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TANZANIA

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17bn/- pyramid scheme cash is now confiscated

By Guardian Reporter

THE Corruption and Economic Crimes Division of the High Court yesterday allowed the state to confiscate 16.7bn/- from a marketing company found guilty of operating a pyramid scheme and money laundering.

Judge Elinaza Luvanda ruled that the government can now take the money that was being held by IMS Marketing (T) Ltd after agreeing with an application by the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), Biswalo Mganga (pictured).

The request submitted to the court by the DPP was supported by two affidavits submitted by State Attorney Esterzia Wilson. Also on the prosecution team was Senior State Attorney Shadrack Kimaro and Christopher Msigwa.

Applicants argued that the money was acquired irregularly through an illegal ponzi scheme.

"Respondents did not object to



He explained that the money was acquired through a pyramid scheme although the company was registered to undertake marketing activities

submissions of the applicants as presented in court. Therefore, the money is hereby confiscated and handed to the state," Judge Luvanda ruled.

He explained that the money was acquired through a pyramid scheme although the company was registered to undertake marketing activities.

Judge Luvanda, however, rejected the second application that the bank which held the deposits-Bank of Africa (BOA)-pay interest for the entire period it kept the money since January 19, 2018.

On declining the interest request, the judge said the amount was not stipulated and BOA was not listed as a respondent in

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Corona alarm as dozens side-step mandatory screening, quarantine



Dr Gabriel Mdachi (2nd-L), a health officer with Tanzania's Namanga customs centre, has a word with Fancy Nkuy (L), a member of the East African Legislative Assembly delegation which visited the Tanzania-Kenya border post on Thursday. Others are the Tanzania Revenue Authority head at the post, Paul Kamkuru (R), and an immigration officer who was not immediately identified by name. Photo: Correspondent Asraji Mvungi

By Guardian Correspondent, Arusha

AUTHORITIES at the Namanga border post in Arusha Region have raised alarm over motorcycle taxi operators who ferry people from the Kenyan side into Tanzania through 'panya routes' to avoid screening for Covid-19 and undergoing mandatory quarantine for 14 days.

Dr Gabriel Mdachi, the officer in charge of health at the Namanga One Stop Border Post (OSBP) said here yesterday that those who procure services of bodaboda to flout rules are foreigners as well as Tanzanians returning home from Kenya.

He said they hire services of motorcycle taxi riders to evade scanners mounted at OSBP and enforcement of mandatory quarantine.

Dr Mdachi said they came to learn of the dangerous practice the hard way after it emerged that people who came through the official border had normal temperatures but when told about the quarantine, opted to go back to Kenya only to be spotted in Tanzania much later.

"We later found out that they hire bodaboda riders who ferry them through the bush into the Tanzanian side, ride them to the main road where they board public transport and continue with their destinations," he said.

After learning of the practice, authorities became more alert and recently caught one Tanzanian and two Rwandans who refused to be quarantined at their own cost and instead chose to go back to Kenya which they were allowed to do.

However, the trio did not go beyond no-man's land into Kenya but disappeared into the bush and called a motorcycle taxi rider who took them inside Namanga where they landed in the



He said they hire services of motorcycle taxi riders to evade scanners mounted at OSBP and enforcement of mandatory quarantine

hands of law enforcers.

"They were arrested while boarding a mini bus heading to Arusha. Their passports have been taken away and they are being quarantined under supervision of the defence and security committee of Longido District," he said.

Dr Mdachi appealed to bodaboda riders in the area to stop ferrying people through illegal routes as the practice jeopardises lives of millions of Tanzanians.

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Healthcare workers to get necessary protective gear

By Guardian Reporter

MOST of available personal protective equipment (PPE) will be directed to healthcare workers to protect them from contracting the novel coronavirus.

Ummu Mwalimu, the minister for Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children said in a statement yesterday that 90 per cent of the consignment donated by Chinese philanthropist Jack Ma has

Third patient recovers



Apart from providing protective equipment, the government will train police and prisons officers on how to protect themselves against coronavirus

been allocated to medical staff in key public health facilities.

"This is to protect healthcare workers who are on the frontline in the ongoing fight against Covid-19," the statement affirmed.

The rest will be given to institutions whose workers come into close contact with the public in discharging their duties such

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MPs: Local remedies a must in Covid-19 battle

By Getrude Mbago, Dodoma

MEMBERS of Parliament have asked the government to consider allowing the use of traditional medicines as part of the public arsenal in fighting the Covid-19 pandemic in the country.

The lawmakers equally argued that it was high time the country prepare a grand strategy which also incorporates the use of organic medicines.

Debating the Prime Minister's Office budget estimation for the year

2020/2021 yesterday in the House, MPs however cautioned that the use of traditional medicines should be supervised and handled with great care so as to avoid negative effects.

Anna Tibaijuka (Muleba South-CCM) urged the government not to ignore the use of traditional medicine in the fight against Covid-19.

Considering that currently there is still no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19, promoting the use of alternative medicine was vital, she stated.



"We have witnessed the use of traditional medicine especially in China playing a critical role in the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of the novel coronavirus pneumonia... It is not hard for us as well to adopt the measure," Prof Tibaijuka (pictured) specified.

Hawa Mwaifunga (Special Seats-Chadema) however urged the government to supervise the use of the traditional medicine by making sure that the potions are well investigated and approved for human use.

"We should take extra care when using these alternative medicines to battle coronavirus. There is a lot of information in social media explaining different mixtures of organic products to treat Covid-19 whereby if not handled, some of them may bring negative impacts to people's health," she said.

Peter Lijualikali (Kilombero, Chadema) expressed concern over delays in the construction of the

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17bn/- pyramid scheme cash is now confiscated

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the application.

"Representatives of BOA were not summoned in this court to hear their account. Therefore, ordering them to pay interest will infringe natural justice, namely the right to be heard," the judge underlined.

The deposits were USD 1,351,597.79 and euros 5,377,306.56 held in two accounts operated by IMS Marketing (T) Ltd with BOA.

Respondents in the case were German national Manon Huebenthal, Briton Frank Rickeltis and IMS Marketing (T) Ltd.

In his application, DPP Mganga said the two foreigners registered the company in January 2014 and were issued with a business licence by Kinondoni municipality in Dar es Salaam to undertake marketing activities. However, the company engaged in collecting money from people in pyramid scheme operations, he said.

Mganga told the court that the company had links with a Singapore-based IMS International Marketing Services which was part of Onecoin Limited—a firm incorporated in April 2014 in Gibraltar and operating in Bulgaria and the United Arab Emirates before being deregistered and accounts frozen for engaging in pyramid schemes and money laundering.

In May last year, the High Court ruled that the government confiscates properties and 14bn/- cash which belonged to the Development for Entrepreneurship Community Initiative (Deci) which was found guilty of operating a ponzi scheme.

The properties included vehicles, houses, plots and cash deposited in three commercial banks in Dar es Salaam.

The ruling was read by Judge Stephen Magoiga who said he reached the decision after being satisfied with arguments by the DPP who argued that the properties and the cash be confiscated on the ground that they were obtained through criminal activity of an unregistered pyramid scheme.

Healthcare workers to get necessary protective gear

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as police and prisons, it further noted.

"Apart from providing protective equipment, the government will train police and prisons officers on how to protect themselves against coronavirus," it said.

Meanwhile, a third patient has recovered from Covid-19, leaving Tanzania with 16 patients from its tally of 20 after one fatality which occurred on Tuesday.

Mwalimu said that the latest patient to beat Covid-19 was the sole case in Kagera Region, saying the male person was being treated at a centre in Ngara District.

"The patient had a history of travelling to the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi before being diagnosed with Covid-19," she explained.

With Kagera now off the Covid-19 alert, this leaves Dar es Salaam, Arusha and Zanzibar with confirmed patients.

The pledge to prioritize healthcare workers with protective gear comes a day after the Medical Association of Tanzania (MAT) called on the government to supply sufficient equipment to guard against infection.

As of yesterday, statistics showed that over 1 million cases were confirmed globally resulting in over 55,000 deaths and over 220,000 recoveries.

As nursing and care homes across Europe battled to stop the spread of Covid-19 among the elderly, France revealed 884 residents had succumbed to the virus since the epidemic began.

Alarming cases emerged in the Spanish capital Madrid, with reports of dozens of deaths in two nursing homes.

Residents were taken to hospital in the Italian city of Naples after a care home outbreak claimed several lives.

Cases were also reported in 100 care homes around the Swedish capital.

The White House was expected to advise Americans living in coronavirus hotspots to wear cloth masks or scarves in public to help stop the spread of the coronavirus.

President Donald Trump said "I don't think it will be mandatory - if people want to wear them, they can."

Residents of New York, the outbreak's epicentre in the US, were urged to cover their faces in public but not to use surgical masks. The US death toll was at around 6,000 by midweek.

Both the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) were reassessing their guidance on face masks, reports indicated.



Home Affairs minister George Simbachawene (2nd-L) has an audience with senior police officers in Mpwapwa District, where he was for an official visit yesterday. Photo: Ministry of Home Affairs

Corona alarm as dozens side-step mandatory screening, quarantine

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He also called on public transport operators plying Namanga-Arusha route as well as passengers on such vehicles not to accept passengers emerging from the bush.

Nevely Mungaya, the Namanga

town executive director acknowledged the challenge, saying that the focus is now to sensitize bodaboda riders in the area so that they understand the threat posed by their greed for a few extra coins.

Motor taxi operators were taking part in other illegal

activities and strategies were being laid down to stop them, he asserted.

"They are believed to be behind the transportation of illegal immigrants from the Horn of Africa into Tanzania as well as narcotics. Now they are helping people enter Tanzania

illegally," he stated.

Samweli Chala, the secretary of the association of minibus drivers in the area said they held a meeting and resolved not to take passengers brought by bodaboda riders from the bushes.

"We agreed that operational

licences will be revoked for a driver caught taking passengers brought by bodaboda from unauthorized spots. The vehicle will be brought back to Namanga, impounded and the driver involved prosecuted," he added.



Sensitisation of members of the public on the havoc that Covid-19 can wreak is, by all indications, working quite well - with these people washing their hands with a sanitiser before entering Mwanza city's Makoroboi market yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Neema Emmanuel

MPs say local remedies vital in combating of COVID-19

FROM PAGE 1

66.9km Kidatu-Ifakara road, saying that puts residents, farmers and traders in a difficult situation that has lasted for years.

The road is the one whose construction kick-off was officiated by President John Magufuli who laid a foundation stone in May 2018.

The Kidatu-Ifakara road is of crucial relevance as it connects Kilombero and Ulunga districts with the Dar es Salaam - Tunduma highway on the border with Zambia, as well as to Malawi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Susan Kivwaga (Mlimba, Chadema) said that ongoing rains have destroyed crops as most farms are full of water, which threatens food security.

"The Prime Minister's Office should come up with an alternative strategy to support farmers who have lost their crops in water. This is very serious," the MP declared.

Innocent Bilakwate (Kyerwa, CCM) asked the government to capacitate the Tanzania Rural Roads Agency (TARURA) to enable it rehabilitate road infrastructures in rural areas so as to facilitate carriage of produce to towns, thus promoting industrialization and economic growth.

"Apart from other factors, the coronavirus outbreak has come due to increased sins committed by humans and this needs all of us to put down our knees and repent before God," the MP intoned.

Budget process faces hurdles due to Covid-19

NAIROBI

The budget-making process at both levels of government is facing major disruptions and realignments amid the coronavirus pandemic.

This has forced the national government back to the drawing board.

The National Treasury is preparing a second supplementary budget and reallocate the resources to the health and water ministries, which are at the forefront in the fight

against Covid-19.

In what is set to further complicate the money supply challenges between the different levels of government, travel restrictions and social distancing requirements announced by the Health ministry have grounded physical public participation processes, which are required before budgets are approved.

Last Sunday, the Council of Governors asked the Controller of Budget and National Treasury to ensure the 47 devolved units

receive the allocations for February and March to prevent a shutdown of their operations at a time when health services, which are mostly devolved, are needed the most.

But the biggest disruption will be at the National Treasury, which is faced with agonising decisions and must now go back to the drawing board to prepare a new budget that appreciates revenue shortfalls expected from the partial lockdown.

Treasury Cabinet Secretary Ukur Yatani had indicated that the government would

spend Sh2.7 trillion in the new financial year that starts in July in a budget that had an ambitious economic growth of 6.2 per cent.

The adjustments must also reflect the funding gap nightmare that Kenya finds itself in as well as where the government will get the resources to support an economic stimulus package expected to be announced in coming days.

Kikuyu MP Kimani Ichung'wa, who is the chairman of the Budget and Appropriations

Committee, said the Covid-19 outbreak forced parliament to go into recess two days ahead of the schedule.

However, he noted that the pandemic is yet to significantly affect parliament's role in the budget process.

Ichung'wa said the Treasury is preparing estimates for the new financial year as well as the second supplementary budget for the current fiscal year, both of which must be realigned to the current economic realities.

AGENCIES

Headway in busting crime: Minister praises Mpwapwa

By Guardian Reporter,

HOME Affairs Minister George Simbachawene has hailed the police force in Mpwapwa district for controlling various crimes including rape, killings, drugs abuse and smuggling of weapons.

Minister Simbachawene made the remarks during his tour in the district where he received a report from the police in the district with a population of 302,202 according to the 2012 national census.

"I thank you Officer Commanding District (OCD) Cosmas Mboya and your team for the job well done, continue doing the great job as government we will continue supporting you in efforts to make

people do their businesses freely," he said.

Reading the report before the minister OCD Mboya mentions decrease in crimes especially theft of motorcycles from 27 in 2018 to only seven in 2019 adding that cybercrime also decreased from 29 to 17 in 2018 among others.

Explaining further on gender crimes, he said the cases have decreased because of the installation gender desk in the district.

"The desk has continued to do a commendable job whereby even men who are being oppressed by the wives have come to report their cases here and now the trend has decreased from 874 in 2018 to 718 last year," he said.



These Dar es Salaam residents have found no option but to walk across the Jangwani Valley stretch of Morogoro Road when heading for the city centre's at Jangwani area yesterday. It was all owing to a shortage of commuter buses induced mainly by the recently issued directive that the buses carry only as many passengers as they have seats for – as a precaution against the spread of Covid-19 infections. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

'Automatic fresh meat cutting machine gains momentum'

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE Tanzania Meat Board (TMB) has said the use of wooden chopping logs for cutting meat has reduced in recent days after sensitisation contrary to the past.

The board carried an impromptu visit to butchers at Majengo Street in Dodoma where it found that only a few meat sellers are still using the

wooden logs. Most of the sellers were using the recommended fresh meat cutting machines.

The board had given butchery operators until September 30, this year as a deadline for using wooden chopping logs for cutting meat.

Speaking when addressing butcher owners after the inspection TMB registrar Iman Sihalwe said the use of wood log for cutting meat was public health hazard and a loss of

meat per every kilogram.

"As you can all see, the wooden logs are dirty and when a consumer gets such kind of trash he or she can be infected by various diseases," he said.

He said the porous surface on wood log can absorb or retain bacteria that can lead to meat contamination.

He added that TMB has taken various measures to ensure that meat-processing areas were being improved in order to meet

the required standards.

Speaking on behalf of the butcher owners in Dodoma Charles said they are in total support of the removal of wooden logs use but suggested that there should be an alternative which can withstand huge amount of meat at a time.

"We are in support of this idea but we request that there should be an alternative measure because we sometimes use them because the machines do

not work when we have huge amount of meat," he said.

According to the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Development Tanzania produces an average of 581,804.2 of meat per year whereby 96 per cent is consumed locally, whereby 95 per cent sold in ordinary markets and 4 per cent in special markets like mines, tourist hotels, supermarkets and 0.7 per cent is exported.

Statistics from the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, Tanzania is the second country in Africa with high in livestock numbers.

The country reduced meat imports almost three times from 1,401.96 tonnes to 516.63, according to TMB Registration Officer, Geoffrey Sosthenes. The situation followed various measures undertaken by the government to increase local meat pro-

duction and consumption.

According to TMB in 2017/2018 the country imported 1404.96 tonnes of meat, but in 2018/2019 it dropped to 516.63 tonnes.

Meat exports for 2018/2019 were 1,759 tonnes worth US \$ 3.9 million.

Tanzania produced 679,992 tonnes of meat in 2017/2018 and in 2018/2019 it produced 690,629 tonnes, an increase of 1.6 percent.

Ministry: 'Embezzlement' of funds at NIC false news

By Getrude Mbago, Dodoma

THE government has refuted claims that there is massive 'embezzlement of public funds' going on in the National Insurance Corporation (NIC).

Responding to question from Ubungo MP Saed Kubenea (Chadema), the ministry of Finance and Planning made it clear that there is no mismanagement of public finances in the corporation emphasising that NIC is implementing its duties as per country's laws, rules and regulations.

According to the ministry the corporation has continued to strengthen systems to improve revenue collections and proper expenditure as well as scaling up its services to reach all Tanzanians with quality services.

In his basic question, Kubenea claimed that there is ongoing unofficial information that NIC has got no strong plan to compete with other companies in the market.

"There is information that embezzlement of funds is on the rise within NIC, is this true? What is the government's plan to support the corporation compete well in the market," the lawmaker queried.

The ministry further responded; "In efforts to strengthen itself commercially, the corporation also collects its income and funds using the Government e-Payment Gateway (GePG) system which commenced in November, 2019 which automatically replaced the previous manual system."

It further stated that the government has also taken several measures to ensure that the corporation operates smoothly and serves the public with excellent services.

"Among the measures is removing the corporation from the list of corporations which were scheduled to be privatized, changed its leadership and capacitated it with best experts. The institution has then produced a number of positive impacts by managing to stand by itself while competing well in the insurance industry," read part of the ministry's response.

The government will also continue taking more initiatives and strategies to strengthen the corporation to enable it expand its services and reach more people in the country.

NIC is state owned entity working to oversee all insurance operations in the country. On its inception in 1963, the Corporation was owned in partnership between the government and the private sector.

After nationalization in 1967 NIC became a full government controlled insurance entity and became the sole insurance operator in Tanzania mainland. The situation continued up to 1990 when the government embarked on an economic structural programme in which it witnessed private insurance companies enter into the market and started operations.



There is information that embezzlement of funds is on the rise within NIC, is this true? What is the government's plan to support the corporation compete well in the market



Muslim faithful wash their hands, as per routine but also as a precaution against Covid-19 infections as recommended by health experts, when heading for prayers at Miyomboni Mosque in Iringa municipality yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Francis Godwin

'WB loan to make secondary education have safer, better learning environments'

By Guardian Reporter

THE government said yesterday that the US \$ 500 million (over 1trn/-) loan from World Bank will be used improve secondary school's learning environment.

The monies have been provided through the secondary education quality improvement project (SEQUIP) and will directly benefit about 6.5 million secondary school students.

Education Minister, Prof Joyce Ndalichako made the statement in Dodoma when commenting on the project insisting to construct school infrastructures, provision of on-job trainings to teachers as well as students on digital learning.

"The government has done a number of initiatives to construct schools, but also the increased number of students joining secondary schools after introduction of the free education policy. These schools needs

to be equipped with all the necessary infrastructures", she noted.

Prof Ndalichako added that through SEQUIP the government will construct dormitories at girls secondary schools and provide girls with life skills as part of measures to prepare them for safe adulthood. She said girls will be counseling on various social issues.

"Most of the girls have been facing difficulties to complete their secondary education due to long walking distances to and from school. Construction of dormitories will keep them at school and boost their academic performance as they will learn comfortably", said the Minister.

She said the government has opened its doors and is ready to receive suggestions and advices from stakeholders on how best to implement the project.

A statement released this week by World Bank stated that its board of executive di-

rectors had approved credit from the International Development Association (IDA), a soft loan window for the poorest countries, saying the money will enable millions of young Tanzanians to access and complete secondary education in safer and better learning environments.

This decision came as a victory for the government considering the long-running campaign by a group of activists which opposed the loan on the grounds that it will not benefit all young girls because of the government policy of barring girls who get pregnant from resuming studies in public schools after giving birth.

In its statement, the lender said SEQUIP uses a disbursement mechanism that is phased and releases funds in tranches only when previously agreed results have been achieved. These include increasing access to schools, improving education quality for all public secondary education options,

and supporting more children to re-enter the formal public system if they drop out.

The bank lauded Tanzania's fee free Basic Education Policy saying it has led to more children entering school: primary enrollment rose from 8.3 million to 10.1 million between 2015 and 2018, while secondary enrollment increased from 1.8 million to 2.2 million.

But despite better access, the secondary education system suffers from low quality and high dropout rates.

Nearly 60,000 students (30 percent) fail to complete their schooling each year, and children are not learning enough, particularly in mathematics and science due to a lack of skilled and motivated teachers, large class sizes, and a poor learning environment. There is also a large gender gap in upper secondary school enrollment, as this learning environment has more effect on girls and their performance in exams.



Preparations under way for the rehabilitation of a road at Tabata-Kisukuru Ephata in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Joseph Mwenda-pole

Five Bukoba rural villages set to get clean water

By Getrude Mbago, Dodoma

THE government is finalising procedures to implement a mega water project which will benefit residents in Maruku, Kanyangereko, Karabagaine and Nyakato wards in Bukoba rural, Kagera region.

Responding to questions from Bukoba Rural MP Jasson Rweikiza yesterday here, the Ministry for Water stated that implementation of the project will be a major relief to the residents in the wards and the district at large as it will be one of mega projects to be implemented in the area.

In his basic question, the lawmaker queried on when the government would capacitate the Bukoba Water Supply and Sanitation Authority (BUWASA) with enough funds to enable it supply water to the wards as it promised some years ago.

According to him, thousands of residents in the villages of Maruku, Kanyangereko, Kabaragaine, Katoma and Nyakato wards are currently facing acute shortage of the precious liquid something which affect their daily activities and incomes.

The ministry responded that, in efforts to ensure that residents in Bukoba are supplied with sufficient safe and clean

water, the government has been implementing several projects which have in turn addressing shortage of water in the district.

"In 2016, the government completed the implementation of a mega water project. After that, we also dishd funds to expand water supply network to reach residents in the wards of Kangondo, Kibeta, Ijuganyundo and some parts of Kahororo, Kashai, Nshambya and Nyaga wards," the ministry stated.

The government is also working to get funds to implement other water projects to ensure that all residents access the service throughout the year.

"The Rural Water and Sanitation Authority (RUWASA) has already completed designing exercise of the project which is aimed to produce water from Kyeiringisa River. This will benefit residents in Nyakato ward," further noted.

Reports show that, only 57 per cent of Tanzania's population had access to an improved source of safe water, and only 34 per cent of the population had access to improved sanitation. Under these circumstances, the poor, particularly women and girls spend a significant amount of time traveling long distances to collect water.

Covid-19: RC orders beefing up of security in refugees camps

By Guardian Correspondent, Kigoma

KIGOMA regional commissioner Brig. Gen. (rtd) Emanuel Maganga has ordered stern legal measures to be taken against refugees who flee refu-

gees' camps during this time of Covid-19 pandemic.

In a meeting convened to discuss the region's preparedness against the pandemic Maganga said since the refugees population in the camps is huge special supervision is needed

in preventing loopholes for refugees with the habit of fleeing the camps so that others are not infected by the disease.

It is estimated that Nyarugusu camp holds 137,000 refugees, Nduta (75,000) and Mtenдели (32,000).

"We must ensure that they remain in the camps and those who will be nabbed fleeing we will suspend their refugees status and prosecute and if necessary even jail them," he said.

Brig. Gen. Maganga directed

the police force to beef up security at the border areas as well making sure freight trucks are not used to transport people.

Kigoma regional immigration officer Assistant Commissioner Remigius Pesambili said

they are continuing with the process to ensure all illegal immigrants from Burundi are returned especially during this time of the Covid-19 pandemic, even though the Burundi government appears not ready to receive them.

He added: "Recently we had difficulties when sending back to Burundi 75 illegal immigrants, until after we told them that if they will not receive them we shall prosecute and jail them."

New equipment will facilitate issuance of IDs, says minister

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

THE government has purchased a new machine which will facilitate quick issuance of national identity cards after the previous one failed to operate and causing long queues at National Identification Authority (NIDA) offices.

The machine to be operated by NIDA is worth 8.5bn/- and has the ability to print 9,000 identity cards per hour and is perceived as the solution to complaints against the country's identification agency.

So far Nida has issued six million identity cards and identified 21 million out of the 27.7 million who were expected to be registered by the agency.

At the same time the agency has also issued 17.8 million National Identification Numbers (NIN) which will be used for identification.

Speaking in Dodoma the Minister for Home Affairs George Simbachawene said the government has bought machines which are to be installed later this month.

He said the fact that the machine can produce 9,000 cards was sign that the exercise was going to end soon.

He said the previous machine together with the new one will facilitate a quick issuance of IDs hence to complete the exercise in less than two years.

"This time the machines will be super because in the past they were not produced by a better machine because it was worn out," he said.

The first machine was only producing 500 now with the new machine is expected to issue more IDs.

The minister used the opportunity to apologise to the public for taking long time on the issuance of IDs promising them that currently will issue more cards.

He added that due to unsatisfied performance, the government was expecting to conduct changes within the agency.

In March, last year, the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) launched a pilot project to register Sim cards using the technology.

The exercise was conducted in Zanzibar and Dodoma, Dar es Salaam, Coast Region, Singida, Tanga and Iringa regions.

According to the regulator, the move was meant to get rid of dishonest Sim card users and registration agents who harbored malicious intentions, including committing crimes.

In September this year, telecoms operators decried low turn up of the phone users attributing it to little knowledge on the essence of the process and slow issuance of IDs by NIDA.



Tanga regional commissioner Martine Shigella (L) speaks yesterday shortly after receiving a donation of personal hygiene supplies from an AMREF Tanzania representative for use in the fight against Covid-19. Photo: Correspondent Dege Masoli

Experts study banana disease in Tanzania

By Correspondent Crispin Gerald

RESEARCHERS are challenges against 'banana wilt disease' that affects the growth of banana, a major source of food and income for millions of small holder farmers.

The disease called 'fusarium wilt', a soil borne fungal is being spread by the fungus called fusarium oxysporum fsp Cubense (Foc). It enters the roots systems of banana plants and blocks the uptake of nutrients and water.

The research is conducted by researchers from the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and the CGIAR research program on roots, tubers and banana (RTB).

The disease causes yellowing of leaves, splitting of the pseudostem,

and eventual death of the banana plant.

It is difficult to control as it cannot be managed by synthetic pesticides/fungicides and therefore continues to spread easily as farmers exchange planting materials (banana suckers), water and movement of people and equipment.

A statement issued by IITA yesterday in Dar es Salaam said all traditional East Africa highland cooking bananas including Mchare in Tanzania and some desert bananas like Sukari Ndizi are susceptible to this disease.

However, it was observed that only some of the plants die after infection.

The researchers sought to understand why this is so by studying the microorganisms bacteria

and fungi, surrounding the roots as well as in the roots and soil. This is known as the soil microbiome.

Systems agronomist for IITA who led the study, Manoj Kaushal said: "This study allowed us to have a better understanding of the root microbiome in banana that can be harnessed to develop new disease management tools in Mchare based on beneficial microorganisms (endophytes and biological control agents) for smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa".

The researchers suspect that the interaction between the soil microbiome and the banana plant may provide some defense against the fungal pathogen. And if this is the case, this may pave the way for the development of

bio-control products to protect banana against the disease using soil microorganisms.

In their research, they were able to establish a link between the levels of microbiome diversity with the plants resistance to the invasion of the pathogen in the roots.

The researchers profiled the root microbiome of banana both with and without symptoms of the disease. Each sample showed substantial differences in the community composition and species abundance.

The beneficial bacteria identified in the root samples included actinomycetales which are known to produce various metabolic compounds that helps to suppress various plant and soil borne pathogens.

Others were pseudomo-

nadales, well-known to be responsible for beneficial plant-microbe interactions, and streptomycetaceae, which are known to produce antagonist compounds against various plant pathogens.

The institute said future research will be focused on the isolation, characterization, and screening of various indigenous microbial strains with the target to develop a product from the microbial strains (single or consortium) that will provide enhanced tolerance against banana Fusarium wilt disease to boost the production of banana in the region.

The IITA banana research program aims to improve soil health and increase the yields of the EAHB more sustainably.

The minister used the opportunity to apologise to the public for taking long time on the issuance of IDs promising them that currently will issue more cards



A fire tender is deployed in spraying a disinfectant in Kinondoni municipality on Thursday evening, as efforts to keep the spread of Covid-19 infections in check in Dar es Salaam Region continued. Photo: Correspondent Christina Mwangala

Songwe Region 'isolates' 84 sadc states' nationals

By Guardian Correspondent, Songwe

FOLLOWING the government's directive to put in quarantine all foreigners entering into the country, authorities in Songwe Region had isolated 84 visitors from Southern African Development Community (SADC) member countries.

The visitors had been quarantined at Tunduma town, according to Songwe Regional Commissioner, Nicodemus Mwangela.

He said on Thursday during a tour to inspect the established Covid-19 isolation centres at border areas in Ileje district and Tunduma.

RC Mwangela said the quarantined visitors include 55 Tanzanians and who arrived from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and foreigners from South Africa, Kenya and Uganda who cross the Tunduma border post between Tanzania and Zambia.

"We want to be sure if they are not infected with the coronavirus disease, all these measures are meant to protect our people from the disease which had so far killed thousand people in the world", said the RC.

He called upon regional leaders at all levels to continue educating people on the covid-19 preventive measures.

He however directed the police force to conduct regular patrols at bus stations to make sure all the foreigners arriving in Songwe are quarantined for 14 days.

Songwe Regional Police Commander, George Kyando said they had banned commuter and passenger buses from carrying people beyond recommended capacity.

He insisted that all passengers should be seated as well as making sure the vehicles are sprayed with disinfectants before and after the journey.

Tunduma municipal council's medical officer, Dr Enock Mwambalasa said all the quarantined passengers are tested for Covid-19 twice a day.

"We are closely following their health status, this includes frequent testing. So far, all of them are progressing well and had not shown any symptoms of the disease", he said. Addressing the nation from State House in Dodoma last month, President John Magufuli said it is mandatory for travellers arriving in the country to go into self-isolation for 14 days at their own cost.

The directive included Tanzanians returning home from countries ravaged by covid-19.



We are closely following their health status, this includes frequent testing. So far, all of them are progressing well and had

Tarura calls for regular inspection of bridges

By Guardian Reporter

CHIEF executive officer for Tanzania Rural and Urban Roads Agency (TARURA) Victor Seif has called upon coordinators countrywide to carry out

regular bridges inspection and work on them before they cause calamities.

The Tarura boss made the remarks when he met the agency's coordinators in Dodoma as part of an induction process on how to

carry out their work. He said frequent inspection if conducted can save time and resources because when it reaches a point that it get destroyed, the cost of maintaining the bridges becomes huge.

He also insisted on the impor-

tance of marking road signs on places that have been destroyed so that users can easily recognise them when passing.

"I am directing you to keep on putting on road signs, I will not listen to anyone who will come with

reasons that are against what I have directed," he said.

In order to ease operations, the agency has been facilitating coordinators including giving them vehicles to TARURA managers so that work under conducive conditions.

He said the government knows challenges facing institutions responsible for the management of building road infrastructures especially Tarura.

He named some of the challenges including shortage of funds for

building roads and experts particularly engineers, adding that there is shortage of equipment to test standards of works in some district councils as well as worn out of vehicles used for the management of works.

UN agency keeps Africa food aid flowing amid coronavirus

HARARE

THE United Nations food agency has negotiated a humanitarian corridor to keep food aid flowing in southern Africa after many countries shut their borders to stop the spread of the coronavirus, an official said on Thursday.

Up to 45 million people in southern Africa face hunger following a devastating drought and two cyclones last year, and there are growing fears the crisis could be compounded by the outbreak of the virus.

Lola Castro, World Food Programme director for southern Africa, said South Africa had agreed to let vessels carrying food aid land on its shores and move it to countries like Zimbabwe, Malawi, Botswana and Namibia, which face food shortages.

Castro told reporters during a video conference that Africa's most advanced economy, which has declared a 21-day lockdown, had agreed to "a sort of humanitarian corridor", a move that would help the agency continue its work.

"At this moment we are actually maintaining our normal food distributions but maybe in the future, depending with the effect of the virus and effect on the food system, especially on the smallholder farmers ... maybe we will see an increase in prices and number of people who require food assistance," she said.

More than \$400 million was required to import food aid for the next three months in southern Africa, which has received patchy rains this year, said Castro.

Africa has registered more than 6,650 cases of coronavirus and over 240 deaths, according to a Reuters tally.

The continent is already suffering a huge economic impact from lockdowns aiming to contain the virus and a sharp fall in global demand for commodities.

Daily lives have been upended in many African countries due to tough lockdowns that have affected swathes of populations that rely on informal trade for a living.

Matshidiso Moeti, World Health Organisation regional director for Africa, said African governments had to balance the need for physical distancing measures with making sure that families had food on the table.

"The potential economic impact is of great concern at the lowest socio-economic levels," Moeti said.

Zimbabwe and the United Nations on Thursday made a joint appeal for \$ 770 million in humanitarian aid to help the country cope with a drought and the coronavirus as well as to fund its education and health sectors.

The government also launched a separate \$2.2 billion aid appeal from foreign and domestic donors.

South African Health Minister Zweli Mkhize said the number of confirmed coronavirus cases had risen to 1,462, an increase of 82 from Wednesday, but that people shouldn't be lulled into a false sense of security by a slower rate of increase in recent days.

"It's still very early days... We need to still get out and go and find more and more of the people who could be positive out in the community," he said.

Zambia reported the country's first death from coronavirus.

Malawi recorded its first three cases. All three people were in medical care and health workers were tracing their contacts.



Vehicles literally forced to 'invade' the Jangwani Valley stretch of Dar es Salaam's Morogoro Road yesterday, with one of the lanes meant for them (L) rendered impassable by muddy soil due to a downpour. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

Plans under way rehabilitate prisons infrastructure - minister

By Getrude Mbago, Dodoma

THE government has expressed plan to rehabilitate prisons infrastructures in the country to among other things address overcrowding challenges and improve service provision to inmates and workers.

According to the Home Affairs ministry, the government has been taking a number of measures every year to address challenges facing prisons in the country.

Responding to question from Mbinga Rural MP Martin Msuha, the ministry stated that the rehabilitation and improvement will

be conducted as per availability of funds.

In his basic question, the legislator sought to know the government's plan to rehabilitate infrastructures at Katai prison.

"Our central plan is to ensure that infrastructures of the old prisons are improved, but also building new prisons especially for new regions and districts...In this Katai prison is on the list," read part of the response.

It was stated that the Katai prison was built specifically to carry and promote farming activities and livestock keeping many years ago

but the facility's infrastructures are now in devastating situation.

"It is true that some of infrastructures at Katai prisons are terrible state especially is fence, and poles surrounding the prison are not stable as they have always being attacked by destructives insects," the ministry noted.

However, we are now working to embark on major rehabilitation of buildings and other infrastructures at Katai prison and other prisons in the country which include building strong fences."

In December, last year President John Magufuli directed state and

security organs to cooperate in speeding up court proceedings in order to reduce the number of remandees in the country's prisons.

Speaking at inauguration of Chato district court and laying the foundation stone of the Fire and Rescue Force building, the president said the Office of the Attorney General, Director of Public Prosecutions, Solicitor General, Criminal Investigations Department, the police, prisons and advocates must work together to ensure timely dispensation of justice.

"The police and the Attorney

General's Office must ensure that those in remand are people who deserve to be in custody. It's a shame to have fewer prisoners than remandees in our prisons," he remarked.

During celebrations to mark the country's 58th independence anniversary, President Magufuli pardoned 5,533 prisoners. Currently, the country's jails house 12,000 prisoners and 17,000 remandees.

He said despite on-going efforts to build more courts countrywide, there was still a looming shortage of staff, an issue which his government is working on.



Shinyanga district commissioner Jasinta Mboneko (L, in headscarf) sensitises Mwananchi Garage director Polycarp Kimario (R) on Thursday on the importance of complying with the law on the payment of land tax. Photo: Correspondent Marco Maduhu

AMREF donates 8.22 million/- to contain covid-19 pandemic

By Correspondent George Sembony, Tanga

AMREF Health Africa through its 'Afya Kamili Project' has donated various items worth 8.22 million/- to boost efforts to protect people against the spreading Covid-19 disease.

The donation was made through the organisation's comprehensive HIV prevention, care, treatment and support programme being implemented in Tanga and Zanzibar.

Speaking on behalf of AMREF Health Africa country director, Afya Kamili project director, Dr Edwin Kilimba said that the organization would donate similar materials to Zanzibar. Dr Kilimba said the donated items include hand sanitizers, 80 plastic buckets with tap, 32 boxes of gloves, 40 white disposable medical coats, 120 liquid hand washing soap and water storage facilities.

The organization, he said, will also support in distribution of posters and fliers from the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elders and Children.

Speaking after receiving the items, Tanga regional commissioner, Martine Shigela commended AMREF for boosting regional efforts to contain Covid-19 but also called on residents to strictly adhere to government

guidelines on the disease to safeguard their health.

He said that Tanga region has set several strategies aimed containing the pandemic including directing health care workers to be careful when attending to suspected Covid-19 patients. He said they have also set special centres that will be used to treat patients who will be confirmed to be infected with the disease.

He said the regional government has also set aside hotels at the border between Tanzania and Kenya where people entering into the country will be quarantined for 14 days. According to Shigela, the donated items will be distributed to various places including markets and government institutions.

"We are going to put hand washing facilities and sanitizers at our markets because a good number of people visit the area everyday", he said.

Tanga Regional Medical Officer, Dr Jonathan Budeme thanked AMREF for the assistance and promised to use the various donated items accordingly. He said with the support, the region's efforts in controlling the spreading of the virus have been enhanced.

WHO concerned as COVID-19 incidence rises in Africa

By Guardian Reporter

WITH more than 6000 covid-19 cases reported in Africa, the World Health Organisation (WHO) is concerned that infections are increasingly spreading not only between African countries but within different localities in the hardest-hit countries.

A statement issued by WHO Regional Office for Africa stated that in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where

covid-19 cases were at first confirmed to Kinshasa, now a handful of cases have been reported in the easternmost regions of the country that were until recently in the grip of an Ebola outbreak.

In South Africa, all provinces have now reported cases. The outbreaks in Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Senegal are also widespread.

Dr Matshidiso Moeti, WHO regional director for Africa said: "Case numbers are in-

creasing exponentially in the African region. It took 16 days from the first confirmed case in the Region to reach 100 cases. It took a further 10 days to reach the first thousand. Three days after this, there were 2000 cases, and two days later we were at 3000."

"For socially restrictive measures to be effective, they must be accompanied by strong, sustained and targeted public health measures that locate, isolate, test and treat covid-19

cases," Dr Moeti pointed out.

Lola Castro, the World Food Programme (WFP) regional director for Southern Africa said: "It's vital that ports continue to operate to receive food and other essential humanitarian cargo; that borders and roads stay open so it can be moved where it is most needed; and that distributions to vulnerable people are conducted safely".

"It's also crucial that the international community

promptly provide the considerable funding needed to maintain and scale up assistance programmes" said Castro,

To contain covid-19, many countries in Africa are implementing measures, which restrict gatherings and the movement of people. Nationwide lockdowns are in effect in Kenya, Uganda, DRC and elsewhere.

WHO said in a statement that governments must use

these measures in a considered, evidence-based manner, and make sure that people can continue to access basic necessities.

As many people in the region live in crowded conditions or work in the informal sector and need to earn money daily to survive, it is important that countries make provisions to ensure that people can still access essential services.

As well as ensuring basic needs are met, WHO is pursu-

ing innovative solutions to the region's pressing public health problems.

On 1 April 2020, WHO hosted an online training session on the clinical management of Covid-19 cases. Nearly 500 attendees from across Africa logged in to learn about issues including case characterization and triage, treating severely ill cases, infection prevention and control, and how to quarantine and manage cases in the community.

Uganda blacklists 15 sanitiser brands after failing lab tests

KAMPALA

THE Uganda National Bureau of Standard (UNBS) has cautioned the public not to buy 15 blacklisted sanitizer brands after they failed to pass laboratory tests.

"They failed on alcohol content (minimum 60 per cent), PH 6-8 and bactericidal efficacy, and are thus not certified by UNBS. The public should report these 15 brands on the market using the UNBS toll free line 0800133133 to enable the enforcement team to put them off the market," UNBS spokesperson Barbara Kamusiime said.

Uganda's cases Covid-19 rose to 45 cases after one new case was confirmed on Thursday. Out of the 302 samples tested, 301 samples tested negative according to ministry of Health.

The blacklisted brands are; Lovillea Gelly Cologne, Blue++ King Hand Sanitizer - Aloe, Blue++ King Hand Sanitizer - Peach, Yoza Hand Sanitizer, Strawberry alcohol-based instant hand sanitizer, Oh So Heavenly Crème Oil, Steinfest Instant Hand Sanitizer, Roxy Hand Sanitizer, and Serene Instant Hand Sanitizer.

Others are; Mimi Hand Sanitizer Gel, LaFresh Instant Hand Sanitizer, Quick Flash Instant hand sanitizer, Afro Royal instant hand sanitizer gel, Focus Instant hand sanitizer, Tuku instant hand sanitizer, and Cal Stat Plus instant hand sanitizer.

On March 26, UNBS also confiscated sanitizers manufactured by UKI Hand Sanitizer for illegal use of its Quality (Q) mark. Meanwhile, UNBS has approved nine more firms to start manufacturing sanitizers increasing the number of certified companies to 11 as of April 1, 2020.

The new approved companies are Dei Natural Products International Limited, Rene Industries Limited, Premier Distilleries Limited, Kenlon Industries Limited, and Hoima Sugar Limited.

Others are Akhtab Investments Limited, Armour Group Limited, Samaka Consults Uganda Limited, and Sanit Hygiene - SMC Limited. Carbide Company Limited and Collard Group Limited that were previously listed as manufacturers of sanitizers have not been listed since their licenses expired on September 27, 2019 and January 29, 2020 respectively.

Since the outbreak of the pandemic in the country last month, UNBS decided to offer free standards of sanitizers and disinfectants to manufacturers to help in the production of safe products.

"Following the provision of technical assistance to manufacturers and free sanitizer and disinfectant standards by UNBS, the number of companies certified to manufacture sanitizers is expected to increase. UNBS will thus issue an updated list on a weekly basis," Kamusiime is quoted as saying.

UNBS has so far received 106 applications from various companies to manufacture hand sanitizers and are at various stages of processing and certification.

Kamusiime said applicants can track progress of their applications online using the UNBS mobile application or website under the samples analysis status.

Until March 31, the UNBS website displayed only two companies certified to produce hand sanitizers. These were; Saraya Manufacturing Uganda Limited and GenoHITECH Uganda Limited.



Residents of Mvumi Mission in Chamwino District join hands yesterday in pushing a truck stuck in muddy soil. Photo: Correspondent Peter Mkwavila

Entrepreneurship programme launched for secondary school students

By Guardian Correspondent, Moshi

A Germany-based organisation-Probono in collaboration with Action for Justice in Society (AJISO) have launched a special programme dubbed; Probono Entrepreneurship Programme (PEP) that aims at equipping secondary school students and teachers with entrepreneurship skills.

Speaking while launching the programme recently in Moshi, executive secretary of the National Economic Empowerment Council of Tanzania (NEEC) Dr Beng'i Issa lauded Probono for funding the project and AJISO for locally coordinating it to ensure it reaches the targeted audience.

She was addressing participants

of a two day training workshop who include teachers who are expected to train the targeted students.

According to Dr Beng'i, the project has targeted the right group as the students will grasp entrepreneurship skills at an early stage and cater for some of their needs while still in school.

"It is important to start making these youths believe that they can employ themselves and make it in life rather than studying so they can be employed," she said and stressed that many youths get up when they do not get employment when they could actually employ themselves right from secondary school and develop further as

they grow.

She said the government will continue supporting such initiatives by NGOs to promote entrepreneurship among the youth.

The Probono country director, Eliet Senkoro said they will use the program to keep track of students who will undergo the training to find out what they become afterward.

"We want to know what their goals are so we can guide them and also keep track of their development even after school," he said adding that PEP objectives include improving professional perspectives and chances of the Tanzanian youth, focused on implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), chang-

ing the mind-set: Sustainable self-employment should become a real career option for the Tanzanian youth and enhancing key-competences and soft skills (as self-initiative, confidence, sense of responsibility and teamwork) of students which are essential for their professional career.

The AJISO executive director Virginia Silayo thanked Probono for its support and said the students will learn valuable business skills which will provide them with a real-life experience and also generate an extra income for their schools, gain self-confidence and believe in themselves to venture in their own business and to develop the appropriate attitude "yes, I can

do it!"

"This is a three year training program for teachers and students at 12 Probono partner schools together with PEP co-operation partners who include the National Economic Empowerment Council of Tanzania (NEEC), Teach a man to fish (TAMTF) an NGO from Uganda, Action for Justice in Society (AJISO)," she said.

The launch was attended by several other stakeholders other stakeholders and partners including regional economic empowerment coordinators from Arusha and Dar es Salaam, regional education officers and district economic empowerment officers from 12 districts.

Covid-19 causes havoc on Ilula tomato traders

By Guardian Correspondent, Iringa

COVID-19 pandemic has continued to adversely affect various businesses in the country including the tomato trade in Ilula town, Kilolo district in Iringa region.

Speaking yesterday during the visit by the Kilolo district chairman of Chama cha Mapindizi Parents Organization Yohannes Sarufu at the TASAF tomato market, Ilula tomato traders said the prices for the commodity has gone down because traders from Kenya and other neighbouring countries stopped coming due to the pandemic, hence they sell the produce at a loss.

The traders Felix Msola and Chedy Kilongamwa said the tomato market is currently shaking – the price

of one basket of tomato used to sell at between 75,000/- and 80,000/- but now the price is between 25,000/- and 30,000/-.

They said as of now buyers only come from Dodoma and Dar es Salaam and within the Iringa region.

Kilongamwa said they were incurring huge losses as they invested a lot of money in tomato farming, and added that they pray for the pandemic to end so that they get buyers from outside the country.

However despite the challenge, they are planning to increase production as they believe when the disease ends tomato demand will go up.

Chairman Sarufu advised the tomato farmers to use their association to sell their produce at prices they themselves set.



Aldo Kaduma (L), secretary of Iringa municipal central market traders group, presents a member of the group, Batsta Ngede, with a bucket for use in the washing of hands. It was donated by a café in the municipality to help in the war on Covid-19. Photo: Correspondent Francis Godwin

RMO: 'Covid-19 deaths in Arusha' fake news

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame,

Arusha

HEALTH authorities here have refuted rumours on social media that Covid-19-related death had occurred in the region.

The online reports insinuat-

ed that there was an unnamed person, who had just arrived in the city from Dar-es-Salaam and somehow fell sick upon getting here and was rushed to Arusha International Conference centre (AICC) hospital in Kijenge.

It was again speculated by the digital rumor mongers that,

the unnamed person died at the AICC hospital and that the issue was being concealed under the carpet.

Arusha regional medical officer, Dr Wedson Sichelwe, assured the city residents that there has been no Covid-19-related death here and that the reports should be ignored; "But

we insist that all precautions should be taken to avoid contracting the disease," he said.

According to the previous rumors, the alleged dead victim used to be working with a certain 'Chinese' firm in Dar-es-salaam where he could have possibly contacted the deadly corona virus disease 2019 and took the

infections with him to Arusha.

Until going to press, there were only 20 Corona cases officially reported in Tanzania, with one recovery noted and so far the country has recorded just a single death, in Dar-es-salaam.

There are now more than 5,856 confirmed cases of coronavirus across the continent,

with around 250 deaths while on the other hand a number of African countries imposing a range of prevention and containment measures against the spread of the pandemic.

According to the latest data by the Africa Centre for Disease Control on Covid-19 in Africa, the breakdown remains fluid

as countries confirm cases. The whole of Africa has rising cases with a handful of countries holding out.

Worldwide there were confirmed 951,901 cases by Thursday afternoon, among them 48,284 deaths and if it is of any consolation, over 200,000 people recovered.

Mbeya wheat farmers want indicative prices for the crop

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

WHEAT farmers in Mbeya region have called upon the government to come up with indicative prices for the commercial crop for them to benefit from their sweat.

They raised concerns that middlemen have been offering them lower prices, despite that production costs are relatively higher.

They were speaking during a sensitisation meeting which brought together farmers and stakeholders including researchers from the Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute (TARI) Uyole Centre. The event took place at Usha village in Uyole district.

The farmers claimed that buyers have been forcing them to sell a bucket of wheat for between 8,000/- and 15,000/-.

A farmer, Michael Mbugu said the government should come up with strategies to protect wheat farmers which include setting of indicative prices per sack or bucket or raw wheat. He said farmers spend a lot of money in production of wheat, but they rarely record benefits from their auctions.

"We call on the government to intervene and save us from incurring losses every year, we want better prices for the crop since the market is available locally and internationally", said Mbugu.

Mbeya district commissioner, William Ntinika said farmers also face other challenges including lack of extension officers as the available officials avoid visiting farmers in remoteness areas.

He said the region has a huge of arable land suitable for cultivation of various crops including wheat, but most farmers fail to utilize the opportunity due to lack of modern farming methods and knowledge on how to reduce production costs.

"Extension officers must visit farmers in remoteness areas and advise them on how they can reduce production cost by applying modern farming methods", Ntinika noted.

Responding on the issue of lower wheat prices, the District Commissioner urged farmers to make sure they produce quality wheat that can compete in internal and international markets.

"Quality products can attract buyers from anywhere in the world", he added.

Wheat Researcher from TARI, Dr Rose Mongi said they have produced enough quality seeds which will be distributed to framers in the region.

Dr Mongi said the seeds will benefit 400 wheat farmers who will also be educated on better ways of cultivating the crop to ensure better yields.

According to her, farmers were cultivating the crop without consulting experts hence the poor harvests and quality. She said following professional wheat cultivation guidelines would enable farmers to produce quality wheat that can be sold outside the country.

"We want farmers to benefit from their agricultural activities and improve their wellbeing. The support we extend to farmers including provision of seeds and trainings are also financed by the World Bank", she said.



Simai Mohamed Said (R), Zanzibar's Education and Vocational Training Deputy Minister, makes remarks yesterday shortly after handing over a donation of construction materials for the Kibebe School library at Tunguu in South Unguja Region. Photo: Correspondent Martin Kabemba

Malawi confirms three coronavirus cases, 50th African country hit

LILONGWE

MALAWI President Peter Mutharika has confirmed that the country had recorded three cases of COVID-19. They are the first recorded cases in the southern African country.

Local news outlets report that the President made the announcement in a Special Address to the Nation. The address car-

ried by the state-owned MBCTV lasted one minute and 23 seconds.

The president disclosed that all three cases were confirmed in Lilongwe. Mutharika said one of the patients is a 63-year-old who had recently travelled to India. The other two are her relation and her domestic worker.

A week ago, Mutharika declared a state of national disaster over the pandemic which

continues to spread across the continent.

With Malawi officially becoming the 50th African country to be infected, there are four countries uninfected - Lesotho, Comoros, South Sudan and Sao Tome and Principe.

At least one million people around the world have been infected since the outbreak began, according to figures collected by researchers from Johns Hopkins Univer-

sity.

The number of confirmed deaths has passed 50,000, according to the same researchers.

Italy remains the country worst affected by the outbreak, with 13,915 deaths, followed by Spain, with 10,003 deaths. The US is now the third worst affected country, with 5,316 total deaths.

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**Taking A New Look
At The News
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We must boost palm oil production to reduce edible oil import dependency

TANZANIA, like other African nations along the equator in East and West Africa, is investing to boost the cultivation of oil palm and production of palm oil.

Currently, oil palm production in Tanzania is carried out primarily by small-holder farmers in Kigoma region, Kigoma rural district in particular, as well as in Mbeya region mostly Kyela district and some parts of Tanga region.

Tanzania has set aside 4.3 million US dollars to boost cultivation of oil palm as part of its strategy to end importation of edible oils.

Kigoma region accounts for over 80 per cent of palm oil produced in the country and given its soils and weather, it has the potential to make Tanzania one of the world's top palm oil producers and exporters.

Tanzania imports 55.5 per cent of its total edible oil despite having a vast and promising production potential in palm oil and sunflower sub-sectors.

Despite the huge potential, the country relies on imported raw materials for producing edible oils and soaps.

Tanzania has similar weather conditions as Malaysia from where it imports most of its palm oil. Malaysia is the world's second largest producer of palm oil while Tanzania is not even on the list of palm oil producing countries. The private sector has been in the forefront to increase the production of the crop since 2017.

Palm oil is used in most oil-based products which consumers purchase and use on a daily basis. Palm Oil and its derivatives are used in the manufacture of pre-packaged foods, cosmetics, cleaning products, hair care, soaps and personal care items.

Preliminary research verifies that the palm oil and kernel oil markets in the Kigoma region are highly constrained, lack transparency for actors, lack formal or informal groups to access expanded market function, and lack any standardisation or quality assurance.

The oil palm value chain is underde-

veloped and faces several confounding constraints that can be categorised as low productivity from local trees, lack of investment in the industry, and weak market function. These are essential areas where Tanzania should focus efforts to improve market function and foster value chain development. The palm oil market benefits from three fundamental features present in Kigoma: conducive climate, fertile land, and political support for the promotion of palm oil. With limited remaining unused land in countries which have historically dominated the international oil palm market, Kigoma is a prime region to service its own country's demand for palm oil as well as the East Africa region.

We should encourage and provide incentives to local or foreign investors to provide their rural oil palm-growing communities with basic amenities such as housing, health facilities, schools and recreational centers in all oil palm regions.

A dynamic, innovative and self-sufficient industry that complements Tanzania palm oil industry and provides benefits to various stakeholders, and have enough vegetable oils for the country, and for export is crucial. We should also to develop the oil palm industry through gainful production, processing and marketing of oil palm products and by-products to ensure food security, increased income and rural employment through good agricultural and manufacturing practices and sustainable oil palm development.

Our objectives should to meet the country's palm oil domestic requirements, develop the countryside and provide employment to rural communities.

In other words specific objectives should be to increase yield, productivity through cost efficient technologies. To use under-productive and idle areas with a sustainable environment programmes so that by 2023, a total of about 353,000 hectares shall have been planted to oil palm and increase milling capacity.

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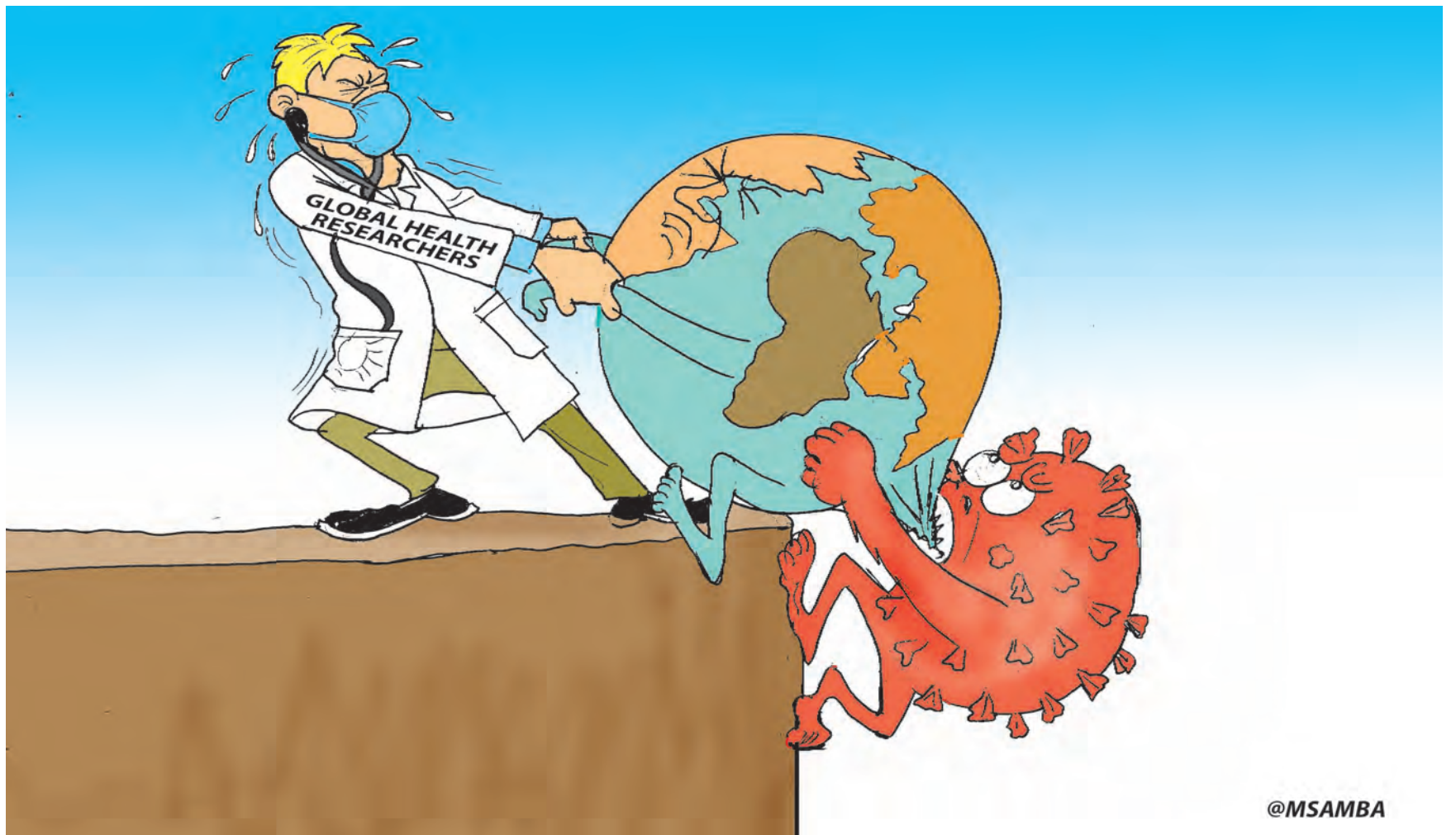
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We need journalists to be our window on a wider world, especially during lockdown

By Jonathan Rozen

AS we temporarily give up certain freedoms to tackle the coronavirus pandemic, we cannot give up press freedom.

Azarrah Karrim kept her camera rolling as the officer raised his gun; he paused as she screamed "I'm media!" then shot at her. Reporting in Johannesburg, she had pressed record as police fired at people to disperse them on the first day of South Africa's coronavirus lockdown. The rubber bullet narrowly missed her.

Around the world governments are seeking to prevent the coronavirus spreading by expanding their authority to control and monitor people, limiting freedom of movement and assembly. Such measures might be necessary for the general public, but journalists play an essential role in documenting application of these new powers – and helping us think through this extraordinary moment.

On the day that police shot at Karrim, photographer Tracey Adam held her phone steady, documenting a Cape Town officer's approach and his demands for her to stop filming. His chest quickly fills the frame, obscuring the group of officers and a form on the ground behind, but the audio is clear. "I have the right to take video," Adam protests. "No,

no, no, no," the officer retorts. His hand reaches out and the scene is smothered in a fleshy hue.

Karrim and Adam's footage offers a window into enforcement of South Africa's Covid-19 response and the challenges journalists have faced in reporting amid new government restrictions.

Broadcast reporter Azad Shakur had his belongings seized at a checkpoint for allegedly violating Iraq's curfew; Kenyan cameraperson Peter Wainaina was assaulted by an



officer clearing the streets, and in India police assaulted at least four reporters covering the nationwide lockdown.

Press freedom should be defended at all times, but at this time its importance should be more apparent. A glance at history reminds us how governments use crises to seize powers that would otherwise not easily be granted, how reluctantly those powers are relinquished and how selective framing and curated public memory can be leveraged for political gain.

Even as we temporarily give up certain freedoms, we cannot give up press freedom. The attacks on Karrim and Adam, like those on media in other countries over the past month, are attacks on the public's right to make informed decisions about the pandemic today, what it means, and what comes next

Covid-19 : Encouraging show from people of means

By Special Correspondent

CHINESE billionaire, Jack Ma, leads the battalion of the world's moneybags who have risen with their resources to help defeat the raging Coronavirus pandemic.

He is pushing millions of units of test kits, face masks, protective clothing and medical equipment to countries in Africa, Asia and hard-hit USA, the pandemic's new epicentre. Also, America's billionaires: Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg and others are funding efforts to find a cure.

In other words, these wealthy people have not left the war against COVID-19 to politicians alone. Nothing important should ever be left to politicians alone.

Here in Nigeria, the situation is the same. We are delighted at the way our own wealthy class has responded. While we begged and waited for President Muhammadu Buhari to address and mobilise the nation for the fight against this invisible enemy, the Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN, Governor, Godwin Emefiele, once again took the initiative to rally the private sector through the Nigerian Private Sector Coalition Against COVID-19.



The Coalition is a Bankers' Committee body which is partnering the Dangote Foundation and Access Bank in an effort to raise at least N120 billion to fight Nigeria's "most lethal adversary", as Emefiele put it.

The fundraising attracted at least one billion naira from Aliko Dangote, Innocent Chukwuma (Innson), Femi Otedola, Herbert Wigwe, Folorunso Alakija, Ifeanyi Uba, Abdul Samad Rabiu, Jim Ovia, Tony Elumelu, Mike Adenuga and many more, including former VP Atiku Abubakar who gave N50million. Some have offered to build or assist in equipping treatment centres.

We commend the brains behind this patriotic coalition for taking up the gauntlet to help the government in responding to this pandemic.

We will not join sceptics in questioning the purity of intentions behind these humongous donations, the highest ever in our history. Human lives are at stake. The well-being of Nigerians is all that matters. The important thing is for these pledges to be faithfully redeemed by all pledgers with zero tolerance for defaults. Those who fail to pay up must pay a telling price for taking Nigerians for a ride.

We note that some Nigerians are worried about putting this huge fund in the hands of government officials. The Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Boss Mustapha, is the Chairman of the Steering Committee to execute the project. Mustapha is also the Head of the Federal Government's COVID-19 task force.

We are, however, optimistic that the three other committees handling the fundraising (Bankers' Committee members), operations (including some of the big donors) and technical matters (which includes reputed local and international professional stakeholders) will exert adequate checks to minimise corruption.

We hope the fund will remember the poor and struggling Nigerians and put something aside for their welfare during and after self-isolation.

Global coordinated governance, health services, quality data vital in war on coronavirus disease

THE spread of COVID-19 is accelerating across the world. In Africa, most countries have now confirmed cases and the number of fatalities is rising. If allowed to spread unmanaged, the impact on African citizens and economies will be substantial. Cases in Africa remain low compared to other regions.

According to the data available, this can be attributed to both the average age of African citizens, which is the lowest globally, and factors relating to the continent's climate - although this has been recently challenged by some experts. However, Africa may yet be worst hit by this invisible disease.

Africa's already fragile health systems, coupled with a high burden of respiratory and diabetic diseases and densely packed urban agglomerations, are likely to increase the vulnerability of the continent and the lethality of the virus.

According to Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus of the World Health Organisation (WHO), Africa should "wake up" to the Covid-19 threat and prepare for a worst-case scenario.

The speed with which countries can detect, report and respond to outbreaks can be a reflection of their wider institutional capacity. Epidemics are a reality test for public governance and leadership, not only at country level, but also at regional and continental levels, as well as in connection with the wider network of multilateral actors and partners.

Home to over a billion people, public health systems across the

continent will quickly be overwhelmed if the virus takes hold.

The Covid-19 pandemic is a wake-up call for improving Africa's still weak health structures and related institutional capacity, such as education, infrastructure or national security. It also highlights the urgent need to strengthen data and statistical capacity, notably in relation to health and civil registration.

The Mo Ibrahim Foundation analyses Africa's readiness and capacity to manage the Covid-19 pandemic.

It draws on a wealth of data, statistics and information from the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) and other sources to examine the current COVID-19 context and its immediate challenges.

In providing this analysis, the Foundation aims to present a clear and accurate picture, highlighting where efforts can be concentrated in the management and mitigation of this health crisis on the continent.

It focuses on the current health landscape and related challenges, while considering the road ahead. Covid-19's global outreach will have a huge economic and wider impact on the entire African continent.

Occurring later, it will isolate Africa from recovering other regions.

On the continent, the pandemic will widen inequalities within and between countries, worsen already existing fragilities, restrict employment and investment prospects, and potentially fuel additional domestic unrest and conflicts.

This requires immediate attention, and calls for adequate, coordinated responses.

I, like all who are currently able to, have been working from home from the past 2 weeks.

It's been an interesting experience for me, because I work as a consultant on the side, so currently a big part of my day involves meeting people online, on zoom, Microsoft teams, and whatsapp group chat videos sometimes.

Now that I'm working from home, I'm finding myself a bit unanchored. I'm not really sure what I'm supposed to be doing - I'm trying to follow my days schedule and work calendar but I also just find myself staring off into the distance, lazily and sometimes in deep thought and distracted.

But, as the days have passed, I've also started to gain more traction. I've forced myself into a routine in hopes that I'll be able to maintain productivity, and my efforts haven't been entirely fruitless. In fact, I'd say that I've learned a lot about my job and about myself through-out this experiences.

Okay, let's be honest. We're learning that most of our meetings could have been emails literally! And working from home is no walk in the park and it requires lots of discipline and zeal.

We joke about it. We make memes about it. We grumble about it when we're sitting in long meetings. We think: this whole thing could have been an email. And inevitably, someone always responds, "No, we need to meet in person."

Thus, the meetings remain on our calendars, always.

But now, we're learning - we were mostly right. I admit, some meetings really were more efficient in person.

That meeting could have been an email, really?

It's challenging to advise my clients over the phone. I can much more easily determine when they're lying to me when I have the opportunity to stare at them.

But staff meetings, quick check-ins, the meeting about the meeting - all of those would have been fine as emails. In our office at least, the quick Skype check-ins have been far more concise and useful than sitting around a table in person.

Most of my job is made up of fielding distractions.

I'm busy all day long. From the minute I walk into my office, from the minute I walk out of it at the end of the day - I'm busy. Now that I'm working from home, I'm learning that a good chunk of my job consists solely of dealing with other people's issues.

I logged into my computer this morning around 8:00 AM.

By 1:30 PM, I found that I could go take a nap if I wanted to. I'd finished all of my pressing work. Talk of eating the uglier frog first that I had reluctantly done early this morning.

What do I do each day from 1:30-6:00? I asked myself.

Well, I do other people's jobs. I help colleagues with their projects. I chat with my co-workers. I field unplanned client visits.

My job title should be Distraction Specialist, because that's apparently what I'm paid for.

We're not truly ready for a remote world, are we? .

Many of us thought we had the technology. We thought,



Oh, everything is online now anyway. We can work from home, let's work from home. The world is online. It's fine.

We all thought we had plans in place for a crisis. We all thought that we had a contingency action we could fall on.

And, we did... kind of.

We packed up our laptops and skipped home, logged into our computers, did group video chats, created group emails to work on and Microsoft teams etc.

But, cellular networks crash sometimes, raising questions about our country's infrastructure and our bandwidth capabilities.

We do have technology. Even-

College Comfort Zone

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rything is online. But we're not always online at the same time. It's a true test - and we're finding ourselves on shaky ground.

Basically, we've learned a fairly valuable lesson during these trying

times more than ever before.

We weren't truly ready for this, in any stretch. The stores are almost empty, everyone is in panic mode, companies are sending out updated COVID-19 policies every three

hours, and everyone is confused.

But, we also have an opportunity to band together and learn about the stretch of our fortitude.

We can take this experience and bring it forward. We can look at how we handled this outbreak, expand upon our best practices, and throw away our worst. We can take a hard look at our infrastructure, our company policies, our personal practices, and our societal behaviors.

And on a smaller scale - when we're all back in the office, on track and in our normal day to day lives, we can point to this quarantine and social distancing practice and fight for remote meetings. Because they always could have been emails, and we have proof of this now.

How South Korea flattened the curve

By Max Fisher and Choe Sang-Hun

NO matter how you look at the numbers, one country stands out from the rest: South Korea.

In late February and early March, the number of new coronavirus infections in the country exploded from a few dozen, to a few hundred, to several thousand.

At the peak, medical workers identified 909 new cases in a single day, Feb. 29, and the country of 50 million people appeared on the verge of being overwhelmed. But less than a week later, the number of new cases halved. Within four days, it halved again - and again the next day.

On Sunday, South Korea reported only 64 new cases, the fewest in nearly a month, even as infections in other countries continue to soar by the thousands daily, devastating health care systems and economies.

Italy records several hundred deaths daily; South Korea has not had more than eight in a day.

South Korea is one of only two countries with large outbreaks, alongside China, to flatten the curve of new infections. And it has done so without China's draconian restrictions on speech and movement, or economically damaging lockdowns like those in Europe and the United States.

As global deaths from the virus surge past 15,000, officials and experts worldwide are scrutinizing South Korea for lessons. And those lessons, while hardly easy, appear relatively straightforward and affordable: swift action, widespread testing and contact tracing, and critical support from citizens.

Yet other hard-hit nations did not follow South Korea's lead. Some have begun to show interest in emulating its methods - but only after the epidemic had accelerated to the point that they may not be able to control it any time soon.

President Emmanuel Macron of France and Prime Minister Stefan Löfven of Sweden have both called South Korea's president, Moon Jae-in, to request details on the country's measures, according to Mr. Moon's office.

The head of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, has hailed South Korea as

demonstrating that containing the virus, while difficult, "can be done." He urged countries to "apply the lessons learned in Korea and elsewhere."

South Korean officials caution that their successes are tentative. A risk of resurgence remains, particularly as epidemics continue raging beyond the country's borders.

Still, Scott Gottlieb, a former commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, has repeatedly raised South Korea as a model, writing on Twitter, "South Korea is showing Covid-19 can be beat with smart, aggressive public health."

Lesson 1: Intervene fast, before it's a crisis

Just one week after the country's first case was diagnosed in late January, government officials met with representatives from several medical companies. They urged the companies to begin immediately developing coronavirus test kits for mass production, promising emergency approval.

Within two weeks, though South Korea's confirmed cases remained in the double digits, thousands of test kits were shipping daily. The country now produces 100,000 kits per day, and officials say they are in talks with 17 foreign governments about exporting them.

Officials also swiftly imposed emergency measures in Daegu, a city of 2.5 million where contagion spread fast through a local church.

"South Korea could deal with this without limiting the movement of people because we knew the main source of infection, the church congregation, pretty early on," said Ki Moran, an epidemiologist advising the government's coronavirus response. "If we learned about it later than we did, things could have been far worse."

South Koreans, unlike Europeans and Americans, were also primed to treat the coronavirus as a national emergency, after a 2015 outbreak of Middle East respiratory syndrome in the country killed 38.

The coronavirus is thought to have a five-day incubation period, often followed by a period of mild symptoms that could be mistaken for a cold, when the virus is highly communicable.

This pattern creates a lag of a week or two before an outbreak becomes



Caption: South Koreans in line to buy face masks in Daegu, where the virus spread quickly through a local church. Credit: Jung Yeon-Je/Agence France-Press

apparent. What looks like a handful of cases can be hundreds; what looks like hundreds can be thousands.

"Such characteristics of the virus render the traditional response, which emphasizes lockdown and isolation, ineffective," said Kim Gang-lip, South Korea's vice health minister. "Once it arrives, the old way is not effective in stopping the disease from spreading."

Workers sprayed disinfectant in a hallway at the government complex in the city of Sejong, in January.

Lesson 2: Test early, often and safely

South Korea has tested far more people for the coronavirus than any other country, enabling it to isolate and treat many people soon after they are infected.

The country has conducted over 300,000 tests, for a per-capita rate more than 40 times that of the United States.

"Testing is central because that leads to early detection, it minimizes further spread and it quickly treats those found with the virus," Kang Kyung-wha, South Korea's foreign minister, told the BBC, calling the tests "the key behind our very low fatality rate as well."

Though South Korea is sometimes portrayed as having averted an epidemic, thousands of people were infected and the government was initially accused of complacency. Its approach to testing was designed to turn back an outbreak already underway.

To spare hospitals and clinics from being overwhelmed, officials opened

600 testing centers designed to screen as many people as possible, as quickly as possible - and keep health workers safe by minimizing contact.

At 50 drive-through stations, patients are tested without leaving their cars. They are given a questionnaire, a remote temperature scan and a throat swab. The process takes about 10 minutes. Test results are usually back within hours.

At some walk-in centers, patients enter a chamber resembling a transparent phone booth. Health workers administer throat swabs using thick rubber gloves built into the chamber's walls.

Relentless public messaging urges South Koreans to seek testing if they or someone they know develop symptoms. Visitors from abroad are required to download a smartphone app that guides them through self-checks for symptoms.

Offices, hotels and other large buildings often use thermal image cameras to identify people with fevers. Many restaurants check customers' temperatures before accepting them.

Lesson 3: Contact tracing, isolation and surveillance

When someone tests positive, health workers retrace the patient's recent movements to find, test - and, if necessary, isolate - anyone the person may have had contact with, a process known as contact tracing.

This allows health workers to identify networks of possible transmission early, carving the virus out of society like a surgeon removing a cancer.

South Korea developed tools and practices for aggressive contact tracing during the MERS outbreak. Health officials would retrace patients' movements using security camera footage, credit card records, even GPS data from their cars and cellphones.

"We did our epidemiological investigations like police detectives," Dr. Ki said. "Later, we had laws revised to prioritize social security over individual privacy at times of infectious disease crises."

As the coronavirus outbreak grew too big to track patients so intensively, officials relied more on mass messaging.

South Koreans' cellphones vibrate with emergency alerts whenever new cases are discovered in their districts. Websites and smartphone apps detail hour-by-hour, sometimes minute-by-minute, timelines of infected people's travel - which buses they took, when and where they got on and off, even whether they were wearing masks.

People who believe they may have crossed paths with a patient are urged to report to testing centers.

South Koreans have broadly accepted the loss of privacy as a necessary trade-off.

People ordered into self-quarantine must download another app, which alerts officials if a patient ventures out of isolation. Fines for violations can reach \$2,500.

By identifying and treating infections early, and segregating mild cases to special centers, South Korea has kept hospitals clear for the most serious patients. Its case fatality rate is just over one percent, among the lowest in the world.

Lesson 4: Enlist the public's help

There aren't enough health workers or body-temperature scanners to track everybody, so everyday people must pitch in.

Leaders concluded that subduing the outbreak required keeping citizens fully informed and asking for their cooperation, said Mr. Kim, the vice health minister.

Television broadcasts, subway station announcements and smartphone alerts provide endless reminders to wear face masks, pointers on social distancing and the day's transmission data.

The messaging instills a near-war-time sense of common purpose. Polls show majority approval for the government's efforts, with confidence high, panic low and scant hoarding.

"This public trust has resulted in a very high level of civic awareness and voluntary cooperation that strengthens our collective effort," Lee Tae-ho, the vice minister of foreign affairs, told reporters earlier this month.

Officials also credit the country's nationalized health care system, which guarantees most care, and special rules covering coronavirus-related costs, as giving even people with no symptoms greater incentive to get tested.

Is the Korean model transferable? For all the attention to South Korea's successes, its methods and containment tools are not prohibitively complex or expensive.

Some of the technology the country has used is as simple as specialized rubber gloves and cotton swabs. Of the seven countries with worse outbreaks than South Korea's, five are richer.

Experts cite three major hurdles to following South Korea's lead, none related to cost or technology.

One is political will. Many governments have hesitated to impose onerous measures in the absence of a crisis-level outbreak.

Another is public will. Social trust is higher in South Korea than in many other countries, particularly Western democracies beset by polarization and populist backlash.

But time poses the greatest challenge. It may be "too late," Dr. Ki said, for countries deep into epidemics to control outbreaks as quickly or efficiently as South Korea has.

China turned back the catastrophic first outbreak in Hubei, a province larger than most European countries, though at the cost of shutting down its economy.

South Korea's methods could help the United States, though "we probably lost the chance to have an outcome like South Korea," Mr. Gottlieb, the former F.D.A. commissioner, wrote on Twitter. "We must do everything to avert the tragic suffering being borne by Italy."

Max Fisher reported from New York, and Choe Sang-Hun from Seoul, South Korea.
Max Fisher is a London-based international reporter and columnist. He has reported from five continents on conflict, diplomacy, social change and other topics. He co-authors The Interpreter, a column exploring the ideas and context behind major world events

Choe Sang-Hun is the Seoul bureau chief for The New York Times, focusing on news on North and South Korea.

COVID-19 and assault against freedom

By Emmanuel Umohinyang

THAT all living things by nature love to enjoy their freedom to the fullest is an established fact. Though freedom is not absolute, even in the best democracies, those who are privileged to exercise such guard their liberty jealously.

Therefore, when there is a threat to such rights, even animals frown most times because they often feel like fish out of water, if such liberties are denied.

In most democracies, the people often resort to the judicial system if and when their rights are infringed on to get the much needed reprieve.

However, Coronavirus disease has since changed the story, with its attendant consequences across the globe.

From Asia, to South America, Oceania, Africa, America and the world over the fear of Covid 19 is now the order of the day and the fear it's bring to the minds of human beings is better imagine than seeing.

This is not unconnected with the fact that it has affected everywhere and everything, even as casualties keep growing across the world.

Worse still, there is no known cure for the pandemic which was said to have originated from China and has no known cure till date, even as scientists and the World Health Organisation, WHO, are battling to find a cure.

It is assault on human race is unimaginable; dealing a heavy blow on all critical sectors, businesses, tourist sites, aviation, agriculture, infrastructure, sports, religion, and the list is endless.

That Covid 19 has dealt the greatest blow on all frontiers of freedom in the 21st century cannot be overemphasized as governments, institutions and people have had to infringe on human rights to outwit, to confront the disease.

All those who would have loved to exercise their freedom to move around are today in the lurch, for something beyond their control in the name and style of coronavirus.

Even if they decide to go to the playing grounds of their beloved teams, they will meet nobody as those grounds are today deserted because nobody wants to be a victim.



Police officers and soldiers check passengers at Milan's main train station in the north of Italy on March 9, 2020. (AP)

Back home, even foreign travels are being curtailed, to ensure Nigeria remains safe from the pandemic, even as the Federal Government has stopped its officials from travelling abroad, at least for now.

Even those who have the resources to travel are having a second thought as they cannot afford to take an avoidable risk.

Nigerians and foreigners alike who would have travelled for Easter break are also being careful by postponing such trips.

Pupils and students who would have loved to conclude their studies before going on holidays have been told to go home, same for their coun-

terparts across the globe.

The story is the same for those who has been practicing to showcase their talents at the National Sports Festival (NSF) tagged "Edo 2020" which has been cancelled by the Federal Government.

For such people, the hope of winning laurels has been shattered albeit temporarily, as an opportunity to display their talents has been cut short by the deadly virus.

Even freedom of worship has been largely affected as Nigerians have been told to avoid places with more than 50 people.

This has negatively impacted many worship centers, especially

churches and mosques especially the big ones who have asked their members to keep away, at least for now.

Perhaps, for the first time in a very long time, Nigerians are witnessing a very strange scenario where churches and mosques are greeted with empty seats during services.

But this is a major sacrifice we must all endure, at least for now, because this is not a time to take needless, risks, to avoid stories that touch the heart. Statistics of those who have been killed by the pandemic is no joke and should serve as a lesson to all patriotic Nigerians

in these very trying times.

This obviously is not the time to be talking about exercising certain rights, as if we cannot do without such, as doing so may come with unpalatable consequences, not just for us, but for the majority of our citizens whose lives we may also be putting at risk, without knowing it.

It is there for better to cooperate with the federal government which has done well so far by being proactive on the pandemic, going by the effective and efficient manner the issue has been handled by both the

Federal and State governments.

Kudos must be given to President MuhammaduBuhari for displaying uncommon and dynamic leadership in confronting the disease by ensuring that a high-powered committee was set up with a view to tackling the menace frontally and giving Nigerians necessary information on the pandemic.

Nigerians must therefore follow suit by cooperating with the authorities to ensure that we jointly win this battle, a war we cannot afford to lose by giving the much-needed support to the government and ensuring they remain safe at all times.

Better global governance for public health needed to defeat pandemics

BEIJING

ALMOST 40 years ago, the World Health Organization (WHO) officially declared the world free of smallpox, an infectious disease that is believed to have originated over 3,000 years ago.

The eradication of smallpox, which claimed an estimated 300 million lives in the 20th century alone, was a fine example of how the world can jointly beat a pandemic with a global effort.

As humanity is wrestling with a new common enemy, a previously unknown coronavirus, this highly interconnected world has made the ongoing international drive to safeguard global public health an unprecedented struggle.

While globalization is not to blame for the current pandemic, the sudden strike of the new disease has indeed highlighted a thought-provoking reality: the existing global public health governance has fallen behind the need of the times, and should be upgraded accordingly.

In face of the ravaging pandemic, the priority is for countries around the world to come together and build what Chinese President Xi Jinping called for at the Extraordinary G20 Leaders' Summit last week a global network of control and treatment so as to better share critical information, take broadly coordinated measures, cut off the chain of transmission, both domestically and trans-nationally, and rein in the ongoing pandemic as soon as possible.

An enhanced global cooperation mechanism for the development of drugs and vaccines needs to be stressed in this network.

Policy makers, experts and medical professionals worldwide should also try to jointly come up with a set of both lessons and useful experiences to guide the work against the pandemic and even future health emergencies.

Second, there is an urgent need to help those under-developed countries and regions with vulnerable health systems build up their capability, so that the weak points in the global network of epidemic prevention and treatment can be strengthened.

The World Bank announced earlier this month a plan to provide a fast and flexible response to meet the needs of developing countries in dealing with the spread of COVID-19, which includes emergency financing, policy advice and technical assistance.

The third task is for governments around the world to create a global architecture for the health of all mankind, within which the United Nations (UN) and the WHO should be given a core role.

The nation-state global system in today's world is without a central authority. Yet, as globalization deepens, countries across the globe need to cope with a growing array of shared challenges, such as climate change and infectious diseases.

Therefore, besides the UN, such a wide-reaching agency as the WHO could function as a platform to facilitate coordination among nations in the field of global health security.

The WHO has successfully headed missions to tackle diseases like smallpox, Ebola and Zika over recent years, and should be placed in a stronger position to guide future global health cooperation ranging from epidemic



Medical worker Wu Qiongli from Shanghai prepares to enter the isolation wards at Leishenshan (Thunder God Mountain) Hospital in Wuhan, central China's Hubei Province, March 29, 2020. Xinhua

early warning to prevention and control, as well as effective vaccine and drug research and development.

In 1851, the first International Sanitary Conference opened in Paris to

standardize international quarantine regulations against the spread of cholera, plague, and yellow fever, a pioneering event for global cooperation on fighting infectious diseases.

More than 150 years later, the threat one lethal pathogen can pose to human health is even greater, as people around the world are linked like never before.

The ultimate solution is not to turn back the clock, but for the human race to move forward.

Xinhua

Effective parental involvement in home schooling during COVID-19 pandemic

By Correspondent Lucy Rweyemamu

IT has been two weeks since schools in Tanzania were closed due to the coronavirus pandemic. I recently called my cousin who claimed she was overwhelmed. She has four children who each go to different schools and was receiving lots of Whatsapp messages from teachers on assignments she can guide her children through.

"What am I supposed to do with all this information, most of

which I cannot understand? They should lower their expectations, as a parent I cannot do all this!" she exclaimed. She continued to rant saying that homeschooling is breaking her mentally and emotionally, and she's at her wits end.

My cousin's protest made me ponder on what is lacking in our education system. It also made me revalue the worth and importance of teachers, not only at national level but also at community level, as the amount of work they have to put in and the impact they make on our children's learning is

immense. It is therefore disheartening to find that teachers are among the most underpaid workers, not only in Tanzania but also in most African countries.

In Tanzania, there is minimal research on parental involvement in children's education. The education system focuses on the school environment as the key source of learning and little attention is paid to continued learning at home.

Possible contributing factors to low parental involvement in education include poverty, uneducated

parents, limited time and resources of parents and teachers, distance from home to school, lack of awareness of parents towards their involvement, poor attitude, lack of parent-teacher partnerships, absence of open relationships between home and school and other cultural factors.

The Aga Khan University in Tanzania conducted a study known as - Strengthening Teaching and Raising Achievement in Pre-primary and Primary Schools (STRAPPS) in Newala District.

The project followed a holistic

approach involving schools, communities, teachers and government officials working together to positively impact education.

Evidence from the study showed that parental involvement improves student learning which means good grades, improved social skills and behaviour as well as parental confidence in the children's education.

With such evidence, it is imperative for parents to be fully involved in their children's learning. Schools also need to promote parental involvement by treating all

parents equally and seeing them as partners rather than adversaries.

Government and education stakeholders need to invest in raised awareness on parental involvement in education. There also needs to development of a policy which outlines specific roles that parents or caregivers must fulfill while the government ensures parents are well sensitized about their roles.

Integration of technology in learning is also key with need for improved access to internet ser-

vices in schools and homes. In such times of crisis like we're facing now, mobile applications can be a useful and innovative tool to enhance learning.

These are add-on materials to books which are essential to growing a child's mind. Effective parental involvement is not only for individual learners but also for future generations.

If we want to make progress in educational attainment as a nation, then all players should work together to ensure our learners receive the best.

Coronavirus: It's lockdown pushing poor across Lagos to brink

LAGOS

A LARGE crowd jostled and cheered in the poor district of Alimosho in Nigeria's megacity Lagos as the doors of a lorry swung open to reveal hundreds of sacks of food.

The rice, beans and other staples were part of a programme from the local authorities to feed some of the poorest in economic hub of 20 million after it went into lockdown this week to halt the coronavirus.

But the joy of the local residents soon turned to anger as the realisation dawned that there would not be enough for everyone.

Only 50 sacks of food were unloaded and handed over to a local traditional leader to dole out before the truck closed up and headed off to make its next delivery.

The stay-at-home order issued by President Muhammadu Buhari from

Monday has cut countless people who live hand-to-mouth in the city off from their only source of survival.

The handout initiative from the Lagos state government aims to provide rations to an initial 200,000 households to last them through the two-week shutdown.

But the 1.2 million people that represents is just a drop in the ocean of the hungry mouths left to feed across a sprawling city where poverty is rife.

"Sixty percent of the people or more are in the informal sector, earning daily wages," Lagos state's minister for agriculture, Gbolahan Lawal, told AFP.

"So there must be a way of palliating the economic challenges during the lockdown."

By day three of the closures, it was clear that the draconian measures to halt the global pandemic were already making many desperate.



A crowd of hundreds shook the gate of the local traditional ruler's headquarters in Alimosho, threatening to break the chains.

"They want us to kill each other, or what? It is very risky to come and give 50 bags of food like that," complained Abiola Okudukun, a young hairdresser with five children to feed.

"Obviously we will have nothing -- as usual they will leave us starving to death."

An irate Akandi Kausara, who usually sells food and water by the side of the road, insisted the situation needed to change.

"They provoke us, if that's how it is, we're going to go back to work tomorrow, you believe that," said the woman in her fifties.

Nigeria's president admitted the decision

to shutter shops and businesses would "cause much hardship and inconvenience to many citizens". But he insisted it was a "matter of life and death" as Africa's most populous country scrambles to contain a virus that has infected 174 confirmed cases and killed two.

The federal government has promised welfare payments worth some \$13 (12 euros) a month will be paid in advance to those who have been receiving them.

However it lacks the financial firepower of richer nations that have unleashed unprecedented rescue packages to pay wages and prop up economies.

The collapse in the price of oil has gutted state revenues for the continent's biggest oil

producer and officials are cutting back the budget.

They face a tough balancing act: how to contain a pandemic that risks flooding Nigeria's weak health system and keep a lid on the wrath of millions of poor unable to make ends meet.

Signs of a potential explosion are already bubbling under the surface.

A task force of unarmed security officers toured the crowded district of Agege on Tuesday evening trying to enforce the lockdown.

They cleared prostitutes and their clients out of a brothel before turning to a mosque where hundreds had gathered in contravention of the rules.

But in a few minutes, thousands of young people emerged from the adjoining alleyway to stop them - hurling bottles at the police cars as they fled.



As DR Congo faces the onslaught of the Covid-19 pandemic, the country is already struggling to deal with the world's worst measles outbreak. Since January 2019, the virus has claimed the lives of over 6,300 children and infected hundreds of thousands of others. Our correspondents Clément Bonnerot and Juliette Dubois report from the north of the country.

Amid coronavirus spread, measles kills thousands of children in DRC

KINSHASA

AS DR Congo faces the onslaught of the Covid-19 pandemic, the country is already struggling to deal with the world's worst measles outbreak.

Since January 2019, the virus has claimed the lives of over 6,300 children and infected hundreds of thousands of others. Our correspondents Clément Bonnerot and Juliette Dubois report from the north of the country.

In the north of DR Congo, the Covid-19 pandemic is a distant concern. Another virus - measles - has been ravaging the country. Since January 1, 2019, more than 6,000 children have died from the disease and another 335,000 others have

been infected, according to the latest World Health Organization (WHO) data.

Hospitals and health centres are struggling to cope. "We have shortages of everything, especially medicines," Gédéon Mushadi, the chief medical officer in the northern town of Boso-Manzi, said.

Mushandi added: "The small amount of money that each health centre receives isn't enough to cover the needs of the population".

Lack of information about the disease and its symptoms is one of the main obstacles to eradicating the epidemic, while vaccines are challenging to distribute in the rural north of the country.

With the support of MSF (Doctors Without Borders) and

the WHO, the Congolese government launched an emergency response plan against measles in January.

The aim is to increase vaccination coverage in the country, which is estimated to be as low as 58 percent.

In 2019, the disease infected over 145,000 people in the Democratic Republic of Congo between January and early August.

In the country's east, Ebola has claimed more than 1,900 lives since erupting last August.

Measles is a highly-contagious disease caused by a virus that attacks mainly children. The most serious complications include blindness, brain swelling, diarrhoea, and severe respiratory infections.

119 youth in Mbeya complete training in better pit-latrines construction

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

SOME 119 youth living in dangerous and difficult environments from three councils of Mbeya region have completed a three week training in pit latrine construction and are expected to construct the same in their

respective districts to save the community from eruption of water borne diseases.

The training which was sponsored by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) a non governmental organization (NGO) under the Roman Catholic Church in partnership with the district councils aims to protect wananchi's

health.

The training was conducted at the Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) College in Mbeya.

Chunya district executive director Sophia Kumbuli said the project involving the youth in pit latrine making will assist them in self-employment and

enable them to earn incomes.

Kumbuli who spoke on behalf of other DEDs promised the councils to assist the youth to obtain capital through loans from the Councils' funds earmarked for the youth, women and people with the disabilities.

She appealed to the youth to form groups to qualify for the

loans according to the government's guidelines for such Councils' funds.

She also thanked CRS for removing the youth from dangerous and difficult environment and called for other institutions dealing in community work to emulate CRS.

Speaking on behalf of Mbarali

DED, Uswege Kaminyoge, she appealed to the youth to utilize well the opportunities for loans they will get from the councils to realize their targets.

CRS project manager Ephraim Tonya said the aim is to increase the push and government's efforts in making sure the community use better latrines and

remove the youth from desperate groups by enabling them in self employment.

A villager of Isewe village in Chunya district Muone Mkuambo who is among the project's beneficiaries, said he learned various skills in quality pit latrine building for the community and became an entrepreneur.

Five days of worship that set off virus time-bomb in France

PARIS

FROM the stage of an evangelical superchurch, the leader of the gospel choir kicked off an evening of prayer and preaching: "We're going to celebrate the Lord! Are you feeling the joy tonight?" "Yes!" shouted the hundreds gathered at the Christian Open Door church on Feb. 18. Some of them had traveled thousands of miles to take part in the week-long gathering in Mulhouse, a city of 100,000 on France's borders with Germany and Switzerland.

For many members of this globe-spanning flock, the annual celebration is the high point of the church calendar. This time, someone in the congregation was carrying the coronavirus.

The prayer meeting kicked off the biggest cluster of COVID-19 in France - one of northern Europe's hardest-hit countries - to date, local government said. Around 2,500 confirmed cases have been linked to it. Worshipers at the church have unwittingly taken the disease caused by the virus home to the West African state of Burkina Faso, to the Mediterranean island of Corsica, to Guyana in Latin America, to Switzerland, to a French nuclear power plant, and into the workshops of one of Europe's biggest automakers.

Weeks later, Germany partially closed its border with France, suspending a free-movement pact that has been in place for the past 25 years. The church cluster was a key factor, two people familiar with the German decision told Reuters. Church officials told Reuters that 17 members of the congregation have since died of complications linked to the disease.

Other religious gatherings have been linked to the spread of the virus: A large church in South Korea has triggered more than 5,000 cases there. This story, told to Reuters by members of the Christian Open Door congregation and officials involved in coping with the outbreak, is testament to the speed and ferocity of the coronavirus infection. As public health administrators were still gearing up for coronavirus, the disease was operating to its own, remorseless timetable - one that has quickly outpaced anything they could put in place.

As the faithful gathered on a clear Tuesday evening in the church, an old shopping center converted into a 2,500 seat auditorium, the disease seemed remote. France had 12 confirmed cases, according to World Health Organization (WHO) data. There were none in the Mulhouse area.

France, like other governments in northern Europe, had imposed no restrictions on big meetings. There was no alcohol gel for the congregations to clean their hands, no elbow bumps instead of handshakes.

"At the time, we viewed COVID as something that was far off," said Jonathan Peterschmitt, son of the lead pastor and grandson of the church's founder.

His father, Samuel, was unavailable for an interview because he had been sickened by the virus, his son and a church spokeswoman said.

The day after the first case linked to the church was identified on Feb. 29, public health officials followed the usual protocol and traced the people whom the carriers had been in contact with, to stem the spread. Using a list supplied by the church - which public health officials said cooperated fully - they first contacted those who had staffed the children's crèche during the gathering.

At this point, the health inspectors realized they were too late. Some crèche staff were already sick, according to Michel Vernay, an epidemiologist with France's national public health agency in eastern France.

"We were overwhelmed," said Vernay. "We realized that we had a time bomb in front of us."

"SPIRITUALLY RECHARGE"

Among the congregation was local man Elie Widmer, a 37-year-old manager of a house-building company. His parents were members of the church, which was founded in 1966 by Jean Peterschmitt, a French shopkeeper who embraced evangelism after his wife was unexpectedly cured of an illness.

Widmer said he had drifted away from the church as a teenager, but returned. The Mulhouse gathering was something he looked forward to the whole year, he said: "You feel a special energy during that week. For a week, you stop everything to spiritually recharge." As a drummer in the church orchestra, he attended the whole week.

Coming from further afield was Antoinette, a 70-year-old grandmother who lives on the Mediterranean island of Corsica. For her, the gathering was part of a 25-year tradition.

Antoinette made the trip with five other women who worship at the Bethel evangelical church in the capital Ajaccio. She spoke on the condition that she not be fully identified, saying believers had been stigmatized by people outside the church for spreading the virus.

Antoinette has chronic lung problems, for which she has regular treatment. As the women flew out of Corsica on Feb. 16, they looked forward to combining evangelical workshops with excursions to the shops.

"We knew nothing," she said from her home in Ajaccio. "We weren't thinking about the epidemic."

Neither was Mamadou Karambiri, who flew into Paris's Charles de Gaulle airport on Feb. 14 aboard an Air France flight from Ouagadougou, capital of Burkina Faso.

He is pastor of his own church in Africa and co-founder of an organization called the International Evangelism Center - Africa Interior Mission. A charismatic speaker with a shock of white hair, Karambiri was to be the meeting's star preacher.

His church, a warehouse-like building that takes up a city block in Ouagadougou, can accommodate 12,000 people, according to a worshiper there. A giant white cross towers above the red dirt street outside. Across the road is the studio that televisions the sermons the pastor delivers to worshippers assembled on rows of blue plastic chairs.

Karambiri traveled to the Mulhouse gathering with his wife and a bodyguard, said his spokesman, Aristide A. Ouedrago. The pastor, through



his secretary, declined to be interviewed for this story.

Ouedrago said that he believed that when Karambiri traveled, the virus was not in France, although in fact there were 12 cases.

"PETRI DISH"

In Mulhouse, the Christian Open Door church stands across the road from a kebab cafe. A four-storey-high white metal cross rises over the car park.

Also gathering in the church building were two children whose mother had taken sick before the event started, health officials said. The mother stayed at home, but their grandfather brought the children along - the elder child was five, the younger just one year old.

The children and their mother would later test positive for coronavirus, making the mother a potential source of the cluster, said Vernay, the French public health official. It was not clear to public health officials where the mother, whom Vernay declined to identify, picked up the infection.

The week's schedule included gospel choir performances, collective prayer, singing, sermons from preachers, workshops, and testimony from people who said God had cured their illnesses.

The best-attended sessions had up to 2,500 people and there were never fewer than 1,000, said Jonathan Peterschmitt, the founder's son, from his home. Many people came day after day, and spent hours there. "So we were in the same petri dish for a week," he said.

By the end of the gathering on Feb. 21, no one had reported any flu-like symptoms, according to Nathalie Schnoebelen, a church spokeswoman. At the time, France's tally of confirmed COVID-19 cases was steady at 12.

SPREAD

In late February, Widmer, the drummer, started feeling unwell. His wife, his three children, and his mother-in-law also took ill.

On March 3, the WHO recorded 91 new COVID-19 cases in France, bringing the country's total to 191. The church, prompted by the discovery of the infected woman and her two children, posted on its Facebook page that people who had come to the gathering should contact a doctor.

Widmer dialed 15, the number in France for emergency medical care. There were not enough testing kits for him to be tested. But doctors diagnosed coronavirus and ordered him and his family to quarantine themselves.

For three days he had a strong fever and headache, and lost his sense of taste and smell. He said he was not especially worried: His family had milder symptoms. He has since recovered, but remains in self-isolation.

The virus spread through the church founder's family. Around a dozen members are now recovering.

A few miles away across the border, German officials were watching with growing alarm.

They had received a report from the Robert Koch Institute, a German state public health institution, that added eastern France to its list of four coronavirus risk areas around the world - along with China's Hubei province, Iran, Italy and North Gyeongsang province, adjoining the city of Daegu, the site of the South Korean church outbreak. By March 11, France's COVID-19 tally at the WHO had leapt to 1,774, of whom 33 had died.

Roughly 45,000 French workers commute to Germany daily, according to official data - around a fifth of them from the Mulhouse area. Most work in Germany's wealthy industrial region of Baden-Wuerttemberg, where automakers Porsche and Mercedes-Benz have their headquarters. Europa-Park, a theme park just over the Rhine in Germany, is a big employer, also of French workers.

After attending the gathering, a worker from the French nuclear power plant at Fessenheim near Mulhouse tested positive. The plant's operator, Electricite de France SA (EdF), ordered 20 others to self-isolate at home but operations were not disrupted, a representative of the power company said. Another person who had been at the gathering worked in the Peugeot Citroen factory on the edge of Mulhouse; that individual too was infected, according to a person familiar with the case.

German officials in Baden-Wuerttemberg decided to act, imposing restrictions on movements across the border.

The French government asked Berlin for an explanation. On March 16, German Chancellor Angela Merkel spoke to French President Emmanuel Macron. They talked about the cluster in eastern France and the risk from commuters, said a German government official briefed on the call. Then they agreed to close the border to traffic other than cargo vehicles and people making essential trips. A French official confirmed the contents of the discussion.

Police appeared at previously unmanned border posts, asking car drivers for a document from their employer proving travel is essential. Cargo trucks are backed up.

But the disease was already out. A resident of Swit-

zerland who went to the meeting brought the virus back to their evangelical community near Lausanne, the Swiss federation of evangelical churches said on its website. Public health authorities in French Guyana said they found five people who had traveled to the gathering also tested positive.

GOD'S PRESENCE

Back home in Corsica after her trip to the church gathering, Antoinette felt under the weather.

She put it down to the exertion of the trip, and carried on meeting up with other church-goers in Ajaccio. On March 2, nine days after she returned, she received a call from Mulhouse describing the outbreak there.

She was hospitalized overnight, tested, and on March 4, became one of the first cases of COVID-19 on the French island of Corsica. She has since been in self-isolation, and her church has suspended services. As of March 27, 263 people were infected with coronavirus on Corsica, 21 of whom died.

"People have pointed their finger at me," said Antoinette on March 16. "They need a scapegoat." She said some people outside her circle were suspicious of evangelical Christians and blamed her for bringing the virus to Corsica. Jonathan Peterschmitt, the son of the Mulhouse pastor, said others in the congregation had been subject to verbal attacks by strangers for spreading the infection, and were now fearful of revealing their identities.

By March 20, France had more than 10,000 cases of COVID-19. Around a quarter were in Grand-Est, the region that includes Mulhouse. "The very great majority" of these could be traced to the church, said Vernay, the local public health official.

Because there are more critical cases than intensive care beds in the region, some patients have been flown by helicopter to Switzerland, Germany and Luxembourg. The French military have set up a field hospital inside green metal-framed tents.

At home in Ouagadougou, Pastor Karambiri and his wife, after falling ill on March 1, went to a local clinic, tested positive, and quarantined themselves until March 20.

At the end of his self-imposed period of isolation, he broadcast a message to his followers in a video posted on his organization's Facebook page. Sitting on a sofa, his bible on his lap and his wife alongside him, he told them about the infection.

The coronavirus, he said, is "a satanic plan conceived a long time ago to destroy the world. But God is watching over us and he will lead the people out."

Agencies

THE GUARDIAN SIMPLE WORD FIT // THE GUARDIAN CROSSWORD --00 80 00--

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

WORD-FIT

3 LETTERS: MEN, MRS, NIT
 4 LETTERS: JUNE, USER, LOUD, DOME, NEED, WAGE, RAIN
 5 LETTERS: AURAL, ROUND, ACORN, COLOR EVENS,
 6 LETTERS: ANGOLA, SPACES, MANENO ANNUAL, T-SHIRT
 8 LETTERS: MINERALS
 7 LETTERS: SAMARIA
 10 LETTERS: JOURNALIST

CROSSWORD

CLUES: Across

- an administration
- one less than ten
- insect infests human hair
- keep away from somebody
- no longer young
- express sorrow
- the offspring of a male donkey and a female horse
- things unacceptable
- a person appointed to select a team in a sport
- First man
- the possibility of suffering injury or harm

Down:

- a list of dishes in a restaurant
- magical power in Maori
- a state of feeling
- lie in a sheltered position
- at any time
- to heed
- enticed into sexual activity
- to tell someone firmly
- oedema
- a faintly blue gas obtained by the silent discharge of electricity in air
- not happy
- a boy

SOLUTIONS

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

CROSSWORD: D O D O M A P D
 R I I S R A E L
 E A S T E R I A
 A T N A V E R T
 M W A N Z A A
 S N Y S T A G E
 S C A M P E O
 C L E V E R O
 O O R A N G E
 P I V S L
 P E D D L E S A Y S

By Maggiez: 0755129240 telixmaggz@gmail.com

BUSINESS

CRISIS

COVID-19: Africa could lose up to \$200bn in 2020

ADDIS ABABA

A preliminary analysis of the economic impact attributed to Coronavirus Disease 2019 - COVID-19 has estimated that Africa's GDP growth in 2020 could be cut by 3 to 8 percentage points.

The paper entitled, "Tackling COVID-19 in Africa" released this week by global auditing firm McKinsey & Company's experts indicated that Africa's economies could experience a loss of between \$90 billion and \$200 billion in 2020 because of COVID-19 pandemic.

"We find that the pandemic and the oil-price shock are likely to tip Africa into an economic contraction in 2020, in the absence of major fiscal stimulus," the experts said in their analysis. The pandemic's spread within Africa could account for just over half of this loss, driven by reduced household and business spending and travel bans.

The global pandemic could account for about one-third of the total loss, driven by supply-chain disruptions, a fall-off in demand for Africa's non-oil exports, and delay or cancellation of investments from Africa's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) partners.

Finally, oil-price effects could account for about 15 percent of the losses, the analysis noted adding that in the month of March 2020, oil prices fell by approximately 50 percent. The experts argued that the COVID-19 pandemic is primarily a health crisis and a human tragedy, but it also has far-reaching economic ramifications.

In Africa, they observed, it is already disrupting millions of people's livelihoods, with disproportionate impact on poor households and small and informal businesses – and the pace of this disruption is likely to accelerate in the weeks ahead.

The assessment indicated that travel bans and lockdowns are not only limiting the movement of people across borders and within countries, but also disrupting ways of working for many individuals, businesses, and government agencies.

Recommended bold actions

Given the potentially devastating impact of the pandemic on health and livelihoods, nothing less will do, the experts warned. They recommended that African governments and development partners could explore several far-reaching solutions.

They include Africa Recovery Plan which would entail an extensive stimulus package or economic development plan, modelled on the Marshall Plan that provided aid to Europe following World War II. They also recommended Africa Solidarity Fund, whereby businesses and individuals could contribute to a fund earmarked for immediate relief for the most vulnerable households and businesses.

Also, a private-sector liquidity fund that could offer grants, loans, or debt for equity swaps to support businesses and limit job losses,

should be considered. Others are African procurement platform, a common platform to procure medical supplies and equipment to combat the pandemic could provide an Africa-wide solution to challenges that each individual country is trying to address.

In addition, an Africa Green Program should be mulled over. Considered a get-to-work program that plants billions of trees across the continent, it could provide employment and help solve global and local climate-change issues by using the currently out-of-work labour force.

Meanwhile, the Bureau of the Assembly of the African Union Heads of State and Government Teleconference on COVID-19, held on 26 March 2020 agreed to establish a continental anti-COVID-19 Fund to which member states of the Bureau agreed to immediately contribute \$12, 5 million as seed funding.

In a communiqué the Bureau issued the same day, it noted the critical role of the Africa Centres of Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) and its under-funding. In this regard Member States of the Bureau agreed to contribute \$4.5 million towards boosting its capacity.

Given the limited health infrastructure in Africa and the reality that most of the pharmaceuticals and medical supplies consumed on the continent are imported, the Bureau called on the international community to encourage open trade corridors, especially for pharmaceuticals and other health supplies.

The Bureau also urged G20 countries to provide an effective economic stimulus package that includes relief and deferred payments. In this regard, the Bureau called for the waiver of all interest payments on bilateral and multilateral debt, and the possible extension of the waiver to the medium term, in order to provide immediate fiscal space and liquidity to governments.

In a tweet he posted on Thursday, April 2, 2020, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization said that many developing countries will struggle to implement social welfare programs of which include free food rations and cash transfers during lockdown to prevent the COVID-19 spread. "Broad and expedited agreement on debt relief are essential to enable them to care for their people and avoid economic collapse," he said.

"Countries are asking people to stay home and shutting down population movement to limit COVID-19 transmission. These steps can have unintended consequences for the poorest & most vulnerable. I call on countries to ensure these populations have food & life essentials during the crisis," he added.

PESSIMISM

COVID-19 will impact China's trade links with Africa

BEIJING

A new report by Economist Corporate Network, supported by Baker McKenzie and Silk Road Associates BRI Beyond 2020, shows that the ripple effects of COVID-19 are affecting the nature, pace and scope of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) activity in Africa, mostly for the short term.

BRI is China's multi-billion dollar plan to link Asia, Europe and Africa. According to Baker McKenzie the report explains how the virus has led to an increased interest in digital programmes in BRI countries, as well as a heightened focus on sustainability, including workforce health.

Bee Chun Boo, M&A Partner at Baker McKenzie in Beijing, said, "The COVID-19 epidemic definitely has a dampening effect on BRI activities as Chinese companies focus their resources and efforts on dealing with the various types of impact caused by such epidemic. However, this effect will likely be relatively short term and we are already seeing the resumption of BRI activities by our Chinese clients. It is also heartening to see foreign sellers and partners adjusting their deal timetables to make allowances for the impact caused by this epidemic."

Ben Simpfendorfer, CEO of Silk Road Associates, said BRI will remain a priority for China, but that it will affect the Chinese government's short-term and long-term response to COVID-19, because shortfalls in China's health sector, and the economic fallout for the country's financially challenged SME sector, will divert official attention and resources away from BRI over the next 12 months and potentially longer.

"This may mean reduced investments into BRI's smaller, less critical markets where the opportunities to connect such investments to the



More than 500 buses ready to be exported at the Lianyungang Port in Lianyungang City, east China's Jiangsu Province.

global supply are limited. Central Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Eastern Europe will accordingly see a short-term dip in BRI related activity, relative to Southeast Asia. The exception to this view is where China seeks to share its valuable experience of battling COVID-19 with other BRI countries," he said.

Strained public health systems Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) reports that as of 30 March 2020, of the 46 African Union (AU) member states, there have been 4,760 cases of COVID-19, with 146 deaths and 335 recoveries.

Mike van Rensburg, Partner and Head of the Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals Sector at Baker McKenzie in Johannesburg said: "Any large-scale outbreak of COVID-19 in Africa will put pressure on

already strained public health systems in the continent and as such African nations are being vigilant in order to contain the spread of COVID-19. Detection of the virus in African has been challenging due to lack of laboratory capacity and medical supplies, but World Health Organisation (WHO) has said it is equipping countries with virus testing kits, and that it has helped to train and provide personal protective equipment to health workers. Further, most African countries are identifying quarantine centres and stocking up on medication."

The report however highlights that one key area of potential for the BRI is in projects focused on strengthening the health systems of low-income countries, even if focused on soft processes rather than hard infrastructure. It points to

Chinese tech companies such as Alibaba's DingTalk, Tencent's WeChat Work and Huawei's WeLink potentially bidding for market share outside of China, especially in the BRI region.

According to Baker McKenzie China's MedTech sector may similarly find opportunities abroad. Online doctor consultation platforms have seen consultations soar in the past few months (Alibaba Health, Ping An Good Doctor) and similar technologies may work abroad if staffed by locals, given health sector shortfalls in many BRI countries.

Simpfendorfer noted that China's success in using AI and other technologies to identify and monitor virus carriers may also have application across the BRI, including in Africa.

Infrastructure

GOOD-NEWS

SA scientists make hand sanitiser from bread

JOHANNESBURG

Food scientists from Stellenbosch University (SU) have made hand sanitiser using bread. During a week-long process, the team produce 18 litres of alcohol-based hand sanitiser from stale breadcrumbs, in their in-house fermentation tank.

"It smells just a little bit like toast," says Stefan Hayward, a postdoctoral researcher in the department of food science at Stellenbosch. He is part of a research group in the department which normally focuses on ways to reduce food waste, and put by-products to use.

"Waste implies a need to discard something which has become useless and needs to be disposed of. We see waste products and the tendency to produce too much food not as a problem, but as raw ingredients or by-products that can provide the impetus to invent new ways of reducing, reusing and recycling," Hayward says.

The team decided to make their own hand sanitiser a day after the presidency announced the national state of disaster, by producing bio-ethanol from bread. "Bread is composed of 40% starch which can be used as an excellent carbohydrate source during the production of bio-ethanol via fermentation," says Hayward.

Unsold bread past its sell-by date is generally returned to distribution centres from where it is discarded as waste, or at



One of the Stellenbosch University's researchers, Dr Timo Tait.

best used as animal feed. The team combined 60 kilograms of breadcrumbs with hot water and added alpha amylase enzymes, a digestive enzyme that acts on starch in food, breaking it down into smaller carbohydrate molecules.

They then adjusted the pH level to optimal levels to convert starch to sugar. The mixture was then incubated at 65°C for 60 minutes to produce sugar, and cooled to 30°C before a specialised yeast strain used by the distilling industry was added. The end product, which looks like mashed potatoes, was left at room temperature for seven days until the fermentation process was complete and they could start distilling.

From the initial 60 kg of bread in their first batch, they were able to produce 10.5 litres of 75% ethanol. This was combined with ingredients such as glycerol, hydro peroxide (which also kills viruses and bacterial spores) and a denaturant to ultimately make 18.2 litres of hand sanitiser.

"We were able to satisfy our scientific curiosity whether or not we would be able to ferment bio-ethanol from a waste product such as stale bread, and at the same time were also able to apply our knowledge to produce an antiseptic formula that can be of help in this time of crisis," says Hayward.

TROUBLE

Without tourists, Thailand's 4,000 elephants among COVID-19 victims

BANGKOK

There are around 4,000 elephants living in captivity in Thailand. Their owners, whether operating sanctuaries or traditional businesses, rely on tourism to feed them. With the collapse of tourism in the country, the elephants face starvation, the BBC first reported.

"Tourism has been the sustaining

rhythm of life for a long time here, and for that pulse to flatline came so unexpected," Save the Elephants Foundation wrote on their Facebook page. "This crisis is both a challenge and a good teacher. It will take a communal effort and resilience to overcome and rebound hopefully into a better world, if wisdom and sound reflection prevail."

As of Wednesday, there were at least

1,771 confirmed cases of the coronavirus in Thailand and 12 recorded deaths. Lek Chailert, founder of the Save Elephant Foundation, told the BBC that if more help doesn't come soon, elephants will starve, or their owners might feel pressure to sell them to less humane outfits, like zoos or the illicit logging business.

The foundation, which is based in Thailand, has been delivering fresh

grass to elephants in captivity around the country. Fresh grass, though, isn't easy to come by in Thailand, Kerri McCrea, of Kindred Spirit Elephant Sanctuary, told BBC.

McCrea said that villagers recently brought 70 elephants to her Northern Thailand sanctuary because they can't feed them. She has to drive up to three hours a day to find enough grasses to

feed the animals, according to BBC. Local owners have been doing the same.

"Feeding elephants is a priority but the issue is that there's not enough forest left to feed them," she told the network. As of March 26, Save the Elephant Foundation had fed 392 elephants around the country, but the owners of 842 elephants had requested help. The organization is seeking donations

to assist with feeding the elephants. As of Wednesday, it had raised more than \$176,000. "The worst-case scenario is that owners will have to choose between themselves and their elephants," McCrea told BBC. "The people here don't have much, but they're doing what it takes to keep the elephants alive for now."

RESTRICTION

As shutdown extended, Rwanda's poor confront further hardships

KIGALI

Out of work, with prices soaring and police on the streets, life for many Rwandans has become immeasurably harder under coronavirus lockdown, and the pain looks only set to deepen.

Traders have warned of food shortages in the tiny landlocked nation, and parents are struggling to put food on the table, as the shutdown gutted the local economy on which lower-income Rwandans depend. "To feed my family, I have to go hungry myself," said Regine Murengeantwari, a widow and mother of four in Kigali, whose income dried up when the new restrictions took effect on March 21.

As the coronavirus took hold, Rwanda swiftly imposed one of Africa's first total shutdowns, banning all "unnecessary movements" outside the home for two weeks to try and curb the spread of the disease. Shops were closed, schools shuttered and public transport ground to a halt as the number of confirmed cases in Rwanda climbed to among the highest

in mainland East Africa.

Other countries in the region have followed suit and with the number of cases still climbing - now at 82 - Kigali announced on Wednesday the restrictions would remain in place another fortnight, until April 19. Murengeantwari, a slum dweller who lost her income suddenly out of a job, does not know how her family will make it through.

Shortages

Her meagre income disappeared overnight when the lockdown was imposed. The 48-year-old had rented two small rooms in her home, one to a hairdresser and the other to a motorcycle taxi driver. When their businesses were banned, neither tenant could pay Murengeantwari her dues. "I have no income at all, and no idea what the future holds now," she said.

The government has extended assistance to some of Rwanda's poorest, delivering food like maize, also called corn, and beans to roughly 20,000 of the country's most vulnerable. "It was important to me, since my family has no source of income now," said Papias Gahungu, a motorcycle taxi driver, who received 4kg of foodstuffs under the



Police officers patrol deserted streets of central Kigali.

government relief program.

But the need is great. Almost 40% of Rwandans live in poverty, according to the World Bank, and some like Murengeantwari said they missed out. To compound the hardship, prices at local markets have soared amid fears of shortages and restrictions on truck movements slowing

deliveries.

"Because delivery drivers are not bringing goods as normal, we have little choice but to raise prices. We are afraid of a scarcity of food," said Emiliene Musabyemariya, a trader at a market in Kigali, who said tomatoes were selling at nearly double the usual rate.

Some businesses are operating on the side. One alcohol retailer, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said he was doing a roaring trade despite the order for his shop to close. "I have customers, and business is doing very well, surprisingly. I have to survive, but secretly... I deliver liquor to my customers'

homes at night," the Kigali retailer said.

'I have nothing'

For those with cars and money, trips to buy goods from supermarkets are still permitted, as is ordering delivery food from restaurants via mobile app. But the suspension of public transport has forced poor Rwandans to walk long distances to buy food and seek work. Some in Kigali have even journeyed on foot to markets beyond city lines to try and source affordable staples.

Tensions have boiled over, and the rules flouted in parts. Some areas of Kigali remain busy, and police have manned checkpoints and warned of arrests for those not obeying the restrictions. Last week, police arrested 12 people for refusing to return home when ordered to do so. They had "turned violent" when instructed to leave a trading area, police said.

In Nyanza district, southwest of Kigali, two men were shot dead by police who said they fired in self defence when the deceased refused to stop at a checkpoint and attacked the officers. An investigation is underway.

COVID-19

Virus to cut Sh1trn from Kenya GDP

NAIROBI

Kenya's economy could shrink by five percent in what will represent a \$10 billion (Sh1 trillion) loss of the country's output if the coronavirus pandemic is not contained, management consultants McKinsey & Company has warned in a new report to be released Friday.

The firm reckons that the dip in gross domestic product (GDP) will be the product of disruption to supply chain for key inputs in machinery and chemicals, a hit on the tourism inflows and exports like flowers and reductions in household and business spending, all of which are critical for economic sustenance and growth.

If the McKinsey forecast comes to pass, this will mark the first contraction of Kenya's economy since 1992 in the aftermath of the Goldenberg scandal during the autocratic era of the then President Daniel arap Moi. The Goldenberg scam led to the loss of at least \$1 billion (Sh105 billion) through a dubious compensation scheme for bogus gold and diamond exports.

McKinsey forecasts that economic growth will dip from 5.2 to 1.9 percent - representing a reduction in GDP of \$3 billion (Sh315 billion). Kenya has so far confirmed 110 cases of the Covid-19 disease and its crucial tourism and farm exports businesses have already been hit by the impact of the pandemic that has caused close 50,000 deaths and over 975,000 infections globally.

"The biggest impacts in terms of loss to GDP are reductions in household and business spending (about 50 percent), disruption to supply chain for key inputs in machinery and chemicals (about 30 percent) and tourism (about 20 percent)," says McKinsey in the report capturing the impact of the pandemic on Africa's economies.

"An initial analysis of Covid-19's economic impact, finds that Africa's GDP growth in 2020 could be cut by 3-8 percentage points. We find that the pandemic and the oil-price shock are likely to tip Africa into an economic contraction in 2020, in the absence of major fiscal stimulus," say the management consultants.

These means that Kenya will perform worse compared to its Africa's peers based on McKinsey & Company's best scenario growth of 1.9 percent. CBK last month revised its 2020 economic growth forecast to 3.4 percent from an initial estimate of 6.2 percent.

"(The government) also need to consider an extensive stimulus package to reverse the economic damage of the crisis," says the McKinsey & Company report. Kenya announced tax cuts on March 25 to protect the economy against the coronavirus. Parliament is scheduled to meet next week to debate the proposal presented by the Treasury (see separate story).

The government has signalled its intention to release billions of shillings in unpaid bills and speed up tax refunds to inject additional liquidity into the economy. As part of mitigation measures, CBK also lowered its benchmark lending rate by a 100 basis points and reduced the amount of cash that banks are required to hold as reserves.



An initial analysis of Covid-19's economic impact, finds that Africa's GDP growth in 2020 could be cut by 3-8 percentage points

CONCERN

Bolivian sex workers feel strain from quarantine amid coronavirus pandemic

LA PAZ

The coronavirus spread is impacting lives across the globe, including Bolivian sex workers, who say they are experiencing a severe drop in business due in part to the government ordered quarantine.

As the coronavirus spreads across the globe, social distancing measures are devastating many professions and that certainly includes sex work. In Bolivia, business is drying up for those in the trade after their interim president ordered a quarantine between the hours of 18:00 and 5:00. That's the time these women usually operate in a licensed brothel. Despite the unprecedented public health concern, women like Roselle are soldiering on.

"I'm working because I have to but I'm also taking care of myself. I've always taken care of myself since before this disease showed up. I like for my clients to leave content and clean. I've always had alcohol gel since I started this job, I have three disinfectants, toilet paper, a first aid kit and my air freshener," says Roselle.

Bolivian sex workers feel strain from quarantine

The coronavirus spread is impacting lives across the globe, including Bolivian sex workers, who say they are experiencing a severe



Sex workers in La Paz, Bolivia's capital.

drop in business due in part to the government ordered quarantine. Jillian Kitchener has more;

But the money is not rolling in. She blames the quarantine, along with competition from

recently-arrived sex workers from Venezuela. Lily Cortez represents the country's sex workers association. She says it's getting harder for these women to support their families and says that sex work will increase

outside of the more regulated brothels.

"The thing is, you can't close this down. Unfortunately, we sex workers will go out in the streets and a cure will be worse than the disease with all the STIs

and HIV because we educate our coworkers in the rooms at the sites so they get their check-ups, we take their documents. But they'll go out to the streets and nobody will test them there and this is a very delicate topic,"

says Lily. Even though brothels are shut down in the evening, essential businesses like supermarkets, hospitals, banks and pharmacies are continuing to operate as normal during the quarantine.

Coronavirus knocks smartphone supply to Africa

LAGOS

Experts have said the continued embargo on China's manufacturing sector over the COVID-19 outbreak (Coronavirus) will see a drop in smartphone shipments to Africa. According to the International Data Corporation (IDC), the overall African

smartphone market will shrink by 8.4% in Q1 2020 resulting in 48.7 million smartphone units.

"The closure of factories in China following the COVID-19 outbreak has severely disrupted the supply chain for components used in the production of smartphones," said Ramazan Yavuz, a research manager at IDC.

"The fallout from the COVID-19 outbreak is compounding existing local and macroeconomic challenges across Africa, and we expect smartphone shipments to the continent to decline 14.9% QoQ in Q1 2020," Yavuz added. Africa's dependency on low cost smartphones from China is a factor that will continue to impact growth in

this market.

"Transsion brands (Tecno, Itel, and Infinix) continued to dominate Africa's smartphone space in Q4 2019, with 40.6% unit share. Samsung and Huawei followed in second and third place, with respective unit shares of 18.6% and 9.8%. The Transsion brands Tecno and Itel also dominated the feature

phone landscape with a combined share of 69.5%. HMD placed third with 10.2% share," the IDC report stated. In the last quarter of 2019 Africa's mobile phone market grew by 3.8% overall, while shipments grew at 5.4%.

The global market analysis and research firm attributed the rise due to the holiday season which includes

Black Friday sale and Cyber Monday discounts. "Africa's two largest markets - South Africa and Nigeria experienced modest YoY growth rates of 2.0% and 5.2%, respectively. South Africa's smartphone market grew 2.2% YoY in Q4 2019 to total 6.5 million units," the report added.

WORLD

Global coronavirus cases surpass 1m, total deaths top 52,000

GENEVA

GLOBAL coronavirus cases surpassed 1 million on Thursday with more than 52,000 deaths as the pandemic further exploded in the United States and the death toll climbed in Spain and Italy, according to a Reuters tally of official data.

Italy had the most deaths, more than 13,900, followed by Spain. The United States had the most confirmed cases of any country, more than 240,000, the data showed.

Since the virus was first recorded late last year, the pandemic has spread around the world, prompting governments to close businesses, ground airlines and order hundreds of millions of people to stay at home to try to slow the contagion.

Amid unprecedented government steps to prop up economies battered by the outbreak, US weekly jobless claims jumped to a record 6.6 million, double the record from the previous week.

Appearing for the first time since recovering from the virus himself, Britain's health minister Matt Hancock promised a tenfold increase in the

number of daily tests for the coronavirus by the end of the month after the government faced criticism for failing to roll out mass checks for health workers and the public.

In Italy, it was the fourth consecutive day in which the number of new cases stayed within a range of 4,050-4,782, seeming to confirm government hopes that the epidemic had hit a plateau.

Noting that the world is facing a new virus and the first pandemic caused by a coronavirus, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that the WHO was reviewing the evidence and adapting recommendations to contain the pandemic as necessary.

"Every day, we are engaged in numerous discussions with our extensive networks of experts to refine our guidance to reflect the best science," Tedros said, noting the need to adapt WHO's guidance for different settings, especially in the poorest and most vulnerable communities.

"Talks underway" over possible EU border closure extension

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said yesterday that talks were underway among European Union member states over whether



British Health Secretary Matt Hancock speaks during a media briefing on the coronavirus at Downing Street, London, on Thursday. AP

or not to extend border closures beyond Easter in order to tackle the coronavirus crisis.

Von Der Leyen also reiterated that the next EU budget should take the form of a new "Marshall Plan" to drive Europe's recovery from the coronavirus outbreak, and that she felt Europe would emerge from the coronavirus crisis in a stronger state.

UK

The peak of the United Kingdom's coronavirus outbreak will be slightly sooner than previously thought and will come in the next few weeks, Health Secretary Matt Hancock said on Friday.

"The modelling suggests that that peak will be slightly sooner than previous, in the next few weeks but it is very, very sensitive to how many people follow the social distancing guidelines," Hancock told BBC radio.

Hancock on Thursday announced a new strategy to ramp up the UK diagnostics industry and promised a tenfold increase in the number of daily tests for coronavirus by the end of the month.

"I am now setting the goal of 100,000 tests per day by the end of this month. That is the goal and I am determined that we will get there," he told reporters. The current number being conducted is about 10,000 a day.

Hancock said the government was also looking at "immunity certificates" for people who have developed resistance, as part of planning on how to end the national lockdown, but he said more scientific research was needed.

The number of coronavirus deaths across the United Kingdom rose to 2,921 as of Wednesday. The country has reported 33,718 confirmed cases.

The government's current worst case scenario envisages a death toll of 50,000 if self-isolation is not fully adhered to, but the country is not on course for a toll of that scale, a source familiar with emergency government discussions said.

A new hospital, built in under two weeks in a conference centre in London to provide thousands of extra beds to treat those who have contracted the virus, will open its doors on Friday. Built with help from the military, it is the first of six new temporary hospitals to be set up across the country to cope with the outbreak.

Latvia

Latvia reported its first coronavirus death on Friday, when a 99-year-old woman died in a hospital in Riga, the Latvian health ministry said.

"The Ministry of Health confirms that the first patient diagnosed with COVID-19 has died in Latvia today," the ministry said in a statement.

According to the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, Latvia has 493 confirmed cases of coronavirus.

Zambia

Zambia has recorded its first death from coronavirus, and the number of confirmed cases has risen by three to 39, Health Minister Chitalu Chilufya said on Thursday.

Chilufya said the three new cases registered in the southern African country had all got the virus from people who had travelled abroad.

Russia

Russia will send 11 military planes carrying medical equipment to Serbia to help it fight the coronavirus outbreak, the Russian Ministry of Defense said on Friday.

Russia has tallied 4,149 cases of COVID-19 in 78 regions as of Friday, up by 601 the previous day, official data showed. The death toll rose to 34 after four more patients died of the disease, Russia's coronavirus response center said in a statement.

Agencies

No lockdown needed? Japan stores are shutting down voluntarily

By Bloomberg



WITH Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's government stuck on the brink of declaring a state of emergency that might lead to a lockdown, Japan's restaurants, bars and chain stores are taking matters into their own hands by voluntarily shuttering hundreds of stores to help curb the spread of the coronavirus.

Across Tokyo this weekend and into next week, karaoke parlors, amusement centers and izakaya bars will be among the retailers closing, in many cases shutting their entire chains nationwide for more than 10 days.

The closures join those of cinemas and department stores that didn't operate last weekend in response to Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike's call for people to stay indoors.

Japan's strategy for dealing with the virus has so far eschewed full-on lockdowns seen in other rich nations; it has the lowest infection rate of the Group of Seven.

The country's authorities lack the power to enact even if a state of emergency is declared. Instead, the country has focused on encouraging people to avoid an overlap of what it calls "Three Cs" – crowded spaces with poor ventilation, crowded conditions with people and conversations in a short distance.

That has prompted locations likely to host those conditions to shut their doors following Koike's call for people not to go out on weeknights after a series of suspected coronavirus cases were found among those either working or participating in Japan's seedier nightlife scene. Tokyo saw 97 new coronavirus cases on Thursday, the most yet in a single day.

The choice to close isn't an easy one to make, particularly for listed companies which have been punished by the market. Amusement center operator Round One Corp. fell as much as 14 percent after announcing it would close all its stores, with its shares down now down by a half this year.

Yakitori restaurant chain Torikizoku Co. fell the most since listing in 2014. The government is offering subsidies for companies forced to close stores, so long as they preserve jobs.

"The use of trains has dropped," said Seiichiro Samejima, an analyst at Ichiyoshi Research Institute Inc., pointing to figures that showed an almost 80 percent decline in passengers last weekend in Tokyo. "Customer numbers and sales will drop the same amount. Companies may also be thinking about the employment subsidies."

The timing of the pandemic couldn't have been worse. April begins a new year for many universities and companies, which typically see a boost in business from fresh batches of students and employees celebrating at night – with a round of karaoke a typical choice for the after-party. But with the public becoming more aware of the need for social distancing, many have already begun to shun such gatherings.

Agencies

Pandemic impacting young people's mental health

LONDON

THE novel coronavirus crisis is impacting the mental health of young people, according to a new survey by the charity YoungMinds that found 83 percent of young people in the United Kingdom with a history of mental health problems had reported a deterioration because of the pandemic.

YoungMinds surveyed 2,111 people under the age of 25 who have a history of mental health problems. The polling took place between March 20 – the day most schools closed to students because of government restrictions – and March 25, when further restrictive measures were put in place.

Among respondents accessing mental health support in the lead-up to the crisis from service

providers including the National Health Service, counsellors at school and university, private providers, charities, and helplines, 74 percent said they had continued to get some mental health support after the introduction of social distancing restrictions, despite the immense challenges that posed to services.

But 26 percent said they could not access support. Some had experienced cancellations because of schools closing. Others had not been able to attend peer support groups and face-to-face services because of the virus restrictions and could not access replacement services provided online or by phone.

Respondents said they were most worried about the health of their families, school and university closures, loss of routine and coping mechanisms, isolation,



This photo shows a large advertising display issued by the National Health Service asking people to stay at home as they fight the ongoing coronavirus outbreak. In London, on Wednesday. AP

and a loss of social connections. Naomi, a 21-year-old YoungMinds activist, said the crisis has made her feel anxious.

"My normal coping strategies, such as keeping a routine, getting out of the house and meeting people, are now no longer possible and this is a big trigger

for my existing anxiety, which is getting worse. What would normally be quite a stressful time in my final year of university is harder at the moment," she said.

Naomi has found other coping strategies, such as keeping a journal of her emotions and setting

a goal of a certain number of interactions with people each day.

Emma Thomas, chief executive of YoungMinds, said: "The coronavirus pandemic is a human tragedy that will continue to alter the lives of everyone in our society, and the results of this survey show just how big an impact this has had, and will continue to have, on the mental health of young people."

Thomas added that it is a time for people to pull together and "look out for those who are most at risk in our society".

"The government must fully recognize the growing mental health impact that COVID-19 will continue to have on children and young people, and ensure that addressing this is a key component of the ongoing response," she said.

Agencies

AU commission deputy chief hails China's continued support in battle against COVID-19

ADDIS ABABA

THE Deputy Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission, Kweisi Quartey, has hailed China's measures and efforts to handle the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, and its continued support to Africa in the battle against the epidemic.

This came during the meeting on Thursday between the Deputy Chairperson of the AU Commission and Chinese Ambassador to AU, Liu Yuxi, at the AU headquarters in Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa.

They touched on ways of con-

solidating deliberations towards increased collaboration between AU and China in the fight against COVID-19 in Africa, according to a statement that Quartey (pictured) posted on his Facebook.

The meeting between the two sides was part of efforts by the AU Commission to contain and minimize the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, aiming at enhancing collaboration between AU and China to combat COVID-19 in Africa, at the bilateral as well as on a coordinated continental scale.

Stating that one of the major effects of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic is the mas-



sive disruption of the global supply chain, he said many countries are on a full or partial shutdown, while medical consumables need-

ed to tackle the pandemic are in increasingly short supply.

"The decisive manner in which the Government of China is handling the outbreak of the pandemic has caught the attention of the WHO and the international media," he said, indicating that his meeting with the Chinese envoy was therefore to discuss how China could facilitate the procurement of needed medical supplies for the continent.

The two sides discussed how to deepen cooperation on the area of public health and to mitigate the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on the African conti-

nent and its people.

The Chinese ambassador to AU said China has placed a high value on its relationship with Africa, and that Africa has always stood by China and vice-versa.

The Deputy Chairperson of the AU Commission reiterated that the Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, which is the AU technical health arm, through its regional collaboration centers, had, before the first case was reported on the continent, trained health personnel from all over the continent in readiness to fight such a pandemic.

Xinhua

Shanghai doctor aiding Wuhan shares COVID-19 experience with overseas counterparts

IT'S high time to share the effective measures that Chinese medical professionals have adopted in Wuhan and Hubei with the world, as epidemiologists warned the global battle against COVID-19 is just starting and cases outside China are expected to spike.

Chen Jinhong, a professor at Shanghai's prestigious Huashan Hospital, who served in the frontline Wuhan for 44 days, highlighted the effective strate-

gies to curb the pandemic.

"With the treatment experiences gained in Wuhan, I'm ready to help fight the novel coronavirus outbreak in foreign countries so long as China, a responsible and powerful country, needs more experienced medical staff to do so.

The virus recognizes no borders, only when the global community is united, can we effectively curb its spread," said Chen speaking exclusively to the

Global Times.

Chen added "the current situation in foreign countries is quite similar to that in China when COVID-19 outbreak first befell in Hubei.

The infectious rate is very high at this stage." China's epidemic prevention and control measures induced the turning point in China's fight against the novel coronavirus when the authorities decided "to quarantine all the suspects and close

contacts" and "treat all the confirmed patients."

Explicating the medical approach, Chen said, it is based on a diagnosis and treatment classification. The patients were classified into four categories, the suspected cases, patients with mild symptoms, patients with severe symptoms, and patients in critical condition, and accordingly treatment plans were enacted.

The suspected cases under-

went quarantine. The mild patients were admitted to the makeshift fangcang hospitals for further diagnosis and treatment. The patients with severe symptoms were treated at the designated hospitals, and the critically ill ones were admitted to the ICU.

"It's an effective practice as the sources of infection are curbed to the biggest extent and the survival rate of the critical patients is increased, thus the

fatality rate can be decreased. With both ends controlled, the whole pandemic prevention situation is under control," Chen stated. "But based on the information I learned about the epidemic control measures in foreign countries, loopholes exist in the enforcement of government policy that triggered the worsening pandemic situation and escalating death toll."

In medically well-developed countries, medical professionals

can gather experience in treating severe and critical patients. But more efforts should be put in identifying and curbing suspected and mild cases so that source of infection can be contained.

The general public and medical personnel should better protect themselves against the infection, or else there's a risk of transmitting the virus to others.

Global Times

China refutes US accusations of concealing extent of virus

BEIJING

CHINA on Thursday refuted several United States intelligence officials' accusations that China concealed the extent of the coronavirus epidemic and under-reported the number of the Covid-19 cases and deaths, and noted that such remarks were "shameless and immoral."

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying made the comments at a news briefing when answering a relevant question.

"China has been giving open, transparent and timely updates to the world as demonstrated clearly in the details my colleagues and I have elaborated on China's response many times," Hua (pictured) said.

On international public health security, it is the World Health Organization (WHO) and experts on epidemiology and disease control who are entitled to make judgement, rather than several politicians who are habitual liars, Hua said.

It is true that Wuhan was where CO-

VID-19 cases were first reported. But where and when exactly did this virus originate? We read many recent reports and findings on that.

There are articles written by medical professionals from Italy, the UK, the US, Australia and other countries, which are published in top academic journals including Nature Medicine. On the origin of the virus, the Chinese government's position has been consistent.

It is a serious matter that requires scientific, fact-based and professional assessment made by experts. Now there are various reports on experts' science-based and authoritative opinions.

These views should be valued and respected by all, including those politicians in the US. China invited WHO experts to visit Wuhan as part of a joint mission. As some in the US are so obsessed with the issue, we advise the US side to also invite WHO and international experts to visit the country and find out.

She said a senior WHO official on



Wednesday refuted unjustified accusations against China's epidemic data at a press conference in Geneva.

China has always been open, transparent and responsible in all its efforts, Hua said.

"The decisive and strong measures taken by the Chinese government ensured to the highest possible extent

the life, safety and health of the Chinese people and bought precious time for stemming the global spread of the virus."

"We understand that the United States is facing difficulties and some US officials are under pressure, and we feel deeply for the hardship of the American people," Hua said.

"Out of humanitarian spirit, we would like to provide help and support within our capability to the United States in the fight against the pandemic."

However, Hua said the remarks by these few US politicians are just shameless and immoral.

"Slandering, smearing and blaming cannot make up for lost time and more lies will only waste more time and lead to more lives lost."

"We advise these politicians that, at this moment, they should put the safety of people's lives and health before politics," Hua said.

"It is immoral and inhumane to continue to politicise public health issues, which should be condemned by all

people of the world, including people of the United States."

We understand the US is facing difficulties and some officials are under pressure and we feel deeply for the hardship of the American people.

Out of humanitarian spirit, we would like to provide support and help to them as our ability permits. However, the comments by these few US politicians are just shameless and morally repulsive.

As we've repeatedly said, slanders, smears and blame games cannot make up for lost time. More lies will only waste more time and lead to more lives lost. A word of advice to these politicians: at this moment, lives should come before politics.

It is immoral and inhumane to politicise public health, which should be condemned by all in the US and beyond. I hope they will lose no more time and focus instead on fighting the pandemic and saving American lives".

Hua said

Agencies

Northern Fleet cutting-edge frigate sails to shipyard in Russia's northwest for upgrade

EVERMORSK

THE Project 22350 frigate Admiral Gorshkov has departed from the Northern Fleet's main naval base of Severomorsk and set off for Severodvinsk in the northwestern Arkhangelsk Region for planned maintenance and partial upgrade, the Fleet's press office reported yesterday.

"The ship is making a transit to the Belomorsk naval base where it will undergo planned maintenance with the partial upgrade of its systems and mechanisms at enterprises of the shipbuilding industry," the press office said in a statement.

During its inter-base transit, the warship's crew will continue sharpening naval skills and will practice air defense and anti-submarine warfare tasks, and also measures for ship damage control while on the move at sea, the statement says.

"After the technical works are over, the ship will undergo trials at the Fleet's combat training ranges in the White Sea," the press office said.

A source in the domestic defense industry earlier told TASS that Russia's latest Tsirkon hypersonic missile would be test-launched several times from the frigate Admiral Gorshkov in 2020.

The frigate Admiral Gorshkov is the Northern Fleet's most advanced warship. It was built at the Severnaya Shipyard in St. Petersburg in Russia's northwest and made operational in the Fleet in July 2018. The warship successfully accomplished the tasks of several drills and round-the-world deployment.

The Admiral Gorshkov is the Project 22350 lead frigate. Warships of this class displace 4,500 tonnes and can develop a speed of up to 29 knots. They are armed with Oniks and Kalibr missile launchers, and also with the Poliment-Redut surface-to-air missile system.

Emptying skies to cut airline emissions 38% in 2020 - report

By Bloomberg

AIRLINES' carbon emissions could drop by more than one-third this year as travel demand sinks, a trend that could continue as businesses reassess their need to fly, according to the Australia Institute.

The industry's carbon-dioxide emissions between Feb 1 and March 19 fell by more than 10 million tons from the same period a year ago as airlines scrapped flights during the coronavirus outbreak, the research body said in a report.

Traffic forecasts by the Inter-

national Air Transport Association suggest airlines' emissions could drop 38 percent in 2020, according to the report.

Businesses barred from flying have turned to online alternatives to face-to-face meetings including Zoom Video Communications.

The teleconferencing company has recorded more active users in the first two months of 2020 than in all of 2019. Commercial aviation accounts for about 2 percent of global carbon emissions, according to IATA.

"The question remains as to



whether Covid-19 pandemic will permanently change our flying habits," said Richie Merzian, climate and energy pro-

gram director at the Australia Institute. "If we can work well together online now, perhaps it will permanently reduce the

need for business travel."

Air traffic bounced back within months after SARS in 2003, though that outbreak

didn't have the global reach nor impact of the coronavirus.

In Australia, Qantas Airways Ltd and Virgin Australia Holdings Ltd, have shuttered all international routes and pared back domestic services to the bare bones.

Those cuts will see the country's demand for aviation fuel drop by as much as 90 percent as long as the crisis persists, according to fuel marketing company Caltex Australia Ltd. Australia's aviation emissions could more than halve in 2020, according to the Australia Institute report.

Pandemic calls for global coordination on daily necessities

FACING an escalating coronavirus threat, some countries have imposed harsh lockdowns and border controls, which may cause shortages of daily necessities due to incomplete industrial chains. A global coordination mechanism covering basic necessities among countries is imperative.

While the coronavirus pandemic spreads around the world, many countries have been forced to implement tough measures. Some have moved to close their borders or pondered stricter customs controls. More countries and regions have enforced lockdowns or quarantines to control the virus.

Though necessary, these measures inevitably come with side effects. It will be a while before economies worldwide wake up from the shock of the coronavirus.

The economic shock is both foreseeable and unavoidable. Now making sure that basic supplies don't run short has become the top priority when a growing number of people face intensifying lockdowns that could last for a long time.

Many have been discussing and wondering what is the so-called Chinese way of containing the coronavirus. As a country that was struck by the coronavirus hardest, China managed to control the virus effectively relying on two things.



On the one hand, China strictly enforced lockdowns to stop transmission. At the same time, the country maintained adequate supplies of people's basic living necessities under lockdowns.

Even cities like Wuhan, which adopted the harshest stay-at-home orders, guaranteed steady supplies of food, utilities and daily necessities.

What is also worth noting is that China benefited from its long and complete industrial chain, as well as its complete industrial categories.

Unlike China, most countries that have taken strong measures

do not have full-scale industrial chains. Many necessities of life such as toilet paper, hand wipes and products made with plastics and rubber are far from self-sufficient, depending on imports.

Long-term lockdowns and border controls that affect trade and reduce economic activities will eventually lead to shortages of everyday necessities.

Due to fears of shortages, consumers in the US, Canada, the UK and Australia have reportedly emptied the shelves of grocery stores and stocked up on toilet paper, causing more shortages. Once a vicious cycle of hoarding starts as the coronavirus

spreads, it could evolve into chaotic unrest.

The cost for China was huge to contain the coronavirus. The Chinese economy has suffered damage from it, and the impact will not be mitigated in the short term.

The country has gained experience and learned lessons from this disaster. Now it is willing to offer advice to other countries that just started their lockdowns. It is time for countries worldwide to build up coordination mechanisms to ward off potential shortages of necessities.

Global Times

China's economy resilient enough to guarantee stable employment - NDRC



Workers in the large motor workshop of the Hebei large motor workshop at the equipment manufacturing base in Luancheng District, Shijiazhuang City, Hebei Province, are shaping the winding end of the low-voltage high-power motor. Photo: People's Daily

THE Chinese economy is resilient, has great potential and is flexible enough to keep employment stable, as the economic fundamentals sustaining sound development remain unchanged, an official from the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) said.

Gao Gao, deputy secretary-general of the NDRC, expressed confidence that the novel coronavirus epidemic will not change the basic conditions that allow the country to enjoy stable employment.

Gao's remarks were echoed by Zhang Yi, an official from the National Bureau of Statistics.

Zhang pointed out that China

has rolled out a series of policies aimed at boosting employment, such as efforts to ensure work resumption, and finding jobs for migrant workers and new college graduates.

"Further implementation of such policies will ensure stable employment," Zhang added.

China will support "Internet Plus" economies, and develop a consumer service industry integrating online and offline features and focusing on elderly care, childcare and early childhood education, and house-keeping services that will lead to the creation of new jobs, according to a State Council executive meeting on March 17.

The online-offline integration will lead to the creation of new business models and provide broad space for innovation and business startups, Gao noted.

As innovation and business startups can create more jobs, college graduates and migrant workers should be given a favorable environment to start their own businesses, Gao said. He added that China will also support flexible employment through multiple channels, and encourage people who are returning or moving to the countryside to start businesses or pursue innovations.

People's Daily

Two Russian Navy ships make call at South Africa's Cape Town

PRETORIA

THE Russian Navy's guard ship Yaroslav Mudry and sea tanker Yelnya have called at the port of Cape Town in South Africa, a spokesperson for the Russian Consulate General in that country told TASS on Tuesday.

"The ships have arrived from the Indian Ocean and are now replenishing supplies in South Africa for accomplishing upcoming missions in their long-distance deployment. The ships have arrived in the republic after their anti-piracy watch," the spokesperson said.

A coronavirus quarantine is in

effect in Cape Town and on the entire territory of the Republic of South Africa. That is why, the ceremony to welcome the Russian ships by representatives of the South African Army, the Mayor's Office and the public on March 31 has been cancelled.

"Unfortunately, Cape Town has been unable to worthily welcome the Russian ships and their crews due to the restrictions imposed in the Republic of South Africa over the coronavirus spread," Consul of the Russian Consulate General in Cape Town Yevgeny Kosenkov told TASS.

The Yaroslav Mudry and the

Yelnya will stay in the port of Cape Town for several days.

As South Africa's Defense Web portal reported, the two Russian Navy ships are following the pipe-laying vessel Akademik Cherskiy, which after its stop in Mozambique sailed around the Cape of Good Hope and entered the Atlantic Ocean.

At the time when the Yaroslav Mudry and the Yelnya moored at Cape Town, the Akademik Cherskiy was sailing near the coast of Namibia towards one of the ports of Angola, according to the web portal.

The Baltic Fleet's naval group comprising the guard ship

Yaroslav Mudry and the sea tanker Yelnya embarked on their long-distance deployment from the Baltic Fleet's main naval base of Baltiysk in the westernmost Kaliningrad Region on October 1 and set off for the Indian Ocean.

In December, the warships took part for the first time in the naval phase of the Indra-2019 Russian-Indian drills and in the Maritime Security Belt Russia-China-Iran naval maneuvers.

On January 21-22, 2020, the Baltic Fleet's naval group held anti-piracy drills with the destroyer Harusame of Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force in the Arabian Sea.

Following the route of Russian barques

The naval ships Yaroslav Mudry and Yelnya arrived in Cape Town two weeks after the two Russian windjammers – the frigate Pallada and the barque Sedov called at the port.

The sail ships are making a round-the-world voyage devoted to the 200th anniversary of the discovery of the Antarctica by Russian explorers and the 75th anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945.

The festive ceremonies held aboard the Pallada and the

Sedov on March 18 to hand over two copies of the Victory Banner were the main event of the stay of the sail ships' crews in the south of Africa.

The copies of the Victory Banner were received by representatives of the Russian diplomatic corps and military diplomats for keeping them on South African soil.

The Russian Embassy in the capital of Pretoria and Russia's Consulate General in Cape Town are operating on the territory of the Republic of South Africa.

The Russian representatives in South Africa also received two Immortal Regiment Banners.

The Immortal Regiment march is held on May 9 in many cities of the world to commemorate those who fought or died in World War II.

For the entire Russian community in the south of Africa, the Immortal Regiment Banner is a very important symbol of unity as it has become a tradition to hold Immortal Regiment marches in the cities of South Africa on Victory Day.

This year, these marches will be held in Johannesburg and Cape Town with the original banners of this popular movement.

Agencies



Tekashi 6ix9ine

Judge lets rapper Tekashi 6ix9ine go home, citing COVID-19

NEW YORK

RAPPER Tekashi 6ix9ine was ordered immediately freed from a Manhattan federal lockup four months early Thursday by a judge who cited his asthma and the greater danger he would face behind bars during the coronavirus outbreak.

U.S. District Judge Paul A. Engelmayer made the ruling a day after telling lawyers on both sides that he intended to do so. He cited "a raging and virulent pandemic that has entered federal prisons in New York City." Prosecutors did not oppose the action.

"In light of the heightened medical risk presented to Mr. Hernandez by the COVID-19 pandemic, there are extraordinary and compelling reasons to reduce Mr. Hernandez's sentence," he said.

Last week, the judge said he would have sentenced the 23-year-old performer, whose real name is Daniel Hernandez, to home confinement rather than prison when he announced the sentence in December had he known then of the coronavirus.

Engelmayer ordered the release the same day that he asked lawyers to advise what should be done after a former associate of Tekashi 6ix9ine who was released from jail because of the coronavirus threat might have put himself in danger outside bars.

The judge said a video of Kintea McKenzie, who pleaded guilty in the case and was

awaiting sentencing, "appears to reflect Mr. McKenzie partying in very close proximity to numerous others."

Engelmayer said he was concerned because the activity might reflect a violation of McKenzie's terms of pre-sentence release and because "the conduct depicted on the video suggests a complete lack of concern by Mr. McKenzie for avoidance of contagion of himself and others."

For Tekashi 6ix9ine, testimony against members of the Nine Trey Gangsta Bloods gang earned him leniency from charges that could have subjected him to a mandatory minimum 37 years in prison for crimes that included orchestrating a shooting in which an innocent bystander was wounded.

The rapper is serving his sentence in a private jail because he cooperated with prosecutors and because the government has control of him as a cooperator.

He was expected to be released July 31. He will be subject to electronic monitoring until he is released from home confinement. Until then, he can visit only his lawyer or a doctor. His lawyer said he was diagnosed in October with bronchitis and sinusitis.

In 2018, Tekashi 6ix9ine had a multiplatinum hit song, "Fefe," with Nicki Minaj, which peaked at No. 3 on the pop charts, and "Stoopid," featuring imprisoned rapper Bobby Shmurda.

(AP)

'There may be no more tennis this year', says Wimbledon chief Lewis

LONDON

TENNIS may not return until 2021 after the coronavirus pandemic caused the cancellation of the entire grasscourt season and most of the claycourt campaign, All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC) chief executive Richard Lewis said on Thursday.

The outbreak has played havoc with the global sporting calendar and the Wimbledon championships were cancelled by the AELTC on Wednesday for the first time since the second World War.

Lewis, who is set to step down in July, said he hoped the situation will stabilise in the coming months to allow the hardcourt season to get underway before the U.S. Open begins on Aug. 24.

"The optimist in me - and I'm often not optimistic - still hopes that the American hardcourt season will take place," Lewis said.

"One hopes that things have settled down a bit and those big 1,000-point tournaments - Montreal, Toronto,

Cincinnati - can happen in the lead-up to the U.S. Open. We all know that's probably tenuous at the moment.

"I don't think it's unrealistic to say that there may be no more tennis this year. But let's hope that the U.S. Open and Roland Garros can take place."

The French Open, originally due to be played from May 24-June 7, was postponed and controversially rescheduled by the French tennis federation for Sept. 20-Oct. 4 - a week after the U.S. Open concludes.

Top players, including eight-times champion Roger Federer and seven-times winner Serena Williams, expressed their disappointment at not being able to play at Wimbledon this year.

The two 38-year-olds are nearing the end of their careers and Lewis is hoping they will return to the All England Club in 2021.

"We'd love to see both of them back," Lewis said. "It's something to look forward to, and we'll hopefully enjoy it all the more, a silver lining to come out of it."

REUTERS

Contracts vs ownership: Why Yanga, Simba leaderships are wrong on player interviews

BY CORRESPONDENT MICHAEL ENEZA

PLENTY of soul searching is going on in the corridors of city giants Simba SC and Dar Young Africans, on account of repeated irritation of club leaderships when players talk on their own to the mass media, whether it is newspapers, radios or television channels. There appears to be letters being circulated as orders from club chief executives or somewhere along the hierarchy that players ought to use club media outlets for airing views, instead of taking 'club issues' to other places. It is likely that plenty of club officialdom and elsewhere shall take this as sound.

The communication - and there appears to be plenty of similar instructions or points of querying on players being interviewed in various places in what was said in respective circulars so to speak - simply seeks to gag players from speaking. One cited communication complains that players don't give adequate or proper cooperation to club media when it comes to airing their views on this or that matter, or as a routine exercise for enhancing the club image, but are ready to do so when approached by other media. This appears to be disrespect for the club, for once.

What is at stake is to find out from what angle the players are said to be wrong to air their views on their welfare - not club leadership wrangles as at any rate the media wouldn't seek out players for that sort of concern - on other than selected media, preferably in-house media. To start with, in-house media is no media at all, for mass media is an avenue for free engagement of an individual to talk what she or he thinks or wants, and that can scarcely be performed within an outlet owned by the player's employer. It means that clubs want patriotism



Simba's midfielder, Jonas Mkude (L), gets the better of Namungo FC midfielder, Carlos Protus, in a recent Premier League clash, which took place in Dar es Salaam. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA.

from players, isn't it?

The question is whether the players are in error, any error whatsoever, first in talking to other media rather than club in-house outlets, and secondly for making remarks or expressing views that are marginally or otherwise critical of club leaderships on welfare, etc. It is unclear how far there were technical issues like coaching techniques but usually the key problem is welfare, in particular when players go for months without payment, or recent bonus cash is withheld, or information is curbed as to what it properly amounted to. Club leaders wish this to be internal...

There is a simple reason why things of this sort can't be said to be internal to the club, namely that players aren't part of the club ownership, and not even among its officials. They may be the club's external image in terms of prowess or ability, but they act in their capacity as contracted employees, year-long casual staff to be more precise, and on no account can they be expected to have the club at heart, beyond their actual welfare tied to contractual commitments. If they

have such sentiments they would in that sense constitute part of the fan base, not as contracted players.

The club leaderships are trying to gloss over this aspect, in trying to rake in the players to become part of the 'club spirit.' This isn't the case as players are used and discarded, and the pretension about having the club at heart would be sentimentally terminated the day that the club stops having a heart for the player, in which case the mutual regard between club and player ends there. As each player has a day when his services will no longer be needed at the club, and thus he will not be part of the club except as part of its fan base, why pretend that he was part of the club in the first place? If someone is disgruntled as an employee, is he restricted whom he tells the matter, that is, being told in advance who should listen to his story and perhaps pay attention?

On this question club officials are strictly speaking being disingenuous, in letting out the idea that they are the best to listen to players' grievances or misgivings, whereas only their disfigured

external image pushes them to act in relation to welfare of the players. Otherwise they would persist in what is known by the idiom of 'cock and bull stories,' that is, anything that one wants to tell children as to what is happening, and they softly complain to the club media, presumably acknowledging that club officials had advanced this or that explanation. It can also be expected that within an in-house media interview the player will necessarily feel that answer is reasonable!

Club officials ought to know that it is part of their job to properly manage players, and not to expect that players will help them to manage the club. Often times the players are complaining of obvious wrongdoing, which in club and association officialdom takes years to resolve, or never. Plenty of what was wrong in clubs and in the Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) was only unearthed as part of President John Magufuli's campaign against corruption. How could in-house media help solve anything when its appointed role is to sing praises of the club leadership, first?

Music never dies: 'Bolero' busts out of coronavirus lockdown

LE PECQ, France

LOOK closely: The kettle drum player has a wooden spoon in one hand, a ladle in the other ... and doesn't even have his drums.

But, hey, cutting a few corners can be forgiven of an orchestra that managed the remarkable feat of performing "Bolero" while its musicians are scattered far and wide under coronavirus lockdowns.

Why? To send this message to music lovers: We are still here for you.

Like building a musical jigsaw puzzle, the National Orchestra of France used the magic of technology to weave together the sight and sounds of its musicians, who filmed themselves playing alone in their homes into a seamless, rousing whole.

Posting a video of their stitched-together performance on YouTube was a way of keeping in touch with each other and with audiences they sorely miss playing for.

"For us, the public is essential. Without the public, we don't really exist," said Didier Benetti, the kettle drum player.

The video posted Sunday has quickly racked up hundreds of thousands of views.

The performance starts with three musicians: a cellist, a violinist and a percussionist with "Stay home" written on his red drum.

A flutist joins, haunting, bewitching, seemingly playing in his lounge.



In this handout photo provided by the National Orchestra of France on Wednesday April 1, 2020, musicians from the National Orchestra of France are shown in the screenshot as a patchwork, each performing parts of "Bolero" alone in lockdown. The musicians recorded themselves over several days in March for this video posted by the orchestra on March 29. With the magic of technology, their individual videos were woven together to create a rousing orchestra-like sound for the famous piece of music by French composer Maurice Ravel. (National Orchestra of France via AP)

The musical tension and power builds as more and more join, until they are an orchestra of 50.

Benetti rearranged French composer Maurice Ravel's work, chopping it down from the usual 15 minutes to a more manageable and social media-friendly length of just under four minutes.

The musicians got their scores by email. They also got an audio track to listen to through headphones as they played. That audio included a previous recording of the music and the ticking sound of a metronome, to help them keep time and stay in perfect unison despite being scattered to the winds.

The musicians filmed themselves over four days in the fi-

nal week of March. One violinist played outside, with a beautiful seascape as his backdrop. Most of the others filmed themselves inside, making the performance feel particularly intimate. No black tie. The clothes were casual, with open shirts, T-shirts, jeans.

Dimitri Scapolan, a video producer and sound engineer, burned the midnight oil to stitch together the musicians' self-shot footage into a remarkably coherent musical and visual patchwork.

For a smoother sound, Scapolan also blended in audio of a previous performance that the orchestra recorded before the new coronavirus turned the world upside down. France is one of Europe's hardest-hit countries, with more

than 57,000 confirmed cases and 4,000 dead.

When France went into lockdown on March 17, Benetti couldn't take his hefty kettle drums home. So unlike other musicians, he had to improvise for the video, enthusiastically pretending to bang two chairs in his living room with utensils he took from his kitchen.

Performing for the video was "very therapeutic," but still felt like second-best compared to being all together on stage, Benetti said.

But isolation is having an unforeseen upside.

"We are starting to realize that we really need each other," he said. "Music is sharing."

AP

FIFA chief says football will be totally different after coronavirus

ROME

FOOTBALL will be totally different when it eventually resumes after the coronavirus outbreak, the head of global soccer body FIFA Gianni Infantino said on Thursday.

"Football will come back, and when it does, we'll celebrate coming out of a nightmare together," he told the Italian news agency ANSA in an interview.

"There is one lesson, however, that both you and me must have understood: the football that will come after the virus will be totally different... (more) inclusive, more social and more supportive, connected to the individual countries and at the same time more global, less arrogant and more welcoming."

He added: "We will be better, more human and more attentive to true values."

Last week, Infantino told Gazzetta dello Sport that it was the right time to take a step back and reform a sport where fixture lists have be-

come overloaded and financial resources increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few elite clubs.

He suggested there could be "fewer, but more interesting tournaments. Maybe fewer squads, but more balance. Fewer, but more competitive, matches to safeguard the health of the players."

Later on Thursday, Infantino told the annual congress of the South American Football Confederation (CONMEBOL) that "it is our responsibility as football administrators, first of all to ensure football can survive and secondly move forward once again."

"On the international match calendar we have to look for global solutions to tackle these global problems in a spirit of cooperation and solidarity," Infantino said in a video link from Zurich.

"Everyone has different interests, but we must talk and put on the table topics that we perhaps didn't discuss in the past."

REUTERS

Europe's leagues told ending play 'last resort'

LONDON

EUROPEAN football, currently at a standstill because of the coronavirus, is focusing on a restart in July and August with clubs and leagues being told that stopping competitions should "really be the last resort."

UEFA, the European Club Association and the European Leagues umbrella group sent a joint letter to their members Thursday saying it was of "paramount importance" that competitions, including domestic leagues, were decided on the field.

The letter, sent by Reuters, was sent hours after the Belgian league abandoned the season and proclaimed Club Brugge as champions. There have also been calls from clubs in the Netherlands and Italy for those respective leagues to be called off.

However, the letter said that two working groups set up by UEFA -- which has agreed to postpone its flagship Euro 2020 tournament until next year -- were working on ways to extend the current season beyond the official June 30 finish. More details are expected by mid-May.

A potential issue could be that many players from prominent leagues -- including the English Premier League, Spanish La Liga, Italian Serie A, German Bundesliga, French Ligue 1 -- would, legally, disappear from club rosters come July 1 when their contracts expire or when their loan deals come to an end.

FIFA have assembled a working group to deal with that issue and a proposal, obtained by ESPN's Gabriele Marcotti, outlines some potential solutions. The single biggest proposed change is that all contracts set to expire on June 30 would instead expire on the final day of the 2019-20 season, whenever that day is in an individual

country in accordance with their government and health authorities.

The letter sent Thursday said the working groups were "focusing on scenarios encompassing the months of July and August, including the possibility that the UEFA competitions restart after the completion of domestic leagues."

It said that a joint management of calendars was needed to coordinate the end of the current season with the start of the new one, "which may be partly impacted because of the overstretch."

It also called on leagues around Europe to work together.

"Only an extraordinary coordinated effort of all competition organisers can help European football out of the crisis, recovering in full its core asset, the competitions," it said.

It added: "Stopping competitions should really be the last resort after acknowledging that no calendar alternative would allow to conclude the season. "We are confident that football can restart in the months to come -- with conditions that will be dictated by public authorities -- and believe that any decision of abandoning domestic competitions is, at this stage, premature and not justified."

It appeared to suggest that, where competitions did not end on the field, the clubs involved might not qualify for European competition next season.

"Since participation in UEFA club competitions is determined by the sporting result achieved at the end of a full domestic competition, a premature termination would cast doubts about the fulfillment of such condition," it said.

It added that UEFA reserves the right to "assess the entitlement of clubs" to take part in the Champions League and Europa League.

(Agencies)

Juve won't accept title after coronavirus - chief

MILAN

JUVENTUS would not accept winning the Serie A title as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, according to Italian Football Federation (FIGC) president Gabriele Gravina.

Maurizio Sarri's side lead the Italian league by a single point ahead of Lazio with 12 matches remaining as the Italian federation extended the ban of all Italian sporting activity to April 13.

Italy has been under lockdown for three weeks.

Fiorentina and Torino owners are confident the league will be unable to finish but Gravina has said it would be an "injustice" to scrap the campaign.

"The top priority is completing the season," he told TMW Radio.

"The idea is to start from May 20 or early June, to end in July.

"There's even been talk of August and September. I've made it clear that I'd hate to take the risk of compromising another season to save this one.

"I think scrapping the season would be rather complex. It would be a grave injustice, which would lead to a legal emergency during an epidemiological one.

"Only the Scudetto would need assigning and Juventus themselves, I believe, have expressed a dislike of such of a solution."

Belgium became the first European top-tier league to cancel the rest of its season and crowned Club Brugge as league champions on Thursday.

(Agencies)

Players must 'share financial burden' during virus - PFA

LONDON

THE Professional Footballers' Association insist they are aware players must "share the financial burden" during the coronavirus as the row over wage cuts for Premier League stars mounted on Thursday.

The British Government's Health Secretary Matt Hancock called on top-flight players to take a pay cut after several clubs placed non-playing staff on furlough.

Hancock said Premier League players should "make a contribution, take a pay cut and play their part".

The English season is suspended until at least April 30 due to the pandemic and there is little chance of a return to action for some while after that.

The optics of top stars, many on multi-million pound contracts, being fully paid during the crisis are bad for the PFA and the Premier League, especially with Tottenham, Newcastle and Norwich all using the government's job retention furlough scheme to save money.

Pressure is mounting on players to accept wage cuts or deferrals, with talks on-going between the PFA, the Premier League and the English Football League.



A woman wearing a protective face mask walks near the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium (AFP Photo)

The matter is expected to be debated again on Friday at a meeting of English football's major stakeholders.

The players' union hinted at a resolution as they said in a statement: "We fully accept that players will have to be flexible and share the financial burden of the Covid-19 outbreak in order to secure the long-

term future of their own club and indeed the wider game."

"Our advice going out to players at this point reflects that expectation."

Bournemouth manager Eddie Howe and his Brighton counterpart Graham Potter have agreed to wage cuts in the last two days, along with other senior staff at those clubs.

Players and management staff at Championship leaders Leeds have agreed to defer wages.

Former Tottenham striker Gary Lineker on Thursday criticised his old club for using the furlough scheme and the PFA added that clubs should only be doing so if it is absolutely necessary.

"We are aware of the pub-

lic sentiment that the players should pay non-playing staff's salaries. However, our current position is that - as businesses - if clubs can afford to pay their players and staff, they should," the statement said.

"The players we have spoken to recognise that the non-playing staff are a vital part of their club and they do not want to see club staff furloughed unfairly."

"Any use of the government's support schemes without genuine financial need is detrimental to the wider society."

Hancock's demand followed comments by his Conservative colleague Julian Knight, who is chair of the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport committee.

Knight has told Premier League chief executive Richard Masters that clubs who furlough non-playing staff but do not impose cuts on player wages should be subjected to a windfall tax if they do not change approach by April 7.

AFP

The issues the Premier League's big clubs need to address when football returns

BY MARK OGDEN, SENIOR WRITER, ESPN FC

FOOTBALL'S decision-makers continue to attempt to navigate through the coronavirus crisis that has seen all major leagues suspended indefinitely until competitive action can safely resume. But while the game is on hold, decisions and plans are still being made at the top clubs in preparation for when football returns.

The leading clubs in the Premier League all face different challenges and objectives, and issues to overcome. So what are the priorities to address and questions to be answered?

LIVERPOOL

Core players: Alisson, Virgil van Dijk, Trent Alexander-Arnold, Mohamed Salah, Sadio Mane

Top priority when football resumes: For Liverpool, only one thing will matter when -- or if -- the 2019-20 season resumes: They simply have to secure the two victories that will confirm the club's first league title since 1990. Until the Premier League was suspended last month, Jurgen Klopp's team were just six points from confirming themselves as champions. A 25-point lead over Manchester City is as good as unassailable, but mathematically, the job has still not been done and that is the key. Two more wins, whether they come in June, July, August or September, is the absolute priority for Liverpool.

Biggest question to be answered: Leaving aside the ultimate question, which is whether this season will ever be played to a conclusion, Liverpool have to plan ahead with a business-as-usual approach. That means Klopp and the club's recruitment department must assess the squad and decide whether it can dominate for the next two to three seasons or if it requires new players to replace those who may have already produced their best at Anfield. Liverpool have made just one first-team signing -- Takumi Minamino -- since summer 2018 and they lack a true game-changer in midfield, so the biggest question of all is whether they can afford to have another quiet summer window this time around.

Manchester City

Core players: Ederson, Aymeric Laporte, Kevin De Bruyne, Bernardo Silva, Sergio Aguero

Top priority when football resumes: The Champions League. City's owners have made no secret of their determination, maybe even desperation, to have the European Cup in the club's trophy cabinet, and this season arguably offers them their best-ever chance. Holders Liverpool have been knocked out and City are 2-1 up from the first leg of their round-of-16 tie against Real Madrid in Spain. Over-

turning UEFA's two-season European ban is another battle City must win, but on the pitch, Pep Guardiola's team now have a great opportunity to end the wait for Champions League success.

Biggest question to be answered: A cloud of uncertainty is hovering over the Etihad Stadium because of UEFA's decision to ban City from European competition for the next two seasons for "serious breaches of club licensing and financial fair play regulations."

City have lodged an appeal against the sanction with the Court of Arbitration for Sport, but that hearing is now on hold due to the coronavirus crisis. The outcome of the appeal is absolutely crucial to the club's future. If they fail, the financial and reputational damage will be huge, but they also risk losing star players who will not accept being out of the Champions League at the height of their career.

LEICESTER CITY

Core players: Kasper Schmeichel, Jonny Evans, Wilfred Ndidi, James Maddison, Jamie Vardy

Top priority when football resumes: Leicester went into the shutdown in third place, with an eight-point cushion between themselves and fifth-placed Manchester United in the race for Champions League qualification, so getting the job and clinching a top-four spot is the priority. Manager Brendan Rodgers will be concerned by a recent run of form that has seen his team win just

two, and lose four, of their past eight Premier League games, however. Can Leicester hold on during their last nine games or has the rot set in? With United due at the King Power Stadium in the final game of the season, it could go down to the wire.

Biggest question to be answered: Can Rodgers keep his team together? Leicester's performances this season have raised the profile of several of their younger players, with Ben Chilwell (Chelsea) and James Madison (Manchester United) both being targeted by heavyweight rivals. Champions League qualification might be enough to persuade both to stay, but the Foxes face a fight if they want to keep them.

CHELSEA

Core players: Cesar Azpilicueta, N'Golo Kante, Willian, Mason Mount, Tammy Abraham

Top priority when football resumes: Chelsea need to hold on to a place in the top four to be certain of Champions League qualification. Manager Frank Lampard has been able to keep his young side in the top four, but Manchester United, Wolves and Sheffield United are all on their heels, so it will be a testing final period of the campaign for Chelsea.

Biggest question to be answered: Chelsea allowed planning permission to lapse earlier this week on their modernisation and rebuilding proj-

ect at Stamford Bridge, despite the club hierarchy insisting that owner Roman Abramovich has only shelved the plans rather than abandoning them completely. But when, or if, the transformation of the ground into a 60,000-seat super-stadium goes ahead is now a crucial issue for Chelsea because they risk falling behind Arsenal, Tottenham and even West Ham if they fail to renovate a now-outdated 41,631-capacity Stamford Bridge.

MANCHESTER UNITED

Core players: David De Gea, Harry Maguire, Scott McTominay, Bruno Fernandes, Marcus Rashford

Top priority when football resumes: United still have two routes to Champions League qualification open to them via the Premier League top four and the Europa League, and they must take at least one of them to avoid Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's position as manager being placed under intense scrutiny. Returning to the Champions League is also crucial in terms of United's recruitment plans as targets such as Jadon Sancho, Donny van de Beek, Matthijs de Ligt and Kalidou Koulibaly would be unlikely to move to Old Trafford to play in the Europa League.

Biggest question to be answered: Will Paul Pogba be at United next season, and do they actually want him to be there? The Pogba saga has now rumbled, on

and off, for the best part of two years, but with Fernandes proving himself an instant hit at Old Trafford since his January arrival from Sporting Lisbon, United can now perhaps sell Pogba and not suffer as a consequence. Both Juventus and Real Madrid are keen, but whether either has the money or desire to sign him this summer remains to be seen.

TOTTENHAM

Core players: Harry Kane, Son Heung-min, Dele Alli, Harry Winks, Toby Alderweireld

Top priority when football resumes: Get Harry Kane back on the pitch. The England captain has been out of action since suffering a hamstring injury on Jan. 1 and Spurs have struggled for goals and results ever since. They are out of the Champions League, out of the FA Cup and seven points adrift of the top four, so Kane's presence is desperately needed by Jose Mourinho's team.

Biggest question to be answered: Is Mourinho the right man for Tottenham Hotspur? Many Spurs fans were against his appointment as Mauricio Pochettino's successor last November because of his connection to London rivals Chelsea and the style of play the Portuguese favours. So far, injuries to key players have conspired against Mourinho, but the jury is still out and he will need to finish this season with some kind of flourish to keep his critics at bay.

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Players must 'share financial burden' during virus – PFA

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TONIGHT @ 9:00

EATV MONDAY

11:00 DADAZ LIVE
14:00 Wanawake Live (r)
14:30 Bongo Hits
15:00 Funguka
15:30 Copa Coca-Cola (r)
16:00 Akili & Me (r)
16:30 #HASHTAG
17:00 SSELEKT
17:55 Kurasa
18:00 eNewz
18:30 Music/Soap
19:00 EATV SAA 1
19:45 MJADALA
20:00 DADAZ (r)
21:00 UJENZI
21:30 SSPORTS LIVE
22:30 Bongo Hits

TONIGHT on EATV
Find out how using glass blocks from Canghui Traders Limited can improve your home decor

And Tanlix Quality Choice has an innovative solution for wall fungus

It's all on Ujenzi at 9PM

eastafrica RADIO

06:00 Supa Breakfast
10:00 MAMAMIA
12:00 Kipenga Xtra
13:00 Planet Bongo
16:00 EA Drive
20:00 Kipenga
21:00 The Cruise

88.1FM DAR ES SALAAM

Sputanza seeks to increase members

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

TANZANIA Soccer Players Union (Sputanza) has said plans are underway to make it mandatory for Premier League, First Division League (FDL) and Second Division League (SDL) players to be the union's members.

Mussa Kisoki, Sputanza Chairman, said the move will help players have a voice which will represent them when they face either legal or moral challenges from their respective soccer clubs.

He said currently there are many players, who are not members of the union, given being a member of Sputanza is not mandatory.

He disclosed due to this players who are not members of the union association fail to get a strong representation when they face problems with their employers.

"We had a verbal discussion with Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) so that they can amend the constitution to make it mandatory for a football player to become a member of Sputanza," he disclosed.

"They liked the idea and advised as to make our request in writing so that the federation will discuss it in its coming meeting, we will soon come up with a written request," he said.

He said Sputanza is aimed at uplifting the welfare of all players in the Premier League, First Division League (FDL) and Second Division League (SDL) and therefore the union appeals to all clubs to encourage their players to join it.

The Sputanza top official disclosed that on their calendar, they are supposed to organize seminar in August every year to educate players on contacts, responsibilities and other related issues, but elite league players shun the seminars.

He disclosed he is though of the view that if it becomes mandatory for any Premier League, First Division League (FDL) and Second Division League (SDL) players become his union members many will be attending the seminars.

"We have been organizing seminars for all Premier League, First Division League (FDL) and Second Division League (SDL) players, the aim is to equip them with knowledge of their contacts, rights and other related things," he disclosed.

"But players from lower leagues are the ones who attend, those from elite league teams always give us excuses that they are busy preparing for the league," he disclosed.

Kisoki said since Sputanza formation years ago they have helped a lot of players who had issues with their employers.

"We have helped many football players, but many people don't know, some players bring their complaints individually, others use lawyers while others use their managers (player agents) but we have helped them both and they are all satisfied," he said.

Simba player supports fight against Coronavirus pandemic



Simba midfielder, Ibrahim Ajibu (L) challenges JKT Tanzania midfielder, Edward Songo, in a recent Premier League clash, which took place in Dar es Salaam. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

SIMBA SC midfielder Ibrahim Ajibu has become the first Tanzanian player to join the fight against Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic by providing equipment to under privileged children at orphanage centers in Dar es Salaam.

Ajibu said he will donate hand sanitizers, masks, gloves and other equipment to six Dar es Salaam based centers during this period.

He said Covid-19 is having an adverse impact on many people as a result children who are kept at orphanage centers are not getting more help from companies, organizations and individuals who had been supporting them financially and materially.

"Children at orphanage centers are most hit by this Covid-19 pandemic, nearly all centers depend on handouts from companies, organizations and individuals, but due to the coronavirus spread many donors have abandoned

them," he disclosed.

"I'm sure the children are hit hard and are suffering, as a person and footballer I decided to help with the little I have," he said.

The football star has since called upon other people of influence to ei-

ther do their part or join him.

"I'm calling upon all people in the country, those with influence, those who feel touched to do their part or join me in the efforts to mitigate the impact of Coronavirus spread to less privileged

children," he disclosed.

"It is my thinking that once we join forces we can reach out and assist many underprivileged children," he said.

Ajibu is a second Simba SC player to help the needy people in his society during this time of

Coronavirus spread.

The first one is Kenyan midfielder Francis Kahata who donated various items in his home country.

With Coronavirus pandemic still ravaging various areas in the world, businesses around the

globe are coping with lost revenue and disrupted supply chains as factories are being shutdown and quarantine measures spread across the globe, restricting movement, business activity and nearly all sporting activities are suspended.

Basketball league dribbles to halt as organizers seek venues, supporters

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame, Arusha

IT WAS supposed to be held in the first week of April but now the Arusha Regional Basketball League seems to be caught between a rock and a hard place.

To begin with, just like all other sporting events in the country, the basketball league is currently garaged pending the current Coronavirus (Covid-19) global outbreak.

But most important is the fact that, organizers want sponsorship from firms and companies that at the moment have gone underground.

"We are contacting various organizations seeking support, but few have shown interest while other have issued long list of ulti-



Betras basketball side's players, Victor Michael (R), and Salum Shaib take part in training at JMK Youth Park in Dar es Salaam recently. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

matums," Arusha Regional Basketball Association (ARBA) secretary general, Phabian Mjarif, revealed.

Now, according to the of-

ficial, the league also suffers lack of venues.

He disclosed, "We are forced to rely on only one court at the Sheikh Amri

Abeid Stadium, which is a multi-purpose ground, usually also hosting other events including soccer, athletics and even public

meetings," he noted.

He disclosed he is hopeful that the association will in future be allowed to use the new Ngarenaro Arena built by the City Council adjacent to the Primary School, within the National Housing area, which also has basketball courts.

The Arusha Regional Basketball League was scheduled to start in the first week of April, but the calendar fell within the Covid-19 curfew and now the events have been postponed pending the government directives.

Kings Club is the league's defending champions, given the team clinched the previous league's trophy, followed by an outfit from MS-Training Center for Development Cooperation (TCDC) of Usa River.

"However we are still practicing on clubs' basis,

with each player warming up in solitary," the official said.

He noted they are hopeful for the situation to stabilize so that they can resume arrangements.

The regional basketball league has lined up a number of teams, including Kings, Scorpion, MS-TCDC, Hoopers, Hoo, Police Moran, Spider and Palloti, totaling eight but many more may enroll later if things go well.

Usually the league is preceded with a number of training programs for the youth, but again due to the Coronavirus alerts, these also will be shelved until later days.

Kings are currently the defending champions of the regional league, while MS-TCDC of Usa-River, became the Zonal Championship winners.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

