



DOWNPOUR



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Well over 2,000 UDSM, DUCE students due for new hostel

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

WORK is expected to start soon on a two-storey building intended to house 2,280 students from the University of Dar es Salaam and the Dar es Salaam University College of Education (DUCE).

Tabling budget estimates for the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology for the 2020/2021 financial year, minister Prof Joyce Ndalichako (pictured), told the



The university will offer scholarship to 50 girl students opting for science courses, she remarked

National Assembly here yesterday that completion of the new hostel will increase the number of students accommodated at the Magufuli hostel to 5,120.

"Expansion of the Magufuli hostel will end the long-existing accommodation shortage for students at higher learning institutions. We also plan to improve the new students' hotels at NSSF quarters in Kijichi, Temeke district which can accommodate 500 students".

The University of Dar es Salaam will admit 29,056 students in the coming academic year, as well as increase the number of girls admitted from the previous 12,129 to 12,735. DUCE will admit 1,900 students, among them, with 600 taking science courses, the minister said.

The university will offer scholarship to 50 girl students opting for science courses, she remarked.

Prof Ndalichako said to facilitate processing and issuance of loans to students at higher learning institutions, the Higher Education Students' Loans Board (HESLB) has opened six zonal offices in Dodoma,

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WAR-READY: Messages on the need for precautions against Covid-19 are surely sinking in across Tanzania, as Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole confirmed upon catching up with these children at Segerea in Dar es Salaam yesterday

'Reducing internet bundle prices is key social responsibility'

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma



As the country contains the spread of the novel coronavirus with schools closed, parents and guardians have no idea of the future of their children's education

TELECOMMUNICATIONS operators need to reduce prices of services especially internet bundles as the demand has increased, and students require internet to continue learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Dr Paul Loisulie, the chairman of the Tanzania Higher

Learning the Institutions Trade Union (THTU) said here yesterday that the reduction of internet bundle prices should be part of Social Corporate Responsibility (SCR) to help the society to adjust to the Covid-19 pandemic.

He also urged local researchers and scientists in various higher learning institutions to make good use

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Children set to get NIDA numbers

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

THE government intends to issue national identification numbers (NIN) to citizens and residents below 18 years after it emerged that the group cannot register phone numbers biometrically.

The move has been informed by the fact that NIN and national identity cards issuance is limited to people aged 18 and above



while there is no law prohibiting those below that age from opening mobile phones.

Home Affairs minister George Simbachawene said this when responding to a number of issues raised by MPs when contributing to debate on the ministry's budget estimates for the 2020/2021 financial year.

Simbachawene (pictured),

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Coronavirus: Zanzibar has 15 new cases, tally now 299

By Guardian Reporter

The number of novel coronavirus infections in the country reached 299 yesterday after Zanzibar announced confirmation of 15 new ones.

A statement released by Zanzibar's Health minister, Hamad Rashid Mohamed, said the total number of confirmed cases in the Isles reached 98.



This emerging tendency is contrary to health care provision guidelines and ethics; health workers are not supposed to abandon patients

Before this announcement, total cases in Tanzania stood at 284 with 10 fatalities as of Wednesday.

"All the patients are Tanzanian nationals; ten live in Unguja while five live in Pemba," the minister noted.

The government has set 13 isolation facilities in the Isles where 892 patients and suspected carriers were being quarantined as of yesterday. Some 632 suspects who were in quarantine have been released after 14 days elapsed and the tests conducted came out negative.

Ummu Mwalimu, the minister for Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children yesterday appealed to health workers to stop stigmatising patients with coronavirus or symptoms associated with the disease.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam, the minister said she was aware of incidences whereby healthcare providers give a wide berth to patients or individuals

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SHARE FACTS ABOUT COVID-19

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

FACT 1

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

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

FACT 4

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

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

FACT 2

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

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

FACT 3

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

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

FACT 5

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

- Fever
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath
- Seek medical advice if you
- Develop symptoms
- AND
- Have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.



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cdc.gov/COVID-19



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Children set to get NIDA numbers too

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said the ministry has scheduled a meeting with officials from the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) and the National Identification Authority (NIDA) on how the matter can be worked upon.

He said the difference between total registered SIM cards through biometric system and the number of issued national identification numbers (NIN) is clear indication that many people have registered SIM cards for use by people who do not have NIN.

Recent data from the ministry show that TCRA has so far registered 37.2m SIM cards through biometric registration, but NIDA has only issued 21.8m NIN until last month.

He however clarified that the Registration and Identification of Persons Act, (No.11 of 1986) which was revised, gives NIDA the mandate to register and issue identity cards to Tanzanian citizens and eligible residents who are non-citizens with the age of 18 years and above.

Simbachawene defended NIDA's slow pace in issuance of physical IDs insisting NIN is the most important as its use are acceptable in accordance with the country laws.

"We have over six million more people issued with physical IDs compared to those with NIN.

"The most difficult part in processing the numbers is identification and vetting of eligible Tanzanians. Let us be patient as the authority works to produce the physical IDs," he said.

NIDA officials are working closely with their Immigra-

tion Department counterparts and local governments to ensure that only eligible Tanzanians are registered and given national identification numbers, he said.

Strict processes in border regions are necessary due to reality, that giving IDs to foreigners threatens national security. He said issuance of national identification numbers will resume by end of this month, the minister intoned.

Salum Mwinyi Rehani, chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Security and Defence, had earlier suggested that the government comes up with a strategy that will facilitate registration of eligible Tanzanians aged below 18 years.

"This will help documentation of their information as well as reduce the authority's workload in future," he said.

MPs commended the government for procuring two new machines with the capacity to produce 4,500 identity cards per hour.

The committee advised the government to provide NIDA with 4.4bn/- which is required for completion of the national identification and registration exercise countrywide before end of this financial year.

The minister said the government had set aside 5.2bn/- for the exercise in the past financial year but until February this year only 805m/- had been disbursed, about 15.4 percent of allocated funds.

"Delays in disbursing funds affects implementation of the exercise," he remarked.



Mourners pay their last respects to Mwanhamisi Mwema, wife of former Inspector General of Police Saidi Mwema, moments before her burial in Moshi municipality on Thursday. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

Well over 2,000 UDSM, DUCE students set for new hostel

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Mwanza, Arusha, Mtwara, Mbeya and Zanzibar. The board has also improved its operational systems where students can access loan information through the Student's Individual Permanent Account - SIPA.

"Students can now send their examination results

and education certificates online. Previously, they were required to physically submit the documents to HELSB," she stated.

Contributing, Special Seats MP Suzan Lyimo (Chadema) urged the government to improve learning infrastructures at both primary and secondary schools. She also insisted on the need to

employ more teachers to curb existing shortages which affect the provision of education.

Most classrooms in public schools are congested which is contrary to the recommended ratio of 1:45, as currently a single teacher attends to 96 students.

"We are offering free education, but the challenges

are many. These challenges affect performance of students," she said, insisting on the need to have a ring-fenced budget for improvement of infrastructures including desks, pit latrines and classrooms.

The ministry expects to spend 1.3trillion/- in the 2020/2021 fiscal year whereas 87.3bn/- is for recurrent expenditure. The

ministry projects to spend 61.8bn/- to pay salaries and 25.5bn/- for other charges.

A total of 403.6bn/- will be directed at recurrent expenditure in its various institutions. The ministry also expects to implement various development projects at a cost of 857.5bn/-, she added.



Jiangxi Geo-Engineering Group managing director Chen Xianghua (R) presents 10m/- to Tanga regional commissioner Martine Shigella in Tanga city yesterday in support of the war on Covid-19. Photo: Correspondent Boniface Gideon.

Z'bar has 15 new Covid-19 cases, tally now 299

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suspected to have contracted the disease.

"This emerging tendency is contrary to health care provision guidelines and ethics; health workers are not supposed to abandon patients," she said.

Mwalimu said she understands the stigma may be informed by fear of contracting the contagious disease but warned that for health for workers to avoid patients is both unethical and contrary to ministerial guidelines.

Health workers can remain safe while attending to patients by adhering to the national infection prevention and control guidelines for health care services issued in June 2018 as well as the Covid-19 management guidelines of January this year, the

minister intoned.

But Medical Association of Tanzania (MAT) President Dr Elisha Osati said yesterday that health workers are not adequately provided with personal protective gear as they work to save lives of patients.

"I want it to be known that as of now, personal protective equipment is the main challenge for health workers. We request the government and other stakeholders to assist with the same," said the MAT leader in a tweet.

Reports of patient neglect by health workers first emerged on Thursday after Covid-19 patients reportedly rioted at the Amana Hospital in Dar es Salaam which is a designated facility for the disease.

The Wednesday night incident was confirmed by

reports that Ilala District Commissioner Sophia Mjema who added that authorities were checking with guards at the facility to find out if claims that some patients managed to flee were true.

The minister said yesterday that there were a total of 108 patients who did not show any signs of illness, with 37 who had completed their required testing discharged.

"Those who remain at care centres are waiting for final test results and those who are found to be free of the virus will be immediately released," she said.

As of yesterday, globally confirmed cases surpassed 2.7m with over 190,000 deaths and more than 750,000 recoveries.

There was some promising news from Spain,

where the number of new coronavirus-related deaths dropped to the lowest daily level in over a month.

Some 367 people had died in 24 hours to take the total fatalities there to 22,524 by late Thursday, which remains the third-highest in the world. The number of new coronavirus cases rose by 6,740 to 219,764.

In the United States, President Donald Trump was fiercely criticised by the medical community after suggesting research into whether coronavirus might be treated by injecting disinfectant into the body.

In another development, US scientists have found that coronavirus dies the fastest when it is exposed to direct sunlight, though the relevant study cited has not yet been made public and awaits external evaluation.

'Reducing internet bundle prices is key social responsibility'

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of their knowledge and invest in coming up with new approaches to bring positive answers in the battle against Covid-19.

"It is also an opportunity for industrialists and small scale entrepreneurs to produce more protective gears and sell them inside and outside Tanzania," the unionist noted.

Similarly, the official opposition camp in Parliament yesterday asked the government to come up with long and short term strategies to facilitate distance learning for primary and secondary school students during the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak.

"The proposed education budget should include putting in place e-learning facilities to enable teachers to have contacts with students through the internet. It is crucial

to come up with alternative teaching approaches instead of relying on traditional methods which are currently not usable," Shadow Education Minister Suzan Lyimo said.

Tabling the opposition proposed education budget for the 2020/2021 financial year, Lyimo was concerned that there are over 14m students with 12m primary and 2m secondary school pupils staying at home during the outbreak. Among them there are candidates for this year's coming national examinations, she affirmed.

The government should look into ways to facilitate availability of smartphones and tablets since many students cannot afford them. She said mobile phone companies should consider to lower data charges

to enable students to download learning materials.

These suggestions blended well with proposals by academic staff and auxiliary personnel for a raft of measures to keep the education sector moving amid Covid-19, including formalisation of distance and electronic learning.

Addressing journalists here yesterday, the THTU chairman said that the pandemic has adversely affected education. Thousands of students in public schools are staying at home since last month while a handful in private institutions struggle to continue with lessons online, he stated.

"The remedy is for the government to formalize and invest in information and communication technology (ICT)

infrastructure so that learning can resume since no one knows when the pandemic will end," he declared.

He also challenged universities and colleges to come up with strategies and utilize well opportunities available in modern technology to reach students with daily lessons wherever they are as well as testing strategies.

As the country struggles to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus with schools closed, parents and guardians are stranded with no idea of the future of their children's education, he observed.

"The idleness piles pressure on parents who have to juggle between work and keeping an eye on the children to keep them safe from coronavirus."

He said that lessons may be posted through digital platforms, radio or TV programmes using universities and college tutors available in particular areas.

"This issue should be taken seriously. We should make sure that we come up with educational technologies to provide remote online learning opportunities for university students. The disease has destroyed all arranged plans and what is needed is an alternative way to move forward," he asserted.

He hailed the programme established by the Tanzania Education Institute to provide online schooling through television channels and radios but urged improvements in order to reach pupils and students across the country.

Dr Reginald A. Mengi: His Legacy

"Making it as an entrepreneur essentially entails hanging onto your dreams and making them come true."



Media mogul Dr Mengi's position on corruption had little parallel

By Hilal K. Sued

IN the mid-2005 I left what was then known as Habari Corporation (now New Habari 2006 Ltd) and joined The Guardian Ltd as a subeditor at The Guardian newspaper, quitting again at the end of 2006 to rejoin my former employer.

It is perfectly normal in media work for journalists and other practitioners to move from one "house" to another, a phenomenon obtaining across the globe.

During my brief stint at The Guardian, I personally came to know IPP Executive Chairman Reginald Mengi for his dogged stance against corruption. In fact, I still have memories of the several occasions when he would call to congratulate me on opinion pieces I had found time to write in the paper on corruption in official circles.

I clearly remember when, as Media Association of Tanzania (MOAT) Chairman, he lashed out at journalists he said were fond of reporting on allegedly corrupt people without being as bold but level-headed as they were fair and objective as demanded by codes of media conduct and practice.

Dr Mengi said he was opposed to the habit by some journalists of generalising and sugar-coating issues when reporting on corruption in society in general and in officialdom in particular, saying they should neither mince their words nor venture into exaggeration or distortion.

In other words, he wanted them to call a spade a spade but without meaning to victimise anyone while heaping unwarranted praise on anyone else. That was sometime in early March 2014.

I did not have any qualms with that, chiefly considering Dr Mengi's untiring fight against corruption, itself a pursuit of exceptional dimensions among business tycoons in Tanzania and indeed in many other countries.

British wartime Prime Minister Winston Churchill is on record as having once said: "Censure is often useful, praise is often deceitful." Put a little differently, this is to suggest that anything in any way beautiful derives



Dr Mengi has a quick word with former President Jakaya Kikwete in Dar es Salaam.

its beauty from itself and asks nothing beyond itself.

Surely, praise seldom makes anything better - even less, worse. That may have to do with the ways with politicians. And that is precisely why I stand convinced that Dr Mengi knew for a fact that he would have been unfair to journalists

had he praised them instead of telling them the bitter truth.

However, I had a few observations with respect to the MOAT chairman's piece of "advice" to the media fraternity. In essence, what he was advocating was for journalists to religiously adhere to the rules of their own game even

as they took part in a war on an enemy as vicious as systemic corruption truly is.

It is undeniable that those benefiting from corruption and other vices always engineer ways to ensure that they build supposedly impenetrable steel walls around themselves to protect their evil activities from

eagle-eyed and ever nose-poking journalists.

If officials elect to stand tight-lipped or turn war-like to reporters even where what is in question is public interest information on innocuous issues, who would expect them to be even an inch more accommodating on corruption?

Or let me put it this way: if journalists find even merely exposing corrupt tendencies or practices a perilous job, what would happen if it came to the level of naming and shaming supposed culprits - even complete with watertight evidence?

Journalists 'stalking' some huge scandal would be lucky indeed if they made it to the fringes, and if they did they would emerge with record-making front-page scoops.

Yet, at what cost, as many such 'scoops' would be without the names of the perpetrators of the vices in question even though these could be well known to the journalists?

The 'daredevil' journalists and their respective media houses would fear being hurled to courts of law for defamation - and court action is what many media owners would be all so happy avoiding. Dr Mengi was, without doubt, no exception - particularly, I would dare say, given his position as chairman of the national association of media owners.

In the early 1990s I was working as writer-editorial assistant with the Family Mirror, a fortnightly English-language 'hothead' broadsheet that rarely remained unsold on newsstands for more than a couple of hours after landing. The owner of the paper used to tell us (editorial staff) that he would not entertain any court cases and that everyone would have to carry his or her own cross.

And, talking about mentioning names of corrupt elements in society, it is relevant here to mention that Dr Mengi is widely known to have actually walked the talk. He provided an excellent example of the courage he summoned to do so, as he later told journalists.

Many still remember his famous "mafisadi papa" (literally, 'corrupt sharks') news conference many years ago where he mentioned some big names of people he said were engaged in grand corruption, notwithstanding the consequences that would mean to him. In fact, he publicly "invited" anyone feeling wronged to seek legal redress.

Many also still remember what happened soon after the news conference. Many of us thought that, if anything, those named as "mafisadi papa" would heed Dr Mengi's call by going to court the very next day to demand billions from him in

damages.

Strangely, things did not go that way - at least, not as soon as widely expected, given the news conference "bombshell".

The Tanzanian citizenry had been reduced to the level of being so helpless as to sway to the whims of the few elements in society who had been blinded by their immense, mainly ill-gotten, wealth.

Dr Mengi's revelations raised hell, including suggestions from some quarters that they might jeopardise peace and harmony - and that he was now using his own print and electronic media outlets to spur public resentment.

Just for the record: it was just about that time that the idea of so amending the country's laws as to prevent proprietors of media houses from owning more than one type of media outlet was mooted.

But, of course, it was clear that those behind corruption posed much greater danger to peace and harmony in the country than those making anti-corruption "noises".

Luckily for Tanzania and Tanzanians, the preamble to the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Act of 2007 states clearly in the very opening paragraph: "Whereas corruption is an obstacle to principles of democracy, good governance and human rights, and poses a threat to peace, tranquility, and security..."

It is thus quite obvious that Tanzanians have a lot more to gain by mercilessly fighting corruption both "grand" and "petty" on all fronts than allowing the centuries-old vice to deny the nation the peace, harmony and stability it so badly needs to develop meaningfully socially, politically, culturally and economically.

It is again on record that the whistle-blowing on corruption saw Dr Mengi ordered to explain why he had dared make the utterances he had made at the news conference. As happened, though, things ended without further incident.

The truth was that he had breached no law, which is primarily why he had made it quite clear from the very outset that whoever would be aggrieved by his statements had the liberty to seek legal redress.

Sometime after the watershed news conference, at least one of those feeling aggrieved did as much. The events and incidents that followed remain an eye-opening and instructive part of Tanzania's media and legal history to which Dr Mengi spent decades contributing so patriotically. Little wonder, then, that standing in Tanzanian society remains so well and highly regarded.



Dr Mengi (L) shares a light moment with Valentino Mlowola, then Director General of the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau, at an event held in Dar es Salaam.



President John Magufuli, Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa and IPP Executive Chairman Dr Reginald Mengi in jovial mood at a meeting in Dar es Salaam.

Govt: We'll use 150m/- on building of three dispensaries in Tarime District

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

THE government plans to spend 150m/- in the next fiscal year to construct three dispensaries in Tarime district, Mara region.

The project is part of the government's efforts to improve provision of social ser-

vices including the health sector whereas it is constructing dispensaries and health centres at every local government council.

It was announced in the National Assembly yesterday by the Ministry of State in the President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Gov-

ernment when responding to a question from Tarime-Urban MP, Ester Matiko (Chadema).

The ministry stated that the government will not upgrade dispensaries to health centres, instead it will construct new health facilities.

In 2016/2017 and 2019/2020 the government allocated

35 health workers at various health facilities in Tarime district. "The ministry has been allowed to employ 610 doctors who will be allocated to districts with acute shortage of health workers including Tarime district."

According to the ministry, the various initiatives taken to

improve provision of health services in the country are also meant to reduce child and maternal mortality rates.

In her question, Matiko was concerned that available dispensaries and health centre in Tarime provides not adequate medical services to a number of patients including those

from nearby districts such as Tarime-Rural and Rorya.

She claimed that Gamasara dispensary at Nyandoto ward also serves patients from Konggo and Kitere villages in Rorya district and Kewamba and Nyangisya villages in Tarime-Rural district.

"Over 50 per cent of patients

going to the dispensary are from far villages. Why is the government not constructing dispensaries in these villages", questioned Matiko.

She however wanted to know whether the government had any plans to upgrade the available dispensaries into health centres to meet the demand.



Anthony Mavunde (L), Deputy Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (Policy, Parliament, Labour, Employment, Youth and the Persons with Disabilities, pictured at Chamwino in Dodoma Region yesterday presenting fasting-time foodstuffs donated by Dar-UI-Muslimeen and World Islamic Propagation and Humanitarian Services. The items are meant for use by Muslim faithful at Chamwino's Hudda Mosque during the Holy month of Ramadhan, which has just set in. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

Uyole Institute partners with Netherlands to enhance production of potato varieties

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

THE government through Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute Uyole (TARI-Uyole) has entered into agreement with the Netherlands to enhance production of new potato varieties in efforts to make Tanzania among the weighty Irish potatoes producer and exporter.

The seed varieties are expected to increase productivity of the crop whereas the government is working to improve its value chain as well as training farmers on modern potato farming to enable them move from traditional to commercial agriculture.

According to the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT), previously, the country had only four potato varieties, but it now have 11 varieties.

"Some of the improved Irish potatoes varieties are currently tested by farmers in Busokelo Council, Mbeya region. The government expects positive results from the trials as the Netherlands has assured farmers of reliable market", said the Ministry of Industry and Trade in its written response to a question from Busokelo Member of Parliament Freddy Mwakibete (CCM).

The ministry noted that the ready-made market in the Netherlands will be a catalyst for increased investment in crop's value chain. The move is also expected to boost farmer's income as well as national economy.

In his question, the law maker had wanted to know government efforts in finding markets for banana and Irish

potatoes which are mostly cultivated in Busokelo Council.

He also asked whether the government had any plans to construct processing factory for the crops.

According to the ministry, the government has been working to improve business and investment climate in the country whereas both local and foreign investors are encouraged to set-up processing factories for the crops.

"All these efforts are meant to fulfill the country's demand as well as exports. The government is likely to earn more from potato exports", said the ministry.

There are some existing factories for banana processing which include, Mazimba Company Limited and Matunda Mema Tanzania Ltd in Karagwe district, Kagera Region and two in Rombo district, Kilimanjaro Region-Kibo Alex Banana Wine Ltd and Kilimanjaro Banana Wine Limited.

Other are Lumbuga ni Banana Enterprise located in Mwanjelwa district, Mbeya Region, Kasuku Banana Wine Ltd in Rungwe District and Arusha Banana Investment Ltd.

The government urged farmers to make use of the industries by selling their crops since most of the factories source raw materials locally.

The ministry informed that to ensure vegetable and other horticultural products reach local and international markets while fresh, President John Magufuli has embarked on renovation and construction of airports in southern highland regions.

'Over 1,000 dairy heifers produced at Arusha centre'

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

THE government has produced 1,062 dairy heifers at Arusha based Na-

tional Artificial Insemination Centre (NAIC) between July 2019 and March this year.

The quality cattle breeds were distributed to various state-owned dairy farms across the country for production of dairy calf that will later be distributed to dairy farmers.

Responding to a question by Bunda MP, Getere Mwitwa (CCM), the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries said the government is implementing a grand project-Tanzania Livestock Master Plan 2017/2018 - 2021/2022 with the aim of producing a good number of meat and dairy calves.

The MP wanted to know the government's plans to ensure availability of the best heifers to dairy farmers in Bunda as well as in other regions.

Under the project, a total of 1,000,000 meat and dairy

calves will be produced annually through artificial insemination (AI). This will enable the government to fulfill the current demand for improved cattle breeds across the country.

The ministry said through the project it has established artificial insemination camps in Simiyu region (Bariadi and Meatu), Geita (Bukombe and Chato), Dodoma (Kongwa), Katavi (Mpanda and Tanganyika) and in Kagera region (Missenyi and Kyerwa).

Through the camps, livestock officers have provided free insemination services to 4,900 cows for the above mentioned regions.

The project will later be implemented in Mara region whereas it will cover a number of districts including Bunda.

"The government is imple-

menting the project to boost meat and milk production. Plans are also underway to involve the private sector in production of heifers.

The produced 1,062 dairy heifers according to the ministry were distributed to different dairy farms including-Sao Hill (212), Mabuki (175), Ngerengere (93), Nangaramo (8), Tanzania Livestock Research Institute-TALIRI (260), Livestock Training Agency-LITA (164) and Kitulo dairy farm which was provided with 150 heifers.

However, between July 2019 and March this year, a total of 134 heifers were produced through AI at Kitulo dairy farm and National Ranching Company Limited (NARCO).

Tanzania is rich in livestock resources with a total of 32.2 million cattle, according to

Livestock and Fisheries Minister, Luhaga Mpina.

From the 32.2 million cattle, the country is endowed with 20 million goats, 5.5 sheep, 2 million pigs and 636,997 donkeys.

According to data from Tanzania Dairy Board (TDB) the livestock sector contributes 7.4 percent to the gross domestic product (GDP) whereby 30 percent of it is from the dairy industry.

According to UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Tanzania has a low level consumption of milk and dairy products which is 45 liters per capita per year, against the recommended 200 liters annually.

The yearly amount of milk produced in Tanzania is 2.4 billion liters but less than 10 percent of the milk produced is processed.

SUPER EMACO LIMITED
Company Registration Number: 96323

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT a Special Board Members Meeting of the above named Company will be held on the 30 April, 2020 at 10:00am at the Registered Office of the Company, Plot No. 7, Block "A", Sinza Service Trade, PO Box 72622, Dar es Salaam

3.To finalize queries from creditors if any;
4.Any Other Business.

By Order of the Company Liquidator
Leah Karunde

Dated at Dar es Salaam: 23 April 2020

Circulation:
To all members

216715507

Enabel Belgian Development Agency

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
PROMOTION OF SANITATION AND HYGIENE IN KIGOMA

The Kingdom of Belgium through Enabel and the Government of Tanzania through the Ministry of Water, are implementing a water and sanitation project in Kigoma region. This is a 5-year project which runs through June 2022 and aims to promote provision of sustainable water supply services in the region. The project now seeks to engage an NGO to carry out activities that aim at improving safe hygiene practices at household level in respective of: a) water collection, b) transport to point of use, c) storage d) use e) hand-washing and f) latrine use.

Interested NGOs can be local or international or a partnership of both but with a track record in carrying out sanitation and hygiene promotion activities using the most effective approaches. The project is looking for NGOs with capacity to implement and monitor and evaluate improvements in hygiene practices. Those organizations that are directly present or have implementing partners in Kigoma region will have an added advantage

More information and bid documents of this assignment are available at: <https://btctanzania.wordpress.com/>

216716201

WHO urges countries to move quickly to save lives from malaria in sub-Saharan Africa

By Guardian Reporter

THE World Health Organization has called on African countries to double our efforts to achieve a 75 per cent reduction by 2025.

In her message ahead of today's World Malaria Day, WHO regional director for Africa, Dr Matshidiso Moeti suggested the need for greater political commitment, accelerated investment, and more innovation in malaria prevention and control are urgently required.

Together, we must recognize that as long as malaria exists, it threatens the poorest and most vulnerable, and has the potential to resurge in times of crisis, like the COVID-19 pandemic facing us now.

"To build on the gains we have made, I urge countries to allocate resources, to work across sectors, and to strengthen cross-border collaboration to control malaria. With the required financing, strong coordination, dedicated part-

ners and engaged communities, we can achieve a malaria-free Africa."

She said: "W commemorate World Malaria Day to draw attention to the devastating impact of this disease on families, communities and societies. As the world grapples with COVID-19, this is an opportunity to highlight the importance of maintaining robust health systems and continuing delivery of essential health services in times of crisis."

The theme of World Malaria Day 2020, "Zero Malaria Starts with Me" is a grassroots campaign, first launched in Senegal in 2014. It aims to engage everyone from policy-makers to the private sector to communities affected by malaria.

Dr Moeti said that African countries have led a massive effort to control the disease and Algeria was certified malaria free in 2019. "However, there were still 213 million cases in the WHO African Region in 2018, accounting for 93 percent of cases worldwide."

Every year over 400 000 people die of malaria, and 94 percent of these deaths occur in the African Region, she said, adding that children under five years are the most vulnerable group, accounting for 67 percent of deaths.

"This situation remains alarming and inequitable," Dr Moeti said.

According to her, through the Sustainable Development Goals, countries have committed to ending the malaria epidemic by 2030.

"The E-2020 Malaria Elimination initiative was launched in 2017 and to halt rising cases, mainly in countries in sub-Saharan Africa, WHO's High Burden to High Impact approach was launched in 2018. A year ago, pilot testing of the world's first malaria vaccine, RTS,S, started in Ghana, Kenya and Malawi. So far, 275 000 children have received the vaccine.

"This action is commendable, but we are falling short on the 2020 milestone of a 40 percent reduction in cases and deaths."

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15/04/20 09:30am	AST - NOR Virtual Football / English League 1X2 - FT (1)	3-0 2.00
15/04/20 09:30am	MCI - MUN Virtual Football / English League 1X2 - FT (1)	3-0 1.54
15/04/20 09:30am	NEW - BUR Virtual Football / English League 1X2 - FT (1)	2-1 2.60
15/04/20 09:30am	WAT - CRY Virtual Football / English League 1X2 - FT (1)	3-0 2.60
15/04/20 09:30am	ATH - GRN Virtual Football / Spanish League 1X2 - FT (1)	4-0 2.23
15/04/20 09:30am	EIB - BET Virtual Football / Spanish League 1X2 - FT (1)	1-0 2.45
15/04/20 09:30am	OSA - MAL Virtual Football / Spanish League 1X2 - FT (1)	3-0 1.67
15/04/20 09:30am	RSO - SEV Virtual Football / Spanish League 1X2 - FT (1)	4-2 2.09

15/04/20 09:30am	VAL - VIL Virtual Football / Spanish League 1X2 - FT (1)	2-0 1.88
15/04/20 09:30am	BOL - TOR Virtual Football / Italian League 1X2 - FT (1)	3-0 1.95
15/04/20 09:30am	JUV - BRC Virtual Football / Italian League 1X2 - FT (1)	2-1 1.16
15/04/20 09:30am	INT - NAP Virtual Football / Italian League 1X2 - FT (1)	2-0 1.79
15/04/20 09:30am	SAS - GEN Virtual Football / Italian League 1X2 - FT (1)	2-1 1.95
Odds:		5 893.45
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Potential Winnings:		TSh 10 606 401.00
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betPawa inatoa **bonasi bora za ushindi Tanzania** kwa bashiri zote zenye mechi tatu au zaidi, pamoja na 250% kwenye mechi 30, za michezo yote miwili mubashara na virtual.

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Wakala wa pesa za mtandaoni aliongezea kuwa alisoma mfumo wa pawaLeague na kufanya chaguzi: "Nilifuatilia matokeo yao ya mwisho na mfumo waliokua nao halafu nikabashiri."

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Taliri 3bn/- project to boost livestock keepers' incomes

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo,

Dodoma

LIVESTOCK keepers in Tanzania must have all reasons to smile following an ambitious 3b/- multiple ovulation and embryo transfer (MOET) project, after its initial laboratory trials proved successful.

The key initiative, launched last year by director general for Tanzania Livestock Research Institute (TALIRI) at Mpwapwa centre, Dodoma region, targets to expand multiplication of quality livestock (dairy and beef) in the country through a massive production of heifers using high reproductive technological methods.

The project, part of series in the biotechnology laboratory at Mpwapwa center which started with at least 100 embryo donor cattle and a total of 34 recipients targeted 400 recipients at the initial stage to be derived from the Dodoma-based livestock institutes under the parent Ministry.

MOET, a conventional embryo flush, is the first-class procedure used in advanced cattle breeding. It involves a 5-week super ovulation program, resulting in several embryos amounting to 8 to 10 being released from one donor cow at once, as opposed to one during a natural mating. A donor cow can be harvested six times a week, producing 48 to 60 embryos per year.

TALIRI's director general, Dr.

Eligy Shirima, told The Guardian in an interview that success of the high-technological project will enable the country to stand at the helm of the continent's livestock status in the near future.

Dr. Shirima added "the target is to produce at least 5,000 heifers in a year, through a combination of MOET, the conventional Natural Mating and Artificial Insemination techniques."

He further enumerated that, the Institute will join hands with other institutes and livestock farms in the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries to produce 1 million calves per annum to satisfy the overwhelming demand for improved heifers and bulls for beef and dairy in the Country

"This move will automatically stimulate growth of dairy and meat processing industries through increased production of raw materials including milk, meat and hides. The major targets, among other, are to increase income, nutrition and employment among livestock communities in Tanzania," Dr. Shirima explained.

He added, after success of the pilot project, the prospectus development was to disseminate the advanced scientific technology to livestock keepers from across the country at reasonable prices.

"This initiative is vital as the beef cattle to be produced (bulls and heifers) which will have a market weight of 400-600 kg

live weight, contrary to local zebu that are usually at 250kg market weight," he noted.

In addition, he informed that throughout the program, the produced crossbred dairy cattle will have the capacity to produce more than 10 litres of milk in a day, compared to the current production of 1-3 litres of milk/day from the pure indigenous zebu cattle.

According to him, the cattle breeds to be involved in the program includes Friesian, Ayrshire and Jersey which are genotypically tested for high milk production while boran, simental and sahil breeds for beef production. In addition, Mpwapwa breed, one of the TALIRI's product, is also included in the programme

with a purpose of enhancing their multiplication to meet the farmers' demand for dual purpose cattle.

The MOET programme relies on use of genetic merits of both donor cows and bulls, hence maximising their genetic potentials.

The highly equipped TALIRI's Mpwapwa lab is linked with various potential partners including Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), Tanzania Artificial Insemination Centre (NAIC) and Massey University in New Zealand through strategic memorandum of understanding (MoU).

Apart from hailing initiatives done by the 5th phase government led by Dr. John Pombe

Magufuli for concerted efforts to spur improvement for the crucial sector, Dr. Shirima appreciated financial patronage from the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) and the parent Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries in supporting efforts to expanding multiplication of quality livestock (dairy and beef cattle) in the country.

Suffice to say that, the TALIRI's Mpwapwa laboratory is not only used to produce and supply livestock Semen, Embryos and Liquid Nitrogen, but it is also a National biobank facility for cryopreservation of livestock germplasm to prevent the risk of losing livestock genes of economic importance.

BoT advised to purchase more gold amid Covid-19 pandemic

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE Bank of Tanzania (BoT) has been advised to purchase more gold amid Covid-19 pandemic as part of strides meant to rescue the country's economy from falling down.

Msalala MP, Ezekiel Maige (CCM) made the call yesterday here warning that if early intervention measures were not be taken, the country's economy could be shaken greatly.

He noted the disease which has killed thousands of people globally while also affecting millions of people, may bring more negative impacts in the country.

"Gold price in the global market is still higher but declined in the local market, we have also witnessed big nations reporting how the disease had affected their economy, with all signs, it high time our central bank acted accordingly by purchasing more gold and put it in stock for future use," he said.

The lawmaker also called on the Ministry of Finance and Planning to think on the issue and come up with more interventions that will enable

the country's economy remain stable.

"I remember when the deputy minister of Finance and Planning Dotto Biteko told the House recently that the government had purchased gold through STAMICO. But this should not limit BoT from keeping more stocks of the minerals," Maige said.

According to him, by purchasing more gold, small-scale miners will also benefit by earning more incomes for their daily needs.

On February, this year, President John Magufuli ordered the central bank to create a gold reserve as the minerals are payable.

"We should start buying gold, the central bank must invest in this. We must have our reserves in dollars but also our reserves in gold, because gold is money," Magufuli said at a ceremony in Dar es Salaam.

President Magufuli is intent on regulating the country's mining sector, which had been facing challenges of fraud and under-reporting of production and profits, and has locked horns with foreign mining companies.



Arumeru district commissioner Jerry Muro (L) has a first-hand account of rescue efforts on Thursday after heavy rains left two residents of the district dead. Photo: Correspondent Woinde Shizza

Ikungi District Council offers 5,590 secondary school desks

By Guardian Correspondent,

Singida

IKUNGI District Council in Singida region has made

4,600 school desks and repaired 990 for the district's secondary schools.

Ikungi district executive director (DED) Justice Kijazi said the money for 850 desks

came from the Constituency Fund and donations from various education stakeholders.

Kijazi was speaking at the handing over event and

award giving to teachers from the schools that did well in the national examinations that enabled the district to hold top positions in Singida region.

He said the council's community development department mobilised various stakeholders who contributed funds and sanitary pads to enable their children attend classes for the whole year.

He said for the whole year the girl students school attendance was only 70 per cent due to menstrual challenges. The headmistress of Muungano secondary school Dina Jaredi Ihonde used the occasion to advise parents and guardians to help their girls because sometimes it appears as if some girls had no parents.

She also stressed that despite donation of the sanitary pads, they are not sufficient; hence it is better for parents to understand the challenge and be read to contribute as well.

Presenting the desks, Ikungi district administrative director (DAS) Winfrida Funto called on teachers against complacency from the attained achievements in the education sector, and she instead said they should work hard to attain 100 per cent pass mark in examinations.

She said in 2019 the district held number four position among the region's in Std VII national examinations. "I congratulate you all Members of Parliament and councilors for your good supervision of the education sector and revenue collections in our district," she said.

HALMASHAURI YA JIJI LA DODOMA



TANGAZO LA UUZAJI WA VIWANJA

Mkurugenzi wa Halmashauri ya Jiji la Dodoma anawatangazia Wananchi wote kuwa kutakuwa na zoezi uuzaji wa Viwanja kuanzia TAREHE 24/04/2020 katika eneo la wazi Manispaa ya zamani (karibu na Sabasaba) kuanzia saa 2:00 Asubuhi hadi saa 9:30 Alasiri.

Viwanja vinavyouzwa ni katika maeneo ya:

ENEEO	MATUMIZI NA BEI TSHS KWA (SQM1)
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Njedengwa Investment Centre, Karibu na Mradi wa Nyumba 300 wa Kisasa	• Biashara 10,000/=
Nala Industrial Area, Karibu na Kituo cha Malori	• Apartment 13,070/=
Medeli Extension, Karibu na Jengo la Hazina na Benki Kuu	• Biashara 18,876/=
Mtumba (Karibu na Mji wa Serikali na Ikulu)	• Viwanda 5,000/=
Nala, Karibu na Chuo cha IFM	• Hotel 80,000/=
Mahomanyika, KM 2 kutoka unapojengwa Uwanja Mpya wa Ndege	• Taasisi 40,000/=
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Kitelela, Karibu na Unapojengwa Uwanja wa Ndege Mpya	• Makazi na Biashara 7,500/=
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Chahwa, Karibu na Ikulu	• Makazi 5,000/=
	• Makazi 6,500/=
	• Makazi 5,000
	• Makazi na Biashara 6,000/=
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	• Makazi na Biashara 6,500/=
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Tangazo hili limetolewa na:
Mkurugenzi wa Jiji,
DODOMA

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IN LOVING MEMORY



Eng Aloys Joseph Mwamanga."

The family of the late Eng Aloys Joseph MWAMANGA of Kunduchi Mtongani, Dar es Salaam and Mbeya block T would like to inform family, friends and all close relatives that April 25, 2020 marks one year since our beloved passed on. To honour him on this day, there would be a special thanks giving mass at Kunduchi Mtongani Roman Catholic Church St. Nicolaus from 7am. Taking into consideration the Covid-19 outbreak, we are not going to conduct any gathering right after the mass.

We would like to extend our deepest appreciation to family, religious leaders, friends, co-workers from PEMACCO, TCCIA, TSPF, PPAA, NRCL, Mapembasi, doctors and nurses who took care of him while in Hospital in Tanzania and India and all relatives who stood with family from the time of his illness until his burial in Uwemba Njombe. We ask the Almighty God to continue offering his blessings and grant you long life. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the Name of the Lord be praised.

Amen.



These Dar es Salaam residents have some 'balancing act' to ensure in crossing the narrow makeshift Mzinga River bridge in the Kivule Bomba Mbili suburb, as captured yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma

SGR project: TRC allocates 22.5bn/- for compensation

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

TANZANIA Railways Corporation (TRC) has set aside 22.5bn/- for paying compensation to wananchi in Dodoma and Singida regions whose land will be taken to pave way for the ongoing construction of Standard Gauge Railways (SGR) project.

TRC has unveiled Phase II compensation payment to wananchi in the two regions, and they will start receiving the money in the near future.

the exercise was unveiled by Dodoma District Commissioner Patrobas Katambi at Mkonze Secondary School in Dodoma City who said the money will be paid to landowners in Bahi, Dodoma and Manyoni districts in Singida Region.

He said TRC will not make errors

as it has the list of names of all those qualified to be paid, hence whoever will try to insert his name in the list are wasting their time.

He said after the wananchi receive the money they should plan to invest it in development projects and not squander it.

TRC Assistant Project Manager Eng Christopher Mang'wela said TRC has already paid 13.5bn/- compensation to more than 3,000 victims from the project in Mvomero, Kilosa, Mpwapwa and Chamwino districts.

He said for those who are in the list will be paid through their bank accounts and added that no one will be shortchanged.

Wananchi who are victims of the SGR project have thanked the government for keeping its promise in paying the compensation.

Tanzania's domestic market for tilapia estimated to reach \$380m by year 2030

By Correspondent James Kandoya

TANZANIA'S domestic market for tilapia is estimated to reach U.S. \$ 380million by 2030, where 64 per cent of which remains obtainable to new aquaculture production.

The USAID report on aquaculture investment opportunities - 2018 conducted by the Darberg - a strategy and policy advisory firm in the country has revealed that initial review suggests freshwater tilapia farming has the highest potential.

The report entitled "Market Analysis and Value Chain Prioritisation in the Livestock & Fisheries sector in Tanzania" - aquaculture investment opportunities -summary of findings screened 18 sub-sectors to appraise commercial and social potential of which aquaculture was selected as a main priority based on commercial viability.

The report revealed that aquaculture has a strong domestic consumption trends, and was the most commonly farmed fish in Tanzania and East Africa.

"To unlock this potential, commercial aquaculture operation will need to be introduced at scale; options exist for cage, pond and re-circulation systems," it suggested

The quality input supply was a key consideration for emerging aquaculture industries. Producers have make or buy decisions and typically start importing inputs of a consistent quality.

In addition, Tanzania will require up to 69 kg million tons of additional tilapia production, the supply could be either be fresh or frozen.

The report however noted that despite the clear opportunities for local fish productions, the sector has not yet unlocked its full potential.

Currently, the potential opportunity is underpinned by strong domestic demand growth, constrained conventional supply, surmountable competition and strong regional precedents of technology application.

The report further point out that the population growth, urbanization and income effects will increase domestic demand for tilapia. While pushing total fish consumption rates closer to global averages.

From the domestic demand point of view, the population growth, urbanization and improved incomes will increase demand for fish, the annual average per capita consumption is at only 60 percent of global levels.

However, statistics show that Tanzania's commercial aquaculture production still remains under 5,000 per year tonnes, about 1 percent of fish production.

Currently, the population has been growing at 2.8 percent one of the highest rates in Sub Saharan Countries (SSA).

It is poised to reach 80 million in less than 10 years, which on a baseline scenario would increase current fish consumption by 50 percent.

Apart from that, it is urbanizing at a rate of 5.4 percent Urban populations demand a higher proportion of fish than rural, a trend clearer in coastal / lake regions.

Being in urban centers increases the access and availability of fish, one of the most cited factors driving consumer choice Besides that, over-fishing and poor fisheries management has significantly reduced fish stocks in most lakes.

While this domestic artisanal supply currently dominates the market its share is set to reduce. Regional imports are starting while frozen Chinese imports represent significant competition and are steadily increasing.



To unlock this potential, commercial aquaculture operation will need to be introduced at scale; options exist for cage, pond and re-circulation systems."

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The Board of Directors, Management and the Staff of **TANZANIA ELECTRIC SUPPLY CO. LTD** wish to congratulate the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, **H.E. Dr. John Pombe Magufuli**, President of Zanzibar and Chairman of the Revolutionary Government **H.E. Dr. Ali Mohamed Shein**, and all Tanzanians for commemorating **56years of the Union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar.**



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SATURDAY 25 APRIL 2020

Taking A New Look
At The News
ESTABLISHED IN 1995

It's World malaria Day, so what do we say to it?

WORLD Malaria Day is an international observance commemorated every year on 25 April and recognises global efforts to control malaria. Globally, 3.3 billion people in 106 countries are at risk of malaria.

Malaria is a mosquito-borne infectious disease that affects humans and other animals. Malaria causes symptoms that typically include fever, tiredness, vomiting, and headaches. In severe cases it can cause yellow skin, seizures, coma, or death. Symptoms usually begin ten to fifteen days after being bitten by an infected mosquito.

Malaria is a life-threatening disease caused by parasites that are transmitted to people through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes. It is preventable and curable. In 2018, there were an estimated 228 million cases of malaria worldwide.

The estimated number of malaria deaths stood at 405,000 in 2018. Children aged under 5 years are the most vulnerable group affected by malaria; in 2018, they accounted for 67 per cent (272,000) of all malaria deaths worldwide.

The WHO African Region carries a disproportionately high share of the global malaria burden. In 2018, the region was home to 93 per cent of malaria cases and 94 per cent of malaria deaths.

According to the latest World malaria report, released in December 2019, there were 228 million cases of malaria in 2018 compared to 231 million cases in 2017. The estimated number of malaria deaths stood at 405,000 in 2018, compared with 416,000 deaths in 2017.

In most cases, malaria is transmitted through the bites of female Anopheles mosquitoes. There are more than 400 different species of Anopheles mosquito; around 30 are malaria vectors of major importance.

All of the important vector species bite between dusk and dawn. The intensity of transmission depends on factors related

to the parasite, the vector, the human host, and the environment.

Transmission also depends on climatic conditions that may affect the number and survival of mosquitoes, such as rainfall patterns, temperature and humidity. In many places, transmission is seasonal, with the peak during and just after the rainy season. Malaria epidemics can occur when climate and other conditions suddenly favour transmission in areas where people have little or no immunity to malaria. They can also occur when people with low immunity move into areas with intense malaria transmission, for instance to find work, or as refugees.

Human immunity is another important factor, especially among adults in areas of moderate or intense transmission conditions. Partial immunity is developed over years of exposure, and while it never provides complete protection, it does reduce the risk that malaria infection will cause severe disease.

For this reason, most malaria deaths in Africa occur in young children, whereas in areas with less transmission and low immunity, all age groups are at risk.

Vector control is the main way to prevent and reduce malaria transmission. If coverage of vector control interventions within a specific area is high enough, then a measure of protection will be conferred across the community.

WHO recommends protection for all people at risk of malaria with effective malaria vector control. Two forms of vector control - insecticide-treated mosquito nets and indoor residual spraying - are effective in a wide range of circumstances.

Sleeping under an insecticide-treated net (ITN) can reduce contact between mosquitoes and humans by providing both a physical barrier and an insecticidal effect. Population-wide protection can result from the killing of mosquitoes on a large scale where there is high access and usage of such nets within a community.

Chernobyl 25 years later: Many vital lessons learnt

THE catastrophic accident in 1986 at the Chernobyl nuclear power station in Ukraine was one of the worst man-made disasters of the twentieth century. Two and a half decades later, the nuclear accident offers many lessons for preventing, managing, and recovering from such a horrible event, as well as specific lessons for the further development of nuclear power.

The Chernobyl disaster was a nuclear accident that occurred on Saturday 26 April 1986, at the No. 4 reactor in the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, near the city of Prip'yat in the north of the Ukrainian SSR.

It is considered the worst nuclear disaster in history and is one of only two nuclear energy disasters rated at seven, the maximum severity, on the international nuclear event scale, the other being the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster in Japan.

The accident started during a safety test on an RBMK-type nuclear reactor, which was commonly used throughout the Soviet Union.

The test was a simulation of an electrical power outage to aid the development of a safety procedure for maintaining reactor cooling water circulation until the back-up electrical generators could provide power.

This gap was about one minute and had been identified as a potential safety problem that could cause the nuclear reactor core to overheat. It was hoped to prove that the residual rotational energy in a turbine generator could provide enough power to cover the gap.

Three such tests had been conducted since 1982, but they had failed to provide a solution. On this fourth attempt, an unexpected 10-hour delay meant that an unre-

pared operating shift was on duty. During the planned decrease of reactor power in preparation for the electrical test, the power unexpectedly dropped to a near-zero level.

The operators were able to only partially restore the specified test power, which put the reactor in a potentially unstable condition.

This risk was not made evident in the operating instructions, so the operators proceeded with the electrical test. Upon test completion, the operators triggered a reactor shutdown, but a combination of unstable conditions and reactor design flaws caused an uncontrolled nuclear chain reaction instead. [4]:33

A large amount of energy was suddenly released, vaporising superheated cooling water and rupturing the reactor core in a highly destructive steam explosion.

This was immediately followed by an open-air reactor core fire that released considerable airborne radioactive contamination for about nine days that precipitated onto parts of the USSR and western Europe, before being finally contained on 4 May 1986. The fire gradually released about the same amount of contamination as the initial explosion.

The reactor explosion killed two of the reactor operating staff. In the emergency response that followed, 134 station staff and firemen were hospitalised with acute radiation syndrome due to absorbing high doses of ionizing radiation.

Of these 134 people, 28 died in the days to months afterward and approximately 14 suspected radiation-induced cancer deaths followed within the next 10 years.

Among the wider population, an excess of 15 childhood thyroid cancer deaths were documented as of 2011.

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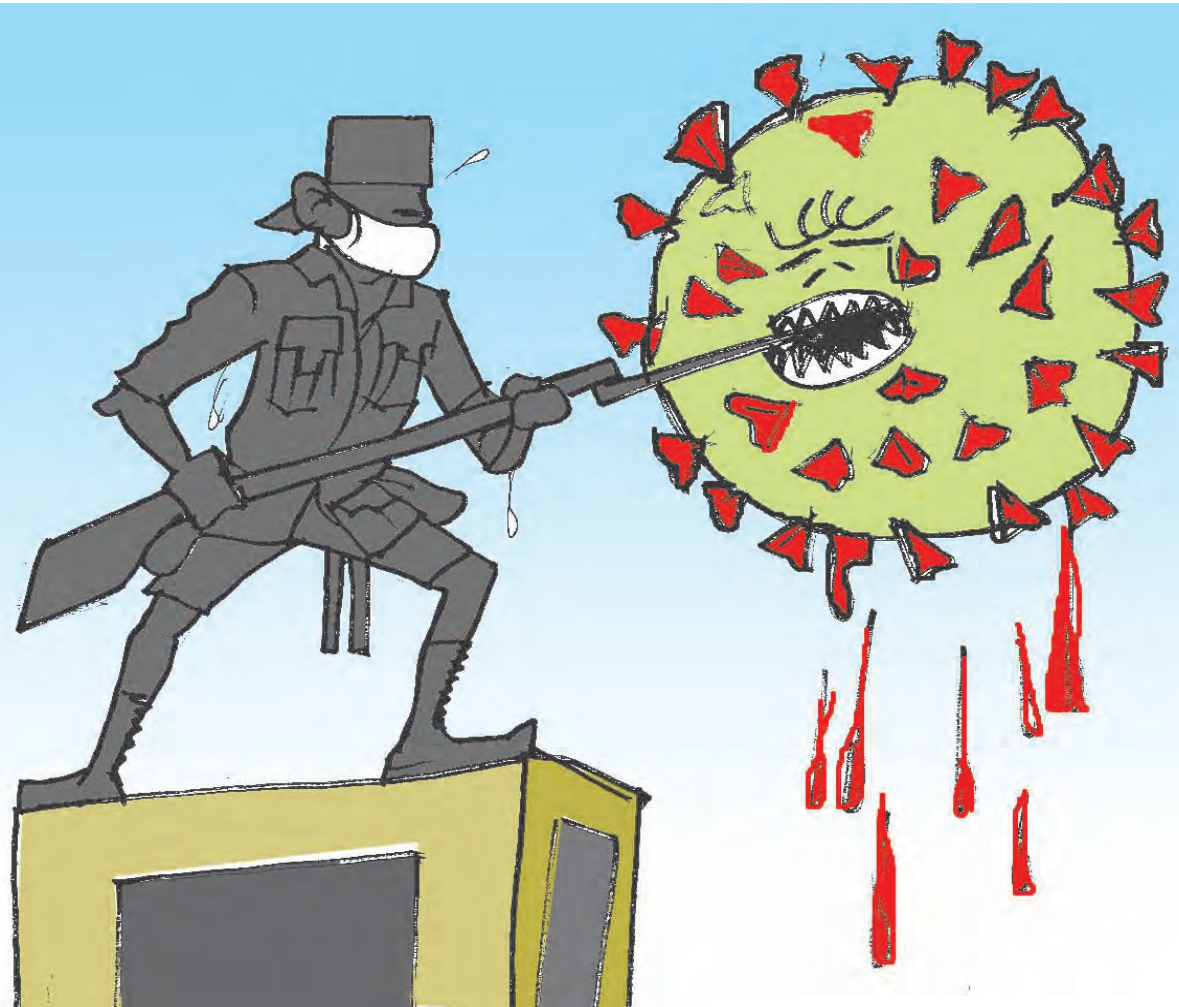
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COVID-19 Impact: What should African countries do?

By Belay Begashaw

EVERYTHING feels different. No one in their right minds could have imagined the level of stillness we see today, in every aspect, a mere few weeks ago.

This all happened at an unprecedented speed, level, and scale; which makes synthesis of this experience, which is seemingly even grander than historical pandemics, all the more difficult. The streets are shut down, and so are the market places, and public spaces. Everyone is in confinement, in some places even those with no residence.

Income flows are constrained both domestically and across borders, and so is the mobility of goods and services. At the extreme, mass bankruptcy within household, financial and business sectors threatens, as do government-level bankruptcies (including in most African nations) in countries whose fiscal maneuver is limited. What is even more felt is the level of uncertainty from current suspensions and uncertainties imposed, as no one has an idea of what comes next.

Everyone cares about nothing but his or her own circle, household, county, or state - at best country. It is interesting to observe the behavior of humans during this time: we seem to be first and foremost generous to ourselves. Strangely no country or sect is different in this.

While it is natural, if not impulsive, to react in an Adlerian manner when confronting such calamities, it is also alarming how fragile and incapable our civilization is to protect the common good of all people.

Sadly, we have put all our eggs in the same basket and bet the marketplace will solve our issues. We failed the world again, as we arrogantly rejected learning from the recent lesson of 2008 global recession that proved the inherent inefficiency of the market to protect itself. Interestingly, similar to what had happened then, this time too (even more compellingly), with the prevailing economic war, governments must spend freely.

Governments must inject in an unprecedented amount of resources as a post mortem to when they could have acted upon previous expert advice for preparation for a fraction of the cost. Certainly, the poor will be hard hit this time - again - and the majority remain without any form of social safety net or protection (e.g. only 18% of Africans have at least one form of social protec-



Dr. Belay Begashaw is Director General of the Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa (SDGC/A)

tion cash transfer). Low-income countries (the majority being in Africa) who are struggling to run a decent economy under normal circumstances will be exceptionally disadvantaged in coping with this earth-shaking situation.

Can our public system seize this opportunity and change itself?

They are far from prepared to provide the kind of self-bailout actions (no matter how panic driven they may be) seen suggested by developed economies. They cannot mobilize the private sector and military industries or approve record level amounts in economic stimulant packages for people and small businesses. However, even though the figures may not be close and the speed may not be the same, they can act in their own accord, and must do so immediately. As precarious as the situation may be, there are plenty of other tangible and non-tangible assets Africans have over their peers elsewhere.

Africans have a deep-rooted culture of caring and sharing. Our generosity is aggressive and especially extended during such bad days. This has been seen repeatedly during such natural calamities including the recent fights against Ebola. It becomes easier to face our reactions when done with strong communities.

Let us not only look for millions and billions of dollars from a few generous donors; tens and hundreds are as good as billions when billions of people become donors. Every coin counts. Can we be smart and systematic and collect the tens from billions?

Can our public system seize this opportunity and change itself? What level of human tragedy will force us to reevaluate and change our business styles in the public sector if not this one?

Luckily and with some miracle, the spread of the COVID19 virus in Africa is not overwhelming so far. In a way, nature has given a heads up to Africa knowing how much work Africa has to do. Shouldn't

we use that to draw from other experiences and organize better? Isn't it also wise to think a slow start doesn't necessarily mean smooth finishing? The level of preparedness of the health sector remains suspect and insufficient to the meet gravity of the virus if it spreads.

Africa should have a quick action-oriented plan that goes in three phases: immediate, intermediate and post-Corona, and aftermath. I believe given the urgency of the matter it may not be appropriate to talk about the other two now. The counterargument may be that the other parts will be half done if we do the first right. Or there is no intermediate and long term before doing the immediate.

The objectives of the immediate and instant responses are curbing the spread of the virus and ensuring the safety and well-being of people in the process. Given the level of obstinate poverty and expected increase in unemployment, this stage takes a high toll on millions and on the public sector as it has to provide for all supplies of basic Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other essential logistics such as finding decent shelter, food, and essential utilities for all. Governments must act as buyers of last resort.

The following are some initiatives that I would suggest African governments should immediately embark upon and respond to as a proactive measure:

Communication for results

- Let the professionals speak on their respective areas - transparently and openly. Avoid and demystify terms and conditions. Be as direct as possible, as much as possible, and leave no space for ambiguity and misinterpretation. Use all media outlets extensively for quick outreach to serve different target groups.

- Contextualize messages and recommendations. For instance, more than simply defining the term quarantine,

explain that the purpose of quarantining is to isolate someone for 14+ days until proven negative so as to take no chance of spreading the virus to others. This could be done anywhere. If it is being done in the house, at the airport, in hotels, schools, and churches elsewhere - why can't it be on the truck? Can't the drivers from foreign countries with no symptom ride the cargo from the port as long as they will not be out of their truck and maintain the social distancing while in the truck?

Reprioritizing national and local project objectives

No wonder, in such an emergency situation, development tasks are delayed. Thus, projects of intensive resources planned in the year may need to be revisited. While activities, such as census, elections that require a high level of stability and mobility arguably could wait, there are civil projects that might be suited for reevaluation.

- Take stock of all logistics and physical capacities as the demand for hospital beds and retention areas will increase unimaginably. The need for sheltering and feeding the homeless is also necessary and will exacerbate the situation.

- Increase and re-direct all safety net and related social security resources to feed people who will be most affected by the lockdown and stay home measures. For the delivery of safety nets and social, digital payments have proven more effective and transparent. We should also aim to minimize the amount of waste and leakage of food throughout the value chain (field to plate).

Urgency is the new language. Staying safe is the mother tongue.

Utilities and other supply

- Ensuring an uninterrupted supply of utilities such as water, electricity, and the internet is second to none. Failure to do so is gravely consequential to the effectiveness of the safety measures and recommendations that are now so intricately bounded up with technology. Water and sanitation, electricity, and now the internet, are the bloodline for keeping people home and not in limited public facilities that offer these necessities. This also reiterates the call for continuous action (with heightened intermediate attention) in line with SDG targets for an increase in our investment into the universal access of these resources.

- Ensuring availability and timely supply of goods is critical at all times more, and so when people are in confinement and have limited freedom to choose.

The situation is more precarious as the entire supply chain is out of touch and reach. The public-private sector partnership to foster multifaceted intervention and engagement is second to none under such condition. In such circumstances, pure laws of supply and demand order are not feasible as shortage is imminent.

Why most post-pandemic predictions will finally emerge as entirely wrong

By Rob Walker

A DEADLY global pandemic is a self-evidently world-changing event – but world-changing how? While the coronavirus nightmare is nowhere near resolution, we are awash in predictions about what will come next, how our professional and business lives will be permanently altered, and how they will look a decade from now or beyond.

That's only natural, and in some ways, it's necessary: We sense that things will never be the same, and thoughtful speculation about the future helps us cope with the present – and, among other things, figure out economic perils and opportunities.

Yes, it seems that the massive work-from-home experiment will be here to stay, that virtual education is having its moment, and that even meal-delivery subscription companies, which were recently on life support, may once again have a future.

Just keep one thing in mind about these predictions: Most of them will be wrong. As this moment ought to remind us, the most influential and important events are the ones that emerge spontaneously and with little warning – like the coronavirus itself.

That's only natural, too. When a cataclysmic event is fresh or still unfolding, it's hard to see beyond its immediate contours and even harder to imagine what the next unpredictable events will be and how those will affect whatever change is in motion right now.

But it's so seductively easy to go about doing things in an even more determined way than before: Expect to see a recurrence of sweeping pronouncements: E-sports will replace football and basketball, movie theatres will never return, and telemedicine will become the new normal. (We've even made a few.)

Anything is possible, but take a closer look at how often definitive predictions about permanent change are simply extrapolations of recently observable trends taken to some maximum extreme.

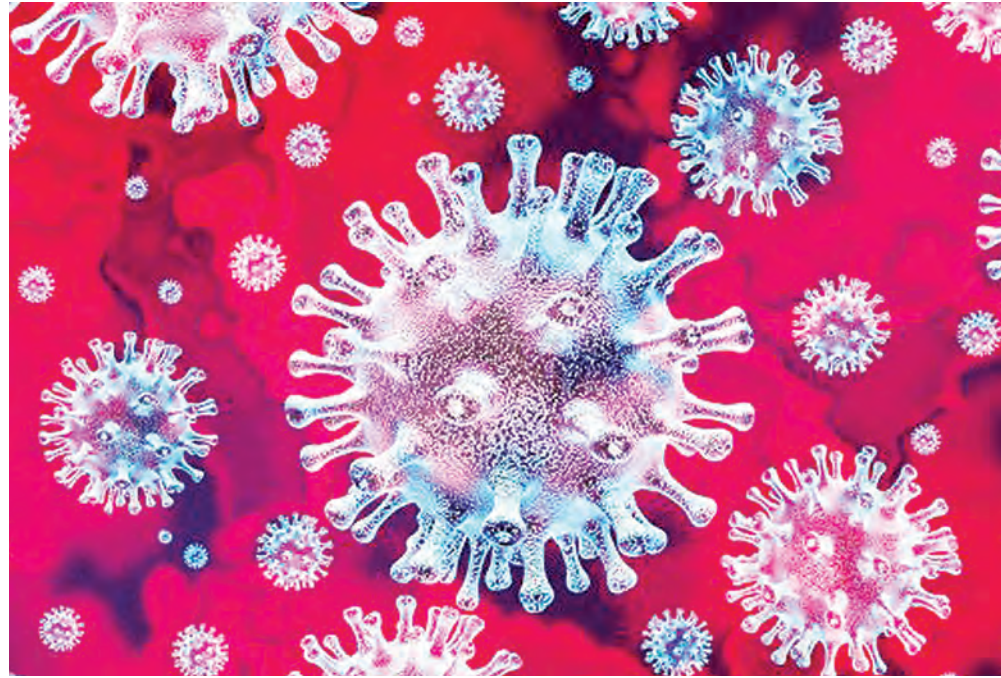
In other words, the future will be like this new present – only much more so. These predictions are the equivalent of then-Vanity Fair editor Graydon Carter declaring, “the end of the age of irony” in the immediate aftermath of 9/11: a reasonable reaction to a moment that just didn't hold up. (Carter later joked that he meant “ironing.”)

Let's look back, for example, at pronouncements forged during our most recent financial crisis. In early 2009, in the depths of the Great Recession, Time magazine declared: “The End of Excess.”

Conspicuous consumption dating back to the 1980s had caught up with us in the form of a recession so brutal that “now everything really has changed. The party is finally, definitely over”, wrote Kurt Andersen, who's built his career on astute cultural observations.

Optimistically, he imagined a healthy societal reset marked by a more temperate and frugal approach to consumption.

This became a widespread



view. “Reluctance to Spend May Be Legacy of Recession,” mused an August 2009 analysis in the New York Times.

Summarising expert views, the piece asserted that “the recession has endured so long and spread pain so broadly that it has seeped into the culture, downgrading expectations, clouding assumptions about the future and eroding the impulse to buy”.

And the experts predicted that the resulting frugality was no passing trend. “We're at an inflection point with respect to the American consumer,” Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's, said. “It's a change in norms,” agreed Robert Barbera, chief economist at the research and trading firm ITG.

“The Great Depression imbued American life with an enduring spirit of thrift,” the piece

noted, suggesting a similar generational impact: “The current recession has perhaps proven wrenching enough to alter consumer tastes, putting value in vogue.”

To take one specific example of how consumer behaviour was predicted to change decisively: the end of SUVs, conspicuous symbols of the old excess. In 2008, GM drastically slashed SUV production in favour of sedans, marking an “end of the SUV era”.

Gas prices approaching \$4 per gallon “are changing consumer behaviour and changing it rapidly,” GM's CEO said, adding: “We don't believe it's a spike or a temporary shift. We believe it is permanent.”

Experts agreed: “The trend away from these vehicles is irreversible,” said one analyst, as an economics academic added: “The SUV craze was a bubble – and now it is bursting. It's an irrational vehicle. It'll never come back.”

And after all, according to a widely

noted book published in 2009, the rise of gas prices to \$20 a gallon was “inevitable”.

All of this was perfectly plausible. But it is not what happened. For better or worse, unpredicted developments such as the fracking boom and other factors put an end to talk of “peak oil”. Today we are “drowning in oil”, and US West Texas Intermediate crude is lately selling for about \$20 a barrel.

SUVs, of course, came back: They make up about half the market and in recent years the production of sedans has been slashed as carmakers responded to the demand for SUVs and trucks.

Some of this proved true but far less lasting than predicted. Consumer spending has risen by about a third since 2009, from about \$10 trillion a year to around \$13.5 trillion last year, and still accounts for more than two-thirds of the total economic activity.

Credit card debt dipped for a few years after the Great Recession but has climbed steadily since 2011 and hit an all-time high last year. The global sales of personal luxury goods have more than doubled in the 21st century.

This does not mean that nothing ever changes. While 9/11 didn't rewrite the culture's sense of irony, it certainly changed air travel; security procedures seem unlikely ever to revert to their earlier form. The terror attacks also led to the creation of the Department of Homeland Security and the passage of the Patriot Act – developments with far-reaching implications.

Similarly, while excess didn't magically vanish in the wake of the Great Recession, some manifestations of it did fade away. And today's SUVs have evolved into more fuel-efficient vehicles, as the broader car market includes electric and hybrid models from both mainstream players and the disruptive

newcomer Tesla.

In what could be considered the biggest move of unpredictability, GM eventually did dump its absurdly excessive, gas-guzzling SUV, the Hummer – only to recently announce that it plans to resurrect the brand back in electric form.

In other words, things really are different, just in more complex and subtle ways than predicted. Because if you're considering a time horizon of 12 years as opposed to 12 months, other things will happen – good and bad – that you cannot foresee but that will have some effect, however oblique, on whatever it is that you are predicting.

This is not an argument against predictions – and it is certainly not a critique of any specific prediction. Speculation about what might happen is useful; it can actually start interesting discussions about a future in which shareholder rights aren't so predominant or provoke us to imagine the implications of cities segregated by immunity status.

Predictions of death rates or economic consequences can help shape or inspire responses that prevent those predictions from coming true.

But that's why, when someone makes a sweeping declaration, the best response is to start asking questions. Every prediction is just a point on a spectrum of possibilities to consider, and that will be influenced by developments no one has thought of yet.

Predictions look like declarations that end the conversation, but it's much more productive to think of them as exactly the opposite. After all, if this pandemic has taught us anything, it's that the future is always more unpredictable than it seems.

• **Rob Walker is Off Brand columnist and senior writer for Marker, writing about design/tech/market-ing/business/culture.**

Protecting East Africa's food supply during COVID-19

By Rodger Voorhies

WHILE the world grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic and its devastating impact on people's health and livelihoods, countries in East Africa are facing an additional threat: swarms of desert locusts, which are devouring the crops and pastures that millions of people depend on for food.

This situation has the potential to wreak havoc on the region's food supply, at a time when shutdowns and market disruptions due to COVID-19 are also threatening to create a food crisis. Neither the virus nor the locust respect national borders, and either one could, on its own, cause people to go hungry. Together, they could spell disaster for millions in East Africa and neighboring regions.

In one day, a single swarm of locusts can consume enough food to feed 35,000 people. The infestation now underway is the largest the region has seen in decades. Desert locusts can reproduce rapidly and migrate long distances – up to 150 kilometers a day – destroying farms and pastures along the way.

Likely caused by an unusual stretch of heavy rains last autumn, the current infestation could lead to a second wave in the coming months, when the eggs laid by the first wave of locusts hatch. That will happen soon in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia – the countries most acutely affected so far – which are already seeing an increase in the swarms due to the widespread rains that fell in late March. There could be 400 times more locusts by June.

Normally, the desert locust inhabits the relatively arid regions of around 30 countries in Africa, the Middle East, and southwest Asia. But if this upsurge isn't controlled, they could more than double their range and invade up to 60 countries on three continents.

The good news is that we know how to halt this potential disaster: by stopping the locusts now, before they breed or migrate again. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization is supporting the governments of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia, as well as others in the region, in a response that involves using planes to conduct aerial spraying and teams of

hundreds of people on the ground, surveying the land and spraying locusts by vehicle or by hand. With support from FAO and other partners, countries in the region have already tackled hundreds of swarms, and are currently treating 143,000 hectares of land.

FAO believes that the job can be done with \$153 million. But while many countries have already stepped up, more is needed. The window of opportunity to mount an effective intervention is closing, and we must act quickly to avoid fighting a two-front battle – the locust infestation and COVID-19 – to protect food supplies in a region already vulnerable to food-related challenges.

Multiple crises converge at once

The locust threat is unfolding at the height of the “long rains” season. Running from March to May, the long rains power a large part of the East African economy. Most people in the region depend on agriculture for both food and income. Farmers rely on the long rains to nourish their fields of maize, beans, potatoes, and other crops, and to provide vegetation for the goats, sheep, cattle, and camels that are often a family's most valuable assets.

For farmers in East Africa, the shutdowns initiated to slow transmission of COVID-19 could make it difficult to find seeds and fertilizer and transport their harvest to markets, as farmers in China have encountered. East African countries also depend on food imports from places like Europe and North America to meet consumer demand.

Unlike wealthy countries, these nations don't have the resources to blunt the impact of prolonged disruptions in the flow of goods, labor, and services. Without an immediate and aggressive large-scale intervention to combat both the locust infestation and disruptions to the global food trade, millions of people in East Africa could be left without food and income while also having to fend off a dangerous virus.

Most governments in East Africa recognize the need to prioritize locust-control operations and are exempting them from COVID-19 lockdown and movement restrictions so those critical workers can continue surveying and treating locust infesta-



tions. That's a critical first step. But countries around the world also need to avoid unnecessary border closures and trade restrictions that disrupt global supply lines both for food and the equipment needed to treat locusts.

A holistic approach to protecting lives

One of the strategies being used to limit COVID-19 infections in the region is disease surveillance. This type of surveillance also can be an effective way to anticipate and target impending locust outbreaks. NASA scientists are already working on an

approach that uses satellite imagery to identify locust breeding sites that can be eliminated before the insects hatch and spread.

Locusts lay their eggs in warm, moist, sandy soil. Until now the best available tools for tracking and forecasting locust movement relied on rainfall as a proxy for soil moisture to predict where they might breed in large numbers.

A NASA/USAID initiative known as SERVIR is helping FAO integrate high-resolution soil moisture data from land surface modeling, which can estimate soil moisture at egg-laying depth, into maps with much more

detail on soil type. Combining locust observations with soil type and moisture data can help identify optimal areas for egg-laying and target control measures early.

Implementing this technology and taking decisive action with the intelligence it produces will require commitment from FAO, and the benefits of using such technology enable us to respond more efficiently now and avoid locust and other pest crises in the future.

In short, it is essential to scale up the resources to meet the need, address the barriers, and realize the innovations in surveillance that are

needed to address the locust infestation. Protecting crops and livestock will save lives and provide urgently needed income for farming households, putting the region on a much firmer footing for fighting the pandemic in the difficult days ahead.

Rodger Voorhies is the president of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Growth & Opportunity Division, where he oversees agricultural development, financial services for the poor, gender, and WASH programs.

Before joining the foundation, he was CEO of the Opportunity Bank Serbia and Opportunity Bank Malawi.

Shifting rainfall patterns growing threat to farming across Africa south of Sahara

By John Gibbons

ONE of the more ominous indicators of climate change in sub-Saharan Africa has been the dramatic recent shifts in rainfall patterns. With rain-fed agriculture crucial for the livelihoods of millions in the region, a better understanding of this is critical to help the most vulnerable to mitigate climate impacts.

UCD's School of Earth Sciences is involved in a collaboration with Irish-based NGO Self Help Africa (SHA) in examining isotopes from deposits found in caves in southern Africa to assess historic rainfall patterns before the era of written records.

To better understand current rainfall patterns, SHA has also deployed 184 weather stations and seven river-line gauges across Malawi and Zambia. "We are looking at the critical periods in a crop's growth cycle, in terms of temperature and rainfall, and aiming to change the planting dates so you can avoid these periods," according to Paul Wagstaff, senior agricultural adviser with SHA.

Although not indigenous to Africa, as with the potato in Ireland, maize has become a staple for many smallholder farmers, and is now favoured over more traditional crops such as sorghum and millet. While maize is productive, its key limitation is a lack of tolerance to high temperatures and drought conditions.

Gathering timely information via rain gauges and other technologies is only half the story. Disseminating this in a timely manner to farmers in remote areas is equally important. Basic mobile phones are an almost universal and vital part of life in

Zambia, with a 2012 study finding that adults spend almost 20 per cent of their daily income on phone credit.

Messaging system

A technology company, Viamo, has developed a user-friendly SMS-based messaging system where farmers in the region can dial a number and receive up-to-date information on rainfall in their area, with advice on, for instance, when to plant.

As the system is voice-activated, illiterate farmers can receive recorded instructions in their local language. If a user has a specific problem, such as insects, the low-cost system can quickly guide them to the appropriate information. It also issues severe weather and disease outbreak alerts.

While cheaper mobiles are common in Zambia, Kenya has a greater number of smartphones, and this offers more sophisticated services for farmers. One system, developed in conjunction with Penn State University in the United States, uses an app that employs artificial intelligence to detect viral diseases in cassava. This app integrates with the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation remote sensing software which monitors water availability in a given area.

I visited Zambia in late February in the aftermath of the latest severe drought to hit the region to assess the impacts, as well as to see what steps were being taken to mitigate the impacts of climate change in the region.

As a result of ongoing extreme weather conditions, about 2.5 million Zambians are now in receipt of food aid. Among these is Catherine Milambo, who farms in the village of Malalika in Kafue, in southern Zambia. She described how her typical maize

harvest would amount to about 15,000kg, but drought conditions have seen this plummet to about 500kg. Her family now receive aid in the form of mealie meal (a coarse flour made from maize) and small amounts of cash.

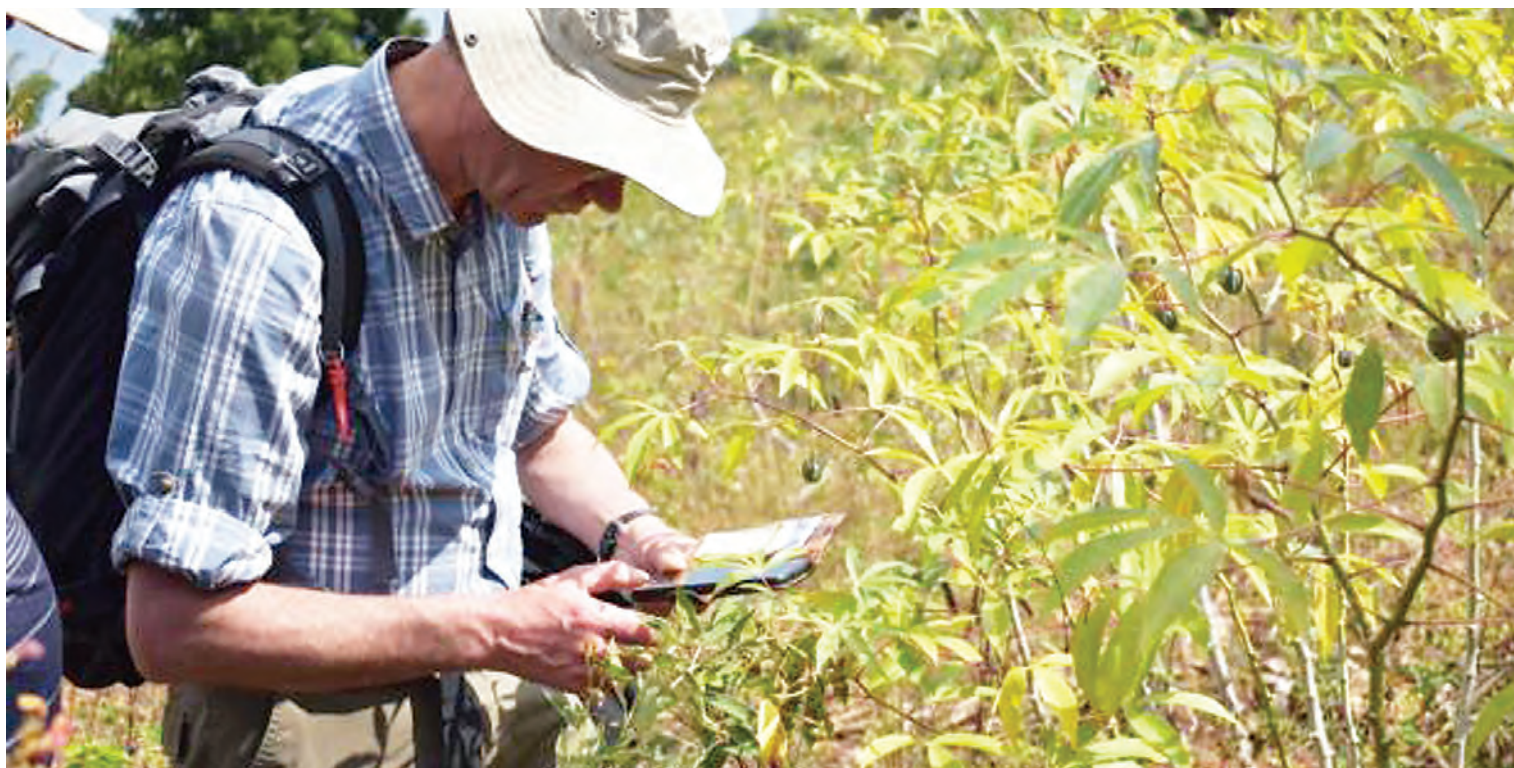
Another villager, Habeene Mable, explained her concern at the cutting of trees for charcoal, believing it is contributing to the irregular rainfall that now plagues the region. She has begun to plant fruit trees as part of a project to help farmers diversify crops and increase food resilience.

Dennis Mooya, senior agriculture officer with Zambia's ministry of agriculture, works with local communities in Kafue and surrounding areas to help them cope with the tough new conditions. "Thirty years ago, we all knew that by the time it was [Zambian] independence day on October 24th, the rainy season would have started, but now it's after November 15th before you have the first planting rains."

This loss of almost a month in the traditional rainy season has a major impact on rural smallholders dependent on rain-fed agriculture, he acknowledges. "I think we need to awaken to the fact that we have a problem, a climate-related challenge," Mooya adds. "Now, let's ask ourselves what if it doesn't rain completely - what are you going to eat?"

He points out that 70 per cent of the food produced in Zambia is grown by smallholders. "We need to start thinking about smart agriculture and water-harvesting technologies for these farmers."

Climate stresses are being exacerbated by unsustainable practices, such as indiscriminate ploughing and land clearance for crops, unmonitored grazing by farm animals and excessive



monocropping, according to Wallace Benn, environmental officer in Kafue. Concerted efforts to introduce conservation agriculture techniques are ongoing. These include no-till planting and maintaining almost total soil cover to prevent it drying out.

Benn is deeply concerned at rising temperatures and dramatic shifts in rainfall. "Now, with the whole climate change scenario, everything is falling apart. We even have situations where people are migrating within the country to do something with their lives other than agriculture," he adds.

"The western world is trying to dedicate resources more to (climate) mitigation - we understand this urgency, but the urgency in developing countries is not mitigation, it's in adaptation," says Carol Mwape Zulu, chief climate change officer in the ministry of lands.

"Our livelihoods are impacted and the infrastructure, the little that is there, is getting damaged. It's drawing development back," says Mwape Zulu, who is based in the capital, Lusaka.

Dedicating more resources towards adaptation, she believes "would be a fair response by the western world towards assisting developing countries".

In its formal submission to the 2015 Paris agreement on climate change, Zambia projected climate-driven GDP reductions in the coming decades as a result of declining agricultural activity "and its associated effects on poverty levels, the potential impact of an energy crisis, the higher cost of treating climate-related diseases, and the loss of natural resources".

Hydroelectric station

South of Lusaka is the Kariba dam, a vast hydroelectric station capable of producing 25 times more power than Ireland's Ardnacrusha plant, and source of about half the electrical needs of both Zambia and neighbouring Zimbabwe. The dam is fed by lake Kariba, the world's largest artificial lake. Despite its huge size, the lake has dropped by about six metres in the past three years, leading to frequent power cuts in both countries.

It is deeply ironic that a clean electricity source in a country with extremely low CO2 emissions (Zambians produce 0.29 tons of CO2 per capita, or 40 times less than the average Irish person) should be severely impacted by the climate-heating effect of emissions produced in the "developed" world.

Another indirect climate impact is that Zambia is now experiencing rapid deforestation, with more than 270,000 hectares being lost annually. Much of this is as a result of farmers cutting trees to produce charcoal to try to offset income losses due to drought and flood damage. The frequent power cuts make charcoal popular in the cities as a reliable material for cooking. Charcoal sellers now line almost every roadside in rural Zambia.

Since the western world has so far failed to act to rein in emissions, mean annual temperatures in Zambia are, according to Irish Aid, projected to rise by a further 1.2 to 3.4 degrees by mid-century. This, even before the impacts of coronavirus are taken into account, paves the way to a dangerously uncertain future.

FAO: Intra-Africa trade will help maintain food security through Covid-19 pandemic

By Sara Jerving

AFRICA, a continent that depends heavily on food imports, should strengthen its interregional trade to maintain food security throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, said Maximo Torero, chief economist and assistant director-general of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, during a webinar on Wednesday.

The food security implications of the COVID-19 pandemic is a "crisis within crisis," said Abebe Haile-Gabriel, assistant director-general and regional representative for Africa at FAO, noting the importance of prioritizing protection of the food supply chain as a key part of the response to COVID-19.

While there are currently no supply shocks in availability, there are starting to be shocks in terms of movement which could impact Africa's ability to import and export food, and "there are seemingly countless ways the food systems will be tested and strained in the coming weeks and months," Torero said. Globally, Africa's top trading partners of agriculture products, including partners in Europe, are also facing financial strains from lockdowns, which could curb demand for imports, turning them into less reliable trade partners for African countries, Torero said.

To hedge against these threats to both imports and exports, African nations should strengthen trade across the continent, he said.

These efforts are already underway.

Last year, the member states of the African Union created the African Continental Free Trade Area, aimed at creating a single market for goods and services, as well as to promote the movement of peo-

ple across borders. Its implementation is expected to take years. But this process should be hastened in response to the pandemic, Torero said.

"We believe inter-regional trade could be a very good option today, given that the global trade, and the countries where you used to trade or export will be severely affected in the next 12, 16, or 18 months," he told webinar participants.

Top agricultural imports to Africa include wheat, palm oil, maize, sugar, rice, milk, and soybean oil, according to UN Comtrade, the United Nations International Trade Statistics Database. Top agriculture exporters to Africa include Brazil, Russia, Argentina, France, India, United States, Indonesia, China, Malaysia, and Ukraine. Of those, both India and the U.S. are currently a concern, Torero said, with delays of shipments from India already occurring.

Top export agricultural products from Africa include maize, bananas, cheese, soybean oil, sugar, cigarettes, fowl, and shrimp. Top importers of African agricultural products include the Netherlands, France, Spain, U.S., Germany, China, U.K., India, Italy, and Belgium - all countries that have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the barriers to interregional trade is the poor infrastructure linking countries. While that is unlikely to change in the coming months, there are other steps countries can take to reduce trade restrictions, Torero said, such as reducing import tariffs and temporarily reducing value-added taxes, as well as other taxes.

There will be a temptation for countries to institute export bans, he said, but that should be avoided. If country currencies devalue as their economies are hit by the pandemic, it can create incentives for export companies to move commodities out of



Volunteers carry sacks filled with food to distribute to vulnerable residents, during a lockdown to limit the spread of COVID-19, in Lagos, Nigeria.

the country quickly, rather than supply domestic markets.

"We're concerned about the effect of potential export bans as countries start to look after themselves first," said Amar Ali, CEO at Africa Improved Foods. "Keeping those borders open and the free flow of goods across those borders is really, really important for us."

Landlocked countries suffer first when borders close, said Vanessa Adams, vice president of strategic partnerships at Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa.

Countries should also avoid panic buying staple commodities, such as wheat, maize, corn, soybeans, and

rice, to bolster national strategic food reserves, Torero said.

Currently there are adequate global supplies of staple commodities. Because of this, the price of staples has dropped.

"If you ask me: Should we buy food for staples for reserves? It is a mistake. Because the price will be lower tomorrow," he said. "The only thing that you will do is increase your costs and create the typical problems of storage."

The situation is not the same for high-value commodities, such as fruits, vegetables, meats, and fish, which are labor-intensive, making them more vulnerable to lockdowns.

They are also more sensitive to delays in transportation because they are perishable. These types of commodities face more challenges in the coming months, Torero said.

Within countries, there is a need to create linkages between farmers and consumers, and the need for a broad range of economic interventions to support food producing companies and prevent massive shutdowns and layoffs, said Ziad Hamoui, president of the Borderless Alliance in Ghana.

There is also a need to shift attention away from increasing production toward reducing post-harvest loss through improved storage methods, he said.

Proper storage can help farmers keep their harvest for six to 12 months, Torero said. This will also allow farmers to hold on to their crops during this period until prices recover.

There is also a concern about a drop in available financing and working capital for small and medium-sized enterprises and agro-dealers, as well as access to agricultural inputs, such as fertilizer, for farmers, Adams said.

"I'm a firm believer that a crisis is also an opportunity. We should use this crisis as an opportunity to build more resilient food systems," she said.

Masks a must before entering Mbeya referral hospital premises

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

MBEYA referral hospital says every person entering the hospital premises to seek treatment or visit patients must wear a

mask as a preventive measure against the spread of Covid-19 infections.

A press statement issued yesterday by the hospital's head of communications and public relations Aggrey Layson said that

the directive comes into effect on April 23 2020 (yesterday).

In the statement Layson said apart from wearing masks, the hospital will also take body temperature of every one entering the hospital to detect any symp-

toms of the disease.

"The steps are among the medical institution's strategies to ensure patients, their relatives, workers and staff remain safe against Covid-19 infections," he said, adding that every per-

son must apply sanitizer on the hands at entering and departure from the premises.

Layson said they have put in place a special procedure in educating wananchi to ensure they apply the sanitiser without being

forced to do so.

He said if directives from health experts on preventive measures against the diseases are adhered to, the pandemic can quickly be eradicated.

Mbeya referral hospital is

among the country's health institution to issue guidelines for people visiting it to put on masks.

According to statistics from the Health Ministry, up to now 284 cases of Covid-19 sufferers have been reported with ten deaths.

COVID-19: Steep drop in European floriculture sector affects East Africa

By Treasure Nnabugwu

AFRICA'S leading flower exporting countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia, are currently facing a significant drop in flower sales due to the novel coronavirus pandemic. Thousands of jobs are at stake as the global floriculture industry is witnessing crucial losses.

The Netherlands which is recognized as home to the world's busiest flower auction is where thousands of flowers are purchased on a daily basis from across the world including Africa to be shipped globally. Since the COVID-19 outbreak began, Aalsmeer just outside of Amsterdam has experienced deep cuts in flower sales. Michel van Schie of the Royal Flora Holland company revealed that flower sales dropped by 50 percent and is affecting the global floriculture industry.

"The coronavirus crisis which we are now facing couldn't have come at a worse moment than this. Not only there were a lot of unsold flowers, but the flowers that were sold were also sold for very low prices," van Schie said. With demand falling sharply globally, it presents bad news for Africa's foremost flower producing countries who largely depend on flower exportation.

As Africa's largest and the world's third-largest exporter of cut flowers, Kenya's flower exports add about \$1 billion annually to the economy. It is

the leading supplier of flowers to the European Union with a market share of 38 percent exporting over 160,000 tons of flowers every year. As the biggest employer of labor in the East African country, over 2 million people depend on the industry as a source of livelihood. However, with flower exports dropping by two-thirds in recent weeks it has cost the industry and the country millions in revenue.

Hosea Machuki, CEO of the Fresh Produce Exporters Association of Kenya, says the situation is critical. Machuki disclosed, "we have about 350,000 Kenyans directly employed and at the moment and about 200,000 are likely to lose their jobs on account of business loss."

Nevertheless, Machuki is optimistic that when it's all done industries and companies that are involved in the horticulture industry "will be able to spring back to life."

Neighboring Ethiopia is the second-largest African flower exporter, and the horticulture sector is the country's fourth-largest in export earnings. According to the Ethiopian Horticulture Producers Exports Association (EHPEA), the sector earned \$280 million in the last fiscal year. But with COVID-19 lockdowns across many European countries coupled with the cancellation of international flights, Ethiopia is exporting only about 20 percent of its usual volume.

Frank Ammerlaan, a Dutch flower



Thousands of jobs are at stake as the global floriculture industry is witnessing crucial losses.

farmer in Ethiopia told VOA he noticed the effects immediately Europe was hit with the coronavirus. Ammerlaan unveiled, "the majority of our sales stop suddenly. And that's because of shops in Europe being closed, borders being closed and logistics to give priority for food items and other essential items. So it was a big shock for us," Ammerlaan who employs about 1,000 people with a majority of them of Ethio-

pian nationality said that business had dropped by 30 to 40 percent.

Some organizations such as the Fairtrade Foundation are working with local farms in Ethiopia and Kenya to provide additional financial support to more than 50,000 florist workers. Similarly, to prevent the Ethiopian flower industry from collapsing and to keep foreign exchange flowing into the coun-

try, the government has designated the sector as essential - meaning its companies and its estimated 150,000 workers can keep operating despite the state of emergency measures.

The floriculture sector is one of the biggest casualties of the coronavirus outbreak, however, for the industry to bounce back and stay afloat, governments need to adopt more stream-lined short-term policies and strategies to support the sector.

WFP: COVID-19 pandemic will cause 'famines of biblical proportions'

By Jean Shaoul

THE United Nations' World Food Programme (WFP) has warned that without urgent action and funding, hundreds of millions of people will face starvation and millions could die as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

WFP Executive Director David Beasley told the UN Security Council on Tuesday that in addition to the threat to health posed by the virus, the world faces "multiple famines of biblical proportions within a few short months," which could result in 300,000 deaths per day - a "hunger pandemic."

Beasley said that even before the outbreak, the world was "facing the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II" this year due to many factors. He cited the wars in Syria and Yemen, the crisis in South Sudan and locust swarms across East Africa. He said that coupled with the coronavirus outbreak, famine threatened about three dozen nations.

According to the WFP's "2020 Global Report on Food Crises" released Monday, 135 million people around the world were already threatened with starvation. Beasley said that as the virus spreads, "an additional 130 million people could be pushed to the brink of starvation by the end of 2020. That's a total of 265 million people."

Boxes of food are distributed by the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, at a drive thru distribution in downtown Pittsburgh, 10 April, 2020 [Credit: AP Photo/ Gene J. Puskar]

The regions suffering the most in 2019 were Africa (73 million people "in crisis or worse") and the Middle East and Asia (43 million people), beset not only with poverty, but also with conflicts and the

impact of natural disasters, economic crises and climate change, with the worst locust swarms in decades in East Africa putting 70 million people at risk.

Beasley pointed out that there are already 821 million food-insecure people in the world, a record number. "If we don't prepare and act now to secure access, avoid funding shortfalls and disruptions to trade," he warned, the result could be a "humanitarian catastrophe."

The 10 worst affected countries are Yemen (15.9 million people "in crisis or worse"), Democratic Republic of the Congo (15.6 million), Afghanistan (11.3 million), Venezuela (9.3 million), Ethiopia (8 million), South Sudan (7 million), Syria (6.6 million), Sudan (5.9 million) northeast Nigeria (5 million) and Haiti (3.7 million). All of these countries are the victims of more than a century of imperialist oppression and exploitation that continues to the present. Most, if not all, continue to suffer from US-led military interventions, economic sanctions or political intrigues that have had devastating social consequences.

In the 55 food-crisis countries that are the focus of the report, a staggering 75 million children are stunted and 17 million suffer from wasting, Beasley said. "Millions of civilians living in conflict-scarred nations, including many women and children, face being pushed to the brink of starvation, with the spectre of famine a very real and dangerous possibility."

African countries affected by conflicts are particularly at risk, including the Central African Republic, Chad, Nigeria and South Sudan, as well as countries hosting large numbers of refugees such as Lebanon and Uganda.

More than half the popula-



Millions across the world already rely heavily on food aid to survive

tion of Yemen and South Sudan, which have endured years of wars, already face acute food shortages even before the virus reaches them. At least 14 million Yemenis are on the brink of famine, while 80 percent of the country's 24 million people rely on food aid.

Save the Children estimated last year that at least 75,000 Yemeni children under the age of five have starved to death since the onset of the Saudi-led and US-backed war. Nearly 3.6 million people have been displaced by the conflict.

In South Sudan, there are more than five million people facing

starvation and reliant on food aid to survive, and 1.7 million women and children are acutely malnourished.

More than 30 of the world's poorest countries could experience widespread famine and in 10 of these countries, there are already more than one million people on the brink of starvation.

The WFP said that lockdown measures in the poorest countries, with fragile health care systems and crowded and unsanitary living conditions, would not suffice to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, while depriving

millions of workers of an already meagre livelihood and leading to an economic and humanitarian disaster. The near global restrictions on all but essential work and travel are affecting farm workers and disrupting supply chains.

Millions of farmers in Africa and other low-income countries, already facing high levels of food insecurity, are at risk of not being able to work their land and produce food. Of the 257 million hungry people in Africa, most live in rural areas.

The Ebola epidemic in West

Africa provides a stark example of what is at stake. Small farmers were unable to work their land, sell their products or buy seeds and other essential inputs, leaving more than 40 percent of the agricultural land uncultivated.

The WFP also noted that many of the poorest countries have been hard hit by the collapse of the travel and tourism sectors, with villages in the Atlas Mountains in Morocco, for example, almost entirely dependent on tourists and hikers for survival. Others will suffer from the catastrophic fall in remittances (up

to 20 percent, according to the World Bank), as migrant workers are furloughed or laid off.

This will affect conflict-torn states such as Somalia, Haiti and South Sudan, and small island nations such as Tonga, with remittances sometimes accounting for more than 30 percent of gross domestic product, as well as larger states such as India, Pakistan, Egypt, Nigeria and the Philippines, where remittances have become a crucial source of external financing. Flows to sub-Saharan Africa are predicted to fall by 23 percent.

Africa must make sure it's part of search for a coronavirus vaccine

By Gale Ure

THE search for a COVID-19 vaccine has sparked international media controversy and negative sentiment around the potential harm of people taking part in clinical trials once the research enters its human testing phase.

A wave of anger was ignited when two top French doctors said on live TV that coronavirus vaccines should be tested on poor Africans. The doctors later apologised for suggesting that COVID-19 vaccine trials should be carried out on a continent where the people were largely impoverished, with limited resources, and unable to protect themselves.

The statements made by Camille Loch and Jean-Paul Mira fed into a world already fissured by deep-rooted racial and economic discrimination.

Stigmatisation and discrimination in previously colonised African countries swung into focus, resulting in research becoming the target of populist rhetoric. Didier Drogba, a retired footballer, raised the issue that African people should not be used as guinea pigs in a testing lab. Samuel Eto'o, another retired footballer, called the doctors "murderers".

The comments also resulted in the launch of a social media initiative in the form of a Change.org petition to stop coronavirus trials in Africa. The reasoning was that "Africa and developing countries have been testing grounds of large pharmaceutical companies" using the poor as the "guinea pigs of the wealthy".

Not unlike fake news, the resultant outcome of the doctor's racist comments was worldwide misinformation. Modern day research and clinical trials are highly regulated. In a COVID-19 world, scientific activity to develop a vaccine for global use is under careful scrutiny. Short of finding a cure, a vaccine is the only viable means to manage the devastating future outcome of the disease. A vaccine will need to be tested, and the world is watching. The doctors' racism, however, unequivocally reminded the African continent of past medical discrimination at the hands of European countries. The result was a gratuitous attack on scientific research.

Finding a vaccine for COVID-19 is a worldwide medical emergency, necessary to prevent the death of millions of people. Should Africa participate in a global clinical trial? Absolutely. To refuse inclusion would prevent Africa's researchers from being significant players in the universal fight against the virus.

The extreme reaction from Africa was not entirely without merit. There are countries on the continent where vaccines and medical research are viewed with suspicion, and where both have been linked to activities, in the name of medicine, which were carried out in a grossly unethical manner.

During a meningitis outbreak in Nigeria, pharmaceutical company Pfizer tested Trovan, an experimental antibiotic drug, on 200 children without proper consent. In Malawi,



during an AZT trial, in spite of there being alternative treatment available, a placebo was given to pregnant women enrolled on the trial. There is an ethical standard in research where a placebo, a substance which is of no therapeutic benefit, may not be given when investigating the efficacy of a new drug or drug regimen in cases where there is appropriate treatment available.

The legacy of this is that some people are afraid of being infected with diseases by vaccination.

That medical research and medicine were involved in historical abuse cannot be argued, but clinical trials in the 21st century look very different.

A changed environment

Globalisation in the past decade has shifted the trend in research activity from being done in developed countries to include trials in low- and middle-income countries.

Fears that countries may not have the institutional capacity to carry out research to the same ethical

standards as their western counterparts have disappeared. Instead global health research partnerships have sprung up across continents. This has led to increased collaboration between European and African research organisations.

Research which takes place in Africa is predominantly funded by northern sponsors, with national academics and clinicians partnering in the research process. This has had a balancing effect - sponsored projects assist African research institutions to acquire funding for their own projects, to facilitate publishing of results, and to upscale research knowledge.

The ethical frameworks of these trials are stringent. International research organisations provide oversight to ensure that participants are

protected.

Research carries risk, which is why there are international codes which protect participants. Each country has national legislation and standards to ensure that research is carried out ethically. This means that:

No person can be enrolled in a clinical trial without first giving their informed consent. To give informed consent, the potential participant must have the entire process of the project explained to them. This includes all of the possible risks and harms, as well as the expected outcomes. This must be done in a language and at a level that the participant is able to understand.

Participants may not be enrolled without being given the opportunity to leave the project at any time.

A participant's personal information must be confidential, and the researcher may not use the participant's information if the person has withdrawn.

There are agencies where the participant can lay a formal complaint.

All participants must be followed up after involvement in a research project, and there must be a plan in place to

assist any participant who requires additional care arising from the trial.

COVID-19 medication trials are taking place around the world. In Asia 1000 participants have already been recruited in to test Remdesivir, a drug developed by an American pharmaceutical company, Gilead. In the US the first trials of a vaccine are being run on 45 healthy participants.

Legitimate medical research activities are important to ensure that pandemics like the COVID-19 tragedy can be managed. Should Africa not be involved in the fight, it will be an indictment against medical research's basic foundation - to allow people to choose to be part of the solution or to refuse on informed and valid grounds. The alternative is to sit idly by, as part of the global furniture waiting to be saved.

What does COVID-19 crisis mean for rural development?

By David Lewis

THE implications and consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic are playing out before us. Much of the news coverage of the to date in both the Global North and the Global South has understandably focused on the horrifying impact of the disease on urban communities, where it is clearly hitting people, and economies, hardest.

But what are the implications for people in rural areas, where just under a half of the world's population live, and where the largest concentrations of the poorest and most food insecure people are still to be found? What conclusions should we be drawing, and how will we be thinking about research and policy in the future?

We should not be in any doubt that rural livelihoods are being and will continue to be severely affected. The chief executive of US NGO Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is today reported as saying 'Lockdowns are hampering people from planting and selling crops, working as day labourer and selling products, among other problems. That means less income for desperately hungry people to buy food and less food available, at higher prices.'

The immediate response challenge is to provide humanitarian support to those people most at risk, drawing on and adapting existing social protection systems as much as possible. This needs to be a cooperative effort in which governments, non-governmental organisations, inter-governmental agencies and business work together with local communities to ensure an effective, rapid response. Educating people about how the disease spreads is also key. These efforts will need to be locally owned as far as possible. BRAC's approach in Bangladesh is one impressive model that can be adapted elsewhere.

Following from this, we also need to start thinking as soon as possible about creating more resilient forms of social protection in rural areas by 'building back better'. These improvements will need to be based on localism and build upon - and strengthen - the decentralised structures that exist in many countries but which remain underdeveloped.

The coronavirus may have been indiscriminate in the way it has infected people from prime ministers to farm labourers, but in reality it has highlighted problems of social inequality, with the poorest people disproportionately affected as a result of weaker health, higher risk exposure and

exclusion from services.

The Covid-19 crisis also raises a whole series of higher order challenges around environment, food systems and climate change that must now be addressed. The issue of 'food sovereignty' highlighted by movements such as Via Campesina will need to be placed front and centre in the reassessment of how we can create more sustainable and equitable farming systems.

The production and consumption pressures created by human beings on the natural environment - in the form of deforestation, habitat loss, declining biodiversity, the carbon emissions contributing to climate change - are now there for all to see.

The new priority is to address these environmental pressures more urgently since they contribute opportunities for 'spillover events' - the spread of zoonotic diseases like coronavirus which cross natural barriers from animals to humans.

Epidemiological studies point to the role of human encroachment into wildlife habitats, hunting and wild animal trades as factors that increase the risk of this, while others also draw attention to the risks contributed by increased levels of factory farming.

One thing that's certain is the need for multidisciplinary ap-



proaches to understanding and managing these risks, such as anthropologists, epidemiologists and veterinary scientists. One example is Hog et al.'s (2019) research

on understanding perceptions of risk in Bangladesh's poultry value chains, which points to contradictions in how people think about and manage risk that

has important implications for all of us. The crisis offers an important opportunity to rethink and restructure policy, practice and research if we can take it.

BUSINESS

RELAXED

Some businesses will reopen in May - but it will not be business as usual

JOHANNESBURG

The strict coronavirus lockdown - which was extended from 16 April until the end of the month - will not be extended again, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced on Thursday night.

However, the phased reopening of the economy means taking a "risk-adjusted" approach, and restrictions will be lifted only on certain sectors, the president said.

Fin24 previously reported that government was adopting an approach based on five alert levels, ranging from level 1 - where all sectors are fully operational - to level 5, namely full lockdown. South Africa is currently on full lockdown.

As from 1 May, the country will be moving down to level 4. Here's what that means. Some businesses will reopen - but it won't be business as usual. "Some activity will be allowed, subject to extreme precautions," the president said.

Businesses that are allowed to resume activity will be allowed to do so under specific conditions. Every business will have to adhere to detailed health and safety protocols to protect their employees, and plans will have to be put in place for disease surveillance and to prevent infection.

Talks are still ongoing

Ramaphosa did not announce which businesses would be allowed to reopen - though he did say cigarettes, and some other additional goods, would be on sale. Food retail stores that are already open are expected to be allowed to sell the full line of products within their existing stock.

In weighing up whether a sector would be allowed to operate, its economic contribution, the effect on livelihoods, and the risk of transmission in each sector would be considered, he said.

Ministers will give a detailed briefing on the classification of industries and how each is affected in due course. Each industry will be given the chance to make submissions before the regulations are gazetted.

Return to business will be gradual

Businesses that open will do so in a phased manner, Ramaphosa said, first preparing the workplace for a return to operations, followed by a return of the workforce in batches of no more than one third. "In some cases, a sector will not be able to return to full production during level four," he said.

Level adjustments will be determined by the NCC

The National Command Council will determine what level is necessary based on an assessment of the infection rate in conjunction with the capacity of the healthcare system, Ramaphosa said.

Working from home is still first choice

"Businesses will be encouraged to work from home where possible," said Ramaphosa. "All staff who can work remotely must be allowed to do so."

Travel regulations will still be tight

The tourism industry is one that is unlikely to experience relief any time soon, as borders will remain closed to international travel except for repatriation of South African nationals and foreign citizens. No travel between provinces will be allowed except for the transportation of goods, or exceptional circumstances like funerals.

Public transport will operate... with strict rules

Public transport will be subject to

limitations on passenger numbers, and there will be stringent hygiene rules. All passengers must wear masks, Ramaphosa said.

Sorry, still no bars or shebeens

Bars and shebeens will remain closed, as will conference and convention centres. Concerts are still prohibited, as are sporting, religious and cultural events. All gatherings barring funerals and work meetings are prohibited.

"The coronavirus is spread by contact between people," Ramaphosa said. "If people don't travel, the virus does not travel." The president stressed that while it was crucial to limit economic damage, government was also acting on the advice of scientists. "The action we must now take must be measured and incremental," he said.

The president on Tuesday announced a R500 billion stimulus package in a bid to mitigate the impact of the extended lockdown on South Africa's economy, which is expected to be severe. Interventions announced included additional grants, several tax relief measures, R100 billion budgeted towards preserving and creating jobs, an extensive food parcel delivery programme, and R20 billion additional budget to boost municipal service delivery.

While R130 billion will be reallocated from the existing budget, R200 billion will be provided in the form of a loan guarantee scheme, in partnership with major banks, National Treasury and the SA Reserve Bank. The remaining R170 billion would be sourced from Covid-19 support loans from international financial institutions, global partners and local sources such as the UIF.

The country was already in recession before the coronavirus hit, after two consecutive quarters of negative growth, and has had its sovereign credit rating downgraded to junk by Moody's. Treasury has projected a deep recession during 2020, while the Reserve Bank has said a contraction of as much as 6.1% is likely. The International Monetary Fund, for its part, has projected a contraction of 5.8%, while Moody's has suggested a more conservative -2.5%. South Africa's economy experienced a 1.5% contraction following the 2008 global financial crisis.

Job losses in South Africa due to the coronavirus pandemic have been projected at anything from 370 000 - according to the Reserve Bank - to one million, according to preliminary modelling by Business for South Africa, a business alliance formed in March in response to the pandemic. This would follow the pattern of record job losses in the United States, which, according to the latest jobs data released on Thursday, have wiped out gains recorded in the boom following the Great Recession.



South African President, Cyril Ramaphosa.

PROGRESS

Coronavirus spread: UK's first vaccine trials begin on humans

LONDON

The UK's first human trials for a coronavirus vaccine began on Thursday at the University of Oxford.

The trials on 500 people will first focus on safety and toleration and will give an initial assessment of how effective the vaccine is in immunising against Covid-19. Half of the people in the trial will have the Covid-19 vaccine and half will have one for meningitis, but none will know which they have.

Over time, they will return to the university labs to be tested. The trial is on a drug based on a chimpanzee adenovirus modified to produce a protein from the coronavirus. Adenoviruses are a group that infect the eyes, respiratory system, intestines, urinary tract and nervous system.

The Oxford team, led by Prof Sarah Gilbert, worked on a vaccine for the Ebola outbreak in West Africa in 2014. Prof Gilbert said that if the study were successful, more extensive research could be conducted and that a million doses of the vaccine may be ready as early as September.

British Health Secretary Matt Hancock on Wednesday praised the team for its quick progress that in normal times would take years. The government has given £20 million to the university's team and a further £22.5m to Imperial College, where another Covid-19 vaccine is being developed.

The Imperial team is set to begin human trials in June. "It's fantastic to see the research team at the University of Oxford get this vaccine trial up and running in record time," said Arne Akbar, president of the British Society for Immunology.

"The UK leads the world for the quality of our immunology research. This is another great example of how the community has come together to drive forward scientific discovery into this pandemic, and to work towards developing a safe and effective vaccine."



Oxford COVID research team leader, Prof Sarah Gilbert.

But Mr Akbar said that developing a vaccine for the coronavirus would not be easy and it was crucial that scientists had an in-depth understanding of the exact immune response to the coronavirus. "All vaccine candidates will still need to go through many stages of testing to ensure that they are safe and effective for wide-scale use," he said. "We need to be realistic about the timescale in which this can take place."

"We also know that everyone's immune system functions differently. Older people in particular often generate less potent and long-lasting immune responses to vaccination. "As this group is particularly vulnerable to Covid-19, we also need to keep supporting research efforts into other approaches, including developing new medicines and repurposing existing drugs that may be effective treatments for patients with Covid-19."

"Well done to the Oxford team and despite all the notes of caution, we sincerely hope the vaccine works." Prof Gilbert was optimistic, but also warned there was no guarantee the vaccine on which she was working would be effective. "That's why we have to do trials to find out," she told the BBC. "The prospects are very good but clearly not completely certain."

Prof Gilbert called on the government to help support the rapid production of the vaccine, should it be proven to be effective. On Friday, the government began a large-scale test on about 20,000 households in England to help understand the rate of infection and how many people were likely to have developed antibodies. Those taking part will form a representative sample of the entire UK population, by age and geography. The results are expected in early May.

Meanwhile, the global opinion of whether it is safer to wear medical face masks in public to battle the coronavirus remains divided. British government scientists were expected to recommend on Thursday that the public should not wear surgical face masks but could choose to wear a scarf or face covering. The advice echoes that of the World Health Organisation, which says there is little evidence that wearing a mask in the community stopped healthy people from picking up respiratory infections.

Instead, they say it might make more sense for someone to wear a mask if they are coughing and showing coronavirus symptoms. But Germany, which has won praise for its response to Covid-19, on Wednesday advised to make face masks compulsory on public transport and when shopping, to combat the spread of the virus.

BREAKTHROUGH

Madagascar hands out 'miracle' virus cure as it lifts lockdown

ANTANANARIVO

Unarmed Madagascar soldiers went door-to-door in the capital Antananarivo, doling out sachets of a local herbal tea touted by President Andry Rajoelina as a powerful remedy against the novel coronavirus.

Baptised Covid-Organics, the tonic is derived from artemisia - a plant with proven efficacy in treating malaria - as well as other indigenous herbs. It has been developed by the Madagascar Institute of Applied Research (IMRA) but has not been tested internationally.

"This herbal tea gives results in seven days," Rajoelina announced at its official launch on Tuesday. "We can change the history of the entire world," he said, after downing a dose. "Two people have now been cured by this treatment."

Mainstream scientists have warned of the potential risk from untested herbal brews. There is currently no known cure for coronavirus, which has infected at least 121 people in Madagascar and more than 2.6 million worldwide.

Yet military officials on the Indian Ocean island nation say the infusion would be better than nothing. "It will strengthen immunity," said military doctor Colonel Willy Ratovondrainy on state television, as troops launched a mass distribution campaign.

In pairs, soldiers followed people through Antananarivo's narrow alleyways into their homes. "Good morning, we are here to distribute the Covid-Organics tea," one of them said. Jean-Louis Rakotonandrasana gratefully accepted the free packet of herbs.

"We are eager to try this infusion since we saw president Rajoelina drink it on television," the 58-year-old said. Most of Madagascar's 26 million inhabitants live in grinding poverty with limited access to healthcare and regularly take herbal teas for a variety of common ailments.

'I think it's great'

"I think it's great," said Dominique Rabefarihy, clutching a sachet of



Madagascar President Andry Rajoelina with a bottle of the Covid Organics herbal cocktail.

Covid-Organics in the poor Ankazomanga neighbourhood. "It reassures me that soldiers are watching out for my family's health and security," the housewife said.

Madagascar deployed the army last month to help enforce a lockdown in its three main cities to curb the spread of Covid-19. Soldiers who set up road blocks and patrolled streets are now making sure everyone receives a sachet of the infusion and instructions for use.

"One infusion goes into four litres of water," said Rabefarihy, repeating the instructions. "Two cups per day for adults, one cup for children, nothing

for pregnant women." Madagascar's coronavirus cases remain relatively low and there have been no recorded deaths so far.

But the country's fragile healthcare system would easily be swamped by a surge in cases and authorities are banking on prevention. Their aim is to raise awareness about the virus and strengthen people's immune systems. "We highly recommend taking this plant-based infusion," said presidential cabinet head Lova Ranoramoro.

'Ready-to-drink'

Covid-Organics is set to be distributed across the island, with a particular focus on the worst-affected cities of Anta-

nanarivo, Fianarantsoa and Toamasina. Fixed collection points have also been set up in the capital. "Here a ready-to-drink liquid version is available for everyone," said municipal representative Ruffin Rafanomezantsoa.

"As long as the WHO (World Health Organisation) cannot provide any medicine to cure this disease, I trust President Andry Rajoelina's proposed remedy," said Jean Paul Rakotozafy, 72, as he queued up. The WHO has cautioned against untested home therapies.

"While some western, traditional or home remedies may provide comfort and alleviate symptoms of Covid-19, there is no evidence that current medicine can prevent or

cure the disease," it said in an emailed statement to AFP. It added that there are "several ongoing clinical trials" of both western and traditional medicines.

The homespun "remedy" was launched as confinement measures were progressively lifted. The president said the lockdown was eased because a "solution against coronavirus" had been found. Public transport resumed in Antananarivo on Monday and schools re-opened on Wednesday. Some children were given a cup of Covid-Organics in class. "Of course each parent is free not to allow their child to take it," said the cabinet chief Ranoramoro. "For now, no one has objected."

RECOGNITION

How helplines have facilitated the Covid-19 fight

KIGALI

After the coronavirus pandemic started spreading across the world, Rwanda set up a raft of measures to contain it which included the Police establishing three call centres.

The call centres were meant to help facilitate the population that was thirsty for information and several other enquiries about Covid-19. The callers raised questions on the symptoms they ought to look out for.

"On average, we receive 10-12,000 calls a day. So, we have medical agents in every district in the rapid response teams, whom we direct to our patients as long as we realize that the person might be infected with coronavirus", says Emmanuel Mberabagabo, the command and coordinating commissioner of the call center.

The call center operates 24 hours, 7 days a week and works in four shifts with 64 operators. These operators can receive up to 90 calls simultaneously following the protocol at the center.

According to Fulgence

Kamali, the head of health promotion Unit in the Ministry of Health, the purpose of the helpline is to make sure all enquiries are replied to and questions about Covid-19 answered.

"The purpose of this helpline is to assist people who have symptoms such as cough, breathing issues, fever, etc. When we receive such a call, we talk to the person and ask their health history, if they have met anyone who has the same symptoms of Covid-19. That is when we refer them to the command post where there are teams to help such people get healthcare they need", he said.

70% of the operators are from the national police, and have all been trained to give information based on the checklist they have under the information they draw from the caller.

The call center works hand in hand with the rapid response team that is in charge of investigation of cases and contacts, evacuation and testing people who were traced at the Covid-19 command center. The center's task is to give fresh information from the community to the rapid



A cross-section of members of the COVID-19 taskforce at work at the Command Post at Kigali Conference and Exhibition Village in Nyarugenge District.

response team.

Upon encountering any case, the call center quickly transfers it to the rapid response team that then traces other contacts for further management. Among 360,000 calls received since the

first reported Covid-19 case, 5 cases from the calls have tested positive and 33 contacts were also traced from them.

However, 114 helpline encounters some challenges. Among them, some people call

aimlessly or abuse the operators. In fact, the Rwanda National Police on Thursday April 24, paraded five people arrested for misusing the helplines.

Ever since the call center was established a month ago, it has

received over 360,000 calls with only 16% asking related Covid-19 queries, leaving 56.1% as prank calls whereas the rest were requesting for emergency services.

DONATION

German-funded mobile coronavirus testing labs land in Uganda, Rwanda

FRANKFURT

Uganda and Rwanda have taken delivery of two mobile diagnostic labs to help fight the coronavirus pandemic, the first in a network of German-funded units for East Africa, public investment bank KfW said on Thursday.

While the project to procure the labs and train staff has been under way since 2018, "they're arriving at exactly the right moment to help with fighting" the virus, KfW board member Joachim Nagel said in a statement.

More of the mobile units "for speedy and modern diagnosis of infectious disease" will arrive in the six countries of the East African Community (EAC) region in the coming days, KfW said, for a total of nine in the first phase.

Under contract from the Development Ministry in Berlin, KfW has pumped 27 million euros into the project. The World Health Organization says the number of known coronavirus cases in Africa has risen by 51 percent.

Lab staff from EAC countries Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda have undergone training at the Bernhard Nocht Institute for tropical medicine in Hamburg and in Tanzanian city Arusha.

Across Africa, only 25 461 people had tested positive for the novel coronavirus by 19:00 (GMT) on Wednesday, according to an AFP tally from official sources.

'Hunger, unrest' could result

But the pandemic is still in its early stages on the continent, with fears the virus could spread quickly through densely populated cities and refugee camps. German Development Minister Gerd Mueller urged Berlin to invest a



Ugandan doctors work on German-funded mobile coronavirus testing labs.

further three billion euros in battling the pandemic in poorer countries, on top of just over one billion already earmarked.

Wealthy nations must help prevent

"first hospitals and then entire states collapsing", Mueller told the Funke newspaper group. "Hunger, unrest and, in the end, uncontrollable refugee movements" could result

otherwise, he warned. Germany has begun easing curbs on public life after ministers said the contagion had been brought under control. Rapid and widespread testing of the population

for cases has been at the centre of Berlin's containment strategy. Kenya, the third largest telco in the country. In the last financial year, M-Pesa revenue grew by 19.2 percent.

SURVEILLANCE

Uganda mulls restricting cross-border cargo truck drivers as Covid-19 cases surge

KAMPALA

Uganda is devising measures to control entry of cross-border cargo truck drivers as the surge in the number of confirmed Covid-19 cases in the country is attributed to them.

Internal Affairs minister Jeje Odongo told reporters on Thursday that while the country is sacrificing to keep the spread of Covid-19 minimal, the efforts

are being undermined by imported cases. Mr Odongo said that as of Tuesday this week the country had only 56 cases but the number jumped to 61 on Wednesday on account of five cross-border truck drivers, four from Kenya and the other from Tanzania. The minister said the national task force is studying possible remedial actions.

One of the measures is relay driving,

whereby a driver from a neighbouring country hands over the vehicle to a Ugandan driver at the border crossing after the vehicle has been sanitised. The Ugandan driver will take the cargo to the final destination. In case the cargo is transiting through, the Ugandan driver similarly hands over the truck to another driver at the border crossing after the vehicle is sanitised.

The other measure on consideration, according to the minister, is deploying rapid test kits at the border so that the results are obtained before the driver proceeds with the journey. Mr Odongo, however, noted that this may be prohibitive since each test costs \$65 and there are three people in the truck. An average of 1,000 trucks cross into the country daily.

The other possible measure is to

have the drivers park in designated areas to limit their interaction with the public. Uganda allowed the continued operation of cross-border cargo trucks, trains and air cargo despite closing all its border entry points. The move according to government is aimed at not stalling the running of the economy as lockdown measures hit.

ENTERPRISING

Meet the woman who made cloth mask worn by premier of Gauteng

GAUTENG

Sarah Notsi, a designer from Sharpeville in the south of Joburg, is the woman behind the face masks touted by Gauteng Premier, David Makhura.

The cloth masks made from a variety of African Ankara fabrics appeared on television in the hands of the premier. This comes after Health Minister Zweli Mkhize recommended widespread use of cloth masks.

Sarah had already designed and was promoting her masks on social media and says it was the Gauteng MEC of health, Bandile Mabuza, who upon seeing the photos of Sarah's cloth masks, wanted some for his staff.

Two clothing companies in Cape Town have found a creative way to keep their businesses going while helping to fight the Covid-19 pandemic, by creating face masks for South Africans. Before Covid-19 struck South Africa, Sarah was incredibly busy with her fashion business, House of Sarah, but when lockdown hit, everything had to stop and she had to think of another plan to continue.

"That's when I thought of cloth masks and also realising that the amount of fabric I have from through the years would come in handy for the masks," she says. When it was time to work from home Sarah started testing mask patterns and making samples.

"At the end of the day I ended up with three different designs," she says. "I also had to do material tests by finding the suitable cloths that are breathable and protective from the virus, dust and people that suffer from sinusitis."

To be compliant with the suggestion by the minister of health, Sarah says her masks are made with three layers with the first layer being the Ankara cloth and nylon material for durability, and lined with the two layers of cotton material so that they are breathable as well as help prevent spreading the virus.

Sarah's fashion business, which specialises in making uniforms, wedding dresses and evening wear, because it was not categorised as an essential service, but having thought ahead, she took some supplies to be able to work from home.

"With no income or customers, it is very stressful as lockdown has brought an isolation to us due to social distances. Lucky enough I taught my sisters, kids and husband how to sew and I've been working with them on the mask project, which is a blessing [sic]," says Sarah.

Before she had to close shop, Sarah had adopted learners with special needs from Nkwame Nkruma Community College to teach them sewing as part of the Fashion Through Waste project. "We turned old denim jeans into school backpacks to sell them to raise funds to buy equipment such as sewing machines for them (the learners)," she says.

Sarah says she hasn't been able to pay rent and salaries due to this lockdown. But having her mask show up on national television has ignited hope, not only for her and the future of her business but for her community as well.

"The impact has been amazing both on my business and also people from my home town of Sharpeville," she says. "I'm hoping to get big orders from the government and private companies so that I can be able to share the workload with my community just to bring hope and change in their lives."

WORLD

Wuhan's COVID-19 patients in serious condition 'all cured'

BEIJING/WUHAN/HARBIN

All of Wuhan's COVID-19 patients who were in serious condition have been cured, a health official said yesterday.

The last patient in serious condition in Wuhan, the central China city hardest hit by the epidemic, was cured yesterday, said Mi Feng, spokesperson for the National Health Commission, at a press conference in Beijing.

The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Hubei dropped to below 50 Thursday for the first time, Mi said.

As of Thursday, no new confirmed or suspected cases had been reported in the province for the 20th consecutive day, Mi added.

According to the commission's daily report issued earlier yesterday, Hubei had 47 confirmed cases of COVID-19 on Thursday.

Hubei's health authorities said 22 COVID-19 patients were discharged from hospital after recovery on Thursday, all of whom were in Wuhan.

By the end of Thursday, the province had 544 asymptomatic cases under medical observation, after 22 new such cases were reported and 24 were ruled out on Thursday.

By Thursday, Hubei has reported 68,128 confirmed COVID-19 cases in total, including 50,333 in Wuhan.

Meanwhile at the press conference, Mi said that in the last 10 days, the number of imported cases in China has gradually dropped. However, there are still reports of domestically transmitted confirmed cases with connections to imported ones, Mi said.

All-round efforts should be made to thoroughly track the confirmed, suspected and asymptomatic cases and their close contacts so as to eliminate potential risks, he added.

Nationwide, the commission said yesterday that it received reports of six new confirmed COVID-19 cases on the mainland Thursday, of which two were imported.

The other four new cases were domestically transmitted, the National Health Commission said in a daily report, noting that three cases were reported in Heilongjiang province and one in Guangdong province.

No deaths were reported Thursday on the mainland. Two new suspected cases, all imported ones, were also reported.

According to the commission, 50 people were discharged from hospi-



A medical worker embraces her colleague upon their reunion in Urumqi, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, on Thursday. The first batch of the medical assistance team supporting the virus-hit Hubei province reunited with their families and co-workers in Urumqi after completing a mandatory quarantine. (XINHUA)

tals after recovery Thursday, while the number of severe cases dropped by six to 57.

As of Thursday, the mainland had reported a total of 1,618 imported cases. Of the cases, 849 had been discharged from hospitals after recovery, and 769 were being treated with 32 in severe conditions, said the commission.

No deaths from the imported cases had been reported, it added.

The overall confirmed cases on the mainland had reached 82,804 by Thursday, including 915 patients who were still being treated and 77,257 people who had been discharged after recovery, the commission said.

Altogether 4,632 people had died of the disease, it said. The commission said that 20 people, including 17 from abroad, were still suspected of being infected with the virus.

It added that 8,362 close contacts were still under medical observation. On Thursday, 607 people were discharged from medical observation. Also on Thursday, 34 new asymptomatic cases, including one from abroad, were reported on the mainland. Three domestic asymptomatic cases were re-categorized as

confirmed cases, and 36 people, 10 of whom were from abroad, were discharged from medical observation, according to the commission.

The commission said 979 suspected asymptomatic cases, including 157 from abroad, were still under medical observation.

By Thursday, 1,035 confirmed cases including four deaths had been reported in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), 45 confirmed cases in the Macao SAR, and 427 in Taiwan including six deaths. A total of 699 patients in Hong Kong, 27 in Macao and 253 in Taiwan had been discharged from hospitals after recovery.

Heilongjiang

Heilongjiang province reported three new domestic cases and zero imported cases on Thursday, the provincial health commission said Friday.

Also on Thursday, the province saw eight new asymptomatic cases.

By Thursday, the province had reported a total of 543 locally-transmitted confirmed COVID-19 cases and 385 imported cases.

The province had a total of 23 imported asymptomatic cases by Thursday. **Xinhua**

WHO says novel coronavirus not manipulated or constructed

GENEVA

ALL available evidence to date suggests that the novel coronavirus, which has caused the ongoing pandemic, has a natural animal origin and is not a manipulated or constructed virus, the World Health Organization

(WHO) said in a daily situation report on Thursday.

"Many researchers have been able to look at the genomic features of SARS-CoV-2 and have found that evidence does not support that SARS-CoV-2 is a laboratory construct," said the global health watchdog, stressing

that if it were a constructed virus, its genomic sequence would show a mix of known elements, but "this is not the case."

The novel coronavirus, also known as SARS-CoV-2, was identified in early January and its genetic sequence shared publicly on Jan. 11-12, the WHO noted.

According to the United Nations specialized agency, the full genetic sequence of the novel coronavirus from the early human cases and the sequences of many other viruses isolated from human cases from China and all over the world showed that the novel coronavirus has

an ecological origin in bat populations.

Although the intermediate animal host has not been identified, the WHO said, all available evidence indicated the novel coronavirus has a zoonotic source.

To better understand the source of the outbreak in China,

Africa welcomes latest Chinese donation of medical supplies in fighting COVID-19

ADDIS ABABA

The latest batch of massive medical supplies donated by China to 12 African countries and regions arrived on Thursday in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa through the Ethiopian Airlines Cargo Services.

High-level officials and representatives of national and international offices as well as diplomats and representatives of the African Union (AU) and the Africa Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) attended the arrival and delivery ceremony held on the premises of the Ethiopian Airlines Cargo terminal in Addis Ababa on Thursday afternoon.

Noting the rapid increase of COVID-19 across different parts of the African continent, the high-level officials and experts attending the arrival ceremony hailed the donation for its great contribution to deal with the epidemic across the African continent.

The medical supplies include facial masks, disposable protective clothing, forehead thermometers, medical protective goggles, gloves

and shoe covers for medical use, among other equipments, it was noted.

Tan Jian, Chinese Ambassador to Ethiopia, said during the occasion that the COVID-19 outbreak "has dragged the whole human race into a fierce war on a global scale."

The virus is new and highly infectious. The attack is sudden and unprecedented. "A friend in need, is a friend indeed. The China-Africa cooperation in fighting COVID-19 is a telling testament to our friendship," the ambassador affirmed.

Noting that China "has received heart-warming help and support from Africa at the most trying stage of China's fight against the outbreak," Tan stressed that the "profound friendship will always be remembered and cherished by the Chinese people."

The medical supplies are expected to be transferred to 12 African countries and regions that are Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Djibouti, Lesotho, Madagascar, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, Somalia as well as Tanzania's Zanzibar.

Ethiopia has already received



medical supplies from China recently, while more is said to be on the way to the East African country, while another batch of China-aided medical supplies has been shipped to some other African countries via Accra, Ghana earlier this month.

According to the Africa CDC, the death toll from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on the African continent reached 1,242 as the number of confirmed cases hit 25,937 as of Thursday afternoon.

Dawit Yirga, Director General of Asia and Oceania Affairs at the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also stressed that Africa and China are "all weather friends and the Sino-Africa strategic partnership has shown vitality and strength in this time of unprecedented challenges."

China, which is also presently fighting against COVID-19 at home, is winning acclaim from across the African continent for its solidarity and support to African countries

and regional organizations in the continent's fight against COVID-19 pandemic.

As part of China's support to Africa's efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19, Chinese experts and officials from health and customs departments also shared information and experience about COVID-19 in a video conference with officials and healthcare specialists from the African Union (AU), the Africa CDC as well as various African countries, showing commitment to sharing experience and supporting Africa in the fight against the pandemic.

Tewelde Gebremariam, CEO of Ethiopian Airlines Group, also commended the solidarity demonstrated to Africa by the Chinese government as well as Chinese companies and civil societies on the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO also stressed that the airlines' successful partnership with different actors in delivering the life-saving medical supplies across the African continent is showed the true African integration in line with the AU Vision 2063. **Xinhua**

S.Africa to ease lockdown in bid to revive economy

JOHANNESBURG

SOUTH Africa's government will next week begin easing a nationwide lockdown that's devastated the economy, while retaining a raft of restrictions to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

The country will move from the maximum disease-alert level 5 to a national level 4 on May 1, allowing the phased reopening of some businesses and industries subject to strict precautions, President Cyril Ramaphosa said Thursday in a televised address to the nation.

A maximum of one-third of workers will be allowed to return to work. Government ministers will give details of the easing in coming days, and industry groups will be invited to comment.

Ramaphosa (pictured) said the nation's borders will remain closed, travel between provinces is banned, no large gatherings other than funerals will be allowed and bars must stay closed. Restrictions on the sale of cigarettes and some other goods will be lifted and people will be allowed to exercise outdoors under strict conditions. Buses and trains can resume operating.

Meanwhile, South Africa's military reserves have been called up to join the fight against COVID-19, the army said.

The country has recorded 3,953 confirmed cases including 75 deaths with 143,570 people tested for the virus.

Thursday saw the highest one-day leap in infections with 318 new cases, though the health ministry said this was largely due to intensified screening.

Global tally

Confirmed COVID-19 cases worldwide topped 2.7 million and the global death toll surpassed 190,000, according to the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University.

The United States reported more than 869,000 cases, four times the total of Spain. Italy, France, Germany and the United Kingdom have all reported over 100,000 cases, the tally showed.

The United States also recorded the highest death toll with more than 50,000 fatalities. Countries with more than 10,000 fatalities also included Spain, Italy, France, and the United Kingdom, the CSSE said. **Xinhua**

Algeria relaxes lockdown measures on eve of Ramadan

ALGIERS

ALGERIAN President Abdelmadjid Tebboune on Thursday ordered the government to gradually lift the lockdown measures due to an improved COVID-19 situation.

In a message delivered to the nation, Tebboune congratulated Algerians on the occasion of the holy fasting month of Ramadan, which starts yesterday, saying,

"I have issued instructions to review the quarantine procedure in line with the progress of the situation on the ground." "The more indicators show improvement here and there, the closer we will be to returning to our normal life," Tebboune said, urging people to observe the confinement measures in a bid to get over the COVID-19 pandemic as soon as possible.

The Algerian president (pictured) said, "We have managed, so far, to narrow the spread of the pandemic," while urging "more solidarity and synergy, as well as highest degree of discipline, patience and vigilance" in the Algerian people.

Shortly after the president's national speech, Prime Minister Abdelaziz Djerad announced lifting the total lockdown at the Blida province, the epicentre of the novel coronavirus outbreak in the North African country, as of Friday, while replacing it with a partial lockdown from 2:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. the next day.

The Algerian government has also decided to relax the partial lockdown measures imposed on 10 other provinces, including the capital Algiers, with the confinement shortened to run between 5:00 p.m., instead of 3:00 p.m., and 7 a.m. Earlier on Thursday, Djamel Fourar, head of the COVID-19 Detection and Follow-up Commission, told reporters that the total confirmed COVID-19 cases increased to 3,007 cases with 91 new infections reported over the last 24 hours.

Fourar added that the death toll reached 407 after registering an additional five fatalities. The number of recoveries reached 152, bringing the total number to 1,355. **Xinhua**

Chinese cities introduce customised bus routes for students to minimise COVID19

SUZHOU, a city in East China's Jiangsu Province started a customised bus route on Tuesday, April 7, for shuttling students to school, covering several middle and primary schools, including kindergartens, in a bid to reduce the risk of COVID-19 contagion amid citywide school resumption.

A teacher from Suzhou No.10 High School, surnamed Wang, whose school comes under this route, told the Global Times that during specified hours in the morning and afternoon, the bus is available for students, and par-

ents can accompany their wards to school.

Passengers must undergo body temperature screening before they board the bus, Wang said, noting that the city launched this dedicated route in October 2019, much before the pandemic befell.

"Now it can help minimize risk of cross-infection amid COVID-19 along their way to school, to some extent," Wang said, adding that the city's authority is soliciting public opinions, in a bid to launch more similar routes in the city.

"It is really nice to have such a special line for students, consider-



Traffic police detachment of the Zhoushan Public Security Bureau of Zhejiang Province, together with the civilian police of the New City Public Security Branch Bureau, inspected and checked the on-board safety equipment of school buses in the jurisdiction.

ing that traffic congestion risk will increase if parents drive their kids to and from school by themselves," Suzhou resident Jack commented.

Some other Chinese cities are also launching customized routes for students amid the COVID-19 outbreak. As of April 5, Fuzhou of East China's Fujian Province has begun 11 bus routes for students, according to reports.

The bus is equipped with an automatic thermometer and a facial recognition system. Li Meng, a teacher in Fuzhou, told the Global Times students who want to use this service, can register their in-

formation and other details using a mobile application. A new line will be introduced if a certain number of students register for the same route.

With visible signs of COVID-19 waning in China, schools are gradually resuming classes. They are adopting stringent plans to ensure health and safety, covering transportation, ventilation, disinfection, self-protection, etc.

Wang from the Suzhou school told the Global Times his school has laid out step-by-step guidelines that students are expected to adhere to between school and

home, in a bid to reduce infection risks. Students are directed to eat meals in different areas at the school to reduce risks of cross-infection.

At Hangzhou of East China's Zhejiang Province where schools are scheduled to resume classes, across different grades, starting from April 13, some schools have arranged separate timings for different grades to arrive and leave school to avoid overcrowding. Certain schools have enforced a one-student-one-seat policy to avoid close contact.

Global Times

Xi leads China's search for safest path to growth amid COVID-19 control

BEIJING

AT a time when the world economy is plagued by the coronavirus pandemic, policymakers across the globe are faced with the same dilemma: how to get the economy back on track amid containment of the virus?

With new cases dwindling, China is among the very first countries that are able to explore ways of restarting its economic engine while keeping the virus under control.

The trajectory of the Chinese economy toward more steady growth in the long run has not changed, said Chinese President Xi Jinping during an inspection tour from Monday to Thursday in northwest China's Shaanxi Province, urging more efforts to accelerate the transformation of economic growth modes and firm up the real economy, especially the manufacturing sector.

Since COVID-19 has been basically contained domestically, Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, has personally chaired a number of key meetings themed on coordinating epidemic control and business resumption, offering the world insights

into when to restart an economy and how.

VIRUS-CONTROL AS PRECONDITION

After over two months of lockdown, Wuhan, the Chinese city hardest hit by the novel coronavirus outbreak, lifted its outbound travel restrictions on April 8.

The decision to lift the lockdown, just like the one imposing it, required both cautious assessment and courage in policymaking.

Hubei Province first reported zero increase in confirmed cases on March 18, a milestone for the main battlefield of the anti-virus fight. Previously, new confirmed cases elsewhere in the country had been declining for more than a month.

"The economy is a dynamic circulating system that cannot afford a long-term disruption," Xi said during an important speech in Beijing in February.

But lifting certain restrictions does not mean the country has eased its epidemic control efforts. Across the country, strict quarantine measures were taken to ensure the hard-won results be maintained.

While the positive momentum in China's epidemic prevention and control



is being consolidated, the task remains formidable, requiring control measures on a regular basis and strengthened efforts to guard against both imported infections and domestic rebounds, according to a recent meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee chaired by Xi.

During his inspection in March to a port in Ningbo of eastern China's Zhejiang Province, Xi said that things could gradually get back to normal amid a positive trend in epidemic control, but

also cautioned against a potential comeback of the virus.

"Although the vast majority of regions in the country are now at low risk, it is not yet time to think everything is fine. We need to be careful and patient," he said.

The country is restarting its economy in a gradual and orderly manner. Factories and grocery stores were among the first to resume operation, followed by restaurants and barbershops. Depending on the risks of different regions,

schools are scheduled to reopen, while indoor sports venues will soon receive customers.

"With continued epidemic prevention and control as a precondition, we must now actively push forward the resumption of work and production, ensuring not only production tasks but also people's health," Xi said during his inspection in Zhejiang.

REGION-SPECIFIC MEASURES

In coordinating epidemic control and business resumption, China has avoided a "one-size-fits-all" approach and resorted to more targeted measures to revive different regions.

"Region-specific, multi-level targeted approaches to business resumption must be implemented," Xi said in the February speech.

According to a national guideline, regions with relatively low risk should focus on preventing imported cases and comprehensively restoring the order of production and life. Medium-risk regions should promote work and production resumption in an orderly manner, while high-risk regions should continue to be fully committed to epidemic prevention and control.

Xinhua

Spain's daily coronavirus deaths lowest in a month

MADRID

SPAIN'S daily coronavirus deaths fell to the lowest in more than a month on Friday, with 367 registered in the previous 24 hours, as the government prepared criteria to ease one of Europe's strictest lockdowns from next month.

The new deaths were just a 1.7% increase overall, down from 440 the previous day, and the lowest since March 21, underlining optimism that Spain's epidemic was past the worst.

However, with 22,524 deaths in total, it still has the world's third-highest tally after the United States and Italy.

Cases rose over 6,700 to 219,764 from the day before, but the rise in new infections based on more specific testing was much lower, at 2,796, meaning those cured, at 3,105, surpassed new infections for the first time.

"We hope the trend will continue in the future, which will depend mainly on how we all behave as we gradually have fewer restrictions on mobility," health emergency coordinator Fernando Simon told a news briefing.

According to Cadena SER radio, the government started to outline thresholds on Friday for further easing of the economically-crippling lockdown from May for regions with the lowest contagion rates and least burdened intensive units (ICU).

For restrictions to be lifted, there must be no more than two daily cases per 100,000 people in an area, or COVID-19 patients must occupy no more than half of ICU beds.

The government has already taken some steps to relax the lockdown, such as allowing construction workers back and letting children take walks outside from this weekend, but broader restrictions will not be eased until late May.

Anticipating more people outside, the government started capping prices of protective surgical masks at 0.96 euros (\$1.04) a piece, and of disinfecting gels and solutions at 0.015-0.021 euros per millilitre depending on packaging volume.

In Catalonia, Spain's second hardest-hit region, the regional administration's separatist leader Quim Torra criticised the central government's handling of the epidemic, saying it would have worked out better "without impositions".

He also called for more financial aid. Torra urged all Catalan political

US Congress passes COVID-19 relief package to aid small businesses, hospitals

WASHINGTON

U.S. Congress on Thursday passed a 484-billion-dollar relief package to boost funding for small businesses, hospitals and virus testing, as the country continues to grapple with a COVID-19 fallout.

The House of Representatives approved the bill by a vote of 388-5, two days after the Senate swiftly cleared the legislation in a voice vote, sending the bill to President Donald Trump for signature.

"At this time when many Americans are enduring significant economic challenges, this bill will help small businesses and keep millions of workers on the payroll," Trump said at a White House briefing Thursday.

The package will provide more than 310 billion dollars in additional funding for the Paycheck Protection Program to

boost small business lending, as well as 75 billion dollars for hospitals and 25 billion dollars for virus testing.

Congressional Democrats reached an agreement with the Trump administration on the package earlier this week following days of intense negotiations.

The new package, the fourth COVID-19 relief bill approved by Congress, came as the coronavirus continues to sweep the nation, with the death toll still rising and the economy devastated.

As of Thursday, over 860,000 cases have been confirmed and over 49,000 deaths reported across the country, according to a data-tracking tool developed by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering at Johns Hopkins University.

White House coronavirus response coordinator Deborah Birx said there has been prog-



President Donald Trump

ress in bending the curve. "If you look at seven-day reporting, we are starting to go down. We have a long flat peak, largely driven of course by New York," she said at the briefing.

Meanwhile, newly released

data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that 4.4 million Americans filed jobless claims last week, bringing the five-week total to more than 26 million, as businesses, especially small ones, struggle to retain

their employees.

"Historic, tragic layoffs continue to pile up nationwide. This pandemic has erased a decade of job creation in just over one month," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said on Twitter.

McConnell, a Kentucky Republican, went on to blame Democrats for having made the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) "lapse."

The program, designed to provide loans for small businesses to keep their workers on the payroll during the COVID-19 outbreak, ran out of money last week. In a previously approved 2.2-trillion-dollar relief package, 349 billion dollars had been allocated to fund the PPP.

About 80 percent of PPP applicants said they are still waiting, while many do not know where they are in the application process, according to a survey released Monday by the National Federation of Independent

Business. Calling the new bill "an interim emergency funding package," Democratic leaders have said they are disappointed that the administration has not agreed to more funding for state, tribal and local governments on the front lines of this crisis who desperately need an infusion of funds to pay essential workers.

In a joint statement earlier, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer had pledged to advance a larger bill, which could include another round of direct payments to households as well as more aid to state and local governments.

Before voting on the relief package Thursday, the House also approved a Democratic-majority select subcommittee to oversee the Trump administration's use of the 500-billion-dollar aid for corporations, states and municipalities.

Xinhua

WHO warns malaria deaths in Africa could double this year

NAIROBI/LAGOS

THE number of deaths caused by malaria in Sub-Saharan Africa could double to 769,000 this year, as efforts to curb the disease are disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Health Organisation warned on Thursday.

The region has more than 25,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19, with more than 1,200 deaths, and governments working with partners such as the WHO are focusing on tackling the pandemic.

WHO Regional Director for Africa Dr Matshidiso Moeti called on all countries to ensure that essential malaria prevention work continues.

"A recent analysis has found that if insecticide-treated bed net distribution stops, and case management reduces, malaria deaths in sub-Saharan Africa could double in comparison to 2018," Moeti said at a briefing.

"This would be the highest number of deaths seen in the region since the year 2000."



She pointed to statistics from Africa's ebola outbreak showing that more people died of other diseases, including malaria, than from ebola itself, due to lack of access to treatment.

"Let us not repeat that again with COVID-19," she said.

In 2018, there were 213 million malaria cases and 360,000 related deaths in the African region, accounting for over 90 percent of global cases.

The WHO said that if the focus on slowing the spread of the new coronavirus leads to a reduction by three quarters of access to anti-malaria medicines, deaths could double to 769,000.

"Countries across the region have a critical window of opportunity to minimize disruptions in malaria prevention and treatment and save lives at this stage of the COVID-19 outbreak," the WHO said in a statement.

The doubling of the number of deaths represents the worst case scenario, which also assumes the suspension of all distribution of treated mosquito nets due to the pandemic, the WHO said.

Benin, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and Chad have all initiated anti-malaria programmes during the pandemic, the WHO said, adding that should serve as a model for other nations on the continent.

EU leaders agree on need, but not size, of virus recovery fund

BRUSSELS / PARIS

European Union (EU) leaders in a video summit on Thursday tasked the European Commission to shape the bloc's collective response to the coronavirus pandemic and link a recovery fund against the pandemic with the EU's next long-term budget starting next year.

Charles Michel, the President of the European Council, said EU leaders agreed a recovery fund is needed and urgent.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said in a briefing that it is clear to everyone that the EU needs such a recovery fund.

No specific amount was given, however. French President Emmanuel Macron said disagreements over the size and shape of the rescue package remained. Ursula von der Leyen, the President of the European Commission, said the EU's executive

arm would start working on the details.

"Based on proposals from the European Commission, we will work constructively on a joint strategy for the recovery phase, linked to the multi-year budget," Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said on Twitter.

"This fund shall be of a sufficient magnitude, targeted towards the sectors and geographical parts of Europe most affected, and be dedicated to dealing with this unprecedented crisis," Michel said.

The EU must provide budgetary transfers and not just loans to its worst-hit regions and sectors to help restart the economy, said Macron. "In the moment we are living through, these transfers must be transfers by subsidies, real budgetary transfers."

With a rescue package worth at least 5 to 10 percentage points

of EU gross domestic product, an agreement within EU could allow the issuance of debts with a common guarantee in order to finance "budgetary transfers towards a region or a particularly hit sector, with very clear rules and governance and accepted by all," said the French president.

"No consensus is reached today. But it is an answer that we will have to provide and I believe that our Europe has no future if we can not provide this answer," he added. "If we let part of Europe fall, all of Europe will fall with it."

The EU leaders also endorsed a separate 540-billion-euro (US\$587 billion) package, drawn up by euro area finance ministers earlier, to set up safety networks for workers, employers and member states.

Xinhua

China to take global lead in economic recovery - analysts

Even after the city lockdown was lifted, Liu Qi, a taxi driver in Wuhan, Central China's Hubei Province, said he only had half the number of fares compared with before the coronavirus pandemic, as residents remain on high alert over its resurgence and are choosing to stay home. Ma Ming, manager of a local food market, said that 500 vendors haven't earned a penny for the past two months, and are still anxiously awaiting a full resumption of business.

In the major manufacturing and export hub of Ningbo, East China's Zhejiang Province, Chen Jie, deputy general manager of Ningbo Yikade Electrical Appliance Technology Co, said

that production lines have been busy producing generators over the past month, but new export orders have been suspended due in part to port closures overseas, and workers could be furloughed if no new orders come in soon.

In the border city of Aksu in Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, the owner of a local garment factory said that the company was facing a "serious shortage of cash" to purchase essential materials to keep it running. Local farmers are counting on government support for securing everything

from seeds to fertilizers to start the planting season.

These are vivid testaments to the depth and breadth of the far-reaching economic ramifications of the coronavirus pandemic, as well as the profound challenges the country faces in making up trillions of dollars lost over the past couple of months and lifting up the economy in the face of lurking uncertainties and risks going forward. They also provide a rare window for countries around the world that are still battling the virus to see what lies ahead in terms of economic recovery, even after they

have successfully reined in the pandemic, and potentially draw lessons from how China tackles these challenges.

Many in China have billed the pandemic as a once-in-a-century event, that will reshape the global order and economy. However, with changes come pain. Beyond the devastating human costs, the pandemic has also left many in economic despair.

No sector has been spared by the outbreak, though some like the services industry and transportation have been hit harder than others. And no place - big or small, virus stricken or virus

free, economic powerhouses in the East coast or less developed areas in the westernmost region - is immune to the fallout.

For taxi drivers in Wuhan, factory owners in Ningbo and farmers in Aksu, the virus first threatened their lives, and now it is threatening their livelihood. "I was also scared to death of going back to work, especially as my work requires constant contact with strangers... But if I stay home any longer, my family can't afford food anymore," Liu, the taxi driver, told the Global Times.

"It took China two months to

control [the epidemic]... foreign countries can also control it, so overall we are optimistic but remain cautious," Chen, the manager of Ningbo Yikade, told the Global Times, noting that his company generates about 80 percent of its annual sales revenue of 200 million yuan from exports.

While Chen remains optimistic, China's top leadership are not taking any chances, calling for full-fledged efforts to restart the economy while continuing to put some anti-epidemic measures in place.

Warning of new difficulties

and challenges for China's economic and social development, President Xi Jinping on Wednesday urged "preparedness in mind and work" to cope with prolonged changes in the external environment, and efforts to minimize losses caused by the epidemic.

Xi made the remarks during a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, where the country's top leadership discussed epidemic prevention and control and fully advancing work resumption, the Xinhua News Agency reported.

Global Times



Naomi Campbell

Naomi Campbell - from catwalk queen to chat show host

NEW YORK

CORONAVIRUS quarantine has supermodel Naomi Campbell reinventing herself as a talk show host with the new series "No Filter with Naomi."

The catwalk queen is chatting live on YouTube every day with some of her famous friends, including Vogue editor Anna Wintour and models Cindy Crawford and Karlie Kloss.

"I want people to be able to see we're accessible, you know, to know a bit more about us," Campbell told Reuters.

In normal times, she said, "you get us doing these talk shows for five minutes or seven minutes when we're promoting something."

Her chats, all conducted remotely, are 30 minutes long so "you get us relaxed at home. Being able just to sit and just talk."

Campbell has also allowed fans to join her for daily live workouts with her personal trainer on Instagram, drawing about 50,000

people.

"I just want to share it with everyone, whoever wants to do it with me, which is great," she said.

When restrictions are lifted Campbell said she's unsure of what the fashion industry will look like.

"I really do worry what's going to happen about fashion shows," she said. "But there will be work again. It just will be in a different way."

Campbell can currently be seen as a judge on the Amazon fashion design competition "Making the Cut" hosted by Heidi Klum and Tim Gunn. She said she was attracted to the show because of the "opportunity that these young designers of the next generation will get."

The British native said the first thing she'll do after social distancing guidelines end is simple.

"I just want to hug my mom."

REUTERS

Ball shining, celebrations to change post virus - Tendulkar

MUMBAI

FROM shining the ball to celebrating a dismissal - certain things may never be the same again when cricket restarts after the novel coronavirus pandemic, Indian batting great Sachin Tendulkar told Reuters.

Cricketers use the age-old method of shining one side of the cricket ball with a combination of saliva and sweat, ostensibly to help bowlers generate more swing in the air.

But with increased focus on social distancing and personal hygiene to contain the spread of the virus, the sport stares at a changing landscape.

"Shining the ball will change I think," Tendulkar, who will turn 47 on Friday, told Reuters in a telephone interview. "Everyone will be conscious of maintaining social distancing, giving high-fives to each other and hugging after celebrating the fall of a wicket."

"I don't think those things are going to happen. It may happen instinctively but consciously players would want to make sure that they follow certain norms. During this period personal hygiene has been at the forefront."

Cricket like all other sport has come to a grinding halt as countries closed borders and enforced lockdowns to fight the virus that has infected more than 2.66 million people globally and killed more than 186,000.

Australia, South Africa and England have been among many who have been forced to

postpone cricket tours to other countries while the cash-rich Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 tournament has been indefinitely suspended.

With several bilateral series being wiped out, the new World Test Championship (WTC) is in doubt with its final between the top two sides scheduled in June next year at Lord's.

The nine top-ranked sides are scheduled to play three series each at home and away to determine the finalists and Tendulkar feels everyone should get a fair chance.

"I would like to believe that some tours are getting postponed rather than being called off," said Tendulkar, who will not be celebrating his birthday as a mark of respect for frontline workers involved in the health crisis.

"The whole world has come to a standstill, it applies to all cricket playing nations. The whole calendar can be moved forward a little bit without altering too many things."

"I know the timings of the cricket season are different in different continents and that needs a closer look at."

Australia is scheduled to host the Twenty20 World Cup starting from October but Tendulkar feels it will be impossible to predict the fate of the tournament at this stage.

"It's not just about Australia, it's also about making sure that the rest of the teams are also feeling safe enough to travel there," he said.

REUTERS

Tokyo Olympic CEO promises 'transparency' over cost of delay

TOKYO

THE chief executive of the Tokyo Olympics promised "transparency" with the Japanese public on Thursday regarding the cost of postponing the games until next year.

Neither the Japanese organizers nor the International Olympic Committee has said what it will cost to delay the Tokyo Games for one year. Early estimates in Japan range between \$2 billion and \$6 billion.

"It's highly likely that the expense will be higher than the originally planned budget," CEO Toshio Muto said, speaking through an interpreter at a weekly teleconference.

He said the exact amount was unclear, "but we will proceed with transparency and explain to the taxpayers about the costs."

Although officials say the added costs are unknown, one thing is certain: Japanese taxpayers will pick up most of the bills.

The Tokyo city government, the local organizers and the Japanese Olympic Committee are obligated under the "Host City Contract" signed in 2013 to pay most of the costs.

The cost issue is sensitive in Japan, particularly for the government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who has been a fervent backer of the Olympics.

Japan, like many countries, could be deep in a recession next year, brought on by the coronavirus pandemic. Japan is officially spending \$12.6 billion to organize the Olympics, but a



In this March 30, 2020, file photo, a man jogs past the Olympic rings in Tokyo. The chief executive of the Tokyo Olympics has promised "transparency" on Thursday, April 23, 2020, with the Japanese public over the cost of postponing the games until next year. (AP Photo)

government audit report last year said it was at least twice that much.

It's all public money except for \$5.6 billion in a privately funded operating budget.

The Switzerland-based IOC has contributed \$1.3 billion to that private budget, but is not expected to pay much more. It's income over the latest four-year Olympic cycle was \$5.7 billion.

IOC member John Coates, who oversees planning for the Tokyo Olympics, said last week the IOC would need to pay "several hundred million dollars" to keep many international sports federations and national Olympic committees afloat. He did not indicate any of that money was going to Tokyo.

Muto was asked point-blank if Japan was "prepared to pay all of the extra running costs - or should it be shared?" He did not answer directly, referring instead to a non-descript statement put out last week by the IOC and local organizers.

"The joint statement is all we have," Muto said. "We need to assess the impact of the postponement, and then we need to discuss how to address it."

Muto was asked repeatedly if the pandemic would allow the delayed Olympics to open on July 23, 2021. Earlier this week, a Japanese scientist and an expert in infectious disease said it was unlikely the Olympics could be held.

"How this coronavirus infec-

tion situation will develop and when this will end - nobody can answer this question for sure," Muto said.

He said postponing until July 2021 gave organizers and the IOC "enough time."

He also discounted any chance of postponing until 2022. The Beijing Winter Olympics are scheduled for 2022 but are also under a cloud since it was in China where the virus was first discovered.

"Prime Minister Abe said the nature of the Olympics would change if Tokyo 2020 were postponed for two years," Muto said.

AP

Study: Olympians should push for collective bargaining

By EDDIE PELLIS

A STUDY of the worldwide Olympic bureaucracy's finances concludes there's far more money available for athletes than what they receive, and that they would be best served by the sort of collective-bargaining arrangement that's common in pro leagues.

The study, a collaboration between the Global Athlete advocacy group and the Ryerson University Ted Rogers School of Management in Toronto, said the IOC - the largest and most integral cog in the Olympic system - averages \$1.4 billion a year in revenue and spends 4.1% of it on athletes.

Even since the Olympics departed from the amateur-only model on which it was founded, the majority of athletes have been largely dependent on their own sports organizations and national Olympic committees for funding. Lucrative sponsorship deals exist for only a small percentage of top-tier Olympians.

At the same time, the study says, because the IOC receives most of its revenue (91%) from TV and marketing and virtually nothing from donations, its model is more in sync with the NFL, NBA and other pro leagues than the family of nonprofit organizations it is part of.

The study says those pro leagues return between 40% and 60% of their revenues to the players, while the Olympic movement gives back 4.1%, the bulk of which "is mostly through scholarships, grants and awards for successful competition, numbers which athletes cannot negotiate."

"If the IOC and its affiliates are unwilling or unable to compensate its athletes, collective bargaining will change the face of the Olympic Movement," the report concluded, while also underscoring athletes' chance



In this May 4, 2019, file photo, International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach speaks at the Australian Olympic Committee annual general meeting in Sydney, Australia. (AP Photo)

to grab a central role in reshaping the movement in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic that has delayed the Tokyo Games by a year.

The IOC called the claim that it spends 4.1% of its revenue on athletes "just plain wrong."

"It redistributes 90% of all its income generated from the Olympic Games to assist athletes and develop sport worldwide," the IOC said. "As a result, every day the IOC distributes about \$3.4 million around the world to help athletes and sporting organizations."

As detailed in its annual report, among the areas the IOC sends money to are international sports federations, national Olympic committees and the World Anti-Doping Agency.

The IOC also sends about 28% of its budget to local organizing committees for the Olympics; in 2016 and 2018, that amounted to \$1.7 billion, the study said. Without the Olympics there would be no grand stage on which the athletes could perform. That has long been an IOC argument in defending its overall model, as well as Rule 40, which limits the amount of sponsorship-related revenue athletes can generate during the games themselves.

Over recent months, the IOC has allowed countries to relax some of those restrictions, but the study argues athletes would be much better off if Rule 40 was abolished altogether and replaced by collective bargaining.

The study outlined a complex

web of Olympic finance and bureaucracy that it says is outdated. It describes a system in which the vast majority of money flows in from broadcasters and sponsors, then filters through hundreds of Olympic-related subsidiaries across the globe before, eventually, a small amount gets to the athletes themselves.

The study estimated the average Canadian athlete in 2013-14 spent about \$15,000 more than he or she made in a year.

"If the IOC is truly against the commercial abuse of athletes, it will find a way to pay its athletes back," the report concluded. "If not, it will be up to the athletes themselves."

AP

UEFA: Champions League qualification should be 'on sporting merit'

PARIS

UEFA on Thursday left the door open for leagues to bring an early end to their seasons during the coronavirus pandemic but said qualification for the next Champions League should be "based on sporting merit".

The announcement by European football's governing body came after a videoconference meeting of its Executive Committee and with several countries awaiting approval to end their seasons because of the complications brought about by imposed virus lockdowns.

In a statement, UEFA said completing seasons in their original formats remained "the ideal scenario, should the pandemic situation permit it." If not, leagues were urged to find ways of restarting "with a different format", which could mean play-offs being introduced in some cases.

"If a domestic competition is prematurely terminated for legitimate reasons...UEFA would require (leagues) to select clubs for the UEFA club competitions 2020/21 based on sporting merit" in the current season.

That would appear to definitively rule out any possibility of seasons being voided altogether. Instead, national associations are left with the choice of trying to restart somehow or, if needed, calling an end to the season with current tables considered final and Champions League and Europa League places dished out on that basis.

The "legitimate reasons" outlined by UEFA for ending seasons now included leagues being prevented from doing so by governments "before a date that would make it possible to complete the current season in good time".

Earlier this week the Dutch football federation (KNVB) announced its intention to call an end to the season following a government decision to extend a ban on large gatherings until September because of the

pandemic, which has caused more than 110,000 deaths across Europe.

Ending the Eredivisie season now would mean Ajax being declared champions although they are level on points with second-placed AZ Alkmaar with nine games still to play. AZ have won both league meetings with Ajax this season.

The Belgian Pro League is hoping to confirm next week that it will end its season, thereby declaring Club Brugge champions.

The Scottish league could do the same after a controversial resolution passed last week by the 42 member clubs to award positions on a points-per-game basis. The lower leagues have already been declared over and doing the same for the Premiership would mean Celtic being handed a ninth successive title with eight games still to play.

In contrast, the German Bundesliga is hoping to restart early next month, with games behind closed doors.

It remains to be seen if Europe's other leading leagues -- halted since mid-March because of the health crisis -- will be able to do the same.

There are still 11 rounds of matches left in Spain's La Liga, for example, yet UEFA remain keen to get the 2019-20 season over and done with by the end of August. That would mean fewer delays in starting next season.

UEFA's own calendar working group has been working on two potential scenarios, with one seeing domestic and European competitions restarting in parallel and the other seeing domestic leagues being played out before the Champions League and Europa League are completed in August.

In the latter scenario, the Champions League final would be pencilled in for August 29, with the Europa League final two days earlier. Both competitions are currently frozen in the last-16 stage, but any resumption depends on travel restrictions being lifted.

AFP

Mayor demands investigation into Liverpool-Atletico match

LONDON

ONE of the mayors for Liverpool has called for an investigation into why Liverpool's Champions League clash against Atletico Madrid was allowed to go ahead in front of 52,000 supporters last month.

Despite the game taking place after a plan was agreed to play La Liga matches behind closed doors, 3,000 visiting fans were allowed to travel from Spain and attend the match at Anfield on March 11.

Days later Spain was forced into a nationwide lockdown and mass gatherings, including all major sporting events, in Britain were cancelled.

Madrid has been one of the European cities worst-hit by coronavirus and the Spanish capital's mayor Jose Luis Martinez-Almeida said it had been a "mistake" to play the game.

"If people have contracted coronavirus as a direct result of a sporting event that we believe shouldn't have taken place, well that is scandalous," Steve Rotherham, Mayor of Liverpool City Region, told the BBC.

"That needs to be investigated

to find out whether some of those infections are due directly to the Atletico fans. There were coronavirus hot cities, and Madrid was one of those.

"They weren't allowed to congregate in their own country, but 3,000 of those fans came over to ours, and potentially may well have spread coronavirus.

"So it does need looking at, and it does need the government to take some responsibility for not locking down sooner."

The UK government has insisted it was following scientific advice when it allowed the match and other major events such as the Cheltenham horse racing festival to go ahead in the same week.

However, the British government's deputy chief scientific adviser, Angela McLean, said on Monday that infections in Liverpool due to the Atletico match was an "interesting hypothesis".

Atletico won the game 3-2 after extra-time to knock out the defending champions 4-2 on aggregate and progress to the quarter-finals.

AFP

Adebayor: I'm not Drogba, Eto'o; I won't donate

LONDON

EMMANUEL Adebayor has defended his refusal to donate to Togo capital Lome's coronavirus battle and distanced himself from fellow African football stars Didier Drogba and Samuel Eto'o.

The 36-year-old, who now plays for Olimpia in Paraguay, said he does not want to be compared with Drogba and Eto'o and feels criticised because he has not established a foundation in his hometown.

"I am compared with Drogba and Eto'o," he said during a Facebook Live. "However, I am

neither of them. I am Emmanuel Sheyi Adebayor and I will always do what I want.

"I do what I want, I eat what I want, and this is the most important thing. Of course, there will be those who criticise me because I did not create a foundation in Lome."

The former Manchester City and Arsenal forward said he will not make a donation after feeling mistreated.

"For those saying I do not donate, let me be very clear: I do not donate," he added. "It is very simple. (Agencies)

Sports nostalgia all the rage during virus lockdown

LONDON

FROM Premier League stars reliving their own iconic moments to the documentary that broke records in America, the lack of sport during the coronavirus lockdown has triggered a wave of nostalgia among fans and players.

With virtually no live action anywhere in the world due to the pandemic, sports lovers have been forced to go cold turkey over the past two months.

Whether it is the Premier League being postponed, cricket tours being cancelled or US leagues going into hibernation, the sudden shutdown has been a shock to the system.

Searching for a sense of normality in troubled times, fans have turned to comforting trips down memory lane.

In England, Premier League and Championship clubs have been keeping their supporters entertained by turning back the clock.

Many teams have posted entire matches from the past on their websites and YouTube channels, along with individual players' finest moments and interviews with old stars.

As part of their "Citizens at Home" campaign to encourage supporters to respect lockdown rules, Manchester City organised a Twitter event, tweeting clips from their 2017 Champions League win at Napoli.

Sergio Aguero, who became City's all-time leading scorer with his goal in the game, joined in with video commentary on the 4-2 win and fans tweeted their own descriptions



Manchester City striker Sergio Aguero celebrates after scoring against Napoli (AFP Photo)

of key moments as though the match were happening in real time.

Such is the desire to remember happier times that even a boy's recreation of Paul Gascoigne's classic FA Cup semi-final free-kick for Tottenham against Arsenal in 1991 briefly became a Twitter sensation.

Thousands of social media users saw the youngster, wearing a Spurs kit from that season, smashing his shot over two rubbish bins and into the top corner of a small goal before copying Gascoigne's Wembley celebration.

Television companies have responded to the absence of scheduled matches by feeding the appetite for nostalgia.

The BBC has rebranded Match of the Day as the long-running Premier League highlights programme switches to showing memorable matches

selected by the show's pundits including Alan Shearer and Ian Wright.

In July, the BBC will show the opening ceremony of the 2012 Olympics alongside highlights from the rest of the London Games and Rio 2016, replacing coverage of what should have been Tokyo 2020.

Filling the void left by Euro 2020, which is delayed until 2021, they will show matches from Euro 96 and classic Wimbledon contests will be screened during the July fortnight normally dominated by tennis.

"In these unprecedented and difficult times we are delighted to bring some of the most incredible sporting events from years gone by to our audiences," the BBC's director of sport Barbara Slater said.

Sky and BBC radio allowed cricket lovers to relive the drama of Ben Stokes's unforgettable 135 not out in

Newcastle can't buy into Premier League elite like Manchester City did

BY MARK OGDEN, SENIOR WRITER, ESPN FC

WHAT do Antoine Griezmann, Edinson Cavani, Timo Werner, Dries Mertens, Mauricio Pochettino and Massimiliano Allegri all have in common? Over the past week, all have been linked with moves to Newcastle United once owner Mike Ashley completes his proposed sale of the Premier League club to a consortium backed by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, which has estimated assets around £320 billion (\$395bn).

The deal, which has attracted criticism, has yet to be sanctioned by the Premier League, with the prospective new owners due to be assessed under the league's Fit and Proper Persons Test. If the Saudi-backed takeover gets the green light, Newcastle would automatically find themselves with the financial resources to transform the club and muscle their way back into the elite in England and Europe.

Well, that's the theory, at least. After 13 years of stagnation, drift and underwhelming investment since Ashley took control in 2007, Newcastle could become another Manchester City or Paris Saint-Germain, two clubs whose incredibly wealthy owners have ambitions to take on the world. That's why the likes of Griezmann, Cavani and Werner, and star-name coaches such as Pochettino and Allegri, are being linked with moves to St James' Park.

Newcastle has suddenly become the No. 1 destination for players, coaches and agents who fancy being on the ground floor of an exciting new (and lucrative) project, but it's not quite as simple as all that.

The days of clubs being bankrolled to the top -- as happened under Roman Abramovich at Chelsea, at City thanks to the billions of Abu Dhabi's Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed al Nahyan and thanks to Qatari owners at PSG -- are over. The drawbridge was pulled up by the football authorities as a result of those finance-fuelled transformations, and Financial Fair Play regulations (FFP) introduced by UEFA and the Premier League mean it will be so much more difficult, if not impossible, for Newcastle to make the same leap as Chelsea, City and PSG.

Thanks to FFP, clubs are now restricted to spending what they earn as a sporting entity, rather than simply lavishing millions on signings and wages thanks to the bottomless pockets of their owners. PSG and City have both previously fallen foul of UEFA's strictures, with City currently attempting to overturn a two-season



Antoine Griezmann

ban from the Champions League for their failure to comply. UEFA's FFP regulations are so complex that they amount to a 116-page document, but in a nutshell, the measures are aimed at limiting losses made by clubs, so they can only report annual losses up to a maximum of €30m (\$32.3m). UEFA's "acceptable deviation," or loss, is €5m.

This is the problem that will face Newcastle's new owners, if or when they assume control of the club. If they are going to sign the likes of Griezmann and Werner and hire Pochettino or Allegri, they will have to find a way to rapidly increase Newcastle's revenue streams, because they simply will not be allowed to spend hundreds of millions of pounds without first proving that the money has come through

legitimate sporting and commercial income.

The good news for Newcastle is that they have plenty of room for growth from a commercial perspective. When Ashley bought the club in 2007, Newcastle's commercial income amounted to £27.6m (\$34m) a year. In their most recently published accounts, for the year ending June 2018, it had decreased to £26.7m. Over the same period, Manchester United's annual commercial revenue has gone from £58.1m to £276m.

Back in 1999, Deloitte & Touche listed Newcastle at fifth in the table of the world's richest clubs, with their £49.2m turnover placing them ahead of Barcelona (£48.57m), AC Milan (£48.55m) and Liverpool (£45.5m). They are the definition of a sleeping giant and Newcastle's new owners

could quickly improve their present-day numbers with more lucrative sponsorship deals and tap into the club's huge fan base. With a population of just 268,000, Newcastle is a relatively small city, but the club's average home attendance this season is 48,248 -- almost a fifth of the city -- and in better times, the 52,405 capacity of St James's has proved to be too small.

But even with a rapid growth in off-field income, it will take time and astute management to make Newcastle United competitive again. The financial problems can be overcome in time, but attracting the best players to Newcastle is a long-term issue that may never go away.

Former manager Kevin Keegan, who was in charge when Newcastle broke the world-record transfer fee

the third Test against Australia at Headingley last year.

Sky's programme included a "watchalong" segment that saw Stokes and captain Joe Root dial in via video-link.

Even newspapers have got in on the act.

The Guardian has run a series of "as-live rebroadcasts of classic sporting events" including Jack Nicklaus's win at the 1986 Masters and Italy's victory over Brazil at the 1982 World Cup.

- Jordan smash hit - In the United States, basketball fans successfully campaigned to get ESPN to move its eagerly anticipated 10-part Michael Jordan documentary series "The Last Dance" from June to April.

Jordan is widely regarded as the NBA's best-ever player and ESPN said Sunday's first two episodes, which focused on his final title-winning season with the Chicago Bulls, were the most-watched documentary content in the company's history, with an average of 6.1 million viewers.

Encapsulating the public's enthusiasm for some sporting escapism, Los Angeles Lakers great Magic Johnson tweeted: "Michael Jordan's Last Dance was fantastic and I loved all two hours of it."

"Young fans that never got to see Michael play now understand why he's the G.O.A.T (greatest of all time) of basketball!"

AFP

Gwiji by David Chikoko



Azam FC extends contract for Chirwa

SPORT

Sports nostalgia all the rage during virus lockdown

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19

BCCI suggests deferring World Test Championship

DELHI

THE BCCI has suggested the World Test Championship (WTC) be postponed as the cricket world grapples with a calendar vastly disrupted by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. India sits atop the WTC points table currently, in prime position to qualify for the final, but the suggestion was made by the BCCI as members agreed that the entire FTP through to 2023 would need to be collectively reviewed "with a view to rescheduling as much of the cricket that has been postponed due to COVID-19 as possible."

As expected, no big decisions were taken at the ICC convened Chief Executives' Committee meeting via conference call, but the CEC did agree that both the T20 World Cup (scheduled to be played in Australia in October-November) and the 2021 Women's ODI World Cup (to be played in New Zealand next February-March) for now remain on course. What has been agreed upon is that there will be regular updates, possibly once a month, to discuss the status of the T20 World Cup - an acknowledgement that the situation remains a fast-evolving one. According to one official, greater clarity on whether or not the tournament goes ahead may not come at the next call - in four weeks' time - but could come in the one after that, in June.

The importance of the T20 World Cup, in particular, is clear. Most of the boards in attendance rely heavily on revenue distributions from ICC tournaments and a disruption to that equation, as Ehsan Mani has warned, could have a massive financial impact on boards. But in a sign of how unusual the current situation is and the problems in hosting a global tournament within that, the meeting was given a presentation by Peter Harcourt, the ICC's medical committee head, who said the pandemic was "full of significant risk" and that the decision-making would be that much more difficult as a result.

Harcourt struck a note of caution. "Our next step is to create a roadmap for the resumption of international cricket which will include a criteria for decision-making and a checklist for what needs to happen."

"This will consider everything from player preparation to government restrictions and advisories and bio-bubbles. The scale and complexity of getting cricket started again cannot be underestimated particularly with respect to a global event. The more teams, venues and cities involved in an event, the greater the risk which has to be assessed and managed."

And though it is drawn out over a two-year period and essentially played bilaterally, as opposed to a one-off event, a decision on the WTC will also not be easy or be made quickly. ESPNcricinfo understands the BCCI was the only board of the view that the WTC should be put off for the time being until some sense of normalcy returns.

It is not clear why Jay Shah, the BCCI secretary on the call, made the suggestion, midway into a league where each team plays six series in a two-year cycle with a maximum of 120 points per series at stake. Not all teams have played the same number of series and some, like West Indies and Bangladesh, have only played one series so far.

Geoff Allardice, the ICC's general manager cricket, is understood to have noted that it would be better to wait for later in the year, once there is a better understanding of how much international cricket has been disrupted, before reviewing and rescheduling both the WTC as well as ODI Super League, which is the pathway to qualify for the 10-team 2023 men's ODI World Cup.

It could be, in fact, that the ICC wait until October, by when the fate of the T20 World Cup will be clear, before taking a final call on both the WTC and the ODI League, both of which were started by the global body to provide context to bilateral five-day and ODI cricket respectively.

"There was agreement that the disrupted FTP programme would need to be collectively reviewed through to 2023 with a view to rescheduling as much of the cricket that has been postponed due to COVID-19 as possible," the ICC said. "Discussions and decisions on this and the future of both the World Test Championship and the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Super League will be held at a later date when there is a greater understanding of the impact of the cricket that has been lost on the competitions."

The meeting was attended by the chief executives of the 12 Full Member countries and three Associates, as well as Manu Sawhney, the ICC CEO, Allardice and Chris Tetley, the ICC's head of global events.

AGENCIES

Correspondent Adam Fungamwango

VODACOM Premier League club Azam FC's management has extended contract with the outfit's forward, Obrey Chirwa, for a year.

Chirwa has become one of Azam FC reliable players since he joined the outfit from domestic top flight's other club, Yanga.

Azam FC information officer, Thabit Zakaria, noted his club has opted to extend the forward's contract because the squad has been satisfied by the player's performance.



Obrey Chirwa

"The player's contract with our side was about to end at the end of this season's league but

we have extended his contract because he is presently our best striker," Zakaria disclosed.

"The one-year contract extension has come about because of the agreement between the two

parties, he has his demands and we have ours."

"We meet and table our demands, after discussions we set either the duration or kind of contract."

The contract will see Chirwa play for Azam FC up to June next year.

"I request my club's fans to continue attending our side's games in big number. I have performed well this season and I will keep on putting impressive performance next season and make the fans happy," Chirwa disclosed after putting pen to paper.

Chirwa's contract extension is a continuation of Azam FC efforts to see to it the side's reliable performers stay at the club.

The club has also extended several more senior players' contracts so they can feature for the squad next season.

Chirwa has netted eight goals for Azam FC this season and has become the club's reliable player when it comes to finding opposing sides' back of the net.

He did not enjoy a good start at his current club the previous season because he netted three goals.

Azam nevertheless extend the player's contract that had been set to end at the end of this season.

Chirwa was roped in by Azam FC during the 2017/18 mid season transfer window from Yanga, a club he had featured for in the 2016/17 and 2017/18 seasons.

Playing cricket in empty grounds will be 'strange' - Imam

LAHORE

PAKISTAN opener Imam-ul-Haq is sceptical of playing international cricket without fans at venues, terming it "strange". He believed it would see much of cricket's charm lost, particularly if the T20 World Cup, scheduled to begin in October in Australia, was played in empty stadiums. Imam is the first Pakistan player to express cautious opposition to the idea of playing without fans present, after Test captain Azhar Ali was guardedly supportive of it last week.

"I feel cricket without crowds is strange," Imam said during a video press conference. "If the World T20 happens, I'd like to see crowds at the tournament. There is a charm to full houses for the players, and the whole dynamic and atmosphere changes when crowds are present. Ultimately it is a decision for the ICC and the respective boards, and I'm sure they'll take players into consultation before they decide. We've all heard that the World T20 may be postponed, but let's hope for the best and hope the situation improves in the next month or so. We need to take into account player and crowd safety, too."

Imam also supported the idea of improving mental



Imam-ul-Haq

health access to athletes in Pakistan, something brought into sharp relief with curbs on people's movements and orders to stay at home implemented around the world. The reduced opportunities for outdoor exercise and confinement to indoor spaces may not be ideal for mental health, but Imam believed making it a priority at all times would lead to, among other benefits, improved results on the cricket field.

"Mental health is a very important aspect," Imam said. "Even in cricket, if you fail two or three times, there is a lot of mental strain on you. People wonder if you're past it or whether you will ever regain your form."

"We had a coach come over to work on our mental health [Taimur Ali Khan] before the World Cup, and he worked with all of the players. We need to work on this aspect as much as possible. If a player

is mentally strong, they can handle pressure on the field much better, too. The board is working to improve upon this side of things, but I think we could do a lot more."

The coronavirus pandemic, which has shut down cricket, and nearly all sporting activity throughout the world, has meant the Future Tours Programme (FTP) and the cricket schedule for the rest of the year has been thrown into disarray. Sev-

eral tours and series have been called off or postponed, including England's Test series in Sri Lanka, as well as India's ODI series at home against South Africa. There is no clarity on the status of the T20 World Cup either. So far, only one international match, the first ODI between Australia and New Zealand, has been held to a closed stadium, with the three-match series called off after that.

The pandemic-induced lockdown has allowed Imam to take stock of a career that may still be in its very early stages. While the left-hander is among the more prominent names in the Pakistan set-up, his struggles with form have put him out of the Test side. Abid Ali's explosive start to his Test and ODI career has now resulted in increased competition at the top of the order. Imam welcomed the challenge, but admitted the axing from the Test side in Australia hurt him.

"I am a Pakistani cricketer, and every cricketer wants to play in all three formats," he said. "You learn from your experiences, and that's true of me as much as everyone else. My responsibility and focus is to do my best. I played only one Test match in Australia, after which I was dropped because I didn't perform in two innings [scored 2 and

0]. I was obviously upset, as I believed I'd get another chance in Pakistan."

"But you don't always get what you want. I performed in ODI cricket to start off but that doesn't mean I'm going to start off the same way in Test cricket, too. And when things don't go the way you wish, all you need to do is work harder. I'm still part of the Test squad, and while I might not be in the XI, I'm just as happy and proud to serve as 12th man as I am as opener. When I get a chance, I'll try and take it. I haven't played 35-40 Tests; I've only played 11, and all of them out of Pakistan. But I learnt from them and tried to iron out the mistakes I made. I thought about my mindset, and tried to replicate the mindset I have in ODIs in Test cricket."

"I've been playing for two to three years because I can handle pressure. Because if you're a Pakistan cricketer and can't handle pressure, I don't think you can be too successful. As for media pressure, I've had that throughout my career, and sometimes it has annoyed me, at others it has made me laugh. I just try and channel any criticism into motivation for self-improvement, because I think that's the most constructive thing I can do."

AGENCIES

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