



### ATTACKS



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**The Dr Reginald Abraham Mengi Legacy: Celebrating the life of a Tanzanian philanthropist and environmentalist. - Page 3.**



## ...AU gearing to distribute Jack Ma haul

ADDIS ABABA

MOST of the 55 member states of the African Union will soon receive further medical supplies for their COVID-19 responses, after the arrival here yesterday of a third batch from the Jack Ma Foundation.

The supplies, weighing 125 tonnes, consist of 4.6 million single use surgical masks, 500 000 civilian use KN95 masks, plus 100 000 medical grade N95 masks.

Others are 200,000 pieces of protective clothing, 200,000 face shields, 2,000 thermometer guns, 500,000 medical gloves, 300 ventilators along with 500,000 each of swabs, extraction and detection tests. About 100 infrared thermo detection machines are also included.

The supplies were received by the deputy chairman of the African Union Commission



**He also commended Africa's private industry for rising up to the challenge**

Ambassador Kwesi Quartey, accompanied by the Commissioner of Social Affairs, Amira El Fadil.

Others were the South African Ambassador to Ethiopia and chairman of the Permanent Representative Committee of the African Union, Edward Xolisa Makaya, and the Africa CDC Director Dr John Nkengasong.

The ceremony was also attended by Ethiopian Minister of Health Dr Lea Tadesse, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Degu Andargachew, Dr Shumete Gizaw, representing the Office of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, and the Chief Executive Officer of Ethiopian Airlines Tewolde GebreMariam.

This is the third donation of medical equipment and supplies from the Jack Ma Foundation. Two other consignments

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# MPs: Procure Covid-19 safety kits for medics

By Felister Peter, Dodoma



Legal and Human Rights Centre's executive director, advocate Anna Henga (C), officiates at the launch of the Tanzania Human Rights Report for last year in Dar es Salaam on Wednesday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

URGENT procurement and distribution of more Covid-19 testing kits to designated centres as well as personal protective equipment (PPE) for health workers must be made top priority, MPs have demanded.

This position was expressed yesterday by members of the parliamentary committee on public services and community development, suggesting immediate measures to facilitate availability of PPE to health workers.

They also appealed for procurement of essential required medical equipment such as oxygen concentrators, ventilators and treatment drugs.

Peter Serukamba (Kigoma North, CCM), the committee chairman, said to tackle the novel coronavirus the government must strengthen health systems as per requirements of the World Health Organization (WHO).

"To combat the pandemic, WHO advises governments to enhance provision of health services, ensure adequate trained health workers, medical supplies and strengthened information and data issuance systems," he said.

Contributing to debate on the 2020/2021 financial year budget estimates for the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children, he urged the government to come up with special packages for health workers

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## EAC leaders hold talks on transit truck drivers

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame, Arusha

THE Presidents of Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda have held talks over the phone on how to handle truck drivers entering landlocked countries amid the Covid-19 pandemic among other issues.

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni said yesterday that he had private talks with President John Magufuli and President Uhuru Kenyatta, along with Rwandan President Paul Kagame.

The conversation with Kenyatta and Kagame focused on truck drivers, while his exchanges with Magufuli were pitched on a slightly different subject, the Ugandan leader said in a tweet.

The leaders agreed to hatch a common plan for truck drivers of transit vehicles crisscrossing the region delivering cargo, but no details further emerged.

Truck drivers from Tanzania and Kenya destined to Uganda and Rwanda were on the news lately as host landlocked countries are said to deport instead of treating truckers who test positive for Covid-19.

The EAC Secretariat has lately appealed to member states to treat truck drivers and crew who test positive for COVID-19 where this situation is spotted rather than deporting them to the country of origin.

A 17-page document entitled 'EAC Administrative Guidelines to Facilitate

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## Airport staff set for anti-Covid-19 drills

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame, Arusha

AVIATION and health sector stakeholders are collaborating with the East African Community Secretariat to organize Covid-19 intervention training for staff at eight international airports in the region.

The EAC civil aviation safety and security oversight agency is teaming up with the African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF)

and flying doctor service who will supervise the drills.

The program will be deployed in terminals located in the partner states during this time of minimized activity at airports prior to resumption of normal travel.

Simon Owaka, senior public relations officer at EAC headquarters said yesterday that mobility across countries, largely driven

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### SHARE FACTS ABOUT COVID-19

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

[cdc.gov/COVID-19](https://cdc.gov/COVID-19)





## GBV against children, women on the rise, says LHRC's 2019 Human Rights Report

By Guardian Reporter

TANZANIA'S Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) has unveiled its 'Human Rights Report Tanzania 2019', throwing light on the human rights situation for last year compared to 2018.

The online launching took place on Wednesday this week due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Speaking at the event the LHRC managing director Anna Henga said the report revealed incidents of human rights violations as well as recommendations for improvement of the policy, laws and administration to the society.

She said the report enlightens on human civil, political, economic, cultural, vulnerable groups, the security systems on human rights and general rights, and added that the report was drawn from various reports sourced within and outside the country.

"The report is the result of various reports collected by LHRC including those from human rights watchers all over the country, legal assistants from various areas, official statements from government institutions, Parliament, Judiciary, Police Force, Media and the civil society organisations.

"This report also used various national as well as international reports especially those aims to elucidate

human rights situation in the country," said Henga.

According to the report five rights were rampantly violated in 2019:

The rights to life: Incidents like killings of women, children, killings committed by taking the law in the hands, killings due to witchcraft beliefs continued to be reported during the year.

Freedom from abuse - including sexual abuse against children and women were also rampant.

In the period from 2017 to June 2019 a total of 88,612 incidents of gender violence were reported.

There were also 3,709 incidents of child rapes reported at various police stations, 128 more than those during the same period in 2018.

Abuse to people with disabilities and elders has also been occurring unabated - and in one incident an old woman was raped till she died.

Freedom of expression: There was the continuation of suppression of the rights to express oneself due to suppressive laws, rampant arrests and detention of journalists in violations to the laws as well the revocation of media outlets' licenses.

Freedom of freedom and security: The report highlights several incidents that saw the suppression of this right such as attacks and killings of motorcycle drivers, abduction, disappearances of people and



Ruvuma regional commissioner Christina Mndeme (C) leads members of the region's defence and security committee, which she chairs, in inspecting Mkenda Bridge - at the Tanzania-Mozambique border - yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Gideon Mwakanosya

## MPs: Procure Covid-19 safety kits for medics

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such as risk and extra duty allowance to motivate them as frontline fighters against Covid-19.

Halima Mdee (Kawe, Chadema) said the government should stop politicizing the deadly coronavirus. She raised concerns on poor information sharing between the government and the House, making it difficult to properly advice on how to combat the disease.

Mdee said the government should disburse remaining funds for the ministry as monies under the proposed budget will be disbursed in July. Issuance of the funds will boost efforts against Covid-19 spread, she emphasized.

Julius Laizer (Monduli, CCM) said

to enhance testing for COVID-19 the government should procure mobile clinics to test any suspected individuals in various parts of the country.

Peter Msigwa (Iringa-Urban, Chadema) faulted poor information sharing systems to the public as well as the legislature.

"We are representing the public but yet we are not furnished with enough information on the disease. The government should come with a comprehensive report indicating the magnitude of the problem as well as the number of jobs losses caused by pandemic," he urged.

Dr Haji Mponda (Malinyi, CCM) said funds which were earmarked for various suspended national celebrations should be directed to the fight against COVID-19 at district level.

Dr Mponda urged the government to come up with strategies to rescue workers and preparations to admit and treat patients fast.

"Scientific evidence shows that 80 percent of patients can be cured at early stages," he affirmed.

Shadow Health Minister Cecilia Pareso advised the government to enhance testing for COVID-19 to control free spreading of the disease.

"It is dangerous for the country to depend on a single national community library for testing. It will take long for the country to combat the disease if the majority is not tested," she declared.

Mobile clinics to reach and test those in interior rural areas are similarly vital, she told the House.

Umyy Mwalimu, the minister for

Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children had earlier said the government has enhanced COVID-19 testing capacity at its national community laboratory.

She assured the public of continued provision of medical treatment for coronavirus patients where in Dar es Salaam treatment centers are located at Temeke, Mlonganzila and Amana Referral Hospital.

To enhance testing and treatment of the disease, the government has so far trained 2,113 health workers from 11 regions, with about 47 from Dar es Salaam, the minister specified.

WHO announced COVID-19 as a public health emergency of international concern late January and as a global pandemic towards mid-March, she added.

## EAC leaders hold talks on transit truck drivers

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Movement of Goods and Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic' distributed to EAC Affairs desks of the partner states urges enforcing mandatory screening or testing of truck drivers and crew at border posts. It also demands mobile monitoring during transit at selected inland points.

Partner states were advised to adopt a multi-sectoral and coordinated approach that provides access at designated points for entry and exit of goods. They were urged to treat cross-

border movement of trucks and cargo as essential services.

Among items to be prioritized as essential goods to mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic are food, fuel, medicaments, agricultural products and inputs, security supplies, emergency and humanitarian relief goods.

To mitigate critical shortages of equipment and supplies, EAC members need to promote local production of the items required to contain COVID-19, including medicaments, sanitizers, protective gear and ventilators, the statement underlined.



Ushetu Town Council health trainer Athanas Lucas (C) instructs health officers yesterday on how to dress while attending to Covid-19 cases. Photo: Correspondent Shaban Njia

## Airport staff set for anti-Covid-19 drills

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by air travel, facilitated the rapid spread of COVID-19 across the world.

Early confirmed COVID-19 cases in the region had a history of air travel, the official noted.

Airports in the EAC region enhanced their preparedness and response measures early and have been able to intercept several COVID-19 susceptible travellers through intensified surveillance and screening. Yet, airports continue to be high risk areas for the spread of infectious diseases, he said.

Emile Nguzo Arao, executive director of the oversight agency, said investments in strengthening surveillance, building

robust early-warning systems and coordinating public health responses of international airports will help to detect and respond to COVID-19 and prevent further spread.

The training will be implemented by AMREF Flying Doctors to build the knowledge of staff on safety measures, surveillance, prevention and control strategies and relevant regional guidelines.

"African Flying Doctors will offer a comprehensive training of trainers to enable the airports to develop their own staff training and surveillance regimes," says Stephen Gitau, CEO.

"This will contribute greatly toward enhanced safety for travelers and the

duty of care of partner states towards their airport staff."

The training composes of two day courses at each of the eight international airports in the region. Topics include "the airport as a "red zone" and measures to identify and demarcate these areas. Quarantine and isolation of passengers is another topic, as well as decontamination of aircraft and airport areas.

Each class will have 15 participants - taking into account social distancing requirements - so that a total of 240 key airport personnel will become trained trainers and are expected to spearhead the development and conduction of targeted training sessions for the rest of

the airport personnel.

It will be done by two teams of three trainers divided to cover the eight airports over a period of about 30 days. Subsequently, the trained trainers will develop and conduct their own classes to roll-out their brief training sessions. The flying doctors will support the process and monitor the progress.

The course design and curriculum development will be based on international health regulations, best practices of the World Health Organization and the US Centres for Disease Control, along with standards and recommended practices of the International Civil Aviation Organization, he added.

## Teacher gets 30 years in jail for raping girl

By Guardian Correspondent, Songwe

A TEACHER at Shinji primary school in Ileje District, Songwe Region, has been sentenced to 30 years in jail and 24 strokes of the cane for raping a 16-year-old girl.

Abed Rajab Mbuba (54) a resident of Mbebe ward was sentenced by the Ileje District Court after being found guilty of raping the teenage girl in the district.

Giving the ruling, magistrate for the court, Shughuli Mwampashi said the accused committed the offence in July 2019 at Shinji, while having in mind that doing so was against section (1), and (2) (e) of the Penal Code and section 131.

Mwampashi said the court after

listening to the two sides was satisfied beyond reasonable doubt and sentenced the accused to serve 30 years in jail as a lesson to other people with such behaviours.

The magistrate said the accused committed the offence under section 130 (1) (2) so that it offers a lesson to other young men with such behaviours.

Earlier, State prosecutor Peter Mrisho urged the court to deliver a severe punishment so that it gives a lesson to other people with such behaviours in Ileje where he said the situation was becoming worse.

In his defense, before magistrate Mwampashi the accused said he has a family to feed and requested the court to forgive him.

## ...African Union due to distribute Jack Ma haul

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arrived on March 22 and on April 6.

"COVID-19 has brought the AU a very challenging situation but the union has risen up to it through integration, unity and collaboration. We are going to transport the equipment to the various hubs across the continent," Quartey said.

He also commended Africa's private industry for rising up to the challenge. "We are already seeing the manufacture of face masks of a dollar each, ventilators and other necessary equipment. As we collaborate more, we can meet all the challenges that the continent is faced with. It is integration that makes Africa a force in the international community," he asserted.

This third donation came after negotiation between the Africa CDC and Jack Ma Foundation officials, and

a telephone conversation between the African Union Commission chairman Moussa Faki Mahamat and Jack Ma, he said.

The AU is identifying and projecting the needs of the member states and the commission is doing pool procurement for medical equipment needed for Africa, El Fadil noted.

Dr Nkengasong said the supplies are going to be extremely important in supporting AU efforts to help prevent transmission of COVID-19, and to prevent deaths and harm in our community.

Dr Tadesse recalled that the donations started as an initiative of premier Ahmed and Jack Ma. She appreciated the value of global solidarity in the COVID-19 response, underlining that the latest donations are testimony of such solidarity.



## Dr Reginald A. Mengi: His Legacy

**"You change when things are really good and you go into the new job with a big kind of energy rather than going there totally depressed because you had been sucked dry or you were not doing that well."**



Dr Mengi addresses a meeting attended by media owners and Tanzania Editors Forum (TEF) members in Dar es Salaam.



Tanzanian and foreign journalists have an informal audience with Dr Mengi on the sidelines of a media event they had just attended.

# Charitable philanthropist Dr Mengi's generous hand is still touching many

By Correspondent Mboneko Mnyaga

SOMETIME in the early-1990s, an old friend by the name of Vumi Urassa approached me with a proposal that I join a team of pioneer journalists in what he described as a "powerful media house expected to be established soon".

I found this an exceptionally bold statement on a hugely appealing idea, primarily in that the media outlets then in place in Tanzania were basically state-owned and therefore state-dominated.

I had a lot of respect for Urassa, one of the major reasons for this being that he was one of the people who helped shape my writing skills at Uhuru and Mzalendo, sister newspapers then - and still - owned by the ruling party. He was what is known in jounalese as Chief Sub-Editor - or Chief Sub, for short - when I joined the publications as a reporter in 1977.

But true to his character as a rather hawkish guy, Urassa refused to tell me the magnet behind the venture he had foggily hinted me on.

Fearing to wade into uncharted waters, I diplomatically rejected the offer - while Urassa, too, stood his ground. Too bad, he has since gone the way of the ancestors, and may his soul rest in peace.

However, the "secret" was soon out, as the IPP's newspapers Nipashe and The Guardian (both of them daily newspapers) soon hit the streets - with the conglomerate's Executive Chairman, Dr Reginald Abraham Mengi, at the helm in advisory capacity. It is a matter of immense pride that both Nipashe (born in late 1994) and The Guardian (born a month later) - and with Vumi Urassa as founding Managing Director - have weathered all manner of storms and continue to soldier on to this day.

Launching at just about the same time were ITV-Independent Television, Tanzania Mainland's first pan-territorial television station and Radio One. Both boast countrywide coverage.

The IPP Media Empire, if you will, sucked in various top-notch talents and personalities then. Most were from state-owned media, which was truly a novel departure from the country's ages-old tradition of widely dismissing



Media Owners Association of Tanzania (MOAT) Dr Reginald Mengi (R) engaged in a hearty high table exchange with Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) chairman Judge (rtd) Thomas Mihayo (2nd-R), MCT executive secretary Kajubi Mukajanga (L) and former Tanzania Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance chairman Bahame Tom Nyanduga. This was at a high-profile media event held in Dar es Salaam.

the news media as unsuitable for serious private venture enterprise.

Years later, Dr Mengi would tell me: "You know, young man, the best way to guarantee success is the ability to sniff business from the air, just like the way you smell a sweet flower."

He added: "Plans and write-ups are all important for financing and to stay focused but without the ability to sniff the business from the air, the venture is likely to crash."

Call it business acumen - and it is indeed one of those things which many people, even those in business, acknowledge as rare commodities.

I once bumped into Dr Mengi at a

city hospital. It was clear that some personal loss had taken a toll on him much as he struggled to project an air of normalcy, including not betraying his characteristic smile. This constituted part of the subtle power the ever cheerful and upbeat philanthropic industrialist often used in all manner of dialogues and other exchanges.

Throughout his business career, Dr Mengi had established himself as quite a charitable philanthropist. Coming to the help of even total strangers was a way, he often said, that helped him to continually remember his past as a poor goatherd who first went to school barefoot.

Dr Mengi was a highly calculating businessman, never hurtling into a venture like a headless chicken. For instance, for many years before he established his Media Empire, he was Patron of then massively vibrant and highly regarded Tanzania Association of Journalists (TAJA), a fledgling organisation into which he breathed life.

As patron, he used to host monthly luncheons for journalists, many of whom were not even TAJA members. In fact, there were quite a number of gatecrashers too, but no matter! The luncheons were a kind of retreat for members of the media fraternity to

dine and wine with abandon without any apparent benefit to the sponsor.

Now, though, I can dare suggest that Dr Mengi used the luncheons to get to know journalists well in readiness for his venturing into the "fourth estate" in which they were the key players.

Apparently, his only reward for the cash he spent was merely to get the opportunity to address the media without any guarantee on how his views would be covered in newspapers and radio the following day.

At one of the luncheons, Dr Mengi came up with a paper entitled: "Responsible Journalism", in which he made the case for media practitioners

to adhere to professional and social ethics.

"Responsible Journalism" was by all accounts a juicy term and was for years the subject of nourishing debate in media circles. One school of thought held that the concept was necessary for the protection of society and the growth of the industry itself. However, another view was that was merely euphemism for "self-censorship," which in the end was not good for society or the industry.

Dr Mengi's presentation leaned heavily towards the former view while I believed in the latter. When it came to time for debate, I boldly expressed my dissenting views, which in effect meant clashing with the host!

It was an act of gross ingratitude on my part, one would have said! But rather than feel offended, Dr Mengi took the criticism in his stride - with the poise of a true nobleman. From that moment, too, was born a kind of bonding of the mind, mutual respect and friendship between us.

Dr Mengi's generosity is experience actually lived and his philanthropy touched many lives. His kind-hearted nature remains phenomenal just as endures his legacy of overcoming adversity to emerge one the wealthiest indigenous Tanzanians ever who remained with simplicity a bar too high for many to reach.

But Dr Mengi's philanthropy was never the equivalent of randomly dishing out huge amounts of money to whoever sought his help, far from it. Most of it was in the form of sharing business ideas and clues with people who, on numerous occasions, ended up knowing more happiness and greater joy than previously.

Tanzania has thousands upon thousands of members of the business community, some doubtless much richer than Dr Mengi. However, he distinguished himself thanks to the fact that his kind of heart and character made both rich and poor, both able-bodied and maimed, and both powerful figures and ordinary mortals feel both comfortable and welcome.

His redoubtable legacy lives on and he continues to touch people of all age groups and social, cultural and economic segments in pleasantly diverse ways.



# Big boost in food, cash crop production is seen following introduction of bulk fertiliser supply effective from 2017/18

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

THE introduction of the Fertiliser Bulk Procurement System (FBPS) has improved production of food and cash crops across the country, the Ministry of Agriculture has said.

The new system, which became effective in the 2017/2018 financial year, has seen farmers including coffee growers benefiting due to constant supply of fertilisers throughout the farming season.

"The fertiliser bulk procurement system is meant to improve the availability and distribution of agricultural inputs especially fertilisers for all crop producers in the country," the ministry told the National Assembly in response to a question by Buhingwe MP, Albert Ntaliba (CCM).

In its explanations, the government noted that it was previously providing agricultural input subsidy (seeds and fertilisers) to farmers across the country, the programme which was implemented between 2003/2004 and 2016/2017.

"Agricultural inputs subsidies are now available to maize and rice farmers only," said the ministry noting the government recognises the importance of fertilisers in production of food and cash crops including coffee, hence introduction of FBPS.

The bulk procurement system has apart from ensuring timely and affordable price of the commodity, strengthened the distribution system as well as boosting of business capital amongst traders.

It has also reduced operation costs and facilitated supervision.

According to the ministry, coffee farmers in the country have since 2017/2018 been purchasing fertilisers in accordance with their actual demand

basing on market prices.

In his basic question the legislator had wanted to know why the government is not providing subsidies to coffee farmers.

Recent data from the ministry of agriculture indicates that the country's coffee production has reached 214,962 tonnes in four years. The country produces an average of 51,777 tonnes of coffee annually.

On employment, coffee has contributed in the increase of jobs in the sector from 2.3 to 2.7 million both directly employed and self-employed.

There are 554 coffee processing factories in the country.

Coffee is among the country's strategic crops grown in 16 regions in the country including Songwe, Mbeya, Ruvuma, Kagera, Kilimanjaro, Arusha, Mara, Kigoma, Tanga, Morogoro, Njombe, Katavi and Mwanza.

The crop tops the three position in contributing to the national GDP after cashew nuts and tobacco.



**The fertiliser bulk procurement system is meant to improve the availability and distribution of agricultural inputs especially fertilisers for all crop producers in the country**



Telling evidence of the havoc relentless heavy rains can mean: Houses at Pugu Bombani on the outskirts of Dar es Salaam lie under water, as captured by Correspondent Jumanne Juma yesterday

By Guardian Correspondent, Chunya

ROAD communication between Mbeya, Tabora and Singida regions has been severed following heavy rains that have damaged Biti River Bridge in Mafyeko Ward in Chunya District.

Speaking to reporters on Tuesday some of stranded passengers and residents of Bitimanyanga village said due to the cut off road communication they were forced to walk long distance on foot to get other means of transport.

Kefas Kilongozi, one of the villagers said it was very perilous for people walking on foot due to fierce wild animals including lions lurking in Rukwati/Piti Reserve Forest.

## Mbeya-Tabora-Singida road now impassable as bridge swept away

"We ask the government to assist us in repairing the bridge, otherwise we may be delicious meats for the beasts," he said.

Another villager, Nitike Ntabangale who is an entrepreneur said the road has been tormenting travellers for a long time due to repeatedly being damaged by rains and added that in the past the problem was at Lupa River Bridge, but now it is Biti River Bridge.

He said some of the entrepreneurs have lost capital due to being stuck for a long time along the road.

Mbeya Region TANROADS Manager Eng Eliazary Rwekiza said they were working on the issue to ensure communication is restored to normal.

He said they have already procured a contractor who will repair the bridge in a short time and work has already begun.

Chunya District Commissioner

Maryprisca Mahundi, accompanied by her Defence and Security Committee made an inspection of the bridge and called upon TANROADS officials to closely supervise repair work.

She said apart from the bridge, the entire road was in a bad condition from Makongolosi town up to Mbeya/Tabora regions border.

She said the cause of the damage is the ongoing heavy rains in the district that is rich in gold and fertile land.



Seka Kasera (R), acting head (Copyright) at the Business Licensing and Registration Agency (Brela), presents a laptop to Chalenze District Council representative Samson Morris to help the council be in a position to issue business licences electronically. The event was held in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

THE National Electoral Commission (NEC) says it has taken all essential precautions in dealing with Covid-19 infections during the exercise to update the Permanent Voters Register (PVR) Phase II in Mbeya and Songwe regions.

Speaking to this paper here yesterday, NEC Senior Information Officer Abdulwakili Saiboko said PVR updating exercise for the two regions will take place from 2 to 5 May 2020.

He said at all registration centres NEC will ensure the availability of running water, soap, sanitisers and all officials who will be supervising

## Elephants kill two people in Ruvuma, Morogoro regions

By Guardian Correspondents

WILD elephants have killed two people in two separate attacks in Ruvuma and Morogoro regions, authorities said yesterday.

In the first incident, a resident of Angalia village in Tunduru District, Ruvuma Region Rajabu Ninga (43) died after being attacked by an elephant when guarding his farm.

Ruvuma Regional Police Commander, Simon Maigwa said the incident happened on April 27 this year around 1.30am at Kanguye area.

It was claimed that Ningwa was attacked by a herd of elephants whilst guarding his farm crops ready for harvest, the elephants trampled on him and he died instantly.

He said the body of the deceased has already undergone medical examination at Tunduru District Hospital and handed to relatives for burial.

In another incident, one Romario Matajani (53) resident of Melela village in Mvomero District, Morogoro Region was killed by elephants during the night as he was returning home.

Confirming the incident, Ally Nguwa, the Village Chairman said it happened early this week at around 9.00pm when the deceased was suddenly attacked by the jumbos and killed instantly.

Nguwa said the incidents of elephants attacking the village have

been occurring for a long time, adding that the beasts have also been destroying crops and instilling great fear to the villagers.

He said despite various efforts taken by the district authorities to arrest the situation, the situation has become grave.

A witness to the incident Kilandi Koretu who was together with the deceased said it happened when they were returning home on a motorcycle (bodaboda).

He said as they were on the way suddenly they were confronted by a herd of elephants hence they could not immediately make a u-turn to save themselves; hence they abandoned the motorcycle and started running.

"My colleague slipped and fell to the ground whereupon the beasts trampled him to death," he said.

Mvomero District Wildlife Officer Avelina Macklaud confirmed the incident and said the exercise to remove the jumbos from peoples' settlements makes them angrier hence frequent attacks in the villages.



**My colleague slipped and fell to the ground whereupon the beasts trampled him to death**

IN THE HIGH COURTS OF TANZANIA  
MUSOMA DISTRICT COUNCIL REGISTRY  
AT MUSOMA

LAND CASE NO. 05 OF 2020

I & M BANK TANZANIA LTD.....PLAINTIFF  
VERSUS  
SAMORA M. SAMORA LTD & 2 OTHERS.....  
DEFENDANT

TO: SAMORA M SAMORA  
NOTICE OF DATE OF HEARING

TAKE NOTICE that the above case has been fixed for Hearing on 8th day of May, 2020 at 09:00 am before Hon ES KISANTYA, Judge.

YOU ARE required to appear in this Court on the fixed date without fail.

Given under my Hand and the seal of the Court this 20th day of April 2020.

IN THE HIGH COURTS OF TANZANIA  
MUSOMA DISTRICT COUNCIL REGISTRY  
AT MUSOMA

LAND CASE NO. 05 OF 2020

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MUSOMA DISTRICT COUNCIL REGISTRY  
AT MUSOMA

LAND CASE NO. 05 OF 2020

I & M BANK TANZANIA LTD.....PLAINTIFF  
VERSUS  
SAMORA M. SAMORA LTD & 2 OTHERS.....  
DEFENDANT

TO: SAMORA M SAMORA  
NOTICE OF DATE OF HEARING

TAKE NOTICE that the above case has been fixed for Hearing on 8th day of May, 2020 at 09:00 am before Hon ES KISANTYA, Judge.

YOU ARE required to appear in this Court on the fixed date without fail.

Given under my Hand and the seal of the Court this 20th day of April 2020.

## NEC to take precautions against COVID-19 when verifying voters

the exercise will wear face masks.

He said the biometric machines brought from Dar es Salaam for the exercise have been sprayed against Corona viruses to ensure safety of the wananchi.

"Since people will be required to place their finger prints on the machines, there will be chemicals for cleaning the machines to kill the viruses and after every finger placed on the

machines they will be cleaned by a sanitiser," he said.

He said in order to reduce congestion, a person can verify his details through mobile phone dialing \*152\*00# after which he will receive directions on how to complete verification.

NEC Administrative Officer Hidaya Gwando advised wananchi to use online verification of their details to reduce congestion.





Residents of Kajima in Tunduru District move to clear a 16-km stretch of bush earlier this week to pave the way for the construction of a road to neighbouring Matemanga and "woo" vehicle owners into making it to their village. Photo: Correspondent Steve Chindiye

## Yet more tourists' attractions identified for further promotion in Tanga Region - govt

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

MORE tourist attractions have been identified in Tanga Region, including the Handeni Hill Forest Reserve in Kilindi District.

The exercise which was implemented by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism in collaboration with authorities from Tanga-Urban, Muheza, Kilindi, Pangani and Mkinga districts, will see all the identified tourist attractions developed and promoted.

Responding to a question by Kilindi MP, Omary Kigua, the ministry stated that identification of new tourist attractions is sustainable since one of its core objectives includes development and promotion of the tourism sector.

"The ministry has been identifying various tourist attractions across the country as well as sensitising responsible authorities to develop and promote them, this initiative would boost the nation's income as well as the welfare of people surrounding the

areas", the ministry stated in its written response.

Tourism sector is one of the main sources of government revenues whereas in 2019 it contributed approximately US \$ 2.6 billion in the country's economy.

The tourism sector also contributes 25 percent of all the country's total exports and provides direct and indirect employment to over 1.5 million people.

According to the ministry, the sector

is cross cutting and has contributed into growth of other economic sector such as industry, agriculture, infrastructure and financial services.

In his question, Kigua wanted to know the government plans to identify and develop the tourist attractions in Kilindi district.

He claimed that Kilindi has the best natural vegetations in Lwanda and Lukingo villages as well as the Handeni Hill Forest Reserve which has not been further promoted.

## TAWA calls upon Tanzanian and foreign investors keen on wildlife farming development for game meat to seek permits

By Beatrice Philemon

TANZANIA Wildlife Management Authority (TAWA) has called on local and foreign investors desiring to establish wildlife farms to keep and grow animals for game meat production to send their applications in order to get permits.

Mary Kashangaki, TAWA's Principal Game Warden said this in Dar es Salaam recently that in order to establish a wildlife farm, an investor needs to get a permit from the authority.

According to her, the permit's fee stands at 40,000/- for an individual and 100,000/- for a joint venture company.

She wanted interested businessmen to visit TAWA offices to get more information on how to set up wildlife farms and game meat production as well as selling facilities.

The investors will be provided with explanation on regulations and procedures required to engaging in the project.

"Any person who desires to own and operate a game meat selling facility shall submit an application for registration to the Director General and the application forms should be accompanied by an application fee that is 5000/-."

She said all applicants should be qualified and abide by all rules and regulations on the sale and harvesting of bush meat.

Kashangaki said that the authority will register all successful applicants and issue them with certificates of registration which will be valid for a period of five years under subject of renewal.

"The certificate of registration of a game meat selling facility shall not be transferable," she added.

Elaborating on management and operation of game meat selling facilities, she said every operator of a

game meat selling facility shall issue a detailed EFD receipt to a buyer and possess a copy of hunting permit or certificate of ownership or any other written authorization.

Apart from that an operator shall ensure that the meat is inspected and he possesses a meat inspection certificate and comply with any other relevant laws.

Also every operator of game meat selling facility shall maintain a register that indicates sources of meat at a particular selling time, quantity of meat including offal and a list of customers indicating the quantity of meat bought.

The director further said that a holder of a certificate of registration of game meat selling facility who intends to deal with game meat selling shall apply for a trophy dealer's licence.

"The trophy dealer's licence shall be renewable annually and shall be subject to the conditions stipulated in the Wildlife Conservation (Dealing in Trophies) Regulations," she said.

According to her, during the implementation, the authority will monitor and evaluate the performance of game meat selling facilities to ensure compliance with the Wildlife Conservation (Game Meat Selling) Regulations, 2020.

The authority will also monitor and regulate the price of game meat in game meat selling facilities to ensure that local communities benefit.

According to the Wildlife Conservation (Game Meat Selling) Regulations, 2020 any person who contravenes any provision of these regulations commits an offence and shall upon conviction, be liable to a fine of not less than two million shillings but not exceeding five million shillings or to imprisonment for a term of not less than one year but not exceeding five years or to both.

## Government all set to boost agricultural research in bid to enhance productivity

By Felister Peter, Dodoma

THE government is set to improve food crops, fruits and soil researches through the Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute (TARI) as part of efforts to enhance productivity.

The researches will be conducted at the Ministry of Agriculture Training Institute - MATI - Mubondo in Kigoma region, TARI-Kihinga and TARI-Ukiliguru.

Currently, soil researches at national level are conducted at TARI-Mlingano in collaboration with other institutes such as TARI-Ukiliguru, Uyole, Seliani and Naliendele.

However, TARI-Tumbi is finalising processes to start offering similar research services.

In a written response to a question by Kasulu-South Member of parliament,

Daniel Nsanzugwanko (CCM), the Ministry of Agriculture said the move gears to boost production of food crops, fruits and a number of cash crops including invention of improved seedlings of oil palm.

The legislator was also concerned with the shortage of trainers at the MATI-Mubondo institute which apart from offering trainings it conducts researches on improved seed varieties for food crops and fruits.

"The researches will be conducted depending on availability of funds. Various agricultural researches are also conducted at our 14 agricultural training institutions that are under the Ministry of Agriculture's department for training, extension services and research," the ministry stated.

The government said the MATI-

Mubondo institute has been tasked to offer Diploma and Degree Courses as well as regular training to farmers in Kigoma region especially those engaging in cultivation of maize, beans, sweet potatoes, cassava, vegetables and oil palm.

Students undertaking long term courses are trained on soil quality improvement as well as various ways of protecting the soil and making sure it doesn't lose its original quality for improved productivity and sustainable farming.

The ministry informed that in between 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 financial years, the MATI-Mubondo agricultural institute has been provided with three trainers. The government also repaired the institute's infrastructures in a bid to improve learning environment.



Arumeru district commissioner Jerry Muro (L) has a word on Wednesday with residents whose houses have been demolished by floodwaters. Photo: Correspondent Woinde Shizza

## HALMASHAURI YA JIJI LA DODOMA



### TANGAZO LA UUZAJI WA VIWANJA

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

Viwanja vinavyouzwa ni katika maeneo ya:

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

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

Kwa mawasiliano zaidi piga simu namba 0714 785513.

Tangazo hili limetolewa na:  
Mkurugenzi wa Jiji,  
DODOMA



## Hombolo Agricultural Research Institute and international seed firm do forage experiments

By Guardian Correspondent, Dodoma

HOMBOLO Agricultural Research Institute is implementing Advanced Yield Trials (AYT) and Farmer's Assessment Trials (FAT) projects on different forage sorghum and pile millet varieties.

In partnership with Advanta Seed International, the two-year project target to improve silage sector for livestock in Tanzania.

Among others, the initiative is also anticipated to help increase performance of the country's beef and dairy sectors, as well as boosting incomes among livestock keepers and farmers.

Senior Plant Breeder for TARI-Hombolo, Dr Lameck Nyaligwa told The Guardian in an interview the center is running AYT for at least six different sorghum seeds.

He named some seed varieties for forage sorghum and pile millet currently under the Advanced Yield Trials (AYT)'s plantations at the state-owned center in Hombolo, Dodoma region as Sugar -Grace, Mega-Sweet, BMR Rocket and Jumbo-Gold.

"These varieties are very potential for livestock silages as they contain much needed nutrients for cattle, especially in increasing livestock health (market weight) and with at least 25 per cent capacity of increasing milk production," he expressed.

According to him, among the necessary nutrients available in the forage seed varieties include high protein and biomass, good sugar content (between 16-18 Brix) and are also with potential energy for cattle.

Moreover, Dr Nyaligwa detailed that the researched forage varieties for sorghum and pile millet are with deep-green fodders which are tolerant to fodder diseases, added most of them are multiple-cut.

The target is to enable livestock keepers in Tanzania to execute their activities more professional by feeding

their cattle with researched forages with high impact to their livestock's health.

Dr Nyaligwa said once proved, the ongoing research project will open fresh economic opportunities to individual farmers, livestock keepers and other trading companies.

"Door will be open for farmers, and other companies to come and purchase the seed varieties in order to seed them in other destination and ultimately market the crucial silages to herders, at fresh and dry levels," he observed.

Speaking during a special tour of the project, Councillor for Hombolo Bwawani Ward, Ased Ndajilo said the project will play key role in assisting livestock keepers in the area.

"Most of herders here are often compelled to travel far distances seeking to graze their cattle which is time consuming. We thank experts at TARI for coming -up with this project which will bring about key economic development in our area, and the country at large," he appreciated.



**These varieties are very potential for livestock silages as they contain much needed nutrients for cattle, especially in increasing livestock health (market weight) and with at least 25 per cent capacity of increasing milk production**



Dodoma district commissioner Patrobas Katambi (R) listens as residents of Dodoma city's Chadulu Street air their grievances yesterday on disputes related to land ownership, occupancy and use. Photo: Correspondent Ibrahim Joseph

## Closure of schools, colleges depletes Kagera referral hospital's blood bank

By Guardian Correspondent, Bukoba

THE Covid-19 pandemic that forced the government to close schools and colleges has depleted the blood bank at Kagera Region Referral Hospital in Bukoba.

Speaking to this paper this week the advisor of blood transfusion centre at the hospital Amos Bashweka

said before closure of the learning institutions the centre used to collect more than 400 pints of blood each month, but now it collects only 200 pints.

"The scarcity is due to the fact that Kagera Region residents lack the tradition of contributing blood at hospitals.

Bashweka said before closure of

the schools the challenge was not as big as it is now, hence he requests wananchi to change and come up to contribute blood as blood saves peoples' lives.

He said students are an important group in blood contribution as many of them do not have infections that could make the blood unusable.

"The blood we collect is sent to the

laboratory in Mwanza for examination for various infections including HIV, hepatitis, gonorrhoea to ensure that only safe blood is used on patients needing it," he added.

He thanked students residing in Bukoba Municipality who have been going to the hospital to contribute blood despite closure of their learning institutions.



Arusha's acting Regional Police Commander, Koka Moita (wearing black face mask), briefs journalists in Arusha city yesterday on reports that advocate Albert Msando and one Agnes Shinji were under arrest allegedly for disseminating false information via social media. Photo: Correspondent Daniel Sabuni

## DC not happy with pace of public sensitisation on prevention of COVID-19

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbarali

MBARALI District Commissioner in Mbeya Region Reuben Mfune has directed all Ward and Village executives to make sure the guidelines on the preventive measures against Covid-19 infections reach every mwananchi.

Mfune said he was not satisfied with their pace of educating the public and that they should now mobilise themselves to ensure they reach the wananchi in all areas in the district.

DC Mfune was speaking mid this week at a special sitting of a committee against Covid19 infections formed by some of district leaders.

He also ordered the closure of all guesthouses including indoor games such as draughts and 'bao' as well as other games that attract gatherings.

"Some of government officials including ward and village executives have been shying responsibility in passing on government's directives in the protection against the pandemic thereby instilling panic unnecessarily among the wananchi for not getting correct information," he said.

He said the follow up committee on government directives have visited seven wards and discovered that some of the village and ward executives did

not perform their duties as directed. He also directed motor vehicle drivers and all wananchi in the district to put on masks when they are in big gatherings.

He also appealed to tailors who make masks to use the approved clothing materials in reducing Covid-19 infections.



**Some of government officials including ward and village executives have been shying responsibility in passing on government's directives in the protection against the pandemic thereby instilling panic unnecessarily among the wananchi for not getting correct information**

## Poaching in reserve forests under control, TAWA reports

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

TANZANIA Wildlife Authority (TAWA) has assured the public that its game wardens exercise strict control of poaching activities in the country's 22 Reserve Forests.

The assurance was given on Tuesday this week by TAWA Deputy Commissioner of Tourism and Commercial Services Imani Nkuwi when speaking to this paper on efforts by the Authority to tame poaching in the Reserve Forests.

Nkuwi said the achievements in taming poaching activities are a result of good teamwork between TAWA and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS).

"WCS has immensely assisted the Ministry of Natural Resources and

Tourism and the government in general in fighting poaching in the Reserve Forests by its financial assistance and training our game wardens," he said.

He said WCS training has enabled TAWA game wardens to effectively make frequent patrols in the Reserve

Forests.

Nkuwi said the patrols in the Reserve Forests include those by aircraft as well as other modern anti-poaching equipment.

He said TAWA's aim is to see wildlife exist peacefully in their habitats, the

aim that is being realised from the increase of wildlife in the reserves.

He also said time has arrived for wananchi living near Reserve Forests to adopt the habit of disclosing poachers as some of them are known to them.





## THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE ADVERTISEMENT



# CALL FOR APPLICATIONS TO BE A PRINCIPAL RECIPIENT FOR GLOBAL FUND SUPPORTED PROGRAMMES

The Tanzania National Coordinating Mechanism (TNCM) hereby announces its intention to apply for financing from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) for the New Allocation Utilization Period 2021-2023. Tanzania Mainland has been allocated \$587,270,528 for HIV, TB, Malaria and building Resilient and Sustainable Systems for Health (RSSH). Tanzania is also eligible for additional catalytic matching funds beyond this allocation of \$ 20,900,000. The Global Fund encourages applicants to invest in strengthening health and community systems; investment in human rights; increase domestic resources and strengthen the health systems as these are essential to accelerate progress towards ending the epidemics.

### Summary of allocation with indicative program split

Eligible disease component	Allocation US\$	Allocation utilization Period
HIV / AIDS	364,840,423	1 January 2021 to 31 December 2023
Tuberculosis (TB)	43,068,093	1 January 2021 to 31 December 2023
Malaria	145,258,808	1 January 2021 to 31 December 2023
Resilient and Sustainable Systems for health (RSSH)	34,103,204	1 January 2021 to 31 December 2023

S/N	Component	Priority Areas
	Tuberculosis (TB)	<p><b>Finding Missing People with TB:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community TB Care; Private Sector engagement;</li> <li>Removing human rights and gender barriers to TB services;</li> <li>Multi-sectoral engagement and collaboration</li> </ul> <p><b>DS and DR TB Care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate community and facility TB care referrals and linkage;</li> <li>Improve social welfare for TB patients</li> </ul> <p><b>Strengthening Laboratory Networks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate sample transportation and result feedback mechanisms ,</li> </ul> <p><b>TB Prevention:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise awareness and advocacy;</li> <li>Support targeted TB screening campaigns</li> </ul>
2	HIV	<p><b>PMTCT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case-based surveillance, to improve follow-up and retention in PMTCT care cascade</li> </ul> <p><b>HIV Testing Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community targeted testing; (Network work testing, Moonlight testing, Hotspot testing)</li> </ul> <p><b>Key and Vulnerable Populations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen DSD models for HIV case findings and linkage to treatment among which includes; self-testing, index testing, sexual network demand creation and contact tracing as well as enhanced KVP peer navigators to facilitate linkage and retention</li> </ul> <p><b>Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate for reduction of stigma and discrimination to increase enabling environment to facilitate access to services and promote health seeking behavior among KVP</li> <li>Expand targeted health services package for adolescents girls and young women including addressing structural barriers</li> </ul> <p><b>Care, Treatment and Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthening Community engagement to ensure provision of quality HIV care through DSD models to all PLHIV.</li> <li>Establish Community Led Monitoring intervention</li> <li>Strengthen TPT literacy among PLHIV.</li> </ul> <p><b>Support services (enablers)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pharmaceutical and Laboratory Services</li> <li>Blood safety</li> <li>Strategic Information</li> <li>Waste management and infection prevention and control</li> <li>Program management (Administration)</li> <li>Coordination and Leadership</li> </ul>
3	Malaria	<p><b>Integrated Malaria Control:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distribution of LLINs (universal mass distribution &amp; distribution to specific risk groups)</li> <li>LLINs; Continuous distribution through Expanded Program for Immunization; Antenatal Clinic and school based channels targeting socially vulnerable group.</li> </ul> <p><b>Indoor Residual Spraying:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indoor Residual Spraying targeting mosquitoes with behavior on indoor resting in epidemiologically high Malaria transmission strata.</li> </ul> <p><b>Other vector control Measures.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biological Control by using bacterial larvicides that targets and kill vector larvae;</li> <li>Implement activities to empower and engage communities in Vector control;</li> <li>Monitoring of key Entomological Indicators through Community Based Malaria Vector Entomological Surveillance System (MVES) in collaboration with NIMR – Muheza.</li> </ul> <p><b>Malaria Case Management.</b></p> <p><b>A. Facility Based Treatment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement activities related to equitable access to testing and treating malaria cases including severe malaria in operational health care facilities especially in regions with low and very low transmission of malaria.</li> <li>Procurement of diagnostic equipment, rapid diagnostic tests, microscopy reagents and anti-malaria drugs (uncomplicated and severe malaria cases)</li> </ul> <p><b>B. Private Sector Case Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Testing and treating malaria cases including severe malaria in the private sector. For example: Procurement of diagnostic equipment, rapid diagnostic tests, microscopy reagents and anti-malaria drugs (if not part of the co-payment mechanism);</li> <li>Private sector co-payment mechanisms including: e.g. Price negotiations;</li> </ul> <p><b>C. Implement Integrated Malaria Case Management.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand access to testing in the communities with high transmission via more community engagement by expanding mCCM in hard to reach areas and low access due to geographical barriers.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand access to treatment in the communities via more community engagement.</li> <li>Expand mCCM in hard to reach areas and low access due to any reason especially in high transmission areas.</li> </ul> <p><b>D. Ensuring Drug Quality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Setting regulations by national medicines regulatory authorities;</li> <li>Removal of artemisinin monotherapies- protocols, guidelines, audits;</li> <li>Active recall and disposal of existing artemisinin monotherapy stocks from the market;</li> <li>Enforcement activities (such as regular outlet inspections, confiscation and destruction of products, suspension of selling licenses, fines, prosecution)</li> </ul> <p><b>E. Implement activities related to development /refining of the epidemic response strategy e.g. Epidemic detection;</b></p> <p><b>F. Implement activities to conduct active case/foci investigations and response.</b></p> <p><b>Cross Cutting Issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement Advocacy, communication and social mobilization activities related to universal equitable access to vector control and Case Management of malaria.</li> <li>Implement activities to assess and address potential gender, human-rights related and other equity barriers to vector control and case management.</li> </ul> <p><b>Specific Areas for the Program</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Micro stratification: Set-up operationalization of interventions (high resolution)</li> <li>Increase Accountability of Malaria commodity and Management</li> <li>Introduction of LLINs with better efficacy profile in areas with known resistance (Piperonylbutoxide-PBO and/or next-generation nets).</li> <li>Engagement of the Community in Malaria Control Interventions.</li> </ul>
4	Resilient and Sustainable Systems for Health (RSSH)	<p><b>HMIS and M&amp;E: Use of integrated data platform</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance coordination and effective use or resources.</li> <li>Strengthen routine reporting across the sector</li> <li>Harmonization and standardization of surveys, research and surveillance across the sector</li> <li>Strengthen coordination and implementation of domestic research, surveys and surveillances</li> <li>Strengthen Administrative and finance data sources</li> </ul> <p><b>ICT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upgrade Comprehensive Integrated Health Facility Management Information System (AfyaCare, GoTHOMIS) to include program specific health information systems</li> <li>Support rollout of AfyaCare, GoTHOMIS to Regional Referral Hospital and PHCF</li> <li>Enhance DHIS2 integrated dashboard to improve data visibility and use from primary health care level to national level to ministry</li> </ul> <p><b>Integrated Service delivery and Quality Improvement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance quality service provision (including IPC system, water and sanitation)</li> <li>Strengthen socially inclusiveness services delivery (adolescent, disabled, gender)</li> <li>Harmonization and enable data driven supportive supervision by using integrated Digital supportive supervision tool</li> <li>Development and implementation of system for community based monitoring of engagement in quality of health services</li> </ul> <p><b>Laboratory Systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthening of waste management system</li> <li>Strengthening of QMS implementation and accreditation in the laboratory and re enforce review of universities curriculum to include comprehensive QMS Modules</li> <li>Strengthen National level coordination and implementation of the costed NHLSP II (2016-</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2021) to all levels</li> <li>Real time Integrated sample transportation networks and results tracking</li> <li>Strengthening of Laboratory Equipment harmonization and standardization</li> </ul> <p><b>Health Product Management Systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development and review of Supply chain guidelines, strategies , policy guideline and SOPs</li> <li>Strengthening of PSM coordination and monitoring mechanism</li> <li>Optimization of electronic platforms to bring about the needed efficiency (eLMIS, Afya system, GoTHOMIS, KPI dashboard and supply portal)</li> <li>Improve supply chain monitoring by strengthening Inventory management, stock level monitoring, and Downstream Distribution monitoring and upstream supply chain system across disease specific programs.</li> <li>Design and develop the system that will be adopted by FLBs, wholesalers and retailers to improve commodities visibility including subsidized ACT,</li> <li>Strengthening of Data Quality Assessment (DQA) and end use verification of health commodities.</li> <li>Strengthening of LMS to enhance proper management of Supply Chain activities in Tanzania.</li> </ul> <p><b>HRH including CHWs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine HRH Gaps. Request employment permit, Recruit staff and retain them</li> <li>Recruit some Key Health care workers on contract basis</li> <li>Develop new Human Resources for Health Staffing Levels Guideline to be used for the period of year 2020 – 2025</li> <li>Revamp and improve the HRHIS/ITIS, Integrate/link the available Systems such as Lawson, TCU and NACTE systems, capacity building to utilize the systems effectively</li> </ul> <p><b>Community Responses and Systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish community based HMIS for 12,545 villages (At least 2 per village – gender should be considered); Community health worker database for coordination of CHWs to address fragmentation of community health systems (HFGC, VHC, WDC – Social Services Committee (SSC) and CHW)</li> <li>Design Performance based incentive package for CHWs and mechanism to Track and disburse the package. (Payment could be done through the PHCF)</li> <li>Equip Health Promotion Unit to offer community based IEC/SBCC Materials</li> <li>Revision and Decentralization of community scorecard</li> </ul>
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TNCM invites Applications from reputable institutions/organizations that want to be considered as Principal Recipients (PRs) for the above components and priority areas. Principal Recipients will be responsible for grant management and disbursement of funds to other implementing organizations known as sub-recipients (SRs). The Principal Recipient (PR) must be an entity that is locally registered and operating in Tanzania with an independent supervisory board and have legal status and right to enter into a grant agreement with the GFATM. The PRs will be responsible for the implementation of the Global Fund-supported programmes on behalf of the country and the Tanzania National Coordinating Mechanism for Global Fund (TNCM). Each PR will be fully accountable to the TNCM and has formal legal obligations towards the Global Fund with regards to grant funds and the implementation of the programmes. These obligations are set out in the Grant Agreement. The obligations of a PR under the programme are defined in the Global Fund Grant Regulations.

In addition, organizations applying will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- Program/Project Management:** Demonstrate experience in management of projects in the health sector of substantial size and scope, have expertise in the priority areas selected (or demonstrated capacity to hire and support such staff with requisite education, background and experience). Prior experience in implementing GFATM projects will be considered an added advantage but it is not essential. [40 points]
- Finances Management:** Have adequate internal financial control systems and capacity to make timely procurements and payments and to accurately report all transactions, disbursements and balances; be able to adhere to standard practices that safeguard GFATM's financial and physical assets; agree to be subjected to financial and program audits; demonstrate the presence of effective monitoring and evaluation systems and expertise (This also includes the monitoring of outsourced entities, such as procurement agents). [25 points]
- Sub Recipient Grant Management and Capacity Building:** Demonstrate experience in disbursing, monitoring and accounting for funds given to sub-recipients (SRs) and in providing technical support to ensure that sub-recipients have the required capacity to implement GFATM activities. [15 points]
- General Management:** Have a structure that provides for effective organizational governance and leadership with clear division of functions and tasks, have policies and practices that support effective management of human resources, engages routinely in planning and have systems of control to verify that activities are being carried out in conformity with plans and are accomplishing intended goals. [15 points]
- Physical and IT Infrastructure:** Have adequate infrastructure (i.e. physical, material, and technical resources for staff) and computerized management information systems and internet in place for timely e-transactions, communications and financial and program/project reporting. [5 points]

The Application must not exceed 8 pages and must be submitted in English using Times Roman 12 point font. The following information must be provided:

- Cover Page: Organization name, physical address, legal registration number, contact person and designation, and type of organization (Public, Private, FBO, Local NGO, International NGO)
- Description of the organization's experience in the component(s) and priority area(s) selected.

Please note that the cover page and the following supporting documents, which are to be submitted with the Application, do not count against the eight (8) pages limit:

- Institutional or company profile, including a diagram and brief description of organizational structure.
- CVs of three (3) key personnel.
- Proof of registration/legal status.
- General organizational policy and procedures manual.
- Finance policy and procedures manuals.
- Procurement and supply chain manual.
- Audit reports issued during the past three (3) years.
- Description of computer infrastructure, including software for communications and for obtaining, storing, analyzing and reporting financial and program information to GFATM Secretariat and for managing the flow of financial and program information between the sub-recipients and PR.
- Monitoring & Evaluation manual

Some of the references that might be useful in preparing Applications include:

- Malaria**
- National Malaria Strategic Plan (2015 -2020)
  - National Surveillance, Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (2015 -2020)
  - Integrated Malaria Vector Control (2015 -2020)
  - Malaria Communication Guide (2015 -2020)

- RSSH / HSS**
- Health Sector Strategic Plan IV -2015-2020 (HSSP IV-2015-2020)
  - Human Resource for Health (HRH) and Social Welfare Strategic Plan (2014-2019)
  - Monitoring and Evaluation Strengthening Initiative (MESI) 2015-2020
  - Health Financing Strategy (2015-2025)
  - Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health 2nd Sharpened Plan (2015-2020)
  - National Medicine Policy Implementation Strategy (2014-2024)
  - Pharmaceutical Sector Action Plan (PSAP) 2020
  - MSD Medium term strategic plan (2014-2020)

- HIV**
- The National Third Health Sector HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan (HSHSP III) (2018/2022) and National Multisectoral Strategic Framework 2018/2022
  - Costing report of the HSHSP III 2018/2022 and HIV gap analysis report
  - Global Fund application materials – 2020 -2022 allocation period
  - Quantification (forecast and supply plans) reports for HIV commodities
  - THMIS, TDHS, TSPA, ANC Surveillances, IBBS for KPs, program reports, SADC and EAC reports,

- TB**
- Sixth National TB Operational strategic plan 2021 – 2025
  - National TB M&E plan; 2020-2025
  - The National HSHSP III (2018/2022) and NMF 2018/2022
  - Costing report of the HSHSP III 2018/2022 and HIV gap analysis report
  - THMIS, TDHS, TSPA, ANC Surveillances, IBBS for KPs, program reports, SADC and EAC reports,
  - WHO End TB strategy 2035 and the Global plan to stop TB (2015 – 2020)
  - NTP 2020 Program Review report
  - NTP 2020 Epi Report

On the top of the Application's first page, the applicant must clearly indicate the component(s) and priority area (s) for which is applying. The application is to be submitted to the Permanent Secretary, Prime Minister's Office, TNCM Offices, TACAIDS Building - Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and be received by 15 Mei 2020



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## Funding and development initiatives for African continent most welcome

FOOD security is a measure of the availability of food and individuals' ability to access it. Affordability is only factor. There is evidence of food security being a concern many thousands of years ago, with central authorities in ancient China and ancient Egypt being known to release food from storage in times of famine.

At the 1974 World Food Conference the term "food security" was defined with an emphasis on supply. Food security, they said, is the "availability at all times of adequate, nourishing, diverse, balanced and moderate world food supplies of basic foodstuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices.

The final report of the 1996 World Food Summit states that food security "exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life".

African and non-regional donors have pledged US\$17 million to replenish the Africa Solidarity Trust Fund, an initiative which aims to provide food security and eliminate rural poverty on the continent.

The pledges were made at a high-level donor round table convened by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and Equatorial Guinea President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, on the sidelines of the African Development Bank's 2019 annual meetings in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

The Fund illustrated a turning point in the fight against food insecurity.

The Fund, an initiative of the United Nations Food and Agriculture

Organisation, received its start-up contribution of \$30 million from Equatorial Guinea, the host nation of last year's meetings and Angola, which gave \$10 million. Its projects have been lauded for providing innovative solutions for African agriculture and food systems.

Speaking on behalf of African Development Bank President Akinwumi Adesina, Bank Vice President Agriculture, Human and Social Development, Jennifer Blanke said Africa faced challenges in the area of agriculture and food production, relying heavily on food imports.

"It's so important that ASTF is showing that African countries are contributing to Africa that links very closely to what we are doing," Blanke said, adding that the Bank's commitment to providing farmers with technologies to help improve their yields.

The theme of the Bank's meetings last year was "Regional Integration for Africa's Economic Prosperity." The push for regional integration has gained momentum with the ratification of the agreement on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in March 2018, which is now at the threshold of its launch in July.

Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General of FAO who represented FAO head José Graziano da Silva, commended the Fund for its results. The Fund has led to the successful implantation of 18 projects that have benefitted 41 countries and hundreds and thousands of beneficiaries, including 160 vulnerable households in Niger who saw transformation and grants which enabled a rapid response to populations affected in the Ebola outbreak in west Africa in 2014.

## Media can be an instrument of peace in conflict-prone settings

FREEDOM of the press or freedom of the media is the principle that communication and expression through various media, including printed and electronic media, especially published materials, should be considered a right to be exercised freely. Such freedom implies the absence of interference from an overreaching state; its preservation may be sought through constitution or other legal protection and security.

With respect to governmental information, any government may distinguish which materials are public or protected from disclosure to the public. State materials are protected due to either of two reasons: the classification of information as sensitive, classified or secret, or the relevance of the information to protecting the national interest.

Many governments are also subject to "sunshine laws" or freedom of information legislation that are used to define the ambit of national interest and enable citizens to request access to government-held information.

The United Nations' 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference, and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers.

The United Nations General Assembly declared May 3 to be World Press Freedom Day or just World Press Day to raise awareness of the importance of freedom of the press and remind governments of their duty to respect and uphold the right to freedom of expression enshrined under the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and marking the anniversary of the Windhoek Declaration, a statement of free press principles put together by African newspaper journalists in Windhoek in 1991.

In 2018, a conference sponsored by the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations was canceled. In 2018, several news organisations joined together for an ad campaign.

Forty-nine journalists were killed across the world last year, according to Reporters Without Borders, the lowest death toll in 16 years. As of today, a total of 341 journalists are imprisoned around the world.

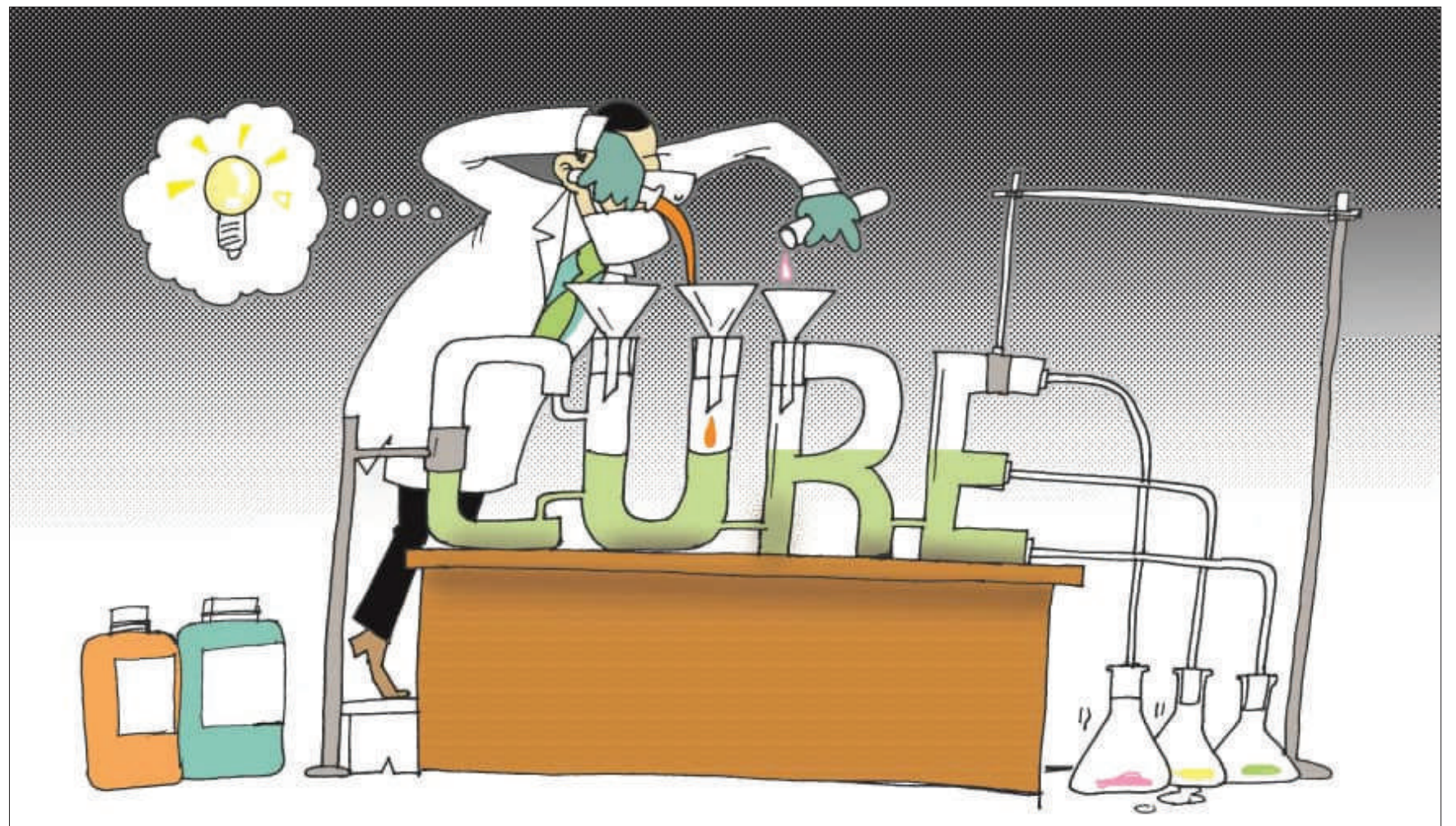
The historically low number mostly died covering conflicts in Yemen, Syria and Afghanistan, the Paris-based watchdog which warned: Journalism remains a dangerous profession.

Media freedom is in decline and journalists around the world are working in an intense climate of fear. This year's evaluation by Reporters Without Borders shows a marked drop in the number of countries where it is safe for journalists to work.

The World Press Freedom Index covers the state of journalism in 180 countries. It found only eight per cent of them have a media climate considered good for journalists.

The biggest deterioration is in the Americas with the United States, Brazil, Venezuela and Nicaragua performing poorly. The Middle East and North Africa region continues to be the most dangerous for journalists.

UNESCO marks World Press Freedom Day by conferring the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize on a deserving individual, organisation or institution that has made an outstanding contribution to the defence and or promotion of press freedom anywhere in the world, especially when this has been achieved in the face of danger. Created in 1997, the prize is awarded on the recommendation of an independent jury of 14 news professionals. Names are submitted by regional and international non-governmental organisations working for press freedom, and by UNESCO member states.



## I support Tanzania's approach to war on Covid-19



By Masalu Masanja

THE possible ramifications of Covid-19 on democracy and human rights cannot be underestimated in Tanzania, Africa and other developing countries around the world.

Measures such as lockdowns, curfews and turning the country into a state of emergency have been adopted by a number of African countries - among them Kenya, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Uganda. These drastic measures have been roundly faulted as infringing upon basic human rights and freedoms as well as democratic principles.

Critics argue that democracy and human rights are seriously endangered by the extreme measures some African countries have decided to undertake to combat the spread of the pandemic.

In this particular context, human rights approach is taken to mean a framework based on international human rights standards and operationally aimed at promoting and protecting the same.

Much like other African countries and indeed the rest of the world, Tanzania is experiencing the devastating impact of Covid-19 pandemic. Official figures show that there are 480 confirmed Covid-9 cases in the country, with 16 patients having since died and 197 having recovered from the deadly disease.

Owing to this scenario, there are relentless calls for the government

also to take more severe measures - without ruling out the declaration of a lockdown.

Some political pundits have called on the government to adopt a blanket lockdown to cover all major cities in Tanzania, with some having complained that the state was yet to take stringent enough measures to stop the spread of the pandemic in the country.

My honest opinion, though, is that the reservations fall short of considering the consequences the extreme measures recommended might have on the national economy and the very democracy and human rights the pundits concerned would like to "defend".

While lockdown, curfew and other extreme measures will doubtless help in arresting the spread of Covid-19, an approach having due regard for human rights and democracy would prove better than anything else.

Despite demands for radical measures, Tanzania has taken a path different from most of its African counterparts. It has refrained from taking stringent measures towards curbing the spread of the disease.

Instead, measures reasonably friendly to human rights and democracy were adopted, among them a ban on public gatherings such as sports events, musical concerts as well as political and community events so as to ensure the strict observance of social distancing.

Furthermore, the government recently suspended all international flights, while also embarking on vigorous sensitisation of the public on simple and workable ways to steer clear of Covid-19. It also opened more health centres dedicated for Covid-19 patients.

The National Assembly, which is currently in session with the marathon Budget meeting, continues to operate but a lot more cautiously than ordinarily - with only a small number of MPs allowed to physically attend sessions while the rest participate in the proceedings virtually. Additionally, disinfectant-spraying booths have been installed on the entrances of the House and EVERYBODY heading there - or leaving - must walk through the chambers.

Allowing economic activities to continue despite the spread of the pandemic, but while implementing strict preventive measures, is both realistic and commendable.

With the vast ignorance, fear and uncertainty surrounding Covid-19, it would be risky indeed "importing" approaches that may appear to have worked elsewhere and decide to swallow them hook, line and sinker, hoping that they will serve us well as well.

It is also my humble submission that the approach our government has chosen to embrace is in consonance with the principles of international law, under which some restrictions on

the enjoyment of basic human rights of people would be understandable only if they would amount to limitations reasonable, necessary and proportionate to the threat or threats posed.

We are faced with a public health crisis of immense proportions, and the future is unknown. This is undeniable. But respect for basic individual rights, good governance and the rule of law are important for long-lasting public health.

Thus, it is entirely problematic to place the fight against Covid-19 above the rights of individuals and placing public health concern in direct opposition to basic individual rights.

Combating the pandemic is but part of a wider process of building a stable state that respects the rule of law and individual basic rights.

The bottom line is that humankind has no option but to fight Covid-19 as strongly and effectively as humanly possible, but while ensuring respect for democracy and human rights. Adopting radical measures towards the end aimed for could well do more harm than good especially in poor economies. From where I am writing, I profoundly applaud the government for the approach it has chosen, while applauding my highly attentive people all the more for appreciating the position.

• Masanja Masalu is a Tanzanian lawyer based in Pretoria.



# The plight of coffee smallholder farmers in Tanzania - 1

By Gerald Kitabu, recently in Moshi

**W**EARING a smiling face, Mariam Foya, a young smallholder farmer, walked energetically to her coffee nursery garden located on the hills along Mbokomu road with a renewed spirit to revive coffee crop on the land she had inherited from her parents.

The 26-year old young girl who resides from Tema village, Mbokomu Ward, in Moshi District, Kilimanjaro region was filled with renewed vigor, very optimistic that if all things go well, the new coffee project would earn her enough money and emancipate her from poverty.

She had teamed up with other youth since December 2017, and formed Mbokomu Coffee Kids Group. The group started as a credit group, but later on, changed mindset and decided to venture into coffee project.

Mariam is the chairperson of the group which has twenty two members. She says the aim of forming Mbokomu Coffee Kids Group was basically to revive the strategic crop which, in recent years, has started losing its glory in Moshi district and Kilimanjaro region as a whole.

"This crop used to be very popular but now it doesn't attract the youth because first many youth don't have land to grow the crop, the land belongs to our parents and grandparents. If you can't inherit any land from your parents that means you can't conduct fruitful agriculture, leave alone to grow this crop," she said.

Besides shortage of land, Mariam explained that ordinary coffee seeds have shown susceptible to pests and disease, a situation which has challenged many youth to venture into the crop.

"We tried to plant the ordinary coffee seeds but as they were germinating and growing up, they were severely attacked by pests and diseases. This caused fear and discouraged many youth. Some youth abandoned the

crop. Only few of us have come back after we have received the new improved seeds from Tanzania Coffee Research Institute TaCRI," she said

Another member of Mbokomu Kids group, Godlisten Materu echoed Mariam's concerns adding that without government intervention in terms of investment in inputs and financial support, the number of youth venturing into the crop will be low.

He explained that lack of agricultural extension officers in their area has also set back their efforts to conduct fruitful agriculture especially education on the best coffee agricultural practices.

Mariam and Godlisten are some of many youth farmers whose dreams might not materialize. According to many experienced farmers interviewed by this paper said that the main challenge facing the coffee crop in recent years is the low market price.

According to the farmers, the market price stands at 2,000/- per kg.

The poor market price has forced some farmers to uproot their coffee from the farm. Didas Mallya from Manushi village is one of the farmers who have decided to uproot the coffee plants from their farms.

He calls for increased quantity and quality of the public investment in agriculture with a focus on meeting the needs of smallholder farmers.

"The crop has lost direction because if it can't pay back the money used for investment, then it is hopeless. I have decided to uproot coffee plants so that I can plant Banana because it pays more than coffee crop," he narrated.

Mallya who started coffee agriculture in 2008 after inheriting the farms from his parents, has so far uprooted five acres of coffee and replaced it with Banana aying growing coffee is costful and huge burden. Currently he is left with only three acres of coffee.

Mallya had received coffee im-



Some members of Mbokomu Kids Group work in the coffee nursery garden at Mbokomu in Moshi district, Kilimanjaro region. Photo by Gerald Kitabu

proved varieties obtained from Tanzania Coffee Research Institute (TaCRI). He thanks the research institute, but he says without good market price, the cost of investment is still very high and burden to the small holder farmers.

In the past when the crop was paying off, Mallya was named as TaCRI's exemplary coffee farmer in Moshi district. He was growing the crop with interest, making it as the main crop's income as such he conducted coffee agriculture according to the best agricultural practices.

Explaining further, he said that to have one strong voice, Mallya and his counterparts formed a group of 50 people and registered the group under Tanzania Coffee Board (TCB) so that they could sale the coffee directly at

market price," he said. Citing an example, he said a litre of pesticide is sold at 18,000/-. The farmer is supposed to fumigate the farm four times per season. A bag of fertilizer is old at 60,000/-, the farmer is supposed to fertilize the plants many times at every stage of the crop's growth and development. But shockingly, one kg of coffee is still sold at a very low price of 2,000/-," he said

He said although there are second payments but will not rescue the situation because at times, the additional amount is very small and takes long time because of bureaucratic procedures.

**Shortage of extension officers**  
The 2013 agricultural policy stipulates very clearly that each village must have extension officer. The ration is supposed to be 1:600 instead of the current situation where one extension

officer serves more than one village or the whole ward. However, despite this fact, the coffee farmers interviewed by this paper said they don't see any agricultural extension in their fields. They asked the government to improve their working conditions.

"We advise the government to enforce laws that directs local governments to set aside 60 percent of own source revenues for internal development activities. This fund will help solve shortage of extension officers, said Mallya.

There is great need for the Support of massive Agro-industrial development across the country, provide clear link between smallholder produces and private sector (Market, processing, credit facilities and extension services)

**The government should**  
Contacted for comments, Moshi district coffee specialist Violet Kisanga explained that the district is aware of hardships the farmers are going through. They have many challenges including poor market price. However, that cannot set back the efforts of improving the crop. She said there are several strategies that aimed at improving the crop.

"We are following up very closely the youth and the farmers who are developing interest for the crop. For example, we have been connecting them with funders and other stakeholders for training and other agricultural advice. We have also supplied improved seed from TaCRI. So far we have disseminated more than 7,000 improved coffee varieties from TaCRI to different youth groups so that they can produce more and fruitfully," she said.

She said recently there were more than 70 coffee youth gardens but the number decreased to 47 gardens after some youth lost their parents.

"Some farmers still have faith with the crop although some have been challenged by presence of crop diseases, pests and low market price," she said.

"Researchers at TaCRI are doing a great job on research, and production of improved varieties but the problem is low market price. I am planning to meet Moshi district executive director to see how the district can help TaCRI perform this good work of research, production and dissemination of improved coffee seeds to the farmers," she added

**To continue**

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

By Special Correspondent

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

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

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

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

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

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

including going on a ventilator, she suffered cardiac arrest and died. We were all devastated.

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

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

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

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

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

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



guidelines have now come out saying the same thing.

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

This is appropriate, because too much fluid in the body can cause the lungs to fill up with fluids and make the respiratory failure worse. At the same time, patients with COVID-19 typically come into the hospital and ICU very dehydrated. They have had fevers for several days, which causes dehydration itself, and they are not really eating and drinking (because they are sick).

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

We REALLY need to discuss goals of care with all patients admitted with COVID-19. This disease can kill. It can leave you needing a ventilator for a very long time, if not forever.

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

Do you want to live the rest of your days on a ventilator? Do you want to die on a ventilator? Do you want to die with the team pounding on your chest? Whatever the answers are to those important questions need to be communicated to the doctors taking care of patients with COVID, BEFORE the patients go into respiratory failure. Having me, as a critical care medicine specialist, ask these questions is too late. It needs to be done sooner.

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

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

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



# Climate smart agricultural techniques resilient to climate change

By Correspondent Daniel Sembery, recently in Tanga

**L**AATEST literature has indicated that in Tanzania, more than 75 per cent of the population is dependent on agriculture or agricultural related activities. Agriculture in the country largely depends on rainfall which is increasingly becoming unpredictable and unreliable with worsening climate change impacts.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with The Guardian recently during agriculture and food resilience study tour to Lushoto and Muheza districts' smallholder farmers a researcher from TARI-Selian, Department of Resource, specialised on climate change, George Sayula has called upon smallholder farmers across the country to understand that climate change was real, and was here to stay.

He therefore, called upon smallholder farmers to apply all recommended agricultural modern technologies at their exposure to enable them become more productive, sustainable and resilient for climate change.

Tanzanian farmers are being faced by declining rainfall, frequent droughts, natural disasters like floods, crop diseases and pests.

The study tour to those farmers was organised by the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) in collaboration with the University of Leeds (UK) and the Food, Agriculture and Natural Research Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN), from South Africa.

Sayula said that they were implementing a four year AFRICAP Project, funded by the UK government's Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF), which is being implemented in four African countries, namely Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia and South Africa.

He further noted that, the project has aimed at supporting agriculture and food systems in sub Saharan Africa to become more productive, sustainable and resilient for climate change.

"In Tanzania AFRICAP project is being implemented in Tanga Region. It supports the implementation of the second phase of Tanzania's agricultural sector development programme (ASD-PII)," he noted.

According to Sayula, climate smart agricultural techniques promoted to small scale farmers in the selected two districts in Tanga was leading to increased income and reduced vulnerability to climate change.

He said that the objective of the integrated approach for climate change adaptation in the East Usambara Mts, in Muheza District, Tanga Region, among others was to demonstrate effective and efficient strategies that support poor, rural households in Tanzania to adapt to the negative impacts of climate change and to alleviate poverty.

And the specific objective was to support the eight communities living near to high biodiversity forests in the East Usambara Mountains to increase and diversify incomes, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change-related impacts.

Smallholder farmers were also taught the use of pest and diseases tolerant varieties, use of early maturing and drought tolerant crops.

They were also taught good farming practices, which include how to plant, weeding, pests and diseases control, harvesting, processing, and better way of storages after post harvesting their produce. And marketing chains of their spices and food crops.

For his part, a farmer from Amani Village in Muheza District, Tobias Fungo commended

ESRF and other donors for supporting and empowering them with the knowledge on climate smart agricultural techniques that has caused them to be more productive sustainable and resilient for climate change.

He said that before the introduction of this project, in one acre he was only harvesting three sacks of maize weighing 100 kilogrammes. But after the introduction of the project, they were now harvesting 15 bags of maize weighing the same measures.

Fungo said that farmers in their area were not using industrial fertilisers and insecticides, but instead they were using cow dung, and local insecticides to kill harmful insects attacking their crops.

He has advised other smallholder farmers across the country to follow good farming practices, which include planting improved seed varieties (for maize, beans and spice crops), soil and water conservation practices, diversification of crops (food and cash), improved agronomic practices like crop spacing and planting dates, and agroforestry, for them to get abundant productivity.

However, Fungo said that despite all those positive achievements, lack of enough agriculture extension officers has remained a major challenge that should be addressed by the government.

Other findings have shown that in 2017 the Tanzanian government in collaboration with development partners and the private sector launched the National Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) Guidelines.

That standard-setting document meant to address challenges and impacts of climate change on agriculture to ensure food and nutrition security in the country.

Speaking at the launch, Dr Charles Tizeba, the then Minis-



Facilitators, agriculture extension officers and smallholder farmers from Muheza and Lushoto Districts in Tanga Region get an explanation from Tobias Fungo in Lushoto recently. Photo: By Daniel Sembery.

ter of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries said that there were several efforts made at different levels in the country to build resilience to the impacts of climate change and that the guidelines were meant to boost the drive.

"Along with other efforts and based on agro-ecological zones existing in Tanzania, it still seemed important for the nation to have a designated Guideline on Climate Smart Agriculture," he said.

"It aims to guide agriculture sector and stakeholders on the identification of practices and technologies suitable for successful climate smart agriculture implementation," he added.

The Minister said that the guideline would also be used in the identification of strategies for up-scaling and to allow development of programmes and plans for its successful adoption by farmers and other stakeholders in the agriculture sector.

Climate-smart agriculture (CSA) is an approach that helps to guide actions needed to transform and reorient agricultural systems to effectively support development and ensure food security in a changing climate.

CSA aims to tackle three main objectives: sustainably increasing agricultural productivity and incomes; adapting and building resilience to climate

change; and reducing and/or removing greenhouse gas emissions, where possible.

CSA is an approach for developing agricultural strategies to secure sustainable food security under climate change.

CSA provides the means to help stakeholders from local to national and international levels identify agricultural strategies suitable to their local conditions. It is in line with FAO's vision for Sustainable Food and Agriculture and supports FAO's goal to make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and more sustainable.

## Life in the era of COVID-19

By Ana Gomes Santos

THE Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has shared few thoughts on LinkedIn, which would interest youngsters and professionals. LinkedIn is an American business and employment-oriented service that operates via websites and mobile apps. Founded on December 28, 2002, and launched on May 5, 2003, it is mainly used for professional networking, including employers posting jobs and job seekers posting their CVs.

Following is the text of Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi's thoughts which was shared on LinkedIn.

"It has been a topsy-turvy start to the third decade of this century. COVID-19 has brought with it many disruptions. Coronavirus has significantly changed the contours of professional life. These days, home is the new office. The Internet is the new meeting room. For the time being, office breaks with colleagues are history.

I have also been adapting to these changes. Most meetings, be it with minister colleagues, officials and world leaders, are now via video conferencing. In order to get ground level feedback from various stakeholders, there have been videoconference meetings with several sections of society. There were extensive interactions with NGOs, civil society groups and community organisations. There was an interaction with Radio Jockeys too.

Besides that, I have been making numerous phone calls daily, taking feedback from different sections of society.

One is seeing the ways through which people are continuing their work in these times. There are a few creative videos by our film stars conveying a relevant message of staying home. Our singers did an online con-

cert. Chess players played chess digitally and through that contributed to the fight against COVID-19. Quite innovative!

### The work place is getting Digital First. And, why not?

After all, the most transformational impact of Technology often happens in the lives of the poor. It is technology that demolishes bureaucratic hierarchies, eliminates middlemen and accelerates welfare measures.

Let me give you an example. When we got the opportunity to serve in 2014, we started connecting Indians, especially the poor with their Jan Dhan Account, Aadhar & Mobile number.

This seemingly simple connection has not only stopped corruption and rent seeking that was going on for decades, but has also enabled the Government to transfer money at the click of a button. This click of a button has replaced multiple levels of hierarchies on the file and also weeks of delay.

India has perhaps the largest such infrastructure in the world. This infrastructure has helped us tremendously in transferring money directly and immediately to the poor and needy, benefiting crores of families, during the COVID-19 situation.

Another case in point is the education sector. There are many outstanding professionals already innovating in this sector. Invigorating technology in this sector has its benefits. The Government of India has also undertaken efforts such as the DIKSHA Portal, to help teachers and boost e-learning. There is SWAYAM, aimed at improving access, equity and quality of education. E-Pathshala, which is available in many languages, enables access to various e-books and such learning material.



### Today, the world is in pursuit of new business models.

India, a youthful nation known for its innovative zeal can take the lead in providing a new work culture.

I envision this new business and work culture being redefined on the following vowels.

I call them- vowels of the new normal- because like vowels in the English language, these would become essential ingredients of any business model in the post-COVID world.

#### Adaptability:

The need of the hour is to think of business and lifestyle models that are easily adaptable.

Doing so would mean that even in a time of crisis, our offices, businesses and commerce could get moving faster, ensuring loss of life does not occur.

Embracing digital payments is a prime example of adaptability. Shop owners big and small should invest in digital tools that keep commerce connected, especially in times of crisis. India is already witnessing an encouraging surge in digital transactions.

Another example is telemedicine. We are already seeing several consul-

tations without actually going to the clinic or hospital. Again, this is a positive sign. Can we think of business models to help further telemedicine across the world?

#### Efficiency:

Perhaps, this is the time to think of reimagining what we refer to as being efficient. Efficiency cannot only be about- how much time was spent in the office.

We should perhaps think of models where productivity and efficiency matter more than appearance of effort. The emphasis should be on completing a task in the specified time frame.

#### Inclusivity:

Let us develop business models that attach primacy to care for the poor, the most vulnerable as well as our planet.

We have made major progress in combating climate change. Mother Nature has demonstrated to us her magnificence, showing us how quickly it can flourish when human activity is slower. There is a significant future in developing technologies and practices that reduce our impact on the

planet. Do more with less.

COVID-19 has made us realise the need to work on health solutions at low cost and large scale. We can become a guiding light for global efforts to ensure the health and well being of humanity.

We should invest in innovations to make sure our farmers have access to information, machinery, and markets no matter what the situation, that our citizens have access to essential goods.

#### Opportunity:

Every crisis brings with it an opportunity. COVID-19 is no different. Let us evaluate what might be the new opportunities/growth areas that would emerge now.

Rather than playing catch up, India must be ahead of the curve in the post-COVID world. Let us think about how our people, our skills sets, our core capabilities can be used in doing so.

#### Universalism:

COVID-19 does not see race, religion, colour, caste, creed, language or border before striking. Our response

and conduct thereafter should attach primacy to unity and brotherhood. We are in this together.

Unlike previous moments in history, when countries or societies faced off against each other, today we are together facing a common challenge. The future will be about togetherness and resilience.

The next big ideas from India should find global relevance and application. They should have the ability to drive a positive change not merely for India but for the entire humankind.

Logistics was previously only seen through the prism of physical infrastructure - roads, warehouses, ports. But logistical experts these days can control global supply chains through the comfort of their own homes.

India, with the right blend of the physical and the virtual can emerge as the global nerve centre of complex modern multinational supply chains in the post COVID-19 world. Let us rise to that occasion and seize this opportunity.

I urge you all to think about this and contribute to the discourse.

The shift from BYOD to WFH brings new challenges to balance the official and personal. Whatever be the case, devote time to fitness and exercising. Try Yoga as a means to improve physical and mental well being.

Traditional medicine systems of India are known to help keep the body fit. The Ayush Ministry has come out with a protocol that would help in staying healthy. Have a look at these as well.

Lastly, and importantly, please download Aarogya Setu Mobile App. This is a futuristic App that leverages technology to help contain the possible spread of COVID-19. More the downloads, more its effectiveness.

Will wait to hear from you all."





Sylvester Kazi (L), export manager at Arusha's A to Z Textiles Limited, briefs Industry and Trade minister Innocent Bashungwa (R) earlier this week on the production of face masks at the firm. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

### PCCB in Morogoro holds magistrate, 10 other people over bribe allegations

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

PREVENTION and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) in Morogoro region had arrested 11 people including eight security personnel from various security organs, a magistrate and two citizens for soliciting and receiving bribes.

Deputy PCCB head for Morogoro region Victor Swella announced during a press conference on PCCP performance report for past three months.

Swella said apart from the magistrate, the eight security personnel included five from Tanzania National Parks Authority (TANAPA), one from Tanzania Wildlife Authority and one from the Fire Brigade and security Services and one from the militia.

He said after intensive follow up they nabbed five TANAPA-Mikumi personnel who solicited and received 2,040,000/- from poachers who they had arrested in the reserve area and after receiving the money they were released.

He said during the same period they arrested a TAWA personnel and militia who solicited 2m/- bribe from farmers including 600,000/- from farmers who were conducting activities in Kilombero river valley.

Swella said his Bureau also arrested a Fire Brigade and Rescue Services worker who solicited and received 30,000/- from a businessman as inducement not to take action for not having a Fire safety certificate.

He also said they arrested Mikumi primary court magistrate for allegations of soliciting and receiving 100,000/- bribe from a doctor from St Harry hospital as inducement to remove a case he was hearing.

He said the bureau also nabbed two people at different times for trying to bribe PCCB official and police officials when performing their duties.

He mentioned those arrested including Missenge village chairman in Doma Ward in Mvomero district who was trying to bribe PCCB official 200,000/-

He said another one person who refused 340,000/- bribe is a district crime officer who was to receive the money from a suspect to ensure his release after being arrested over illicit drugs charges.

### Mbeya police detain woman for spreading false information on COVID-19 pandemic

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbeya

POLICE in Mbeya region are detaining a woman, Joyce Akyoo (31), a trader and resident of Stereo area in Mbeya City for spreading false and misleading information on the Covid-19 pandemic.

A police press statement signed by Mbeya Regional Police Commander Ulrich Matei said the suspect was arrested on April 27 this year at 1.30pm.

The statement claimed that on March 30 this year the suspect posted information via Whatsapp that some of the clothes of people who have died from Covid-19 infections in China are exported to African countries with the viruses of the disease.

In the statement RPC Matei quoted both written and audio statement posted by the suspect among Whatsapp group titled 'MWAILUBI CAR WASH' about the existence of such virus infected clothing.

"She was warning people not to accept donations of such clothing saying "blankets and clothes of Covid-19 patients who died in China are exported to Africa with the viruses," and she placed a picture of bales of clothing," said RPC Matei.

He said such information was misleading and instill unnecessary fear among wananchi and added that investigations were still continuing after which she will be taken to court.

He appealed to wananchi to avoid spreading any information on the pandemic as that was the responsibility of the Ministry of Health through the minister.

## Chalinze ready for e-issuance of business licences - BRELA

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

CHALINZE District Council in Coast Region will soon start providing business licences electronically after landing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) equipment from Business Registration and Licensing Agency (BRELA).

Speaking during the handover ceremony in Dar es Salaam yesterday, acting head of licence department in BRELA Peter Riwa said Chalinze will be the third council to provide business licence electronically after they get the ICT equipment.

"After this handover ceremony this council will be the third among district councils that provide business licences electronically after Ilala Municipal Council in Dar es Salaam and Mwanza City Council," said Riwa.

Riwa also mentioned equipment that were given by BRELA included three lap tops, normal computer, one printing machine, three mobile phone, two modem and one scanner.

Acting head of copy right department Seka Kasera said the aim is to make sure BRELA equip all regions with ICT

facilities across the country

"We are very organised for those district council which have no ICT equipment BRELA will help them and for those councils which have the capacity to buy such ICT equipment we urge them to start providing business licenses electronically and it is our hope that all district councils in the country will follow this direction," said Kasera.

He said the new system will help to reduce bureaucracy, complaints, corruption and minimise time for people to get their licences adding that by using this system clients will be no wasting time any more.

Chalinze district council representative, Samson Morris, applauded BRELA for the donation and promised that they will use the equipment for the intended purpose.

"This new system will help business community in our district especially those who come from remote areas and they will no longer come to town to follow up their business licences," he said.

BRELA introduced the system of providing business licences which intended to cover Mwanza City council, Ilala municipal council and Bukoba, Mafinga township, Karagwe district and Chalinze.



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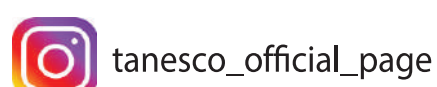
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# Is COVID-19 enabling debt-trap diplomacy?

BY PETER FABRICIUS

ARE foreign powers taking advantage of the economic devastation caused by the coronavirus pandemic to seize control of two of East Africa's strategic ports from debt-stricken countries? Controversies are swirling around Kenya's Mombasa and Sudan's Port Sudan.

Media reports suggest Mombasa could soon be transferred to the ownership of China as collateral for unpaid Kenyan debt. Likewise the United Arab Emirates (UAE) could gain control of Port Sudan.

The Mombasa issue is being viewed by some as yet another example of China's 'debt-trap diplomacy' - a phrase much bandied about by the Donald Trump administration. It refers to Beijing reputedly lending large sums to poorer countries, mostly in Africa, to build infrastructure, with the intention of seizing the infrastructure as collateral when the country inevitably defaults on the interest repayment.

Commentators in Kenya are concerned that this is about to become the fate of Kenya's main port Mombasa. The government reportedly offered the port as collateral for the billions loaned from China to construct the Mombasa-Nairobi railway - the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) - in 2014.

Kenya has accepted over US\$5 billion in loans for the SGR which has now been extended to the Rift Valley - en route eventually to South Sudan - but is running at a loss. Its losses seem bound to be magnified by the COVID-19 economic crash.

Is Beijing executing a grand

strategy of control or just doing business like everyone else?

Overall Kenya's foreign debt amounts to around US\$60 billion - some 61% of GDP - with China holding about US\$6.5 billion of these loans. Kenyan media have reported that the 2014 loan agreement specifically waived Kenya's sovereign immunity on the Mombasa port's assets and that any dispute arising from the loan would be arbitrated in China.

Regarding Port Sudan, Al Jazeera reported last week that Sudan's cash-strapped transitional government was preparing to hand control of the country's principal seaport to Dubai Ports World (DP World), a company owned by the UAE. Dubai has set its sights on Red Sea ports before. A few years ago it was engaged in a tussle - ironically, with China - for control of the nearby port of Djibouti, which is even more strategic as it hosts several foreign military bases.

According to Al Jazeera, anonymous Sudanese officials told it the deal would allow the UAE company to run the South Port Container Terminal at Port Sudan. Khartoum denies this, saying, 'Port Sudan is an asset that belongs to the people of Sudan.' Whether or not this is a sign that the UAE is about to be added to the rogues' gallery of 'debt-trap' diplomats remains to be seen.

Certainly China has long been branded the villain in chief of this club. Many Western commentators especially have seen its Belt and Road Initiative - through which it has lent many billions of dollars to countries along the route - as essentially a debt-trap initiative to control the strategic corridor linking China with the Middle East, Eu-

rope and Africa.

Whether UAE soon joins the rogues' gallery of 'debt-trap' diplomats remains to be seen.

Some analysts see COVID-19 as widening the opportunity for this putative strategy - including the authors of a 2018 Harvard University report on debt-trap diplomacy. The Guardian recently quoted the report's co-author Sam Parker as saying: 'I think it's early stages. But whatever debt leverage China had over countries is going to increase. Whatever bad consequences were going to happen as a result of being unable to repay China, I think the timeline could be severely accelerated.'

The report was written by Harvard's Kennedy School of Policy Analysis for the US State Department. It identified countries such as Pakistan and Sri Lanka as among those where governments had already ceded a key port or military base to China.

Is all this just Western paranoia, or deliberate disinformation by the Trump administration? Is Beijing executing a long-range grand strategy of control? Or is it just doing business like everyone else?

Sinologist Deborah Bräutigam, Director of the China Africa Research Initiative at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, has long dismissed the Chinese debt-trap theory. She wrote this month that China had lent a total of about US\$152 billion to 49 African governments and state-owned companies between 2000 and 2018, accounting for about 17% of African debt, according to the World Bank.

Is 'Chinese privatisation' an oxymoron and a euphemism for takeover by Beijing?



Will Mombasa and Port Sudan be ceded to foreign powers to repay debt? File photo

The African Union has appealed to the international community for at least US\$100 billion to help the continent deal with the health and economic fallout from COVID-19. The first request was a suspension of debt interest payments - which the G20 agreed to. Bräutigam notes that the World Bank and International Monetary Fund have called on all official bilateral creditors - such as China - to provide immediate debt relief to low-income borrowers.

'What will China do for its debtors now facing economic collapse? Some fear that a malign China will leverage this crisis to seize strategic assets,' she says. 'Others report that a benign China has already "wiped clean" many nations' debt slates.'

Both are wrong, Bräutigam suggests. Firstly she says Beijing isn't a pushover when it comes to debt relief or renegotiation. Indeed there are suggestions that China is among the most reluctant

of the G20 creditor countries to forgive the huge debt it holds in Africa and elsewhere.

But conversely, in a close analysis of China's hundreds of loans to Africa, 'We saw no evidence of asset seizures in Africa, or indeed, anywhere among Chinese borrowers in debt difficulties,' Bräutigam writes. Not even in the infamous case of Hambantota port in Sri Lanka which has often been cited - including in the Harvard report - as the copybook example of China's debt-trap diplomacy.

Bräutigam sees it rather as merely a newly elected government with a balance of payments crisis privatising its Chinese-financed port to a Chinese investor in 2017. This brought in over US\$1 billion in foreign exchange. 'Similarly, debt-distressed Republic of Congo concessioned its 535-kilometer Chinese-financed highway to a Congolese-Sino-French consortium, which

now operates it as a toll road.'

Bräutigam suggests Western countries should welcome, not condemn, Sri Lanka for privatising a state entity to reduce costs to the fiscus. Indeed she could argue that this was textbook Washington Consensus doctrine. And if China and the UAE didn't put up the money to run the ports, who would?

The interpretation of the Hambantota episode and maybe others to come seems, however, to hinge on the word 'privatisation'. Many Western observers would suggest that 'Chinese privatisation' is an oxymoron and a euphemism for takeover by Beijing.

It will be interesting to see if Bräutigam's rather sanguine analysis stands up to what must inevitably be a rash of debt defaults as the COVID-19 economic collapse intensifies. That's going to up the ante for both creditors and debtors.

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30 Aprili 2020

## Managing the impact of fighting Covid-19 on the mental health of healthcare workers

ON 1 April, Minister of Health Zweli Mkhize warned South Africans that we were in "the calm before the devastating storm", and that there might not be many further warnings "before the pounding descends".

Communicable disease experts and other healthcare workers have been in a state of preparation and heightened anticipation for many weeks. An advantage of being "behind the curve" in our case trajectory, compared to many other countries, is that we can learn from their experiences and research. An overview of that experience suggests that the mental health impacts on healthcare workers will unfold in phases. These will include:

1. The current preparation phase: characterised by anticipatory anxiety
2. The active phase: heroic and a surge to solutions, followed by a high-risk time of disillusionment and exhaustion; an
3. The recovery phase: recovery and the emergence of long-term psychological impact.

The preparation phase has been prolonged in South Africa due to the relatively slow start of our epidemic and our global vantage point. This phase has been experienced differently across our health-care sectors.

Community healthcare workers are now at the forefront of testing, while many hospital staff have lighter caseloads but unfamiliar logistical challenges. They are busying themselves preparing space for the expected flood of the severely ill,

while wondering about the welfare of their usual daily patients. Out-patient clinics and practices are scrambling to develop protocols that will provide acute and chronic care while limiting risk.

Some healthcare workers are already treating active coronavirus infections, and are overwhelmed by new treatment challenges and fearful for their own safety and that of their families. It is not yet clear whether this prolonged first phase will worsen mental health risks or confer some protection.

Healthcare workers are vulnerable to immediate and long-term mental health consequences of this pandemic. A survey of over 3,000 respondents in South Africa conducted by EMGuidance, a clinical reference platform for medical professionals, found that over 70% reported feeling anxious, overwhelmed, frustrated or angry in early April.

Current trauma research recognises not only that these are expected responses to an extraordinary stressor, but also that specific forms of support can mitigate long-term negative health outcomes.

Drawing on the expertise of international colleagues, including Dr Alys Cole-King and Professors Simon Wesley and Neil Greenberg, a project was launched by private sector volunteers to assist colleagues in the state healthcare sector in Gauteng - though of course it may be expected that the boundary between public and private will blur as the epidemic gathers momentum.

The project has evolved into a responsive partnership between the state and

private sector, with a database of 275 volunteers, 227 of whom are in Gauteng.

The team of psychiatrists and psychologists offering mental health support to healthcare workers is in collaboration with the South African Medical Association, the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG), the South African Society of Psychiatrists (SASOP), the South African Society of Anaesthetists (SASA), and supported by the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA).

SASOP is implementing national replication of the initiative. SAMA will be hosting the portal through which healthcare workers can request direct assistance.

Activities have included giving training and support through the National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH), individual hospitals, and community health departments; conducting workshops with about 450 healthcare workers, CEOs, managers, and other non-clinical hospital staff in the past two weeks. The project assists with both preventative strategies and treatment services.

The first stage is the ideal time for managers and supervisors to psychologically prepare their teams for what may be coming. International research indicates that trauma-exposed frontline staff are likely to benefit from being sensitised to the realities of the work they will be asked to do and the associated psychological challenges. This requires those in positions of responsibility to be upfront about what the likely occupational exposures might be, and not to either over- or under-state

the traumatic nature of a particular role.

Preparatory briefings should include discussion of:

- The moral and ethical challenges of the current situation;
- Likely workplace pressures and traumatic exposures;
- The challenges of wearing PPE for extended periods;
- Fears of becoming infected and by implication infecting others; and
- The support options that will be made available to mitigate the potential distress that individuals may experience.

There is very strong evidence that psychologically savvy supervisors play a critical role in supporting the mental health of team members. Teams operating in even the most arduous of environments are more likely to function well, and avoid the onset of serious mental health difficulties, if their supervisors create the right team ethos.

This ethos should not be about "positive attitudes" or heroics. Sober assessment of challenges, knowledge that team leaders are advocates for the working conditions of their teams, including safety issues such as PPE, testing, and adequate sleep, and good communication create protective and productive environments.

Alongside the preventative team- and management-oriented service, volunteers are providing pro bono services to any individual healthcare worker seeking support or treatment. Group therapeutic services are also offered.

Agencies



# CHINESE RESEARCHER DEFENDS BEIJING'S REAL ESTATE INVESTMENTS IN AFRICA

By Property Watch Reporter

**M**OST Chinese private companies fail to invest heavily in Africa's real estate industry because of existing data gap, financing and unclear policies which makes it hard to raise cash for such long term investments.

Kevin Yin, A researcher at the Centre for Affordable Housing Finance, Kevin Yin said in his paper of Chinese involvement in Africa's real estate published recently that the quality, accuracy and cleanliness of data available in Africa drives away private investments.

"The most glaring challenge for African engagement with investors and developers, in any sector and of any origin, is the existing data gap. Even large, respected research institutions on Chinese involvement in Africa, such as Johns Hopkins University and the American Enterprise Institute, report their data with some hesitancy," Yin said.

He pointed out that as a result, fickle nature of contracts, the privacy of large Chinese entities and the incentives against reporting deals that have failed are widespread. "Data sourced by CAHF consultants sometimes does not align with data from these other sources. Existing databases rely largely on media reports and interviews, using official data and connections to cross-verify," He argued noting that many Chinese projects are not reported to the public.

Yin whose paper seeks to clear Chinese real estate investment on the continent from criticism by Western rivals, argued that inexperienced media outlets often conflate investments and developments, which institutions must then sort and verify.

The Chinese researcher further argued that lack of housing sector specific research on the



Chinese Avic Town investment in Kigamboni has made very little progress in recent days.

continent also contributes to the confusion saying data and research that involves Chinese investment and development are more often concerned with capturing a holistic understanding of Chinese participation in Africa than a focused exploration of a particular sector.

"When specific sectors are explored, they are usually infrastructure construction and mining, not housing. This is understandable given

the relatively little time and investment Chinese firms have allocated to housing. However, this discounts billions in investment and development contracts by CITIC, Dreal Group and smaller private investors," Yin noted.

"Aside from McKinsey's generous projections for future expansion into the sector, internal industry reports, and media discussion on Kilamba Xiayi's purported failure in 2012, little

research has been directed at the potential of Chinese participation in African housing," he argued. Kilamba was a housing project in Angola.

Yin also blames misunderstanding of local contexts by Chinese firms which are either not sufficiently incentivised to participate in affordable housing projects or have not been made aware of the incentives that already exist.

"Dreal Group's attraction to grand, city-wide projects in Guinea and Shanghai Zenda's Modderfontein project in Johannesburg are testaments to an existing failure to meet the needs of African housing. Chinese enterprises struggle to deal with local political structures and differences in the strength of real estate markets compared to China," the CAHF research added.

In addition, he also pointed out that employment conflicts between locals and Chinese nationals in construction of industry emerge because Chinese firms play an important role as employers of locals.

"However, problems between Chinese employers and Chinese employees diminish the efficacy of this role. The mistreatment of employees and informal employment, while not uncommon in foreign firms, greatly diminishes the trust between Chinese and African parties, not to mention the wellbeing of local employees," he pointed out.

Furthermore, Yin observes that better employment standards improve the ability of firms to retain top talent and promote internally, ensuring that expertise in local markets and industry is used to its full potential.

"Language barriers impede the efficiency and comfort of close workspaces, increasing the likelihood that the employment relationship will not last or will not be as fruitful even if it does," he said while arguing that African governments and Chinese participants ought to cooperate directly to develop specialised vocational training and language programs to ensure that locals are being trained for skills the market demands.

## Property industry wants govt mediation in retail rent dispute

JOHANNESBURG

THE Property Industry Group (PI Group), an alliance of South Africa's biggest retail landlords and JSE-listed real estate investment trusts (Reits), has called on the government to come in as a mediator to help resolve the impasse around major retailers paying some form of rent during the Covid-19 lockdown.

In a statement released on Tuesday morning, the group announced "increased and extended" rental relief for most retail tenants, but noted it is yet to secure a deal with the newly-formed Clothing Retailer Group (CR Group), which represents Pepkor, The Foschini Group (TFG), Truworths, Mr Price Group and Woolworths.

As part of its new wider relief guidelines, the landlord alliance has doubled its rental discount for April offered to major clothing retailers that have been forced to close due to the Covid-19 lockdown. It is now offering a 70% rental discount to such retailers that have a turnover of more than R1

billion.

This comes as government has effectively extended the national lockdown in the form of various lockdown levels, which will still see many businesses either not being allowed to trade or facing stringent trade restrictions. "Despite constructive negotiations between the groups and considerable compromises on both sides, we have been unable to reach an agreement on the extent of the rental relief," the PI Group said in its latest statement.

Commenting on the situation, Estienne de Klerk, spokesperson for the PI Group and Chairman of the SA Reit Association, called on government to come in as a mediator for sort of resolution. "Unfortunately, despite both parties moving closer together we can't find a final meeting point on the level of rental discount, and the refusal by the CR Group to pay their share of rates and taxes remains the major point of disagreement," says de Klerk.

"Both sides, however, appreciate that our fortunes

are inextricably linked, and we need each other for the success of our businesses. We value the longstanding relationships forged between members of both groups. To preserve these relationships, and avoid a protracted process, we are proposing the national government as mediator to provide a mutually beneficial remedy," he adds.

After several major clothing and other retailers threatened not to pay rent for April, the PI Group was formed. It has the backing of the SA Reit Association, South African Property Owners Association (Sapoa) and South African Council of Shopping Centres (SACSC), as an industry response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the economic fallout from the lockdown.

The CR Group later came together and offered to pay landlords around 20% of rentals for April. This counter offer was in response to the PI Group's initial proposal of a rental discount of 35% to major clothing retailers for the month. With the discount now



Inside Mall of Africa in Johannesburg.

increasing to 70%, the landlord alliance will be hoping to finalise a deal before the end of April, as many clothing retail giants have yet to pay and are anchor tenants in South Africa's malls and city centre properties.

Meanwhile, the PI Group reiterated in its statement on Tuesday that while its new guidelines aimed to offer greater relief to all affected retailers, the hardest-hit small, medium and micro enterprise (SMME) retailers will be prioritised.

"To sustain retail tenants during the lockdown, the property industry's assistance guidelines offer relief for all affected retailers, regardless of size. SMME

retailers, however, are the focus of the initiative," it said.

"The PI Group proposes that small and micro retailers are given rental discounts of up to 100% for April, with further substantial rental discounts and interest-free rental deferrals for May and June respectively," it added.

As part of its wider relief guidelines, the group said it has increased the extent of assistance, introduced more retailer categories, provided additional options for some retailers and extended the benefits from two months to three months - April, May and June 2020.

"The retail tenant assistance and relief guidelines exclude office, logistics, warehousing, industrial, healthcare, hospitality and other tenants," the PI Group said. "These tenants should discuss their specific situations directly with their landlords, who will consider them on a case-by-case basis without reference to the retail tenant assistance and relief guidelines."

"Adding to its far-reaching relief impacts, the PI Group is committed to continuing paying its suppliers in full, including cleaning and security providers, and taking on the increased cost of enhanced hygiene to protect against the spread of Covid-19. This is helping to preserve thousands of jobs nationwide," it added.

"The PI Group is also paying its rates and taxes, which are vital in supporting the sustainability of municipalities countrywide and by extension supporting the grass level communities and households among which both property and retail sectors conduct business," it noted.

The landlord alliance has also stipulated that as part of its assistance and relief guidelines, all tenants with accounts in good standing at 29 February 2020, will not be evicted during the lockdown period and will qualify for some form of assistance from participating landlords.

"Retailers would need to apply to their landlords directly for assistance. Each participating landlord can offer additional relief and support on a case-by-case basis at their discretion. However, the guideline for retail SMMEs is the minimum that qualifying retailers can expect from participating landlords," it said.

## European shipyards resume work after COVID-19 break

PARIS

SEVERAL of Europe's leading shipbuilders have announced plans to slowly resume operations after more than a month of disruptions. During the peak of the coronavirus, shipbuilders in Italy, France, Spain, and Germany were each forced to suspend operations.

Chantiers de l'Atlantique, in Saint-Nazaire, France, is taking the first steps to resume its opera-

tions on Monday, April 27, 2020. Starting in mid-March, work had been suspended with the yard maintaining administrative functions working from home. Work is now expected to restart in some of the yard's fabrication shops, including the cabin manufacturing facility, and on board ships, with the use of personal protective equipment.

However, it will be voluntary and at half normal staffing levels until mid-May. Subcontractors

can also resume work with reduced staffing levels. Chantiers expects all production activities and other functions such as the design office will begin operating on May 11, although some activities may continue to work from home.

The resumption of work at the French shipyard comes a week after Fincantieri, headquartered in Italy, also took the first steps to restore operations at its yards after having been closed since March

16. "We gradually re-started production in all our yards in Italy," said a spokesperson for Fincantieri. "This process will take place spanned over several weeks in order to ensure safety to all our workers."

Fincantieri's yards are currently working with reduced levels of staffing as well as staggered shift schedules. Employees at the yards are also being supplied with personal protective equipment, undergoing temperature checks

at the entrances, and using private buses so that they are not on public transport.

While the Italian Government is targeting early May to begin relaxing restrictions, it is anticipated that it will be late May or early June before Fincantieri has returned to more complete staffing levels and resumed normal production levels.

Other European countries are also working to reopen their shipyards. In Spain, Navantia has

started some activities at some yards while cleaning efforts are underway at other facilities. Shipbuilding company MV Werften, with operations in Wismar, Rostock, and Stralsund, Germany, suspended operations in late March and is now targeted early May to resume operations if supply chains are again functioning. However, Meyer Werft in Papenburg, Germany and Meyer Turku in Finland, were able to continue work at reduced levels and with

added safety precautions as the virus spread across Europe.

While the return to work is a positive development for the shipyards, they nonetheless are facing high levels of uncertainty. Work on military and Government projects is expected to be unaffected by the economic repercussions of the pandemic, but there is a much higher level of uncertainty with commercial orders and especially those from the hard-hit cruise ship sector.



# SONGAS MARKS MAY DAY BY PROMISING CHEAPER, MORE RELIABLE ELECTRICITY

By Property Watch Reporter

**A**S the world marks May Day, Songas Limited has celebrated some of its hardworking employees while promising cheap and reliable electricity as the country battles the novel coronavirus pandemic.

In a statement, the gas to electricity producing company said as the world celebrates Workers Day now, more than ever, companies and organisations see the need to recognise and celebrate the contribution of their workforce.

"In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, this day carries even more meaning, as many employers are compelled to take drastic measures to limit the spread of the virus. But the need for electricity is an essential service and while the annual event cannot take place as intended, we can use this day to appreciate the men and women that continue to keep our lights on," the Songas statement stated.

The Dar es Salaam based company further noted that it's highly skilled, innovative and dedicated people play a huge role in helping the company to be the leading provider of cheap electricity powering Tanzania's growth.

"In many companies, employee appreciation and recognition are demonstrated through awards. Raphael Bukene, a Technical Engineer at Songas, clinched the Employee of the Year award in 2019 having received the highest performance scores across the company. Raphael is more than a colleague," the statement added.

Bukene is described as a mentor and friend to many at Songas where he spends his workdays planning and coordinating the installation of new equipment and attending to repairs and renovations, an integral role in the upkeep of the Songas plant.

"When asked of the meaning of the award to him he admits that the recognition is phenomenal and unexpected, attributing his success to that of his team. "This is just an inspiration to keep going on this road we've been heading up," he said.

Another outstanding employee is Heradius Chami, an Operations Engineer who last year received the



Songas Ltd's engineers at work.

Business Excellence Award. As an employee in the operations department, Chami often has night shifts and encounters working hours outside the norm. "When asked about his

ability to work the night shift, he described it as one of his key strengths but credits the collaboration with his colleagues," the Songas statement noted.

"When we work in these shifts we have to work as a team, it is like a family," he said noting that the evolving technologies in the operations are also an important part of what

Chami considers to be a motivating factor in his day-to-day duties.

In the administration department, Sharifa Katakweba emerged as runner up of the Business Excellence Award. As an Administrative Officer, Katakweba often has to juggle different roles to ensure the efficient and smooth operation at the office where she holds as a connecting link between management and employees.

"Her efforts create a synergy within the company that motivates employees and helps them achieve their professional goals," the statement pointed out.

Another outstanding employee who Songas is proud of is Sunil Ved, a good leader with exceptional talent and exemplary managerial skills. Ved who is an IT and Communications Manager for over 15 years, has been a core component in the Songas IT department.

"His colleagues are often beneficiaries of his outstanding leadership and counsel. Over the years he has selflessly taken on a mentorship role, helping individuals work as a team who strive for a common goal," the company's statement noted.

While we are unable to have our annual celebrations in honour of our collective accomplishments on Labor Day, it is incumbent on all organizations to shine a light on their employees. Songas recognizes and commemorates the dedication of its people whose hard work allows the company to provide affordable and reliable electricity to Tanzania, the statement concluded.

## World's deepest gold mines on a 'cliff' as virus curbs output

JOHANNESBURG

SOUTH Africa's gold industry output has dwindled to a fifth of its 1970s' peak as ever-deepening shafts and higher costs take their toll. The coronavirus may pose an even bigger threat.

The pandemic jeopardises the future of a 134-year-old industry that once employed more than half a million workers on the world's biggest gold field. While Cyril Ramaphosa's government has been praised for its rapid response to the health crisis, the country's five-week lockdown and the strict conditions attached to reopening gold mines risks undermining their viability.

To ensure the social distancing needed to safeguard tens of thousands of workers in the world's deepest mines, the nation's gold producers will only be allowed to operate with half their normal employees. That may make them unprofitable, even as they struggle with the added burden of screening workers for virus symptoms and testing of those who display them.

"They are pretty much on a cliff," said Rene Hochreiter, an analyst at Noah Capital Markets Ltd. "Nobody is going to make money at 50%." With no sign of a cure or vaccine for Covid-19 anytime soon, much will depend on how long the operating restrictions are applied.

Gold Fields Ltd. may limit cost increases at its South Deep mine to 5%, but only if it can reach full capacity by the end of May, according to Chief Executive Officer Nick Holland. In the meantime, further virus infections could temporarily halt operations again, he said.

"How much are we going to lose on productivity? That's a tough one," Holland said. "If we are stuck at 50% beyond the end of May, then we will have to relook at all the numbers."

South African gold mines already have some of the world's highest production costs, averaging about \$1,000 an ounce, according to RMB Morgan Stanley. That makes the industry "more vulnerable," said James Wellsted, a



Gold Fields' South Deep mine.

spokesman for Sibanye Stillwater Ltd.

"We are only building to 50% capacity, which is positive, but not viable for an extended period," he said. Marian Van Der Walt, spokeswoman for Harmony Gold Mining Co., the nation's largest gold producer by volume, declined to comment.

Some mines may only achieve 30% of their previous output with half their workforce, said Tebello Chabana, senior executive for public affairs and transformation at the Minerals Council South Africa, which represents most producers. Others are warning it may already be too late.

Village Main Reef, owned by Hong Kong-

based Heaven-Sent Gold Group Co., has notified the government and labor unions that it may cut more than 6 000 jobs as losses deepen due to the national lockdown, CEO Jeff Dong said.

"We had restructured the mines by cutting a lot of costs," Dong said. "Unfortunately as we started to see signs of a turnaround, Covid-19 forced us to shut down completely." Still, it's too early to sound the death knell for South Africa's gold industry, according to Noah Capital's Hochreiter. Restarting the mines may at least allow producers to cover the costs of salaries and electricity, he said. The industry currently

employs about 95 000 workers. Producers are also benefiting from the rand's 24% decline against the dollar this year, which lowers their costs. At the same time, a 12% rise in the dollar price of bullion is boosting revenue.

That may not be enough to counter the impact of reduced operating levels, according to Arnold Van Graan, a mining analyst at Nedbank Ltd.

"One thing that's critical for mining, especially deep-level underground mining, is volumes," Van Graan said. "The industry needs to find a way to ramp up to full capacity as soon as possible."

## Kenya's new railway cuts losses, but still a long way from breaking even

NAIROBI

THE Standard gauge railway (SGR) between Nairobi and Mombasa has recorded a reduced loss for its second year of operation, according to figures compiled by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) and reported in Business Day.

The line made a revenue of \$126m for 2019, compared with \$57m reported in 2018. That is less than the operating cost, currently estimated to be \$170m, compared with \$120m the year before. The increase was driven by an increase in freight income. KNBS said this was partly explained by use of normal tariffs in 2019 compared with promotional tariffs in 2018.

Cargo carried on the SGR accounted for more than 70% of national revenue from freight. Income from passenger ticket sales increased to \$53m compared with \$19m in 2018, again reflecting a rise in price and more first-class tickets sold. Income from the rail line is required to meet the loan repayments to China, which began in May last year after a five-year grace period. The government borrowed \$3.2bn to build the line.

However, Kenya is planning to take on more debt to speed economic growth. Last year, the government lifted its cap on public debt in order to restart work on some \$3.8bn of stalled infrastructure projects. At present the county's debt to GDP ratio stands at about 60%, but this can increase to 100% under new rules. Kenya's economy grew by 5.4% last year, a slight slowdown from the 6.3% reported in 2018.

## Uganda applies for \$328m loan to kickstart Kampala-to-Jinja motorway

KAMPALA

THE government of Uganda has applied for a loan of \$328m from the African Development Bank and the French Agency for Development to build its flagship smart motorway between the capital, Kampala, and the port of Jinja on the northern

shore of Lake Victoria, a distance of about 77km.

The six-lane digital toll road is expected to cost up to \$1.5bn, with the remainder of the funding to be supplied by the consortium building the route and the Ugandan government's transport budget.

The project has been on the

government's to-do list for more than 10 years. In 2010, it hired UK consultant Integrated Transport Planning to carry out a feasibility study, and originally planned to begin work in 2015 and complete in 2020.

The Uganda National Roads Authority said the delay was caused by the lack of a legal

framework for Uganda's first toll road and the difficulty of agreeing terms for the public-private partnership, given the difficulty in predicting traffic volumes on the route.

In December 2018, it was announced that a shortlist of four consortiums had been chosen to compete for the work, includ-

ing major players from China, France, Portugal, Turkey, Austria and South Korea. No winner has yet been named.

The government hopes to obtain the loan with a grace period of eight years and a 25-year repayment period. The African Development Bank has suggested an interest rate of 2.25%,

whereas the French Agency for Development has named a figure of 1.5%.

The scheme is one of five expressway projects identified in the Vision 2040 and National Development Plan II as vital to the country's economic development. The expressways are being constructed to the same

standard and together they will form a network that will enable better mobility in and around Kampala.

The project will be developed on a design, build, finance, operate, maintain and transfer basis, with a concession period of 30 years.



## TECHNOLOGY

## WANDA'S AMC FACING IMMINENT DEFAULT AS COVID-19 EMPTIES MOVIE THEATRES



AMC Entertainment headquarters in Kansas.

## KANSAS

**A**MERICAN movie theatre chain AMC Entertainment Holdings Inc is said to be close to bankruptcy, eight years after Chinese conglomerate Dalian Wanda bought the Kansas-based company for \$2.6 billion.

Shares in the NYSE-listed firm closed down 20 percent to \$2.08 at the end of trading yesterday, off the back of Wall Street analyst Eric Wold's comments that bankruptcy looked increasingly likely for the largest theatre chain in North America, with ratings agency S&P downgrading the company from "highly speculative" to "default imminent, with little prospect for recovery."

The reports of the looming financial collapse of AMC Entertainment, which is 38 percent owned by Wanda, comes just under three weeks after it furloughed all 24,000 of its US staff, including CEO Adam Aron, following the American government's enforced closure of cinemas to halt the spread of COVID-19.

"We continue to believe that AMC has minimal liquidity options to make it through an extended theatrical shutdown period even with the recently reported decision to no longer pay rent on its theatres," Wold wrote in an investors note.

Wold's comments followed a New York Post story that AMC is in talks with bankruptcy law firm Weil Gotshal

& Manges, with other US media accounts reporting that the company had sent letters to landlords at the end of last month saying it would not be able to meet rental payments until theatres reopened.

The analyst with investment bank B. Riley FBR told investors that AMC's high debt load made it unlikely that the company would be able to refinance, after the company had been shedding cash even before the pandemic, logging net losses for three of last year's four quarterly reporting periods. "At the end of 2019, AMC's balance sheet had \$265 million in cash and \$4.85 billion in debt - with additional liquidity under its domestic and European revolving credit facilities totalling about \$332 million," Wold wrote.

The media and entertainment specialist noted that it was "unlikely that AMC would be able to secure any additional availability on those credit facilities or that additional debt sources would be made available", while adding that the \$250 million paid AMC has to pay in rent each financial quarter cannot be deferred.

In 2012, Wanda had purchased 100 percent of the equity in AMC, which has over one thousand theatres worldwide and recorded \$5.5 billion in revenue last year, as part of its global expansion into entertainment and maintained an 80 percent stake after the company's \$1.7 billion IPO in 2013.

Wanda then bought out rival Carmike Cinemas in a \$1.1 billion all cash deal as well as London-based Odeon & UCI Cinemas Group for \$1.2 billion in 2016 to make AMC the largest movie theatre company in the world.

Purchasing AMC eight years ago was one of the first steps in billionaire Wang Jianlin's attempt to dominate the movie industry globally, which also included flying John Travolta, Leonardo DiCaprio and other film stars to Qingdao, China in 2013 for the launch of a movie studio touted as a \$7.4 billion investment.

In 2016, Wanda bought US movie maker Legendary Entertainment for a reported \$3.5 billion, but has yet to see the production house become profitable. In 2018, Reuters reported that Wanda was hoping to sell a minority stake in

Legendary, but no transaction has taken place to date.

By 2017, the mainland mall developer was forced to sell off the 30 film and TV sound stages it built at its Qingdao Movie Metropolis entertainment to rival Sunac China Holding as part of a deal that saw the Hong Kong-listed developer by a 91 percent stake in Wanda's 13 theme park-based development projects for RMB 43.8 billion.

Wang Jianlin was forced to scale back his Hollywood ambitions after Chinese authorities cracked down on debt-fueled cross-border investments in 2017, with the stake in AMC standing as one of Wanda's few remaining overseas prizes.

Last year, the group trimmed down its stake in the cinema chain to 38 percent after reaching a \$600 million agreement with private equity firm Silver Lake. Under that deal, AMC bought back 24 million shares from Dalian Wanda Group and issued \$600 million worth of convertible notes to Silver Lake.

With Wanda straining under a mounting debt burden - with a reported RMB 39.8 billion (\$5.7 billion) of its bonds due this year - the company's sports and entertainment unit agreed to sell its Ironman franchise just last month in an all-cash deal worth \$730 million, after buying it for \$650 million in 2015.

In November of 2018 Dalian Wanda sold one of the last of its US real estate projects, an eight acre (32,375 square metre) site along Wilshire Boulevard in Beverly Hills for a reported \$420 million, while in January of that year the company had parted with its still unfinished billion-dollar development project in London's Nine Elms at a loss of nearly £30 million.



A general view of a tourist attraction at Tsim Sha Tsui, following the novel coronavirus outbreak, in Hong Kong.

## Hong Kong hotels on cliff edge from protest, pandemic pain

## HONG KONG

HONG KONG'S distinction as a shopper's paradise used to draw tens of thousands of tourists to the China-ruled city every month, but a year of political unrest and the coronavirus crisis are driving some hotels to the brink of financial ruin.

Hotel occupancy rates in the recession-hit economy have plummeted since protesters took to the streets last June, angry with Beijing's perceived tightening grip over the city. The sometimes violent clashes with police scared away tourists, especially high-spending Chinese and business visitors put off by the political tensions.

The coronavirus outbreak was the final straw for Hong Kong's battered hotel industry as room revenues took a hit from travel curbs and flight cancellations. "Nine-and-a-half hotels out of 10 are losing money now because there're no more tourists and they need to solely rely on domestic demand, so they're just hanging in there," said property consultancy CBRE Executive Director Reeves Yan.

The industry posted an overall occupancy rate of 29% in February compared with 91% a year earlier, the Hong Kong Tourism Board said, as visitors to the financial hub plunged 98% for the month. Now, with much of the border closed with mainland China and travel restrictions to contain the spread of coronavirus extended, some hotels are shutting their doors for good or taking time out to renovate.

Three and four-star hotels, many run by domestic investors including Casa Deluxe Hotel, Butterfly on Morrison and two branches of Empire Hotels, have closed down in the past three months. The InterContinental Hotel overlooking Hong Kong harbour closed its doors last week to undergo a two-year facelift that will see it lay off around 500 people. Many 5-star international hotels recorded single-digit occupancy rates in February and March, but they have more cash reserves to keep them going than smaller hotels, industry participants said. Boutique and budget hotels, however, need to reinvent themselves to survive, including by offering long-term stays, renovating or even converting into offices, property consultants said.

Assets sales on the rise  
 The volume of commercial property transactions fell to new lows in the first quarter, real estate data showed. While there were no hotel transactions, realtor Cushman & Wakefield expects that to change from the second quarter.

"Sellers are now willing to lower prices by another 10% following an

already 10% cut after the social incident (protests), and buyers are coming back to the market to look for bargains on emerging signs that the epidemic is cooling down," said Cushman & Wakefield Executive Director Tom Ko.

CBRE says there are around a dozen hotel assets for sale, not unusually high. But negotiations could drag on, other realtors said, as buyers are asking for prices to be halved while sellers are not distressed enough to dump assets at a loss.

"Banks rarely recall hotel assets, because it's very hard to sell," Knight Frank executive director Thomas Lam said. Potential buyers for hotel assets are mostly local private equity firms, developers and "co-living" operators.

Co-living operators will turn the properties into homes for shared living, where residents have their own rooms but share common areas such as the living room and kitchen. The 37-room Paris Hotel near a busy Kowloon shopping area gave up its lease, which was taken up by co-living operator LINKO Living in April at HK\$230,000 per month.

Co-living investments typically offer yields of around 4% to 5%, more than other mainstream real estate investments, CBRE's Yan said. A major player, Warburg Pincus-backed Weave which has two premises in Hong Kong and two more opening this year, said it's sticking by its expansion target to have 3,000 beds in the next five to seven years, up from 700 now, and it's looking at assets including boutique and budget hotels.

Weave's occupancy rate in the first quarter was 85%, down slightly from 95% in January and at the end of last year. Currently 50% of its residents are expatriates. "When the market is not good we benefit from people who want flexibility, from people who've become a bit more price conscious," said Sachin Doshi, Weave founder and CEO.

Unlike traditional residential leases that require at least a one-year commitment, co-living offers the flexibility of shorter-term stays. Ootopia, owned by Hong Kong-based Arch Capital and with three premises in the city all converted from 3-star hotels, said it won't rule out buying if it sees a bargain, although it will be prudent. "You would want to observe more and whether prices will get more attractive. This is not the moment for fast expansion."

CBRE's Yan said many landlords have holding power and are hopeful things will improve after two to three months. "Would they sell at a loss? We haven't seen that yet...I see many landlords and operators are still positive on the Hong Kong outlook."

## A thousand New Zealand construction workers return to jobs

## WELLINGTON

OVER a thousand of New Zealand's road and rail workers have returned to work today in a bid to improve the country's transport systems and post-lockdown economy, the New Zealand government said.

Employees from the state-owned KiwiRail will work on City Rail Link, New Zealand's largest infrastructure project, Kaikoura earthquake rebuilding efforts, and Wellington metro upgrades. Work on 25 of the 44 state highway projects will restart for crown organisation NZ Transport Agency, including between P hoi to Warkworth, and on Transmission Gully, with the rest of the work resuming next Monday (4th May 2020).

The reintroduction of work coincides with the relaxing of New

Zealand's alert level to level 3, after it was raised to level 4 at the end of March, when only essential construction work could take place. The government has said that it is currently unsure to what extent the pandemic has affected construction timeframes.

Winston Peters, New Zealand's deputy prime minister, said: "We've worked hard to help cushion the blow from Covid-19 with initiatives like the wage subsidy and advance payments to transport contractors; and we know the industry is now raring to go."

Phil Twyford, New Zealand's minister of economic development, said: "For example, the Kaikoura rebuild will see around 450 road and rail workers back to work, City Rail Link expects 400 workers back this week, and Transmission Gully and P hoi to Warkworth will ramp back up to hundreds of workers at each."

## Property portal Bayut's parent company secures \$150m investment

## DUBAI

EMERGING Markets Property Group (EMPG), the parent company of Dubai's property portal Bayut, secured \$150m in new investment in a deal that values the company at \$1 billion.

The investment round was led by Netherlands-based OLX Group, which will combine its Middle East, North Africa and South Asia businesses with Dubai-headquartered EMPG, the companies said in a statement.

"This deal puts us one step further in our journey towards providing solutions in multiple markets to over a billion consumers around the world, expanding our classifieds offering significantly," said Imran Ali Khan, EMPG's chief executive.

In addition to Bayut in the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, EMPG owns and operates property portal Zameen in Pakistan, Bproperty in Bangladesh, Mubawab in North Africa and Kaidee in Thailand. Founded in 2015, EMPG has grown at a "tremendous pace", said Mr Khan, adding, "Our unique ability to scale using our proprietary tech has aided and enabled this expansion."

As part of the deal, OLX will combine its operations in four countries - Egypt, Lebanon, Pakistan and the UAE - with EMPG and will become its largest single shareholder, owning 39 per cent of the shares. "As EMPG's largest shareholder, the company will have a front seat to explore how we can scale their services model further," said Martin Scheepbouwer, chief executive of OLX Group.

"Our brands are household names ... and currently help tens of millions of people to exchange goods and services every month. The next phase is exciting, with EMPG's real estate industry expertise helping deepen the customer experience."



EMPG property in Dubai.

OLX Group owns stakes in at least 16 other online classifieds start-ups including US-based Letgo and Egypt's Storia. It is a subsidiary of Naspers, a South Africa-based investor that acquired Dubai's Dubizzle outright in April 2019 in a deal that valued the business at \$409.5m.

EMPG will use the new capital to develop a range of services, creating a more seamless user experience, enhancing data transparency and expanding market intelligence for both consumers and business users, it said in a statement.

In Egypt and Lebanon, EMPG will operate the existing OLX platforms, rolling out new services for the real estate community. In Pakistan and the UAE, both groups' platforms will be operated by EMPG. It will also operate Naspers' Dubizzle brand.

The aggregated value of properties sold in these markets is "estimated at \$90bn, providing a commission pool for real estate agencies of \$2bn per annum", EMPG said. This presents an opportunity for EMPG to enhance real estate services in these markets, it added.



## WORLD

## WHO chief echoes calls for unity as global COVID-19 cases surpass 3m

BEIJING

GLOBAL COVID-19 cases have exceeded 3 million as of Wednesday, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Countries around the globe are fighting a two-front battle to save lives and restore livelihoods. Amid economic woes, some in Europe are tentatively easing anti-coronavirus restrictions, while calling for more discipline post-lockdown.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on Wednesday reiterated his call for unity and solidarity, saying that he will reconvene the Emergency Committee on Thursday to evaluate the evolution of the pandemic and advise on updated recommendations.

GLOBAL PICTURE

The WHO COVID-19 dashboard updated at 8:00 CET (0500 GMT) Thursday showed that so far it has received reports of 3,024,059 confirmed cases and 208,112 deaths worldwide, with the United States ranking first in both categories.

According to the latest data by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering at Johns Hopkins University,

the U.S. COVID-19 death toll has surpassed 60,000, reaching 60,966. Its total number of confirmed cases has arrived at 1,039,909.

Amid the COVID-19 impact, U.S. real gross domestic product (GDP) in the first quarter contracted at an annual rate of 4.8 percent, the biggest decline in over a decade, the Commerce Department reported Wednesday.

Also on Wednesday, the U.S. Federal Reserve kept its benchmark interest rate unchanged at the record-low level of near zero due to concerns over the ongoing public health crisis.

In Britain, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said that a total of 26,097 patients have died in hospitals, care homes and the wider community after testing positive for coronavirus in the country as of Tuesday afternoon.

It is the first time the government figures have included deaths in care homes and the community as well as those in hospitals.

The total number of confirmed cases in Brazil rose 9 percent from 71,886 to 78,162, the largest daily growth since the outbreak of the epidemic, while Yemen reported its first two deaths from COVID-19.



WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

## MORE DISCIPLINE

The European Commission said in a statement on Wednesday that the Economic Sentiment Indicator (ESI) in both the euro area and the European Union (EU) plummeted in April, marking the sharpest monthly decline on record.

The ESI in the euro area fell by 27.2 points from the previous month to 67.0 points in April, while the ESI for the EU sank 28.8 points to 65.8 points, the commission said.

With all the signs suggesting an economic recession, European countries are starting to loosen lockdowns, while governments are urging more discipline in post-lockdown days.

In Spain, where the pandemic has caused 24,275 deaths, Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska and Health Minister Salvador Illa warned on Wednesday that scaling down anti-virus measures won't be easy.

"We should not fool ourselves, it is going to be difficult," said Grande-Marlaska in a joint press conference with Illa. "We can see the end of the road, but we can't forget the sacrifices that still lie ahead of us. Some of these stages are going to need more discipline than

up to now."

In Poland, where the first stage of exit plan has been in effect since April 20, Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki urged Poles not to get complacent in the face of the pandemic.

"We are opening up the economy, but we are not relaxing our safety measures by one inch," he said.

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said that the country will launch the second phase of re-openings after May 10 "slowly and controlled."

"We are still in a health crisis. We must not compromise the health of the Danes," she said, adding that the long-term health-related strategy will involve a more offensive testing strategy, more use of protective equipment, more hygiene, continuation of social distancing, and avoidance of "super-proliferation" at large assemblies.

## CALL FOR SOLIDARITY

Noting that the WHO is committed to transparency and accountability, Tedros on Wednesday reiterated his call for unity and solidarity at a virtual press conference from Geneva.

"One thing that we would ask is unity at the national level, and solidarity at the global level. More than ever, the human race should stand together to defeat this virus," he said.

Apart from Tedros, Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Thomas Greminger said in a letter to Wang Qun, the Chinese envoy to the United Nations and other international organizations in Vienna, that conquering the pandemic requires solidarity and a combined response by governments and societies at the global level.

Cooperation rather than hasty denunciation is needed at the time of combating the pandemic, U.S. technology magnate and philanthropist Bill Gates told French daily Le Figaro in a recent interview, adding that finger-pointing, for example at China, is not constructive.

"The Chinese have made all the data accessible," Gates said, while praising the country for its contribution to global research on the disease as well as avoiding a market disruption for medical supplies.

"Our economy is at a standstill, the world is suffering -- the priority should be collaboration," he said.

The focus now is to beat the coronavirus, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Wednesday in an interview with the TASS news agency.

"I would like to say that we are upset by the attempts to point a finger at a particular country. You mentioned that the U.S. is blaming China. In Europe, there are also accusations against China," Lavrov said.

"We all see it. This, of course, is sad."

Xinhua

## China, Africa demonstrate strong vitality of ties amid common COVID-19 fight

ADDIS ABABA

THE ever-growing China-Africa ties has shown vitality and strength amid the common fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, an Ethiopian official has said.

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

The director general's remarks came shortly after the latest batch of massive medical sup-

plies donated by China to 12 African countries that arrived in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa through the Ethiopian Airlines Caro Services on Thursday.

Noting that the Chinese medical team to Ethiopia has come together with medical supplies shortly before, Yirga said that "we are indeed very grateful to China for its support and solidarity at this difficult moment in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic."

"Solidarity is indeed the bedrock of this (Africa-China) partnership and when the corona pandemic outbreak happened in China, Africa stood firmly in



solidarity with China," he added.

Yirga, expressing appreciation to the "leadership and commitment of the people and government of China in successfully containing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic," also stressed that as COVID-19

spreads to across the globe, including in Africa, China is supporting the African continent.

"The support mobilized by the Chinese government and the private sector, including the Jack Ma Foundation, to assist the COVID-19 response efforts in Africa is very much appreciated," the director general stressed.

Noting China's "commendable willingness" in sharing its successful experience by deploying medical teams in Ethiopian and other African countries, Yirga also expressed his confidence that the "Sino-Africa strategic partnership, which has passed the test of time, will once again

prove its resilience."

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

The latest batch of medical supplies from Jack Ma Foundation and Alibaba Foundation include facial masks, disposable protective clothing, forehead thermometers, medical protective goggles, gloves and shoe covers for medical use, among other equipments, it was noted.

Xinhua

BRUSSELS

EUROPEANS are bracing themselves for "difficult" post-lockdown days on top of the heavy toll the COVID-19 pandemic has taken on the region.

With all the signs suggesting an economic recession, governments are straining to restore a semblance of normalcy by easing lockdowns while firing warning shots across their residents' bows.

As of 10:00 CET (Central European Time) yesterday, there was 1,265,762 Europeans who contracted the coronavirus, accounting for 41.5 percent of the global count, while 125,986 of them have died, making up 58.2 percent of the

## 'Difficult' post-lockdown days lying ahead for Europeans

death toll worldwide, according to the latest data from the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

## 'MORE DISCIPLINE' NEEDED

In Spain, where the pandemic has caused 24,275 deaths, Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska and Health Minister Salvador Illa warned on Wednesday that the period of scaling down anti-virus measures will not be easy.

"We should not fool ourselves, it is going to be difficult," said Grande-Marlaska in a joint press conference with Illa. "We can see the end of the road, but we can't forget the sacri-

ces that still lie ahead of us. Some of these stages are going to need more discipline than up to now."

The ministers' heads-up came a day after Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez announced his government's four-stage plan -- starting Monday -- to ease restrictions and take Spain progressively towards the "new normality."

In Poland, where the first stage of exit plan has been in effect since April 20, Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki appealed to Poles not to get complacent in the face of the pandemic.

"We are opening up the economy,

but we are not relaxing our safety measures by one inch," he said during a press conference on Wednesday.

Health Minister Lukas Szumowski added that the requirement to cover nose and mouth in public spaces will remain in place.

## GRIM ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Ireland's largest hotel operator Dalata Hotel Group PLC announced on Wednesday that it has laid off 3,500 employees due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It's the latest in a flurry of massive layoffs across Europe. Early this month, Riga International Airport

downtoned 500 staff members, as all its operations have been at a virtual standstill because of the pandemic.

Data released by the Romanian government on Monday revealed the pandemic has idled nearly a quarter of the labor force in the private sector. The massive layoffs and suspensions added to the signs Europe is on a slippery slope toward economic recession.

The European Commission said in a statement on Wednesday that the Economic Sentiment Indicator (ESI) in both the euro area and the European Union (EU) plummeted in April, marking the sharpest monthly decline on record.

Xinhua

## Xi: Efforts secure decisive outcome

BEIJING



Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said on Wednesday that after arduous efforts, China has secured a decisive outcome in containing the spread of COVID-19 in Hubei province and its capital, Wuhan, the country's hardest-hit region.

With strong leadership by the CPC Central Committee and support from all, as well as the participation of the people in Hubei and Wuhan, China has secured hard-won outcomes with major strategic significance in the people's war on the novel coronavirus outbreak as the pandemic still rages globally, Xi said when presiding over a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee.

His remarks came with no new confirmed infections having been reported for 25 consecutive days in Hubei as of Tuesday. The last 12 patients recovered and were discharged from hospitals in Wuhan on Sunday.

The CPC Central Committee also identified a package of fiscal, taxation, financial, credit, investment and foreign trade policies to support economic and social development in Hubei given the difficulties it faces after its sacrifices in combating the virus, according to a statement released after the meeting.

As COVID-19 is still spreading abroad, China faces growing pressure from imported infections and increasing complexity in preventing domestic relapses, Xi said, urging consistent attention to epidemic control.

He asked all regions and departments to make unremitting efforts in virus prevention and control so as to provide effective safeguards for getting the economy and society back to normal and securing a decisive victory in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects.

Xi stressed efforts in the epidemic control work in key areas and for key groups, requiring Heilongjiang province to improve anti-epidemic measures, especially preventing infections in hospitals and making all-out efforts to treat patients.

Authorities in Hubei and Wuhan should continue to strengthen community-based prevention, improve contingency plans and provide more care and help for recovered patients, he said. Beijing should continue to perform its key anti-epidemic tasks.

With the May Day holiday approaching, Xi said local authorities should guarantee ventilation and disinfection in transportation venues and stations, and enhance epidemic prevention at scenic attractions.

The reopening of schools and resumption of classes should be advanced in an orderly manner, and schools are responsible for ensuring the physical and mental health of their faculty and students, he said.

In order to accelerate the resumption of work and life in Hubei, the meeting stressed that local Party committees and governments should focus on ensuring the employment and basic livelihood of residents, helping resolve their practical difficulties, such as finding jobs and going to school, and meeting the basic needs of people with special difficulties.

Hubei authorities should also help solve difficulties small and medium-sized enterprises face, promote pillar industries, such as automobile manufacturing and electronics, to resume development and speed up the construction of traditional infrastructure as well as new infrastructure, such as 5G and artificial intelligence, it said.

Xinhua

## Russian envoy blasts US for claiming to be part of Iran nuclear deal

MOSCOW

THE United States' attempts to present itself as part of the Iran nuclear deal have no future, Russian Permanent Representative to International Organizations in Vienna Mikhail Ulyanov wrote on Twitter.

"The US attempts to present itself as 'JCPOA participant' have no future. It is like common sense mockery. Those who invented this idea gave bad advice to US authorities. Cynical approaches must have their own limits in order not to compromise the national policy to the worst extent," the tweet reads.

US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo said earlier that the United States was determined to prevent Iran from purchasing weapons after an arms embargo expired, insisting that Washington was technically still a member of the Iran nuclear deal despite US President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from it in 2018.

The New York Times reported on Sunday that Washington sought "to pressure the United Nations Security Council to extend an arms embargo on Tehran or see far more stringent sanctions reimposed on the country."

Russia's Foreign Ministry said in a statement on March 3 that an extension of the arms embargo was not on the table.

## Conspiracies to smear China with Xinjiang-related issues will never succeed

XINJIANG Uygur Autonomous Region, the largest administrative region of China that houses over 24 million people, secured satisfying performance in COVID-19 control and fully restored economic and social order thanks to its arduous efforts.

By April 15, 99.3 percent of the enterprises above designated size and 98 percent of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the autonomous region have resumed production. Besides, all of the centrally-administered state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in Xinjiang have

restored operation.

The autonomous region has dispatched three medical teams consisting of 386 medics to Hubei to join the COVID-19 response efforts there. Recently, it once again sent medical teams to Pakistan and Kazakhstan to help relieve pandemic situation.

However, when Xinjiang is going all out to fight the pandemic and resume production, it is bothered by appalling fake news disseminated by the "East Turkistan" forces outside China which lied that "Xinjiang's vocational education and training

centers face dissemination risks of the novel coronavirus," "the Chinese government could use the novel coronavirus to wipe out the one million Muslims interned in the concentration camps," and "Xinjiang conceals the truth of the epidemic."

In addition, some anti-China politicians in the West are also calling white black and making groundless and vicious remarks to smear China.

But lies are lies, and they barely hold water in front of truths. How can its vocational education and training centers face

dissemination risks of the novel coronavirus as the autonomous region has reported no new COVID-19 cases for over 50 days -- let alone the fact that all the trainees had completed their courses as of Dec. 9 last year?

These lies were fabricated with political conspiracies. Lately, American independent news site The Gray Zone published a report by journalist Ajit Singh, revealing the plots of certain Western media outlets to tarnish China by fake news about Xinjiang. Singh pointed out that media reports on Chi-

nese "forced labor" relies almost entirely on a series of dubious studies, and they are in fact the direct product of an orchestrated PR campaign backed by US government, NATO, and arms manufacturers.

Singh revealed that the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), one of the purportedly independent and non-partisan think tanks that produced the studies, is indeed run by Australia's Defense Department and sponsored by a host of weapons manufacturers. Australian Senator Kim Carr of the Labour Party

said ASPI has received nearly \$450,000 in funding from the US State Department for the 2019 to 2020 financial year, seeking to "promote a new cold war with China" in collaboration with the US.

As a matter of fact, anyone who has been to Xinjiang can see through these lies. The autonomous region's GDP expanded by 6 percent year on year to nearly 1.38 trillion yuan (\$194.6 billion) in 2019, and all of its residents enjoy free nine-year compulsory education and free medical checks.

The average life expectancy of Xinjiang residents now stands at 72 years.

The Uygur population in Xinjiang ballooned from 5.5 million to 11 million, or 46.8 percent of the total in the region over the past four decades, and the region houses over 25,000 mosques, more than those in the US, the UK, France and Germany combined together. Every 500 Muslims there share one mosque -- a better environment than those in many Islamic states.

People's Daily



## China to open 'two sessions' in May, step up public health legislation

BEIJING

CHINA on Wednesday set the new opening dates for its key annual political gatherings in May, sending a strong signal that the country is recovering from the coronavirus epidemic.

Known as the "two sessions," the annual sessions of the country's national legislature and political advisory body are usually convened in early March to decide on important state affairs.

But this year, the gatherings of about 5,000 people in Beijing were postponed due to the unexpected COVID-19 outbreak.

The postponement will allow efforts to be concentrated on epidemic control and put people's lives and health at the top of priority, the top legislature said in February when making the decision.

On Wednesday, the National People's Congress (NPC), the top legislature, announced that it will hold the annual session starting on May 22.

The National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, on the other hand, said its annual session was proposed to open on May 21.

The dates were set at a time when the domestic transmission of COVID-19 has been basically curbed.

According to the health authorities, there were only 647 patients still being treated on the mainland while 77,578 people had recovered by Tuesday.

"The COVID-19 epidemic prevention

and control situation in China is improving steadily and the normal economic and social life is gradually resuming," said a statement issued by the NPC Standing Committee after it decided on the annual legislative session's opening date.

"With various factors taken into consideration, the conditions for convening the NPC annual session at an appropriate time are ready," it added.

### LAWMAKING FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

For this year, national lawmakers will consider China's long-expected draft civil code, the government work report and other staple documents at the annual legislative session.

However, due to the COVID-19 epidemic, health is expected to be heatedly discussed by lawmakers when they meet.

A slew of public health-related legislation is in the making, according to the top legislature.

On Wednesday, the NPC Standing Committee adopted a revision to the law on the prevention and control of environmental pollution by solid waste, which stresses the management of medical waste, especially the management work in handling major infectious disease outbreaks.

Local health and environmental authorities should, within their respective jurisdictions, strengthen the supervision over and management of how medical waste is collected, stored, transported and disposed of, it stipulates.

The revision also stipulates that nec-



Li Zhanshu, chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, presides over the closing meeting of the 17th session of the 13th NPC Standing Committee in Beijing, capital of China, on Wednesday. (Xinhua)

essary funds should be earmarked by governments at all levels for hazardous waste disposal in case of emergencies such as major infectious disease epidemics.

### IN THE PIPELINE

During the session, lawmakers also heard a report on strengthening public health legislation, including a specific legislative plan that involves 17 health-related laws to be formulated or revised

in 2020 and 2021.

China already has a public health legal system involving over 30 laws, said Shen Chunyao, director of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee.

But the COVID-19 epidemic has exposed some problems in legislation and indicated the need for systematic law revisions and improvements, he added.

The top legislature is working on a biosecurity law and a revision to the law on

animal epidemic prevention.

Lawmakers will also expedite revising the frontier health and quarantine law, while carefully assessing the revisions to the law on the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases, the emergency response law and others.

Legislation task forces will be formed by NPC special committees and relevant State Council departments to work on the health-related laws.

Xinhua

## African, Chinese healthcare experts share experiences in containing COVID-19

ADDIS ABABA

HEALTHCARE experts from the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) and African Union (AU) member states held discussion with Chinese counterparts on potential ways of replicating the experience of China in containing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in the African continent.

This came during a joint special webinar entitled "Global MediXChange for Combating COVID-19 (GMCC): The Experience of China" that was held on late Tuesday in collaboration between the Africa CDC and the Jack Ma Foundation and Alibaba Foundation.

"We are pleased of the part-

nership and extremely appreciative of the personal commitment of Jack Ma in the spirited fight against the terrible enemy COVID-19," said John Nkengasong, Director of Africa CDC, during the joint special webinar.

"The continent is extremely appreciative of the continuous support received from the Jack Ma Foundation for several member states including the one today to fight COVID-19," Nkengasong said.

He also stressed that the special joint webinar for combating COVID-19 across the African continent and beyond with particular emphasis on the experience of China would enable medical experts from Africa, China and other parts of

the world to share knowledge, experience and best practices for treating COVID-19.

According to co-organizers of the special webinar, over 1,600 healthcare workers from more than 20 African nations participated in the live exchange on sharing the Chinese experience in dealing with COVID-19 in Africa.

The Chinese tech entrepreneur and philanthropist, Jack Ma, also during the webinar commended the AU Commission, through the Africa CDC, for its effective leadership in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic across the continent.

"The AU and the Africa CDC have demonstrated what we need most today, leadership, action and efficiency. Through



Jack Ma

our partnership, our first donation to Africa was distributed to 50 African countries in just only 6 days, this is amazing," Jack Ma said.

"Here, I want to give my special thanks to the Ethiopian Airlines for the great commitment

and capability," he said, adding that "the Africa CDC, your dedication and responsibility in leading experience-sharing with international medical practitioners deserves our admiration."

During the discussion, Jack Ma also vowed to further strengthen the support being made by his foundation to the African continent amid the COVID-19 pandemic. "Solidarity and collaboration are the only ways we can succeed," he said.

"The solution is not isolation but cooperation instead," he said, while calling on others to stand together to battle the global pandemic.

The GMCC platform, which was launched in March to facilitate open knowledge shar-

ing and online communication to combat COVID-19 and supported by technologies and tools from Alibaba Health and Alibaba Cloud, mainly features three main components that are digital access to epidemic prevention resources, videos and webinars, and tools for on-line discussions, it was noted.

Nearly 3,000 medical professionals have already joined the platform globally and thousands of medical staff from hospitals across Ethiopia, Ghana, Rwanda, South Africa and Zimbabwe have so far participated in live exchange sessions organized by the GMCC to better understand how to respond to this new virus disease, according to the Africa CDC.

Xinhua

## Last medical assistance team leaves Hubei as COVID-19

THE last group of medical workers dispatched to support Hubei in fighting COVID-19 outbreak left the province on April 15, ending their 80-day battle against the virus.

The first batch of assisting medical teams arrived in Wuhan, capital of Hubei on Jan. 24, the Chinese New Year's Eve, and the move was soon followed by Jiangxi, Hunan, Shandong, Heilongjiang, and Shaanxi that all established assisting forces to help Hubei fight the epidemic.

Two days later, the first batch of 21 medical workers dispatched by Peking Union Medical College Hospital (PUMCH) arrived in Wuhan, and the following two batches sent by the hospital later expanded the number to 186.

They took over the wards for severe and critical patients on the west part of the 9th floor, Building C of the Sino-French New City Branch of Wuhan's Tongji Hospital affiliated to the Huazhong University of Science and Technology.

The transfer of the last severely ill patient to the hospital's ICU on April 12 marked the completion of their mission there.

On April 15, before the PUMCH



Medical workers assisting Hubei from the Peking Union Medical College Hospital pose for a picture.

medics left the city, flocks of Wuhan citizens gathered near the Zhonghe International Hotel in Caidian district, the temporary residence of the doctors and nurses, to bid a farewell.

A volunteer named Xiong Haojun invited the medical workers to sign their names on a white protective suit, saying he would keep it as a collection so as to have the medical workers forever remembered by the people in Wuhan and Hubei.

A nurse named Chen Yuanyuan from the intensive care unit with the PUMCH tightly held an almost-

dried apple in her hand where a smiling face was drawn and "ICU, Victory, Yuanyuan" was written.

"The apple was given to each one of us by our department before we left Beijing on Feb. 7 as a token of safety. Now, I'm going to bring it home, together with my colleagues," Chen said, with her eyes watering.

"Wuhan is our second hometown. The heroic people in Wuhan stood up and fought back at the epidemic with perseverance and sacrifice. We salute to them!" Zhang Shuyang, head of the PUMCH med-

ical team, made the remarks at a farewell ceremony.

At 10:45 a.m., six buses carrying the medics left the hotel for the Wuhan Tianhe International Airport. On both sides of the road, people waved goodbye to the medics with national flags in their hands.

"Thank you, Beijing. Stay strong and be brave, Wuhan!" A 5-year-old girl shouted.

"Dear colleagues, you have exemplified angels in white's spirit of healing the wounded and rescuing the dying with bravery and selflessness. We sincerely invite you to come to Wuhan again and visit your comrades-in-arms. People in the city will always be grateful to you," said Hu Junbo, head of Tongji Hospital.

Over 42,000 medical workers of more than 300 medical teams from across the country were dispatched to aid Hubei since the virus outbreak. By April 15, they've all withdrawn from the city.

"We arrived here in winter and left it in spring. We are both excited and reluctant to leave, and we'll miss the city," said Zhang.

People's Daily

## No breakthrough in Russia's relations with West amid pandemic – Kremlin

MOSCOW

THERE has been no breakthrough in Moscow's relations with the West amid the coronavirus pandemic, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said in an interview with RTVI.

President Vladimir Putin does maintain communication with his counterparts in other countries and this kind of contact has always been there as far as areas of mutual interest and mutual benefit are concerned.

I don't think it is right to talk about breakthroughs, everyone is in a rush to speak about a thaw. In this case, it is about crisis cooperation, which has always been there and will continue," Peskov pointed out, when asked how Russia's relations with the West had changed.

According to him, Putin has held several conversations with



Dmitry Peskov, Kremlin spokesman, speaking.

US President Donald Trump recently because the oil market situation was complicated and required coordinated actions.

Peskov (pictured) went on to say that dialogue between Putin and French President Emmanuel Macron had begun before the pandemic. "Perhaps, it is mainly because President Macron has a broad vision of international affairs, so that even before the pandemic he was able to adopt the formula 'we have many differ-

ences but it is not the reason to cut contacts because dialogue is the only way to overcome these differences.' This position resonates with that of Russia and President Putin," the Kremlin spokesman emphasized.

Peskov said earlier, commenting on relations between Russia and the US, that the two countries were capable of looking beyond strategic differences and maintaining a constructive dialogue when necessary. At the same time, in his words, a trend for Russophobia persists in the United States.

Peskov said earlier, commenting on relations between Russia and the US, that the two countries were capable of looking beyond strategic differences and maintaining a constructive dialogue when necessary. At the same time, in his words, a trend for Russophobia persists in the United States. Agencies

## China-Europe freight trains from Wuhan resume services, offer new transportation channel amid COVID-19

THE China-Europe freight train X8015 on April 14 arrived in Duisburg, Germany's North Rhine-Westphalia. As the first cargo train departing Wuhan for Europe since the outbreak of COVID-19 nearly three months ago, it marked the resumption of China-Europe freight services in the city.

Loaded on the train were pandemic prevention materials needed by Europe, construction materials for Budapest-Belgrade Railway, as well as auto parts. The cargos were later distrib-

uted to France, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland.

The resumption of the cargo services was heartening, said Hendrik Wüst, Minister of Transport of North Rhine-Westphalia at a reception ceremony held for the freight train, adding that the materials from China would be particularly helpful for Germany to fight the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic plunged some industries into stagnation in European

countries, exerting increasing downward pressure on their economy. As a key project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the China-Europe freight services have become an important part of the global transportation system. The resumption of the services will not only create a channel of transportation for the global fight against the disease, but also reduce the impacts from COVID-19 on the industrial and supply chains for both China and Europe.

Wuhan and Duisburg became

the first pair of sister cities between China and Germany in 1982, and their relations are brought closer thanks to the freight trains running between them. Duisburg donated medical supplies to Wuhan immediately after the outbreak of COVID-19.

The mayor of Duisburg Sören Link sent a congratulatory message over the train's arrival, saying his city is making arduous efforts to fight COVID-19, and the normal operation of the freight rail services between

China and Europe would offer huge assistance.

The China-Europe freight services make the transportation of medical supplies more convenient, said Chief Executive Officer of Duisport Group Erich Staake, adding that the resumption of the services will significantly improve transportation efficiency, cement logistics cooperation between Duisburg and Wuhan, and boost their economic development.

According to schedule, two trips to Duisburg and one to

Wuhan will be made each week following the first train's arrival.

Feng Haiyang, China's Consul General in Dusseldorf, said the resumption of the rail services indicated China's initial progress of epidemic prevention and control, and showcased the country's solid steps to resume production and keep the global industrial and supply chains stable and unimpeded.

The X8015 rail carrying medical supplies and producer goods needed by Germany and other European countries also

signaled the mutual assistance offered by China and Germany to get through the current difficulties, Feng added.

People's Daily

**The China-Europe freight services make the transportation of medical supplies**





In this April 19, 2018 file photo, Bollywood actor Rishi Kapoor greets media as he arrives for the song launch of film '102 Not Out' in Mumbai, India. Rishi Kapoor, a top Indian actor and a scion of Bollywood's most famous Kapoor family, has died after a battle with cancer. He was 67. (AP Photo)

## Bollywood star Rishi Kapoor, 67, dies of leukemia

MUMBAI

INDIAN actor Rishi Kapoor, who starred in celebrated Bollywood movies such as "Bobby" and "Mera Naam Joker", died on Thursday after a two-year battle with leukemia, his family said.

Kapoor, 67, the scion of a famed film industry family, is survived by his wife and two children, and had been diagnosed with cancer in 2018.

"He remained jovial and determined to live to the fullest right through two years of treatment across two continents," the family said in a statement.

The actor had moved to New York for treatment soon after the cancer was detected, returning to his hometown of Mumbai last September.

Kapoor's death followed that on Wednesday of another Indian actor, Irrfan Khan, 54, who had roles in films such as "Life of Pi" and "Jurassic World", and who also suffered from cancer.

Kapoor's family urged his fans, who under normal circumstances would have been expected to pour onto the streets to mourn him, to follow

novel coronavirus social-distancing rules.

"There are numerous restrictions around movement and gathering in public. We would like to request all his fans and well-wishers and friends of the family to please respect the laws that are in force," the family said.

Kapoor came from a family of actors.

His grandfather, Prithviraj Kapoor, father Raj Kapoor, brothers Randhir and Rajeev, and his son, nieces and nephews have all played roles in films.

He made his debut at the age of 16, playing a younger version of his father's character in the 1970 film "Mera Naam Joker" (My Name is Joker), and later made a name for himself as a fresh-faced romantic hero.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was anguished by Kapoor's death.

"Multifaceted, endearing and lively ... this was Rishi Kapoor Ji. He was a powerhouse of talent," Modi said on Twitter.

REUTERS

## Athletes sidelined by 1980 boycott say today's Olympians are saving lives

NEW YORK

ATHLETES impacted by the postponement of the Summer Games in Tokyo will need extra time to regain their fitness but can rest assured they are saving lives by not competing this year, members of the U.S. team that boycotted the 1980s Games said.

The COVID-19 crisis has forced the IOC to move this year's Games to 2021. American athletes also missed the 1980 Games in Moscow when the United States led a boycott against them over the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

"I don't think it's possible for athletes to get to 80 to 90% of peak performance and not roll the clock back and start over, perhaps further than you think you ought to," two-time Olympic track and field gold medalist Edwin Moses, who was part of the 1980 team, said during an online conference call on Tuesday.

"You're not going to be able to stay in shape for 15 months and you really want to prevent yourself from getting injured because that's what takes most athletes out as well."

Olympic volleyball player Rita Buck-Crockett, who was part of the 1980 team, said today's disappointed athletes should know that their sacrifice isn't for nothing, although she said she couldn't say the same for the 1980 boycott, which to this day she said she doesn't understand.

"In this time now, what you have to understand is that you are saving lives by not going to the Olympics this year," she said.

"As hard as it is, you have only one year hopefully and you're going to save a million lives.

"You know when we boycotted as Anita (Defranze) said, we didn't save one life," she said, adding that the boycott left her devastated.

Buck-Crockett was able to compete in the 1984 Games in Los Angeles, where she took home a silver medal.

"We shouldn't have had that position but now just look at it as you're saving lives," she said.

"Just go do yo

“

don't think it's possible for athletes to get to 80 to 90% of peak performance and not roll the clock back and start over, perhaps further than you think you ought to," two-time Olympic track and field gold medalist Edwin Moses, who was part of the 1980 team,

## 'Homebody' Osaka making the most of isolation, remains focused on Olympics

TOKYO

FOLLOWING a whirlwind few years, Japanese tennis star Naomi Osaka can be forgiven for taking time to reset and relax as the sporting world goes on an indefinite pause due to the coronavirus crisis.

Osaka, a two-time Grand Slam winner who also became the first Japanese player to reach world number one, had been preparing for another action-packed summer including her Olympics debut on home soil at Tokyo 2020.

Instead, with the Olympics postponed until 2021, the 22-year-old finds herself in quarantine at her home in Los Angeles where she is making the most of her new-found downtime.

"I know that the quarantine initiatives are so important so I am using this time to really be a homebody, something a tennis player on tour can never be," Osaka told Reuters via email.

"I've been playing tennis almost every day for as long as I can remember, so it has been an opportunity to take stock and reset. I have been cooking a lot, working out to stay fit, reading and keeping in touch with my sister and family."

Although unable to get on the court with her coach Wim Fissette, Osaka has been finding novel ways to stay fit.

"I haven't been able to play tennis, however, I have been speaking to my coach and fitness trainer daily and finding ways to keep my body fit and ready for when the tour resumes," she said.

"It's a new normal but I am adjusting."

Osaka has kept her competitive juices flowing by preparing for Sunday's Mario Tennis Aces tournament, where she will compete with the likes of real-life rivals Serena and Venus Williams and compatriot Kei Nishikori in the virtual competition.

Osaka admits she is a bit of a gamer



Naomi Osaka

and fancies her chances alongside doubles partner, model Hailey Bieber.

"My sister and I played a lot growing up and yes I still play and even more so now during the quarantine. I can say yes, I am a gamer," said Osaka.

"I had actually started playing much less in recent months as I was getting into new hobbies, like fashion, photography and spending more time outdoors with friends ... But since quarantine I'm back into my old habits.

"Gaming is awesome but it is nice to have a balance."

NFL stars DeAndre Hopkins and Ryan Tannehill will also be involved, alongside singer Seal and DJ Steve Aoki.

"I mean Hailey and I are going to be hard to beat! I think she plays a lot with (husband) Justin (Bieber) so I know she's got game," Osaka said.

"I heard we have Steve Aoki and Kei in the first round which is kind of an

all-Japan clash so let's see what those guys bring."

TOKYO OLYMPICS

Whilst Sunday's virtual tournament, which will be streamed live on Facebook, will be fun, Osaka is itching to get back on the court and preparing for the rearranged Olympics Games next year.

Osaka, who was born to a Haitian father and Japanese mother, was set to be the face of Tokyo 2020 and starred in the video to launch the official motto for the Games.

Osaka understands that the postponement was a necessary decision.

"Like most athletes that had been training I was disappointed at first but when you realise the postponement is for the better of the entire world you know the game can wait, we will come together in 2021 and be ready," Osaka said.

"I actually have a lot of sympathy for athletes, like track athletes, who work for four years and plan to peak at that exact time ... Now their schedule is probably in turmoil."

"Tennis is a little bit different so I shouldn't have to alter my preparations too much."

Osaka said that when the Games do finally go ahead, they could be a beacon of hope at the end of the battle against COVID-19, which has killed over 218,000 people worldwide.

"I know so many people (including close friends) that have worked so hard on the Games, and I know how difficult this has been for people in Japan as well ... So it has been tough," she said.

"But of course it is the right decision, which has my full backing, I'm really hopeful that the Olympics will now be a massive celebration for the world at the other end of this pandemic."

REUTERS

## The Worm Turns: Electra recalls 'bad boy' Rodman's courtship

BY DAN GELSTON

CARMEN Electra's basketball fandom wasn't much more than wearing Jordans in high school and her awareness of Dennis Rodman was simply that the NBA bad boy had dated Madonna.

But once the then-Chicago Bulls star, who used his hair as a colorful canvas and illustrated his body with tattoos, noticed the rising 1990s entertainment star and "Playboy" model, he became enamored with Electra.

"We exchanged numbers and he would call and call and call," Electra said. "I wouldn't respond. Finally, one day I picked up the phone and he invited me to come hang out with him and I went for it. I went in."

Electra, who turned 48 last week, has found herself once again in the spotlight after their relationship blossomed back to life in the documentary "The Last Dance" – the ESPN and Netflix documentary series built around Michael Jordan's final season with the Chicago Bulls in 1997-98.

"Dennis was considered the bad boy of basketball," Electra said, "and I like bad boys."

Electra and Rodman were married, the Bulls won championships and the couple became tabloid sensations. She talked about some of the wild times in the documentary – which drew 6.1 million viewers across ESPN & ESPN2 last Sunday – including once hiding naked under the covers as Jordan banged on a hotel door trying to drag Rodman back to practice.

"I remember being in the living room, naked, in Dennis' house in Chicago," Electra told The Associated Press. "He was very humble. He threw a mattress in front of the couch in the living room. That's where he always slept. That's where I slept as well. We were both naked, actually, when there's a knock at the door, Dennis jumps up, I don't know if he answered the door naked or not, I can't remember that part because I was hiding. He just turned around to me and said, 'It's Michael Jordan. I've got to go practice.'"

She later detailed her sexual dalliances with Rodman throughout the

Bulls' practice facility, everywhere from the training room to the court, and possibly even coach Phil Jackson's office.

"I'd have to say, sorry, coach," she said with a laugh.

Rodman's eccentricities transcended his basketball skills that led to NBA titles with the Detroit Pistons and Bulls and forged a path to the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. He led the league in rebounding an NBA-record seven straight seasons, won consecutive defensive player of the year awards, and back-to-back titles with the Pistons before teaming with Jordan and Scottie Pippen for three championships in a row with the Bulls.

Electra's career skyrocketed, her sex appeal had landed her roles in "Baywatch" and a hosting gig on MTV's "Singled Out." She shuttled between jobs and trips to Chicago to be with Rodman and said she passed on numerous auditions to spend more time with him. She explained that Rodman could be a very quiet man who "loved to have a cheeseburger and a shake" before games and always called her "momma."

The changes came when the final horn sounded.

"After the game, the party was on," Electra said. "It would start with dinner. Then we would go to the strip club, after hours ... I was trying to keep up. I kept up for a long time. I literally felt like one of the boys trying to keep up with Dennis."

Electra said the partying didn't seem to slow Rodman, who at times could shrug off the previous night's shenanigans.

"I almost think of him as not human," Electra said. "I would have the worst, worst headaches in the morning and he would go to practice. A couple of times he may have been a little late."

Electra, speaking on the phone from Los Angeles, said she was looking at a picture of Rodman ("so cool, so ahead of his time") from their time together as she recalled their fiery relationship.

They wed in November 1998, filed for annulment nine days later, reconciled but divorced in April 1999. Electra, whose likeness is soon to appear on a mobile celebrity slot game, and Rodman share an agent and he helped reconnect the pair for a brief conversation months ago.

She said watching the documentary helped her appreciate her time with Rodman.



In this July 27, 1998, file photo, Chicago Bulls star Dennis Rodman and Carmen Electra are shown arriving at the opening of the Planet Hollywood restaurant in Montreal. Carmen Electra's relationship with former Chicago Bulls star Dennis Rodman became a focal point of the "The Last Dance" – the ESPN and Netflix documentary series built around Michael Jordan's final season with the Chicago Bulls in 1997-98. They wed in November 1998, filed for annulment nine days later, reconciled but divorced in April 1999. Watching the A-list relationship blossom back to life on the documentary helped her appreciate the wild time in her life when Rodman and the Bulls had a hold on her heart. (Agencies)

"Yes, we had a blast, and this wild love, but we had a lot of hard times, too. A lot of struggles," she said. "No matter what, I'll always wish him the best."

AP



## Virus can affect calendar for years: UEFA executive committee member

LONDON

THE COVID-19 crisis could hit soccer's international calendar for "two to three years" and potentially affect the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, Lars-Christer Olsson, an executive committee member of European soccer's governing body UEFA has said.

The novel coronavirus, which has infected over 3.13 million people globally causing more than 218,000 deaths, has wreaked havoc on the soccer schedule with Euro 2020 postponed to 2021 and national leagues and continental club competitions on hold.

The Qatar World Cup is set to take place from Nov. 21-Dec. 18, 2022 and Olsson said it was a case of "wait and see" if the quadrennial event would be hit.

Asked during a Soccerex webinar how long he thought the international calendar could be affected, Olsson said: "Probably two or three years I think."

"If the virus is developing in an even more serious way as it's been for the time being, there will defi-

nately be a problem with the international calendar.

"When some of the competitions are moved from one year to another...and then the Qatar World Cup is coming in the middle of the European season and you have to squeeze in domestic and international competitions."

"But I think we have to wait and see how that is going to affect the business."

Olsson, who is also the president of European Leagues, said UEFA was planning to complete the Champions League and Europa League in August.

"If that would be possible, then I think it would be fine because that would also mean that we can safeguard the integrity of the final phase of the current season of international football," he added.

"But of course we have to take decisions about that at the end of May at least, because otherwise it will probably not be possible to squeeze it in and also to qualify the clubs for the new season."

REUTERS

## Minister warns Serie A return doubtful, federation boss fears 'football death'

ROME

ITALIAN sports minister Vincenzo Spadafora warned Wednesday that Italy may have to follow France and the Netherlands and call an end to their football and sports seasons because of the coronavirus pandemic.

However, Italian Football Federation chief Gabriele Gravina warned that such a decision would signal "the death of Italian football".

"I see an increasingly narrow path for the resumption of the championship. If I were a president of a football club, I would especially think of organising myself to safely resume the next championship which will start at the end of August," Spadafora told Italian television channel La7.

"The decisions being taken by other countries, like France yesterday, could push Italy to follow this line too, which would then become a European line," he added.

In France, Prime Minister Edouard Philippe announced Tuesday that professional football, rugby and other sports cannot resume until the end of the summer, although his sports minister later told AFP it was possible games could be played behind closed doors in August.

The Dutch football federation called an end to the 2019-2020 season last

week.

"I think the next meeting of the Lega Serie A may hold a surprise," continued Spadafora, with Italy's top flight clubs holding an emergency general assembly on Friday.

"The majority of clubs could ask us to suspend this season and prepare for the next championship as best possible."

Italian Football Federation (FIGC) president Gravina warned later Wednesday that he would "never sign for the end of the championships", which would be "the death of Italian football".

"I refuse to sign for a total block except for objective conditions relating to the health of members, coaches, staff members or employees. But someone will have to tell me clearly and stop me from moving forward," he said.

"Time is working in our favour," added Gravina who estimated that the federation would suffer losses of up to 800 million euros (\$870 million) by stopping the season.

The Italian championship was put on hold on March 9 because of the virus which has killed over 27,000 lives in the country.

The government has allowed individual athletes to resume training but team sports, including football, must wait until at least May 18.

AFP

## Bundesliga clears another hurdle to planned return - reports

BERLIN

GERMAN football has taken another key step towards restarting the Bundesliga next month with the Ministry of Labour the latest body to reportedly approve plans.

"The safety of players, coaches and support staff can be largely ensured if the concept is fully implemented", the ministry's state secretary Bjoern Boehning told the RND media group.

The German Football League (DFL) has drawn up detailed plans for the Bundesliga to resume from May 9. These include games behind closed doors, regular testing of players and strict hygiene measures.

The DFL's plan is "sensible, reduces risks and is therefore acceptable in terms of occupational health and safety," Boehning added.

German football ground to a halt in mid-March because of the coronavirus pandemic which has so far claimed 6,115 lives in Germany.

The final go-ahead to resume must come from the government. German Chancellor Angela Merkel is set to meet with the state leaders on Thursday via a video conference.

The sports ministers of the 16 German states also approved the DFL's plans on Monday, however a spokesman has said a final decision on the Bundesliga's restart is expected next week.

Sticking points are the testing of players, which critics claim will be an extra burden on Germany's health system.

The police union has also warned

that they expect locked-out fans will still congregate outside stadiums during matches, even though public gatherings are banned in Germany.

Christian Seifert, CEO of the German league, has defended the plans to restart.

"I can understand if people are worried about what kind of signal this might send out," Seifert told Frankfurt-based newspaper FAZ.

"However, with our medically-organised concept we can create a framework of which the authorities and politicians can then say 'they are doing their utmost to prevent infection' - that's all we can do."

With several clubs threatened by insolvency, Germany's top clubs are desperate for the season to finish by June 30 in order to claim millions in television money.

On Tuesday night, Borussia Dortmund CEO Hans-Joachim Watzke told broadcaster ZDF that Bundesliga clubs stand to lose "all-in-all 750 million euros" if the season does not resume.

Watzke is convinced that "there will not be a case (of the coronavirus) in football's closed system" given the hygiene measures planned by the DFL.

Players are expected to be tested twice a week.

They would also be 'semi-quarantined', meaning they must remain at home, on club grounds or travelling to or from matches until the season is finished.

AFP

# League-by-league guide to European football's coronavirus shutdown

LONDON

FOOTBALL leagues across Europe have been suspended since March due to the coronavirus pandemic which has claimed over 130,000 lives throughout the continent.

Lockdown restrictions are in effect worldwide although some countries are cautiously beginning to ease stay-at-home orders.

AFP Sport looks at what we know about the plans for Europe's top leagues:

ENGLAND

Premier League chiefs are targeting a return in June and several clubs have reopened their training grounds this week as they work on "Project Restart".

The English top flight is understood to be aiming to run a huge testing operation to keep footballers safe, with reports of 26,000 tests being lined up for players and staff.

Teams could reportedly return to full training mid-May and resume matches on June 8, with the plans to be discussed at a meeting of stakeholders on Friday.

The clubs remain committed to ending the 2019-20 campaign and there are compelling financial and legal reasons to play the remaining 92 games. A failure to finish the season is forecast to cost Premier League clubs an estimated £1 billion (\$1.2 billion).

Matches would almost certainly be played behind closed doors and clubs have reportedly been told that only approved stadiums could be used, with higher health certification than normal.

However, the Professional Footballers' Association have raised the issue of players not wanting to be put at risk by returning too soon.

SPAIN

La Liga players will be able to restart basic training from May 4, based on the Spanish government's plans announced Tuesday to transition out of a strict virus lockdown.

Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said the decision was the first move in lifting lockdown measures which will be done in four stages across two months. Only in later stages of the process will full training sessions be able to take place.

League president Javier Tebas is hopeful the league can begin again in mid-June. He has said "it is not an option" to cancel the season given the economic fallout, estimating it would cost clubs around a billion euros.

"I do not understand why there would more danger in playing football behind closed doors, with all precautionary measures" than any other line of work, Tebas said.



Vincenzo Spadafora

"In Spain, football is an important economic driver that we need to reactivate like many others. We continue to focus on this reactivation, in a responsible manner and adhering to health recommendations, as soon as possible."

ITALY

Italy's sports minister Vincenzo Spadafora has warned Serie A could be called off, with the league facing "an increasingly narrow path" for its resumption.

The government has allowed individual athletes to resume training next week but team sports, including football, must wait until at least May 18. The move was slammed by Italy's footballers' union "as discriminatory and even illogical".

All 20 top-flight clubs have voted unanimously to complete the league season, but the final decision rests with the government.

An emergency meeting of the clubs will be held on Friday. Spadafora suggested "the majority could ask us to suspend this season and prepare for the next championship as best possible".

Italian football chiefs have already

pushed back the end of the Serie A season from June 30 to August 2. The goal of a return to competition in early June has become impracticable, shifting the date towards June 10-14.

Another solution being touted would be a play-off to allocate the Scudetto and qualifying places for European competition and determine relegation.

GERMANY

The Bundesliga could resume by "the middle or end of May" according to the country's sports ministers, although it still requires the green light from Angela Merkel's government.

Chancellor Merkel will meet state leaders in Berlin on Thursday, when it is hoped the league will be granted permission to resume play from May 16.

Clubs returned to training at the start of the month while adhering to social distancing guidelines and games would be played behind closed doors, with large-scale public events banned in Germany until August 31.

Borussia Dortmund chief executive Hans-Joachim Watzke warned last week-

end that "the entire Bundesliga will go down" unless the league restarts.

Germany's top clubs are desperate for the league season to be completed by June 30 in order to claim an instalment of television money worth 300 million euros (\$325 million).

A primary sticking point is the testing of players, which critics claim will be an extra burden on Germany's health system.

FRANCE

The Ligue 1 season appears to be over after French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe said professional football cannot resume until September.

The French league will meet on Thursday "to analyse the sporting and economic consequences" of the government announcement.

Assuming no more matches take place, the league must decide how to end the season. It is understood that France will not follow the lead of the Netherlands, who decided to void their season with no champion, relegation or promotion.

Final placings could be attributed based on the standings as they are, or using an average of points per game.

Sports daily L'Equipe calculates that the top two divisions could now miss out on 243 million euros (\$264 million) from broadcasters Canal Plus and beIN Sports, plus 35 million euros for international rights. That is on top of lost gate receipts and sponsorship.

ELSEWHERE

The Dutch FA put an end to the season last week, as the Eredivisie became the first top European league called off due to the health crisis. No title will be awarded and there will be no relegation or promotion.

The Belgian Pro League is expected to take a similar decision next week, confirming the season over with Club Brugge in line to be declared champions with 11 games unplayed.

The fate of the Scottish Premiership is up in the air. A controversial vote ended the seasons in the lower three divisions but there are hopes the top flight could restart behind closed doors if given government approval.

AFP

## Coronavirus condemns Chinese football to endless pre-season

SHANGHAI

MANY footballers dread the rigours of pre-season training but in China they could be forgiven for hating it by now as stop-start preparations drag into a fifth month because of the coronavirus.

The Chinese Super League (CSL) was one of the earliest sporting victims of the pandemic with the February 22 start date indefinitely postponed in January.

The CSL could now begin in late June or early July but the uncertainty has left teams at all three levels of professional football treading water since the start of the year.

"Everyone was expecting the season would start at the end of February but now we don't know exactly when it will begin," AC Milan legend Roberto Donadoni, coach of second-division Shenzhen FC, told AFP in a recent interview.

"This is the biggest problem for me and everybody because when you know the exact start date, you put your focus on this day."

The never-ending pre-season -- punctuated by short holidays and periods of quarantine -- is the opposite of the problem facing clubs in Europe.

Leagues suspended there because of the outbreak are racing to restart but there are concerns players will not have enough time to get properly fit after weeks locked down.

CSL side Shanghai Shenhua are into a third phase of preparations at home after spells on the island of Hainan then Abu Dhabi and Dubai in the UAE.

Coach Choi Kang-Hee said that the fitness his players built up in the UAE in February and March had been lost.

"Unfortunately, because of the epidemic, both the AFC Champions League and the Super League have been postponed repeatedly," the South Korean said, according to the Oriental Sports Daily.

"So far there is still no exact start time and the players have to face the prospect of only practising, not playing (competitive matches)."

"After returning to China we first had a two-week quarantine period, and then two weeks of rest."

"We are now almost starting everything from scratch again."

For his players, the season cannot come soon enough.

"It's not just me. All the players here are ready for matches," veteran international defender Feng Xiaoting told state media.

- 'Difficult time' -

Last season's CSL runners-up Beijing Guoan have been in Spain, South Korea and Thailand since January. They are now back in China.



Roberto Donadoni

They squeezed in one competitive match, a 1-0 win at Thailand's Chiangrai United in February in the AFC Champions League, but that tournament also ground to a halt.

Guoan's preparations are now hampered by the absence of their French coach Bruno Genesio and the team's foreign stars, among them Brazilian international Renato Augusto.

Shenhua and many other teams are

similarly missing their foreign players, locked out of China because of entry restrictions designed to stop imported virus infections.

Authorities have not said when the borders will be reopened to foreigners.

Guoan last week ended a training camp in the city of Kunming and the players will spend the next fortnight in isolation in Beijing, before embarking on more preparation.

"During the epidemic the team has faced many difficulties," captain Yu Dabao told the Beijing News.

"But the team still maintains high-quality, high-intensity training, which shows that it is together and very united in difficult situations."

"We have spent a difficult time together."

AFP

Gwiji by David Chikoko





# SPORT

League-by-league guide to European football's coronavirus shutdown

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19



Ross Taylor

## Hundred launch postponed until 2021

LONDON

THE first season of the Hundred has been pushed back to 2021 following an ECB board meeting on Wednesday.

The ECB had intended its new eight-team, 100-ball competition to be the showpiece event in the domestic cricketing calendar and to attract a "new audience" to the sport, with the tournament due to launch on July 17.

But with the Covid-19 pandemic meaning that cricket is unlikely to be played in front of spectators this summer, and casting doubts over the availability of the competition's overseas players, the Hundred's inaugural season will now take place in a year's time.

Last week, the ECB announced that no professional cricket would be played in England and Wales until July 1 at the earliest, and that, as the most lucrative forms of the game, international cricket and the T20 Blast would be prioritised. Another board meeting was held remotely on Wednesday to discuss the competition's status, where it was decided that it should be pushed back by a year.

The ECB said in a media release that a number of reasons were outlined behind the decision, including "operational challenges caused by social distancing, alongside global travel restrictions, making the competition's ambition to feature world-class players and coaches unattainable in 2020".

Further reasons given included recognition that staging the Hundred behind closed doors "directly contradicts" the stated aim to attract a broader audience, and the furloughing of staff by venues meaning that "the logistics of delivering a brand-new sporting event, without a tried-and-tested delivery plan, would be incredibly challenging".

Tom Harrison, the ECB's chief executive, stressed that the competition will launch in 2021 rather than being shelved, and said there will be "an even greater need for the Hundred" once the worst of the Covid-19 crisis has passed. "The situation we find ourselves in as a country means that delivery of the Hundred will not be possible this summer," Harrison said. "Whilst we are naturally disappointed that we won't get to realise our ambitions this year, the Hundred will go ahead in 2021 when we are safely able to deliver everything we intended to help grow the game.

"As we emerge from the fallout of Covid-19, there will be an even greater need for The Hundred. Our survival as a game, long-term, will be dependent on our ability to recover financially and continue our ambition to build on cricket's growing fan base. That need has not gone away, if anything, it is now more critical.

"The Hundred will create millions in revenues for the game, through hosting fees, hospitality and ticket sales, as well as delivering £25m in annual financial distributions to all first-class counties and MCC. Its role in driving participation alongside supporting the development of the women's game will be material in generating take-up of our game across country-wide communities.

AGENCIES



Mtibwa Sugar defender, Henry Joseph (front), challenges Yanga's Jaffary Mohamed in a recent Mainland Premier League clash which took place in Dar es Salaam. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT JUMANNE JUMA

## Veterans criticize proposed slash of foreign soccer pros number in VPL

By Correspondent Adam Fungamwango

SOME of Tanzania's former soccer players have criticized the plan to slash the foreign professional players' number in the sport at the domestic level, saying the approach will lead to decrease in enthusiasm.

The veteran soccer players have moreover noted slashing the foreign professionals number will amount to lack of professionalism in the sport's administration.

Speaking on separate occasions, the veterans that had rose to fame in the domestic top flight competition pointed out the foreign professionals hardly prevents their domestic counterparts from showcasing their skills.

They were adamant the domestic players are instead not seeking to improve their performance.

Kassa Mussa, former Coastal Union player, pointed out that several years back the domestic top flight did not have regulation which gives outfits

chance to recruit 10 foreign professional players, as it is the case in recent years.

He disclosed there were, nevertheless, few foreign professionals in the competition and they were compelled to give their all so they can land a place in the starting line ups.

Domestic soccer players, he disclosed, were at the time in great form and the situation forced their foreign counterparts to work hard.

"There were few foreign professional soccer players given we were in great form. The clubs' leaders will not be compelled to recruit foreign professionals, if our current players will maintain consistency," Mussa, who is currently based in Italy, disclosed.

"We can use the same approach presently, it is hardly a matter of changing regulations."

Former Simba SC midfielder, Shekhan Rashid, disclosed there is no need for hastening the plan to slash the foreign professionals' number.

Rashid pointed out there is no any assurance the decision will help to raise the standard of the game in the country, should it be implemented, given the country does not have proper structure for grooming domestic soccer

players. "I think we should first come up with strategies for nurturing up-and-coming soccer players, we will thereafter think of setting the regulation," Rashid, who is based in Sweden, he disclosed.

The duo has echoed recent comments issued by fellow veteran players that are against a recommendation presented by Ministry of Information, Culture, Arts and Sports to Members of Parliament in a recent session in Dodoma.

The ministry had recommended the foreign professional players' number, which currently totals 10 for each club, should be slashed.

The approach, as disclosed by the ministry, will give domestic players opportunity to regularly find their way into their respective clubs' starting line ups.

Most of the sport's stakeholders that include fans, current players, officials, coaches and former players have strongly opposed the recommendation.

The ministry recently clarified the recommendation has yet to be implemented, insisting it has been presented to soccer stakeholders that will discuss it.

## Closed-door cricket 'felt like warm-up game' - Taylor

SYDNEY

THE last international game of cricket that took place before the game went into lockdown - Australia against New Zealand at the SCG - was a prelude to what is likely to be at least the short-term future when the sport resumes but Ross Taylor has admitted the behind-closed-doors encounter felt more like a warm-up game than a fully-fledged tussle.

Overnight, the match in Sydney on March 15 went from being set to welcome around 20,000 spectators to taking place in an empty ground with the crack of bat and ball being the clearest sound of the day and the cricketers themselves climbing into the stands to fetch sixes.

It remains very uncertain when the international game will resume - there is still hope of an English season while Australia and New Zealand have kept their Covid-19 numbers low - but one thing that seems of little doubt is that it will be a considerable time before crowds return to stadiums.

"It was quite strange leading into the game. There were lots of whispers about the game being cancelled and everything happened very quickly," Taylor recalled.

"In the context of the match, turning up the preparation felt a bit strange. To me it felt like a warm-up game, didn't feel like a true international match but I guess once you get into it it's no different to if you are playing a competitive game of backyard cricket or a club game, you give it your all.

"But I'm not going to lie, it did feel very strange. At the same time there could be a few games like that so I'm sure as players we'll have to adjust to that and get used to it."

New Zealand captain Kane Williamson was interviewed via Spidercam after conducting the toss alongside Aaron Finch and then had to motivate his team in an atmosphere of near silence.

However, he did not think the overall standard of the contest suffered and expects players to make the most of when the sport does return.

"The cricket can definitely be played at a high level. The guys were all professional in how they went about their business," he said. "It is odd, though, and creating your own atmosphere. I don't think you can ever quite create what a full house might do when there's simply no one there and all you hear is the crack off a cricket bat.

"You have to adapt and that may well be something players will have to get their head around to allow them to be back on the park. When something is taken away from you, you are often more than happy to compromise to get back to some sort of normality and do what you love doing and that's play cricket."

While still 10 months away, with countries grappling with the risks of mass gatherings before a vaccine or further treatment for Covid-19 is available, it is possible that the Women's 50-over World Cup which New Zealand is due to host next February is played on empty grounds.

For allrounder Suzie Bates, the prospect of such a thing does not sit well at all. "That would be a huge disappointment especially with how far the women's game has come," she said.

AGENCIES

**EATV FRIDAY**  
TONIGHT @ 9:00

11:00 DADAZ LIVE  
12:00 Mid Week Movie (r)  
13:30 Kall Za Wana  
14:00 Bonga Hits  
15:00 Funguka  
15:30 Wakilisha (r)  
16:00 Ujenzi (r)  
16:30 #HASHTAG  
17:00 SSELEKT  
17:55 Kurasa  
18:00 eNewz  
18:30 Skonga  
19:30 EATV SAA I  
19:45 MJADALA  
20:00 DADAZ (r)  
21:00 Friday Night Live  
23:00 Kurasa (r)

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

## Flexibles by David Chikoko

