industry was also invited to the conference. Moira Gilchrist Vice-president for strategic and scientific communications at Philip Morris International, spoke at the conference. According to her, "In an ideal world, we would be having an

open, evidence based conversation to figure out how to replicate these results - alluding to cases of countries such as Japan - as quickly as possible in as many countries as possible. Astonishingly, back in the real world, we are far from this. Many public health advocates and public health organizations seem unwilling to objectively assess the opportunity that smoke-free products present. Why? Because these solutions come from the industry."

Policy makers argue that there is irreconcilable conflict between the tobacco industry and public health. For Moira Gilchrist, it is "pure and simple scientific censorship". For her, science and evidence are the most relevant:

"I cannot talk for the whole industry, but at Philip Morris International we are committed to replacing cigarettes with better alternatives as rapidly as possible. I cannot really understand why this change is met with skepticism. Today our Research and Development expenditures are mostly dedicated to a smoke-free portfolio. Our goal is a smoke-free future. The impact of these products is already being seen. A study made by researchers working for the American Cancer Society concluded that the rapid decline of cigarettes seen recently in Japan is most likely due to the introduction of Iqos, the electronic nicotine device designed by Philip Morris International."

Tanzania has demonstrated a remarkable improvement on reduced incidents of attacks over the past five years under the President John Magufuli. There has been no reported case. Nevertheless, despite this progress, a great need for remaining vigilant is paramount.

Social services remain a great challenge to persons with albinism, particularly those services that directly affect their health conditions.

Access to skin cancer screening and check-up is still a big challenge in Tanzania where there only two major medical specialized facilities which are Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre (KCMC) and Ocean Road Cancer Institute are specialized on cancer treatment and majority of persons with albinism are unable to access these facilities, due several reasons including but not limited to distance and related expenses.

There has been a great initiative to establish skin cancer clinics at regional levels currently in Lindi, Singida, Mara, Iringa, Dar-es-salaam, Tanga, and Morogoro in Tanzania Mainland, and in Mnazi Mmoja, Unguja, in Zanzibar, aiming at skin checks and pre cancer treatment (cryotherapy).

Despite great initiative of availability of skin cancer clinics in almost eight regions there is a great shortage of skin cancer experts and majority of persons with disability, fail to afford treatment costs. Sunburn is a daily challenge to persons with albinism and frequent exposure to sunlight, results in vulnerability to skin cancer.

Persons with albinism live in our own societies and interact with other people without albinism in the community.

Other essential needs remain paramount to facilitate inclusion in the society. As we commemorate this important date, I call upon the government and stakeholders to safeguard rights of persons with albinism and to set a conducive environment for them to shine and reach their full potentials.

Albinism: A mystery of colour and humanity



The physical appearance of persons with albinism is often the object of erroneous beliefs and myths influenced by superstition, which foster their marginalization and social exclusion.

This leads to various forms of stigma and discrimination. This is a mystery between color and humanity.

A prominent disability advocate and Kenyan politician, Dr Mwaura Isaack once said "We continue to suffer from 'in betweenness' - white but not white enough, black but not black enough, disabled but not disabled enough."

In some communities, wrong be-

liefs and myths, heavily influenced by superstition, put the security and lives of persons with albinism at constant risk. These beliefs and myths are centuries old and are present in cultural attitudes and practices around the world.

This year's theme for the International Albinism Awareness Day - "made to shine" is part of the awareness strategy to sensitize the community on the value of giving equal chances for persons with albinism to thrive in society.

Protecting persons with albinism starts at the family level, parents who accepted and took care of their kids

with albinism despite their income status, resulted to kids with more confidence and self-esteem compared to those whose families gave little support.

Persons with albinism need support to overcome stigma and discrimination barriers from early stages of their lives.

Parent can help their kids with albinism to build self-esteem by enabling them to learn things that will make them focus on their talents and strength, banning all negative criticism such as bullying and name calling together will make your kids feel accept-

ed within the family regardless of any discrimination they face in the society.

Across the continent persons with albinism face constant fear for being attacked due to erroneous beliefs and use of their body parts.

According to Under The Same Sun a non-profit organization, there are more than 600 incidents of reported attacks targeting persons with albinism in over 30 countries in Africa.

Such incidents include killings, survivors of mutilations, violence, rape, attempted abductions, missing, grave violations, asylum & other refuge cases.

Joint statement of Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity Against COVID-19

THE COVID-19 pandemic is a major challenge to humankind, and is the most serious global public health emergency since the end of World War II.

To defeat COVID-19 through greater solidarity and cooperation, and to highlight an even stronger China-Africa community with a shared future, we, Chinese and African leaders, convened an Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity Against COVID-19 via video link on 17 June 2020. The Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity Against COVID-19 is a joint initiative between the People's Republic of China, the Republic of South Africa in its capacity as the Chair of the African Union (AU), and the Republic of Senegal in its capacity as the Co-Chair of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC).

The Summit was attended by H.E. President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China, H.E. President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa of the Republic of South Africa, H.E. President Macky SALL of the Republic of Senegal, H.E. President Abdel Fattah el-SISI of the Arab Republic of Egypt, H.E. President Felix-Antoine Tshisekedi TSHILOMBO of the Democratic Republic of Congo, H.E. President Abdelmadjid TEBBOUNE of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, H.E. President Ali Bongo ONDIMBA of the Republic of Gabon, H.E. President Uhuru KENYATTA of the Republic of Kenya, H.E. President Ibrahim Boubacar KEITA of the Republic of Mali, H.E. President Issoufou Mahamadou of the Republic of Niger, H.E. President Muhammadu BUHARI of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, H.E. President Paul KAGAME of the Republic of Rwanda, H.E. President Emmerson Mnangagwa of the Republic of Zimbabwe, H.E. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and H.E. Moussa Faki MAHAMAT, Chairperson of the AU Commission.

Secretary-General Antonio GUTERRES of the United Nations (UN) and Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom GHEBREYESUS of the World Health Organization (WHO) were invited as Special Guests to the Summit.

After cordial and in-depth discussions, leaders attending the Summit reached the following consensus:

1. We express deep concern over the unprecedented, immediate and consequent challenges posed by the global spread of the COVID-19 pandemic to people around the world, especially its major impact on the lives and health of the African people.

We recognize the importance of public health issues to global peace and security and the well-being of people around the world, particularly the fact that Africa is extremely vulnerable to the ravages of this virus and needs

solidarity and support, including resources from various parties to bolster its response to the pandemic and to support its economic and social development.

We commend and support the UN Secretary-General's call for a united response to COVID-19, and commit to jointly safeguard global public health security, protect the legitimate rights and interests of developing countries, make greater contribution to world peace and development, and build a community of health for all.

We underscore the close relationship between peace, security and development, call on the international community to support Africa in implementing its "Silencing the Guns" campaign and urge for an early lifting of economic sanctions on the Republics of Zimbabwe and Sudan.

In accordance with the FOCAC spirit and long-term values cherished by both sides, we remain committed to extending mutual support on issues regarding each other's core interests and major concerns. China supports African countries in exploring development paths suited to their national conditions and opposes interference in Africa's internal affairs by external forces. The African side supports China's position on Taiwan and Hong Kong, and supports China's efforts to safeguard national security in Hong Kong in accordance with law.

2. We highly commend and actively support WHO's role, under the stewardship of Director-General Dr. Tedros, in leading and coordinating the global response to COVID-19, and call on the international community to scale up political and financial support for the WHO.

We welcome the 73rd World Health Assembly (WHA) resolution on COVID-19 response, which expresses deep concerns about the negative impacts and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizes the importance of global collaboration, and calls for intensified international cooperation, unity, solidarity and joint efforts to contain and mitigate the pandemic, and to pay particular attention to the needs of people in vulnerable situations. We reiterate opposition to the politicization and stigmatization of the virus, and call on the international community to jointly prevent discrimination and stigma, reject misinformation and disinformation, and strengthen cooperation on the research and development of diagnostics, therapeutics, medicines and vaccines and the identification of the zoonotic source of the virus.

We support the initiation, at the earliest appropriate moment and in consultation with WHO Member States, of a stepwise process of impartial, independent and comprehensive evaluation, including using existing mechanisms as appropriate, to review



experience gained and lessons learned from the WHO-coordinated international health response to COVID-19 after the virus is brought under control worldwide, in an objective, impartial science-based and professional manner.

We further commend the UN Secretary-General for his leadership and support for the WHO and related health initiatives during this pandemic, which aims at making vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics for COVID-19 accessible worldwide.

3. Africa commends the decisive measures taken by the Chinese government to contain the spread of the virus and its timely sharing of information with WHO and relevant countries in an open, transparent and responsible manner, which bought precious time for the rest of the world. China commends the solidarity and support extended by African countries, the AU and other regional organizations for China's COVID-19 response and appreciates the establishment of the AU COVID-19 Strategy and the appointment of Special Envoys to mobilize international support for Africa's efforts to address the economic challenges faced as a consequence of the pandemic, and further commends the resilience African countries have demonstrated and the positive results thus achieved in curbing the spread of the virus by adopting preventive measures.

African countries express appreciation for China's substantial assistance for Africa's fight against COVID-19 and commitment to China-Africa solidarity against COVID-19, and highly commend the new measures China announced at the 73rd WHA to support developing countries' COVID-19 response. China reaffirms its commitment to actively delivering relevant initiatives and measures to help Africa build capacity for disease prevention and control and for sustainable development, and expedite the construction of the Africa CDC headquarters. China undertakes to make its COVID-19 vaccine development and deployment, when available, a global public good as part of China's contribution to vaccine accessibility and affordability in developing countries, in particular African countries.

We reaffirm the commitment to take active measures to

protect the health and security of each other's nationals and uphold their legitimate rights and interests, and promote the use of Chinese and African traditional medicine.

African countries express profound gratitude and appreciation to the Chinese institutions and companies that have provided medical supplies and material assistance in the effort to combat the COVID pandemic.

4. We fully recognize the positive role of China-Africa investment and financing cooperation in promoting development and improving people's lives in Africa, and call on the international community to work in solidarity and collaboration, share best practices, and provide more material, technical, financial and humanitarian support to help African countries overcome the impact of COVID-19 and achieve independent and sustainable development.

China takes seriously the debt concerns of African countries and will earnestly act on the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative, through friendly consultation as equals, and expedite support for the African countries worst hit by COVID-19.

The African side expresses appreciation for China's actions, and calls on the international community, especially developed countries and international financial institutions, to take concrete measures to ease the debt burden of African countries.

5. We reaffirm the commitment to supporting multilateralism, opposing unilateralism, safeguarding the UN-centered international system, and defending international equity and justice.

We call on the international community to build an open world economy, enhance macroeconomic coordination, and jointly keep global industrial and supply chains stable and unlogged. We express strong support to the development of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

We recognize the importance of digitalization in the post-COVID-19 era and support efforts to speed up the development of Africa's digital economy and expand exchanges and cooperation on digitalization, information and com-

munication technologies, especially tele-medicine, tele-education, 5G and big data.

We support efforts to explore with global partners trilateral or multilateral cooperation in Africa in a way that is active, open and inclusive and based on respect for African countries' wishes, with a view to facilitating an early victory against COVID-19 and faster development in Africa.

6. We extend congratulations on the 20th anniversary of FOCAC, recognizing the important progress in delivering the follow-ups to the FOCAC Beijing Summit, and support a greater focus on public health under the Eight Major Initiatives on China-Africa Cooperation.

We undertake to chart the course for China-Africa cooperation in a post-COVID-19 era, and work together to ensure the success of events on the 2021 FOCAC calendar.

7. We applaud the joint initiative of China, South Africa and Senegal to convene this Summit at a critical juncture in Africa's battle against COVID-19.

We pay high tribute to all African leaders who did and did not attend the Summit for their great efforts to contain COVID-19.

Leaders attending the Summit expressed deep condolences over the passing of H.E. President Pierre Nkurunziza of the Republic of Burundi, and extended sincere sympathy to the people of Burundi.

Researchers release preliminary report on a drug they say reduces Covid-19 deaths

By Nancy R. Gough

RECOVERY trial researchers have released preliminary findings from the arm of the trial evaluating an inexpensive corticosteroid treatment for Covid-19.

The steroid is called dexamethasone. It is an anti-inflammatory prescription medication that is widely used and was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 1958.

The trial included 2,104 patients who received dexamethasone (6 mg once per day by mouth or by intravenous injection) and compared these patients with 4,321 patients receiving "usual care alone". Importantly, the patients were randomly assigned into the treatment or usual care groups.

The results appear to support the use of dexamethasone in patients hospitalised for Covid-19 and needing ventilation or oxygen support. The full data have not yet been made available, but key points from the news release are that dexamethasone reduced the 28-day mortality rate by 17 per cent with patients requiring ventilation benefiting the most, that it reduced deaths by one-third in ventilated patients, that it reduced deaths by one-fifth in other patients receiving oxygen only, and



Image shows the structure of this synthetic corticosteroid on a medicine bottle surrounded by SARS-CoV-2 virus particles. Photo: Nancy R. Gough, BioSerendipity, LLC

that patients who did not require respiratory support did not benefit.

The data suggest that one death would be prevented by treatment

of among eight ventilated patients or 25 patients requiring oxygen

without artificial ventilation. So, not every death can be prevented, but

this is encouraging news that the clinical trials are leading to strategies that will help some of the most seriously ill.

Compared with all other possible treatments, this is the only one that has shown a strong survival effect. Remdesivir has only been shown to reduce the duration of hospitalisation - not to reduce death from Covid-19.

The data for the dexamethasone trial have yet to be published, but the news release states that the results are statistically significant - suggesting that the study has sufficient participants to provide useful guidance for clinical application. Additionally, dexamethasone is readily available and inexpensive.

The researchers running the trial are understandably excited. Peter Horby, Professor of Emerging Infectious Diseases in the Nuffield Department of Medicine, University of Oxford, and one of the Chief Investigators for the trial, said: "Dexamethasone is the first drug to be shown to improve survival in COVID-19. This is an extremely welcome result. The survival benefit is clear and large in those patients who are sick enough to require oxygen treatment, so dexamethasone should now become standard of care in these patients. Dexamethasone is inexpensive, on

the shelf, and can be used immediately to save lives worldwide."

Another of the chief investigators for the trial is Martin Landray, Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology at the University of Oxford's Nuffield Department of Population Health. He said: "It is fantastic that the first treatment demonstrated to reduce mortality is one that is instantly available and affordable worldwide."

Unlike other drugs that have potentially beneficial effects, dexamethasone works for patients with severe Covid-19 and is by prescription only.

Hopefully, this means that there will not be a shortage of the medication: there is no benefit to stocking up or obtaining a prescription for people who do not have severe symptoms that require hospitalisation and oxygen support.

It also very important to remember that the data are not available yet. So, what caveats exist in the findings remain to be revealed. However, the news sparks cautious optimism.

Nancy R. Gough is a PhD scientist with a passion for scientific communication and 20-plus years' editorial experience.

TANROADS WARNS CRJE ON DELAAYS IN CONSTRUCTION NYERERE BRIDGE ROAD

By Property Watch Reporter

RKED by slow pace of construction of a 1.2 kilometres road connecting the landmark Nyerere Bridge and Kigamboni Ferry Road in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania National Roads Agency CEO, Patrick Mfugale has threatened to dismiss the contractor, China Railway Construction Engineering Group.

Eng Mfugale said as the project's main supervisors, Tanroads is not happy with the pace of implementation and several new demands on monetary payment being made by CRJE. "When the president ordered the stalled project to continue, he also dismissed its astronomical costs and ordered that they be reviewed," Eng Mfugale said.

He dismissed CRJE's complaints that the project is being delayed by Tanroads and NSSF Fund's failure to address hurdles facing its implementation which the Chinese contractor refused to give details. "We are still in talks with NSSF and Tanroads details of which you can get from them," said Henry Kasapila who is CRJE's Public Affairs Manager.

But the Tanroads CEO noted that CRJE are seeking more advance payment from the project's owners, NSSF but that such cannot be given because such payment was already done. "They thought that this project will be business as usual which unfortunately is not the case, things have changed," Eng Mfugale added while advising the Chinese contractor to seek a bank loan to bridge the financing gap and complete the project to get the remaining payment. Efforts to get clarification



Nyerere Bridge toll booths

from NSSF Fund's Director General, William Erio failed until we went to press but officials at Nyerere Bridge said the Chinese contractor will only be paid the balance upon completion of the road stretch which has been delayed since 2018.

Speaking at a function to inaugurate Kigamboni district offices earlier this year, President Magufuli expressed discontent with the delay of the project and ordered a review of its abnormal costs directing that construction work should resume immediately.

In a press statement issued immediately after Dr Magufuli's order, CRJE expressed commitment to finish the project with first class quality and at reasonable cost without delay.

The contractor stated that the project was delayed partly because of late possession of the site due to pending compensation for the existing houses, graveyard and structures that were located within the right of way. The compensation was completed towards the end of May 2018. Delay by the employer, NSSF, to re-appoint a new project manager has been given as another reason for the delay in resumption of the construction work. Whereas the previous project managers suspended their supervision services on 1 May 2019, the new manager was appointed only last week.

"It's only on 14 February 2020 that the employer informed the contractor of the decision to appoint Tanroads as the new project manager and will commence work on 17 February 2020," said the Chinese contractor's statement.

Ministry calls on IMTU investors to prepare payments for NDC premises

By Finnigan wa Simbeye

THE Indian investors at International Medical and technological University in Dar es Salaam have been advised to get ready and pay National Development Corporation is rent backlog once the High Court rules in favour of the parastatal.

Deputy Minister for Lands Housing and Human Settlements Development, Dr Angelina Mabula said the court case which the Indian investors filed against NDC challenging payment of rent arrears will soon come to an end.

"Let them imagine that they are staying free because the matter is in court but they should be prepared to pay the backlog plus other charges as the court will determine," said Dr Mabula who has successfully championed a campaign to collect land rent from defaulters dating back several decades.

She said the government respect and understands separation of state powers hence willing to remain calm for as long as the judiciary has not yet given its final verdict. "How long it will take, nobody knows but we cannot intervene with the judiciary," Dr Mabula added.

According to NDC's Corporate Affairs Manager, Abel Ngapembwa the rent backlog had reached over 3bn/- by end last year after following almost a decade of free occupation of the Mbezi Beach

premise by IMTU since 2012.

"It's frustrating but we have nothing to do other than wait for the court's final verdict," said Ngapembwa who acknowledged that IMTU's prolonged court case is a deliberate action to delay payment.

In February 2018, High Court's Land Division Judge, Moses Mzuna ordered IMTU and Registered Trustees of Vignan Educational Foundation Bangalore to pay over 2.6bn/- as rental fees of the NDC premises from where they are currently operating.

Justice Mzuna said in his ruling, "We appreciate, much as IMTU had conferred degrees to many Tanzania's doctors who graduated from the university.

However, upon being fully fledged, the plaintiff must pay rent so that even the government can benefit from collected tuition fees," Justice Mzuna ruled in his judgment dated February 27, 2018.

IMTU argued that they did not recognise NDC as their landlord after Saruji's collapse although the then Parastatal Sector Reforms Commission transferred Saruji's property to NDC. Vignan also argued that it signed a memorandum of understanding with the government to be given free premises to operate from during the initial stage of the investment in late 1990s.



IMTU premises at Mbezi Beach in Dar es Salaam.

Covid-19 threatening hotel development growth in Africa

CAIRO

AS an important industry in Africa, tourism has created both direct and indirect jobs - sustaining foreign currency earnings.

According to the 12th annual survey by WHospitality Group, African hotel development had returned to growth at the start of 2020, with more than 78,000 rooms in 408 hotels in the pipeline; however, with the rise of the Covid-19 outbreak, Africa's hotel industry has been hard hit.

W Hospitality Group's managing director, Trevor Ward, said: "The growth of the chains' presence in Africa has been a very positive story since we started this analysis in 2009. It is quite clear from the numbers that the chains, the developers, the investors - and all of us at W Hospitality Group - continue to believe in the opportunities that Africa presents in the hotel and tourism industry.

"However, our industry has been devastated by the impact of Covid-19, possibly more so than most other economic sectors, mainly because of the almost total shutdown of borders and of the aviation sector - no flights means no guests."

"With that background, we see a slowdown in pipeline growth in 2020, as we all get to grips with the new reality. With so many of the players locked down,

fewer deals will be signed, and it is inevitable that some of the planned openings in 2020 will be delayed, due to closed or slower-paced construction sites, restrictions on funding and a lack of market demand.

"According to our latest data, there are 90 hotels with 17,000 rooms scheduled to open in 2020, but we estimate that at least half of these will be delayed, bringing the actualisation rate down to no more than 40%."

Development performance

This year's African Hotel Chain Development Pipeline survey covers 35 international and regional hotel contributors across the 54 countries in North and sub-Saharan Africa and in the Indian Ocean islands. It reveals a 3.6% increase in the 2019 pipeline.

Most encouraging was a record 68 chain hotels opening last year, fully 75% of those which were scheduled to open, with 11,000 rooms. That performance was substantially up from the 39% of those scheduled to open in 2018 actually doing so. Accor performed particularly well; it opened 18 hotels last year with almost 3,500 rooms in its various brands, ranging from Ibis to Fairmont.

The findings of the 2020 Pipeline report, together with a mid-year update, will be discussed in depth at Bench Events' new



A new hotel under construction in Lagos, Nigeria.

virtual conference, Africa Tomorrow, to be held on 21 July. This event is complementary to the Africa Hotel Investment Forum (AHIF), which has in previous years connected business leaders to serious investors, driving funds into tourism projects, infrastructure and hotel development across the continent.

Marriott, the world's largest hotel chain, has the largest pipeline in Africa, 22% more hotels and 6% more rooms than second-placed Accor, but Accor has been catching up fast, signing 25 new deals last year,

compared to Marriott's 17 new projects. If Accor can open its hotels in 2020 at the same rate that it did in 2019, it is likely the company will overtake Marriott and position itself as the largest operator in Africa.

Trevor Ward said: "We have to wait and see what will happen in the second half of 2020, and in 2021, as we emerge from lockdown and other restrictions. Tourism is such an important industry in Africa, because of the direct and indirect jobs that it creates and sustains, as well as its strong foreign currency

earnings. We are anxious to see hotels reopen and get back to contributing to the African growth story."

Matthew Weihs, managing director of Bench Events, which is staging Africa Tomorrow, said: "Right now, we are facing the biggest recession in history. For those seeking to operate hotels, it is a dreadful time.

"However, for the savvy investors, this is actually a moment of opportunity because hotels are a long-term investment and one of the secrets of success is to spend money during the bottom of the economic cycle in order to capitalise on the upturn as soon as it comes. That's one reason why I expect the networking sessions at Africa Tomorrow will be very busy and fruitful."

THOUSANDS OF LOW-INCOME EARNERS BENEFIT FROM PROGRAMMES FINANCED BY EMIRATES

By Property Watch Reporter

THOUSANDS of people from low income families have benefited from Emirates Airline Foundation's financed projects in education, health and water supply.

The Emirates Foundation has positively impacted the lives of more than 2,670 children and 160 teachers in its educational missions. The foundation which works in partnership with Warwick in Africa, has funded the secondary school students teach children Mathematics and English while teachers have been trained on how to have an impact on the children's learning in the long-run.

"Emirates always looks for meaningful ways in which we can contribute to the local and global communities we serve, whether by sponsoring world-class sports and cultural events, supporting trade and tourism, or community causes," said Sir Tim Clark, President of Emirates Airline and Chairman of the Emirates Airline Foundation.

Clark noted that the Emirates Airline Foundation is passion project, and works with like-minded partners and NGOs globally aimed at reaching out to the neglected, ignored, and the poorest communities on the planet.

Globally, Emirates Airline Foundation's education mission has benefitted 10,705 people. It has also supported the entire travel, logistics and free baggage allowance of three medical missions that brought in 25 medical practitioners to conduct free life-saving surgeries, consultations and screenings in Tanzania and globally.

During their mission, the practitioners conducted 54 surgeries and trained 28 medical professionals in the country and globally benefitting over 76,931 people. "Globally, the foundation used a staggering 132 million Skywards Miles to positively impact the lives and livelihoods of more than 90,000 people, mainly children, living in some of the most impoverished communities worldwide," the Dubai based airline said in a statement.

During the period of between April 2019 to March 2020, the Emirates Foundation also donated more than AED 6.5 million to 22 projects in 12 countries. "The foundation, a vital heartbeat of the airline established in 2003, routinely supports 32 projects and



An Emirates passenger jet parked at Julius Nyerere International Airport in Dar es Salaam.

non-government organisations in 18 countries worldwide through customer donations, corporate sponsorships and Emirates funds," the statement added.

Support ranges from absorbing all annual running expenses and building infrastructure to running feeding and medical pro-

grammes, paying salaries and covering other ad hoc expenses. "Rather than just donating food to feed the hungry, the foundation provides children with holistic care - including food, clothing, shelter, medical support and an education - that transforms lives, creates livelihoods, helps sustain communities, and

leads to a fairer, more just world," he added noting that the airline also enables customers connect to the communities through donation of funds or their Skywards Miles.

In 2018, the foundation used 132 million donated Skywards Miles to support travel for 35 NGOs on more than 50 medical mis-

sions; four NGOs on five engineering missions; and one NGO on two educational missions. The top five countries with the largest beneficiaries were: Bangladesh - more than 66,000 people; South Africa - around 7,900; Uganda - around 5,500; and Ghana - 2,000.

Nile dam talks: Egypt charges Ethiopia with trying to impose terms

CAIRO

ETHIOPIA does not have the "political will" to reach a deal on the operation of a massive Nile dam it is building and wants to act without heeding the interests of Egypt and fellow downstream nation Sudan, according to the Egyptian Irrigation Ministry.

A draft deal presented by Ethiopia during ongoing negotiations between the three countries is not legally or technically sound and does not ensure Egypt and Sudan's share of water during drought. It also grants Addis Ababa the right to change the rules governing the operation of the dam and the filling of its reservoir without prior consultations with Cairo and Khartoum, the ministry said.

"It is a clear attempt to impose a de facto situation on the two downstream nations because the Ethiopian position is founded on forcing Egypt and Sudan to either sign off on a document that takes them hostage to Ethiopia's will or accept that Ethiopia takes unilateral actions like filling the reservoir without prior agreement from the downstream countries," the ministry's spokesman told reporters in Cairo on Saturday.

The latest talks on the long-running dispute began on June 9 and are being held just weeks before Ethiopia plans to start filling the dam's reservoir.

Sudan's Irrigation Ministry said it was drafting a paper based on Egyptian and Ethiopian notes that would be presented when the negotiations resume on Monday.

Ethiopia's Water and Energy ministry said the talks had achieved progress and would result in "finalising the process with a win-win outcome". It provided no details.

Failure to reach an agreement is particularly worrisome as Addis Ababa has insisted it will start filling the dam next month regardless of the outcome, which would affect the amount of water reaching Sudan and Egypt.



Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam under construction on September 26, 2019.

The Egyptian Irrigation Ministry spokesman said Egypt had accepted a compromise "paper" submitted by Sudan as the basis for negotiations between the three nations. Ethiopia, however, countered with a proposal of its own on Thursday. The proposal was "worrying" and "not legally or technically sound," he said.

"The Ethiopian proposal was rejected by Egypt and Sudan. It reinforces the notion that Ethiopia lacks the political will to reach a fair deal on the dam and lays bare its intention to freely exploit transnational waters without regulations or care for the rights and interests of the downstream countries."

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El Sisi has said his country will never accept a de facto situation when it comes to its share of the Nile waters, describing it as an existential is-

sue.

A former general, he has not publicly spoken of military action to protect Egypt's water, saying only that he prefers a negotiated solution. But Egypt will be pushed into a corner if Ethiopia starts filling the reservoir as planned.

Fuelling tensions, a top Ethiopian military commander was quoted by official media over the weekend as saying Egypt should be aware of his country's military capabilities. "Egyptians and the rest of the world know too well how we conduct war whenever it comes," said deputy army chief Gen Birhanu Jula.

Any military action by Egypt would face a set of challenges like that the two countries do not share a border and that it would likely prove difficult to justify it as a legitimate act

of self defence under international law. However, Sudan, which neighbours Ethiopia, has dramatically shifted its stand on the dam issue, from years of support for Addis Ababa to embracing Egypt's concerns.

Moreover, Egypt's military has in recent years acquired cutting-edge hardware that allows it to conduct operations well beyond its borders, such as German submarines, French jet fighters and high seas troop carriers equipped with Russian-made assault helicopters.

The most populous Arab nation with 100 million people, Egypt depends on the Nile for more than 90 per cent of its water needs. It has been trying to persuade Ethiopia to agree to a gradual filling of the dam's 74 billion cubic metre reservoir to reduce the impact on its water share.

Kepsa seeks to halt land system rollout

NAIROBI

THE business community wants the State to suspend the rollout of the Land Information Management System (LIMS) until a legal framework is prepared to back it up.

The Kenya Private Sector Alliance (Kepsa) has petitioned the Senate to stop the Land Ministry from implementing the system pending the formulation of guidelines and regulations. Kepsa chief executive Carole Karuga has warned that arbitrary closures at the ministry would hurt Kenya's overall ease of doing business ranking on access to credit.

"Kepsa recognises that clearly defined legislation, high-quality land administration system and equal access to property rights is essential for enabling businesses to expand their operations and that, the absence of land ownership protections in a country, leaves investors open to land disputes or property seizures, outcomes which likely to hinder direct investment relating to land and property development projects," she said in a petition tabled in the Senate last evening.

Kepsa said the ministry was conducting audits without involving stakeholders with expertise on LIMS matters. The ministry started dry runs on the system, which was expected to go live from April 1, cutting land registration time to 12 days down from 73.

But the registries, which were closed for 28 days due to Covid-19 have since been partially reopened. It currently takes developers and landowners nine processes to register property, which forces them to move from office to office.

JOHANNESBURG

ITALTILE Limited, the JSE-listed ceramic tile and sanitaryware retailer and manufacturer, warned of "substantially lower" sales within its upmarket Italtile retail chain in a trading update on Wednesday. The group's financial year is to the end of June and the trading update highlights the impact of Covid-19. However, buried down in the second page of the update is the worrying warning.

"Italtile Retail's sales were sub-

stantially lower than the prior comparable period. This is due to a combination of factors including the continued deterioration of the commercial projects market in the premium-end segment and the general decline in size of the top-end residential market in the wake of private investor capital exiting SA," it said.

Interestingly the group, which also owns mid-market and discount sanitaryware chains CTM and TopT, did not highlight the impact of Covid-19 first in relation

to lower sales within its premium Italtile chain. "The inability of contractors to operate during the lockdown further restricted sales in the high-end home renovations segment," it said.

Moneyweb reported in July last year of Sapo's concerns around capital flight due to SA's economic woes and policy uncertainty. JSE-listed private education groups, such as AdvTech, also warned last year of student "withdrawals"

Italtile's capital flight warning as top-end sales take a hit

from its premium schools due to emigration.

The Covid-19 pandemic is expected to further restrict private sector investment and spending by South Africa's rich, as they opt to conserve cash. Retrenchments are also likely to impact higher level jobs, with the economic fallout from the pandemic pushing the country deeper into recession.

Meanwhile, Italtile also warned in its trading update that headline

earnings per share (Heps) for its year-end to June, will be between 18% and 28% lower. The forecast includes a once-off cost of R39 million related to its black empowerment deal with Yard Investment Holdings.

Impacted sales

The overall decline in group earnings is largely related to the Covid-19 lockdown and restrictions to trade. However, it noted that with the easing of the lock-

down, sales were picking particularly within its CTM and TopT divisions.

"The group's results for the second six months of the current financial year, being January 1 to June 30 2020, are best analysed in the context of the progression of the pandemic in our trading markets. In the pre-Covid-19 era, up to March 27 2020 when the national lockdown was implemented, sales were on track with management's

stated target to deliver growth in line with the first six months of the current financial year, being July 1 2019 to December 31 2019," it said.

"However, subsequent to the commencement of the lockdown, sales across the manufacturing, supply chain and retail operations were severely impacted," it added. Italtile said that total retail store sales for the 48 weeks ended May 31 2020 decreased by 5%, while like-for-like retail store turnover declined by 10%, compared with the prior corresponding period.

TECHNOLOGY

INDIAN MARKETS BECOME GHOST TOWNS AFTER VIRUS RAGES ACROSS MAJOR CITIES

NEW DELHI

A WEEK after India lifted its crippling nationwide lockdown for businesses and places of worship, many big cities still appear like ghost towns as panic grips millions of residents over soaring coronavirus cases.

Last Monday, the Indian government allowed markets, shopping malls and restaurants across the country to open after 75 days of lockdown that hampered the country's business community and flagged the economy alike.

But the relief has done little for tens of thousands of businesses across major cities, which are bearing the brunt of the pandemic. Total cases have risen to nearly 350,000 and deaths have passed 10,000 in the world's second most populous country.

Almost half of the country's Covid-19 cases were concentrated in major cities, where millions live in packed neighbourhoods amid fears that the country could be further battered by the outbreak in coming weeks.

However, the rising cases and mass psychosis is playing havoc with the business community that was seeking reprieve from the harsh lockdown. Connaught Place, the British-era main commercial hub in New Delhi wore a deserted look as shops and businesses remained closed even after a week of relaxation, with only a few citizens braving to venture out.

Delhi has more than 41,000 cases and authorities have warned half-a-million residents will get infected by the end of July, overwhelming the city's healthcare system that has already witnessed patients being fatally turned away for want of space.

Most establishments, restaurants and coffee shops remained closed across many commercial districts, locations that are usually crowded by shoppers and visitors. Delhi metro system that carries 1.5 million passengers every day remains suspended, making commuting difficult for a vast population.

"Number of cases are multiplying everyday...there is no way I will go to a shopping mall or markets. There is always a fear of contracting infection, who knows who is infected," Nikita Chaudhary, a regular shopper, said. A survey by LocalCircles, an online community-based social media network, found that 56 per cent of Indians are



A street vendor waits for customers at a deserted market in Siliguri, India, on June 15, 2020, after the government relaxed a lockdown that was in force to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

currently feeling anxious about going out.

Sujata Bhatt, 32, a makeup consultant at a famous cosmetic store at a major market in Noida near Delhi, was thrilled to be back to work after three months on June 8. But she has been dejected by the footfall. "It has been a week since we opened the store but we get only two to three customers from an average of 30 customers before the pandemic," Ms Bhatt said.

Trade unions describe the situation as "scary" for their businesses as commercial activity has failed to kick-start in the wake of the panic that has gripped the people. "There is only a 5-7 per cent footfall," said Praveen Khandelwal, secretary general of the Confederation of All India Traders.

"Traders are highly shaken...they are not able to revive their activities for want of finances. There are hardly any customers but we have to still pay taxes and employees' salaries," added Mr Khandelwal. The story was no different in other big cities, where life and business remained disrupted over fears of flare-up.

Authorities in southern Tamil Nadu said they will reimpose "maximised restricted lockdown" for the rest of the month in four cities of the state, including capital Chennai after infection cases crossed 45,000.

Even Mumbai, India's financial capital has struggled with the rising caseload that has surpassed China's Wuhan city where the virus was first reported in December 2019. The city had more than 60,000 cases and over 2,000 deaths, making it the worst region for the pandemic in India as authorities maintain that the country has managed the outbreak successfully.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has sought public cooperation in dealing with the crises, asking people

to learn to live with the virus. Social distancing and masks have been made mandatory in public places and people are encouraged to wash their hands or use sanitisers regularly.

The government has allowed religious congregations, mainly to boost public confidence but not many were ready to take refuge in faith. Since Monday, Delhi's Sikh temple Bangla Sahib had a footfall of a few hundred pilgrims compared to more than 75,000 a day.

Last week, Delhi Jama Masjid closed down for the rest of the month over fears that gatherings could worsen the situation. Two major temples in southern Kerala - Sabarimala and Tirumala - have either cancelled gatherings or scaled down the number of devotees as fear takes over faith.

"I don't want to risk my life by going out to a mall or a temple and getting infected when there is no guarantee of treatment," Teesha Rathi, a make-up artist said. Health experts say the public anxiety was not unfounded as Covid-19 cases were going up manifold amid regular stories of emotional trauma and loss caused by the pandemic, a global event full of uncertainty and no cure.

"Fear psychosis is there but it is realistic and not imaginary," Dr Pulkit Sharma, psychologist at Vimhans, a Delhi-based neurosciences hospital, said. "If you get sick what treatment will be available? People who can manage to stay home, think everything can wait, hotels, malls can wait, and are staying in."

Spain's property market heading for the second crash in one decade

BARCELONA

SPAIN'S \$6 trillion home market looks headed towards another crash, according to economists who are studying the impact on property demand stemming from Europe's strictest pandemic lockdown.

While it's too early to estimate the full dimensions of the blow to demand caused by the health emergency that flared up in March, experts who study the Spanish market say the hit to housing prices in 2020 could range from 6.5 per cent to 15 per cent.

"We're in the prologue of a decline that will only become apparent in September," said Gonzalo Bernardos, an economics professor who directs the real estate master's programme at Barcelona University. "By year-end, prices will have dropped by 12 per cent, because this is maybe the sharpest economic crisis we've had."

The looming crash comes after the Spanish market rose 32 per cent since the trough of the previous collapse was reached at the start of 2014. House-price declines are felt sharply in a country where home ownership approaches 80 per cent and savers tend to use property as their primary nest-egg.

Other observers who predict declines of more than 10 per cent this year include Raymond Torres, at the Fungas think tank in Madrid, and Alejandro Inurrieta, a property consultant and former economist at Spain's Economy Ministry. Fernando Rodríguez de Acuna, director of Madrid-based real-estate consultancy R.R. de Acuna & Asociados, predicts a 6.5 per cent drop.



A woman walks past a real estate agency office in El Masnou, north of Barcelona, Spain, last month. House-price declines are felt sharply in a country where home ownership approaches 80%.

The consultants say no factor is as important to house prices as job growth and the economic outlook. According to the Bank of Spain, GDP could shrink by as much as 15 per cent this year in a worst-case scenario while the jobless rate - already at 14 per cent before the pandemic - could jump to between 18.1 per cent to 23.6 per cent.

The data does point to a correlation between levels of Covid-19 infection and declines in asking prices for homes. Navarra and Castilla y Leon, two of the regions with the highest infection rates, showed some of the biggest declines in asking prices in May, versus a year earlier, according to data compiled by Bloomberg from the Health Ministry, the INE statistics agency and Idealista.com, the largest property

sales website.

By contrast the regions with the fewest cases per 100,000 population - Andalusia, the Balearic Islands and Murcia - saw home prices climb 3.8 per cent to 6 per cent. Still, there are some indications that a housing market collapse won't be as severe as in the previous crisis. Prices for second-hand homes in Spain will fall 6 per cent to 7 per cent this year but bounce back much faster, said Miriam Goicoechea, head of residential and alternative research at CBRE in Spain.

"We don't have an excess of supply that needs selling and neither do we have the levels of indebtedness that we saw in the 2008 crisis," Ms Goicoechea said. "Those two factors will mean we'll have a much faster recovery."



A night view of the Saudi capital's central business district.

Real estate prices in Saudi Arabia continue recovery

RIYADH

REAL estate prices in Saudi Arabia rose 1.2 per cent year-on-year during the first quarter, largely driven by residential property prices as government initiatives to promote home ownership among its citizens underpin activity.

Residential property prices, which had been falling due to a decline in the number of expats, rose 2.1 per cent in the first quarter. This was the second quarterly price increase in succession, according to a new report by Cavendish Maxwell. Commercial real estate prices declined marginally by 0.5 per cent.

In Jeddah, one-bedroom apartment prices averaged 875,000 riyals (Dh857,000) and two-bedroom units cost 1.28 million riyals. In the capital city, Riyadh, a one-bedroom apartment averaged 360,000 riyals and the two-bedroom price was 537,500 riyals. The average price for a 3 bedroom villa in Jeddah was 2.57m riyals and in Riyadh the price of the same unit was 2.8m riyals in the first quarter, data from the report shows.

The Saudi government is aiming to increase the home ownership rate among its citizens to 60 per cent by the end of 2020 and 70 per cent by 2030 from 50 per cent in 2016. It has rolled out a number of initiatives to reach the target including incentivis-

ing developers to increase affordable housing offering and making private sector financing more accessible.

It has already lowered mortgage down payments to 5 per cent from 10 per cent and increased banks' loan-to-value ratio for mortgages of first-time homebuyers to 90 per cent from 85 per cent. "Whilst the residential sector had started to show signs of recovery, the restrictions imposed towards the end of first quarter 2020 to counter the spread of Covid-19 have impacted economic activity, extending to real estate, hospitality and retail, among others," the report said.

"The recovery is likely to face near-term headwinds until clarity emerges on the trajectory of the pandemic and economic activity resumes." Saudi banks issued 170,275 new mortgage contracts in 2019, compared to 46,885 contracts issued in 2018. By the end of 2020, the kingdom aims to increase total outstanding mortgages to 502 billion riyals from 300bn riyals in 2018.

The commercial sector, on the other hand, recorded declines, falling 0.5 per cent from the same quarter a year ago as "many local and international companies are now reviewing their real estate requirements and expansion plans in the region in light of the impact of the pandemic, especially on the office sector and working preferences."

Pro-tenant stance may likely make German property a more difficult sell

BERLIN

GERMANY'S construction minister, Horst Seehofer, wants to help protect tenants by making it more difficult to sell converted apartments, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung reported.

Seehofer (pictured) is proposing to introduce a threshold of at least two-thirds of the flats in an apartment building having to be sold to tenants or their family members for any conversion plan to gain government approval, the newspaper said. Tenants in Germany have a right of first refusal if an apartment building is divided into flats for sale.

In Berlin, legislators have imposed a rent freeze for five years after a property boom caused rents to double over the past decade, but property owners have asked Germany's highest court to overturn the move. Researchers at the Ifo Institute in February warned that such restrictions would encourage landlords to withdraw properties from the rental

market when they become vacant and sell them.

As many people do not have the money to buy the apartments they live in, tenants are protected against eviction for at least three years after a conversion. The bill, proposed by Chancellor Angela Merkel's ally from Bavaria's Christian Social Union, also obliges owners of undeveloped land to build residential properties. In the future, cities and municipalities would be able to insist that one or more residential buildings are part of a development, if the plan allows for it and the area in question has a tight housing market.

Within Germany's governing coalition Mr Seehofer's plans are controversial. Lawmaker Jan-Marco Luczak from Merkel's Christian Democrats said property formation must remain a central element of government policy. Real estate lobby group GdW said the planned changes wouldn't help to accelerate the planning process.



WORLD

Xi chairs China-Africa summit, calls for solidarity to defeat COVID-19

BEIJING

CHINESE President Xi Jinping on Wednesday called on China and Africa to defeat the novel coronavirus with solidarity and cooperation.

The two sides should work together to build a China-Africa community of health for all and take their comprehensive strategic and cooperative partnership to a greater height.

Xi made the remarks in Beijing when chairing the Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity against COVID-19, held via video link.

The summit was jointly initiated by China, South Africa, the rotating chair of the African Union (AU), and Senegal, the co-chair of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC).

Noting that China and Africa have understood the test of a severe challenge and enhanced solidarity, friendship and mutual trust in the face of COVID-19, Xi said the two sides must mobilize necessary resources, stick together in collaboration to protect people's lives and health, and minimize the fallout of COVID-19.

He called on both sides to stay committed to fighting COVID-19 together, saying that China will continue to do whatever it can to support Africa's response.

"China will lose no time in following through on the measures I announced at the opening of the World Health Assembly, and continue to help African

countries by providing supplies, sending expert teams, and facilitating Africa's procurement of medical supplies in China," Xi said.

He said China will start ahead of schedule the construction of the Africa CDC headquarters this year, work with Africa to fully deliver the health care initiative adopted at the FOCAC Beijing Summit, and speed up the construction of China-Africa Friendship Hospitals and the cooperation between paired-up Chinese and African hospitals.

"We pledge that once the development and deployment of COVID-19 vaccine is completed in China, African countries will be among the first to benefit," said Xi.

He encouraged China and African countries to strengthen Belt and Road cooperation and accelerate the follow-ups to the FOCAC Beijing Summit.

"Greater priority needs to be given to cooperation on public health, economic reopening, and people's livelihood," said Xi.

He said China will cancel the debt of relevant African countries in the form of interest-free government loans that are due to mature by the end of 2020 within the FOCAC framework.

For those African countries that are hardest hit by the coronavirus and are under heavy financial stress, China will work with the global community to give them greater support, by such means as further extending the period of debt sus-



President Uhuru Kenyatta was among African leaders who participated in an extra-ordinary China-Africa Summit on solidarity against COVID-19 pandemic. The virtual summit convened by China, South Africa and Senegal was held on Wednesday.

pension, to help them tide over the current difficulty, Xi said. China will work with other members of the G20 to implement the G20's Debt Service Suspension Initiative and urge the G20 to extend debt service suspension still further for countries concerned, including those in Africa, Xi added.

He said China supports Africa in its effort to develop the African Continental Free Trade Area and to enhance connectivity and strengthen industrial and supply chains.

China will explore broader cooperation with Africa in such new business forms as digital economy, smart city, clean energy, and 5G to boost Africa's development and revitalization, said Xi.

Stressing that solidarity and cooperation is "the most powerful weapon" in the face of COVID-19, Xi called on China and Africa to stay committed to upholding multilateralism. "We oppose politicization and stigmatization of COVID-19, and we oppose racial discrimination and ideological bias. We stand firm for equity and justice in the world," he said.

Noting that the world is undergoing profound changes unseen in a century, Xi said closer cooperation between China and Africa "is needed more than ever."

He called on both sides to support each other on issues involving respective core interests and advance the fundamental interests of China and Africa as well as all developing countries.

"This way, we will be able to take the China-Africa com-

prehensive strategic and cooperative partnership to a greater height," he said.

African leaders that attended the summit include South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, Senegalese President Macky Sall, Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo Felix Tshisekedi, Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, Gabonese President Ali Bongo Ondimba, Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, Niger's President Mahamadou Issoufou, Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari, Rwandan President Paul Kagame, Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, and Chairperson of the African Union Commission Moussa Faki Mahamat.

Secretary-General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres and Director-General of the World Health Organization Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus also attended the meeting as special guests.

Xinhua

Rwanda reopens tourism, with great promotion in tracking mountain gorillas

KIGALI



RWANDA has announced the reopening of tourism activities, with a sharp cut in the price of permits for tracking endangered mountain gorillas.

The reopening of tourism activities and resumption of international travel for charter flights are effective from June 17, 2020, Rwanda Development Board (RDB) said in a statement issued on Wednesday, exempting international tourists traveling with charter flights from anti-coronavirus measures that prohibit travellers from entry to Rwanda and suspend commercial flights.

Rwanda's tourism industry is adapting to create a safe environment for travelers and operators, in order to thrive in these unprecedented times," RDB's Chief Tourism Officer Belise Kariza said in the statement.

The board, which promotes tourism and investment for Rwanda, said the permits for tracking endangered mountain gorillas are, from Wednesday until Dec. 31, 2020, available for 200 U.S. dollars to Rwandan nationals and East African Community nationals residing in Rwanda, 500 dollars for foreign residents, a sharp slump from 1,500 dollars for all visitors.

It also said special packages are available for groups, families and corporations on other products in Volcanoes National Park, home to mountain gorillas, and Nyungwe National Park that hosts one of the oldest rainforests in Africa.

Following months of tourism activities' suspension due to COVID-19, Rwanda's tourism sector has been negatively affected and efforts are underway to revive through various special tourism packages for tourists, RDB's deputy CEO Zephania Niyonkuru told Rwanda Television in a news program on Wednesday.

He said the landlocked country generated 498 million dollars in tourism revenues in 2019.

According to the statement, domestic tourists visiting Volcanoes National Park in northern Rwanda and Nyungwe National Park in southwestern Rwanda are required to test negative for COVID-19 within 48 hours prior to visiting them.

A private test center has been set up at Petit Stade, Amahoro National Stadium in the capital city of Kigali, by appointment only, and other test centers outside Kigali will be considered as demand grows, it said.

The RDB also required all visitors travelling by charter flights to test negative for COVID-19 within 72 hours prior to arrival, and a second test prior to visiting any tourist attraction.

Rwanda's three primate-dominated national parks, namely, Volcanoes, Mukura-Gishwati and Nyungwe had been closed since March due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Xinhua

Kremlin slams as absurd EU accusations of coronavirus disinformation campaigns

MOSCOW

KREMLIN Spokesman Dmitry Peskov has blasted as absurd accusations that Russia along with China and Iran are advancing disinformation campaigns against European Union member states since the coronavirus pandemic began.

"As for disinformation, we believe that these accusations are absurd," Peskov told reporters.

The spokesman underlined that the Kremlin "categorically disagrees with these claims." "On the contrary, both Russia and China constantly support international cooperation to fight coronavirus, to develop vaccines and to create medicine to counter this infection," he noted.

The European Commission recently issued a statement, alleging, "Foreign actors and certain third countries, in particular Russia and China, have engaged in targeted influence operations and disinformation campaigns around COVID-19 in the EU, its neighbourhood and globally, seeking to undermine democratic debate and exacerbate social polarisation, and improve their own image in the COVID-19 context."

It is not the first time the European Commission has accused Russia and China of disinformation campaigns. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in late April said that such statements issued by the EU are not proven by any facts.

The minister then noted that Russia got used to "western colleagues increasingly trying to find unifying motives, inventing Russian or any other threat." **Agencies**

WHO says China-Africa summit key platform to virus fight

GENEVA

PLATFORMS like the Extraordinary China-Africa Summit are important in strengthening global solidarity in the fight against the novel coronavirus, World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said Wednesday.

"Unity and solidarity are very important to defeat this virus. When unity and solidarity is lacking, when there is a crack between us, the virus exploits that crack between us," said Tedros at a press conference in Geneva. "That's why

national unity and global solidarity is important, and platforms like this will be important in strengthening solidarity across the globe."

The world has now recorded more than 8 million cases of COVID-19. Noting that 85,000 cases were reported in the first two months of the outbreak but 6 million have been reported in the past two months, Tedros underlined that "the virus is accelerating and moving really fast."

"It's only by moving faster that we can defeat it, and to move fast, the most important element is unity and solidarity," he added.



He recalled that "since the pandemic started, China has been supporting Africa... especially in sending experts, sharing information,

in addition to that, in providing support with supplies, test kits."

Tedros expressed his concern that "although the number of cas-

es in Africa is the lowest compared to other regions, it is at the same time accelerating." The continent has reported more than 180,000 confirmed cases to WHO.

The Extraordinary China-Africa Summit, held via video link on Wednesday, was jointly proposed by China, South Africa, the rotating chair of the African Union (AU), and Senegal, the co-chair of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC).

Tedros and Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, attended the meeting as special guests.

Xinhua

France to apply digital tax this year after US quits talks

PARIS

FRANCE will apply taxes on digital services this year whether the United States returns to negotiations on the issue or not, Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said yesterday, calling a decision by Washington to pull out of talks a "provocation".

The United States announced on Wednesday it was withdrawing from negotiations with European countries over new global tax rules on digital companies, saying the talks had failed to make any progress.

France, one of several European countries which has enacted new taxes to collect more revenue from digital companies, had agreed to

suspend collection of its levy while negotiations were under way at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development on a global approach.

Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire (pictured) said France, Britain, Italy and Spain had jointly responded on Thursday to a letter from US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin announcing the pullout. They said they wanted a deal at the OECD as soon as possible.

"This letter is a provocation. It's a provocation towards all the partners at the OECD when we were centimetres away from a deal on the taxation of digital giants," Le Maire said on France Inter radio of Mnuchin's



letter.

The European countries argue that tech firms pay too little tax in the countries where they do business, because they are able to shift their profits around the globe with

little physical infrastructure. The

United States has resisted any new unilateral taxes on its Silicon Valley companies in the absence of an OECD deal.

Le Maire said that whether the United States returned to the negotiating table to reach a deal at

the OECD or not, France would apply its digital services tax this year. Washington has threatened to retaliate with tariffs. The United States opened investigations this month into digital taxes in Britain, Italy and Spain over concerns that they unfairly target US companies.

A spokesman for Britain's Treasury said London remained committed to finding a global solution.

Nearly 140 countries have been negotiating the first rewrite of international tax rules in a generation in order to bring them up to date for the digital age. The aim is to reach an agreement before the end of the year, although the coronavirus outbreak has slowed progress.

Arduous anti-epidemic efforts manifest great strength of China

THE State Council Information Office of China on June 7 published a white paper titled "Fighting COVID-19: China in Action". The 37,000-word document records the Chinese people's battle against the virus, shares with the international community China's experience in curbing the virus and clarifies China's stance in fighting the virus.

At the critical moment when the world is fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic, the document conveyed confidence and strength in combating the disease through solidarity and cooperation.

International observers said the white paper brings great enlightenment and inspiration to the international community in the global anti-epidemic battle, and is of global scientific value.

A timeline for China's epidemic-fight-

ing efforts since the detection of cases of pneumonia of unknown cause was systematically laid out in the paper.

The document, which faithfully records five stages and 126 important moments of China's fight against the epidemic, demonstrates key policies, measures and achievements of China in coping with the epidemic.

The timeline clearly records the arduous efforts of China in fighting the epidemic and carries the unforgettable memory shared by 1.4 billion Chinese people.

It took China over a month to achieve initial success in curbing the spread of the virus, about two months to bring the daily figure of new domestic cases on the mainland down to single digits, and three months to win a decisive victory in defending Wuhan City and Hu-

bei Province.

With these strategic achievements, China has protected its people's lives, safety and health, and made a significant contribution to safeguarding regional and global public health.

Future historians may well look upon China's fight against the coronavirus as a global role model in containing the spread of new diseases, said Robert Lawrence Kuhn, chairman of the Kuhn Foundation.

China's anti-epidemic timeline clearly shows the strong leadership and scientific guidance of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at the core.

General Secretary Xi Jinping has taken personal command, planned the response, overseen the general situation and acted decisively, pointing the

way forward in the fight against the epidemic. This has bolstered the Chinese people's confidence and rallied their strength.

Under the leadership of the CPC, the whole nation has followed the general principle of "remaining confident, coming together in solidarity, adopting a science-based approach, and taking targeted measures", and waged an all-out people's war on the virus.

The central authorities made major decisions, employed extraordinary measures to deal with an extraordinary emergency, and quickly turned the situation around.

When analyzing the epidemiological curve of the virus after a field visit to China, Bruce Aylward, former assistant director general of the WHO, said every curve represents the extraordinary pol-

icy decision made by Chinese leaders.

The anti-epidemic timeline reflects the people-centered governance philosophy of the CPC and the Chinese government of serving the people and relying on the people.

General Secretary Xi emphasized that people's lives and health must come first. He pointed out that saving as many lives as possible, by every possible means, was the number one priority.

He said China must rely on the people to win the battle against the novel coronavirus epidemic. He hailed the Chinese people as the source of strength and confidence for winning this battle.

China has put the people's interests first - nothing is more precious than people's lives, done everything possible to protect the lives and health of its people, and demonstrated firm de-

termination to fight and win the battle against the epidemic by mobilizing all resources and blocking the spread of the virus. This has been witnessed by the whole world.

The Chinese people have a high degree of trust for their leaders, the Party and government, and consciously shoulder their responsibilities.

Edelman Trust Barometer 2020 reveals that China has once again topped the trust index among major economies in the world.

This reflects that the Chinese people, while going through the epidemic, show more support for and trust in the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at the core, as well as more confidence in the Chinese system.

People's Daily

Govt clamps down on Jamhuri Stadium management

SPORT

Manchester City thrash Arsenal in Premier League's weird new normal

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19



Dodoma's Jamhuri Stadium as pictured recently.

social distancing on stands as spectators did not follow the one-meter apart rule.

He said the social distancing is one of the public health guidelines targeting to counter the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic during this period when football has resumed.

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

THE government has directed that action must be taken against management of Dodoma's Jamhuri Stadium for its failure to adhere to precautionary measures for coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic when JKT Tanzania hosted Yanga in a Vodacom Premier League clash at the venue on Wednesday.

Minister for Information, Culture, Arts and Sports Harrison Mwakembe, said the stadium's management failed to take precautionary measures which included

Mwakembe said closing the Jamhuri Stadium will, though, not be one of the actions, which are to be taken against management of the stadium.

He disclosed he has advised his ministry's Permanent Secretary, Hassan Abbas, to follow up the matter and take necessary action.

The minister was among a section of government officials that had turned up at the Jamhuri Stadium to watch the match, which saw JKT Tanzania hold Yanga to a 1-1 draw.

"I was there at the stadium, the aim was not to watch the match but to see how people (spectators) are following precautionary measures to counter the spread of coronavirus, but I was not happy and something has to be done, it won't

be closing the stadium," he stated in a monitored radio interview.

"I have advised the Permanent Secretary in my ministry to follow up the matter, you know he has been touring stadiums across the country to inspect and appreciate measures stadium owners are taking to avoid the spread of the pandemic," Mwakembe said.

During the game, video pictures posted on social media platforms were showing the stadium filled to its capacity and spectators were sitting close to each other, with many of them not putting on face masks.

Abbas could not be reached on his mobile phone, while his deputy Ally Possi did not respond to our questions when we asked for his reaction on the minister's directive.

However, Abbas had recently told the local media that he is satisfied with the implementation of public health guidelines by fans who are watching football games live.

He is reported to have said that everything is fine after he keenly observed the implementation of health guidelines in

various venues.

"First of all, we should thank President John Magufuli for letting sporting activities resume, since many countries are yet to resume sporting activities and Tanzania has done well so far," he stated.

"The second thing we should cherish is his authorization to allow supporters to watch live games at stadiums while taking into consideration all precautionary measures to avoid further spread of COVID-19," he said.

The Permanent Secretary mentioned some of the precautionary measures as, people should wash their hands before going into the stadium by using running water, use sanitisers and, if possible, wear face masks.

The soccer supporters should, moreover, have temperature tests and create a one-meter distance with each other once they are inside the venue.

Also a similar incident was spotted during a Vodacom Premier League game between Mwadui FC and Yanga, which took place at Kambarage Stadium in Shinyanga last week.

There were video pictures which were showing spectators sitting

close to each other and many of them did not put on face masks.

Due to this, some observers have said all precautionary measures outlined by the government can be adhered to by fans at football stadiums, with the exception of that of creating one-meter distance with each other.

They pointed out reducing stadium capacity is the best way to ensure social distancing, as this will ensure that venues are not congested, thereby taming the spread of the pandemic.

Michael Msemakweli, a football follower, said although reducing stadium capacity is going to affect gate revenue, Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) can offset it by raising ticket prices.

Other measures, he said, should include advance ticket sales with no option for the same on match day at the gates and tightening of security to ensure enforcement of the measures.

He further noted that gates should be opened early to reduce congestion and that stadiums, which do not have capacity to enforce coronavirus precautionary measures, should not host matches.

EATV FRIDAY

TONIGHT @ 9:00

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- 12:00 Mid Week Movie (r)
- 13:30 Kali Za Wana
- 14:00 Bongo Hits
- 15:00 Funguka
- 15:30 Wakilisha (r)
- 16:00 Ujenzi (r)
- 16:30 #HASHTAG
- 17:00 SSELECT
- 17:55 Kurasa
- 18:00 eNewz
- 18:30 Skonga
- 19:30 EATV SAA I
- 19:45 MJADALA
- 20:00 DADAZ (r)
- 21:00 Friday Night Live
- 23:00 Kurasa (r)

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- 06:00 Supa Breakfast
- 10:00 MAMAMIA
- 12:00 Kipenga Xtra
- 13:00 Planet Bongo
- 16:00 EA Drive
- 20:00 Kipenga
- 21:00 Friday Night Live

Azam FC in high spirit ahead of Yanga clash

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

VODACOM Premier League giants, Azam FC, have stated they are looking forward to their league clash with Young Africans SC (Yanga) to be played at the National Stadium in Dar es Salaam on Sunday.

Azam FC information officer, Thabit Zakaria, said after their 2-0 win against Mbao FC in a league clash, which took place at Azam Complex in the city last Sunday, the focus now is on Yanga match on Sunday.

He said Azam FC head coach, Aristica Cioba, is rectifying the weaknesses which his side showed during the last Sunday's match.

"The win against Mbao FC is water under the bridge, we are now looking forward to our next game against Yanga as the aim is to collect maximum points, the team is working hard so as to win our next game," he said.

Buoyed by their 2-0 win, Zakaria said Azam's aim is to continue from where they stopped during their victory over Mbao FC.

Azam FC has been positioned second in the league log with 57 points from 29 matches played.

The Sunday clash will be more interesting as results will give a clear picture on who will finish second in the second in the Premier League table.

Both squads are expected to be boosted by the return of their players who missed last week's games.

Yanga will welcome back winger, Bernard Morrison, and midfielder, Papy Tshishimbi, while Azam FC will boast of key players including Never Tigere and Bruce Kangwa.

Yanga had, before yesterday's game against JKT Tanzania, notched 54 points from 28 games and a win on Sunday will bring level them with Azam FC on points.

The Jangwani Street based side looks to be favourites on paper but if their performance against Mwadui FC last Sunday is anything to go by, then anything can happen considering that they will face an unpredictable side determined to win the game.

A defeat for Yanga on Sunday will be disastrous to them and the squad's head coach Luc Eymael is well aware of its complications.

Victory will be more important to them, as it will see them put pressure on Azam FC and Namungo FC, who are also the second place contenders.

Simba SC seeks to close in on VPL silverware

By Correspondent Sabato Kasika

VODACOM Premier League's Simba SC has made it clear that victory in four matches will see the outfit lift the league's trophy.

Simba are on Saturday expected to play host to Mwadui FC in a league clash, which will take place in Dar es Salaam.

Belgian tactician, Sven Vanderbroeck, who heads Simba's technical bench, stated he hopes they will clinch the trophy, if they will give their all in the matches and come out with good results.

Simba will thereafter feature in two matches against Mbeya clubs, Prisons and Mbeya City, and later head to Tanga to face Coastal Union.

"The next three matches are extremely important to us, my players are aware of that and we will see to it we live up to our expectations. Winning the next three duels will ease the workload," he noted.

The coach disclosed he is impressed by his players' work ethic and their determination to lift the trophy early.

"We nevertheless must be careful

in every match, we will not underestimate our opponents simply because we are enjoying the driver's seat, we know we will not fulfil our targets, should we not be careful" he added.

Simba are currently placed at the top of the league table, as they have notched 72 points in 29 matches.

They have created a 15-point gap with second-placed Azam FC and a 17-point gap with rivals Yanga, who are placed third.

Each of the ree outfits has taken part in 29 games.



Simba forward, Meddie Kagere (L), and defender, Shomari Kapombe (C), feature in training under supervision of the side's assistant coach, Adel Zrane, in Dar es Salaam on Tuesday. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

Moshi tennis centre set to resume training

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

KILIMANJARO's tennis training center, dubbed 'Rafiki Foundation', is set to resume training tomorrow to prepare for the coming local and international events.

The outfit's head coach, Charles Laizer, said he was using social media platforms to monitor the progress of his players, who were indoors due to the coronavirus pandemic.

He said the actual training will now start at the foundation's premises in Machame tomorrow.

He said the foundation has 26 players but the training will begin with eight players, who are based at the facility, and they will follow all precautionary measures set by the government as safety of the players and technical officials is of paramount so the medical team will be on the ground.

"After the government had announced that all activities, including sports, should turn to normal, we thought it wise to resume training, we will not start with all 26 players which we have, we will begin with only eight players who are based here and the rest will join in the near future," he said.

Coach Laizer said he is confident that his players will be in good shape as, during the period when sporting activities were suspended, he had been giving his athletes instructions using social media platforms.

Rafiki Foundation is the hub of tennis in the country as it has seven national junior team players.

The players are Eunice Ali, Irene Munisi, Naitoti Singo, Natasha Singo, Emmanuel Lema, Rachel Swai and Hillary Ndosi.

Natasha is the champion of the just ended Uganda Junior Open tournament which was held in Kampala.

It was used as a qualifying tournament for Africa Junior Championships (AJC), which will be held in Morocco later this year.

Laizer stopped short of mentioning the local and international events which his players will compete.

However, the International Tennis Federation (ITF) suspended all tennis tournaments up to July 13.

The ITF issued guidelines which will be followed once the sport returns.

Some of the guidelines include arriving at a venue already dressed and leaving immediately after the conclusion of a match, no handshakes, no sharing of equipment (rackets, towels, water bottles, etc), no doubles matches.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

