PD Wikendi
SATURDAY/SUNDAY March 28-29, 2020
No. 170 SHOP SPORT SOCIALISE
MASH UP YOUR WEEKEND



LEGENDS APPLE GABRIEL, DIBANGO AND RODGERS PASS DAYS APART PG3

RANDOM CHECK ON MATATUS ADAPTING TO FIGHT AGAINST COVID- 19 PG17

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Keeping **sane** during **distancing**



Uncorked

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Marrying my pastor's sister.

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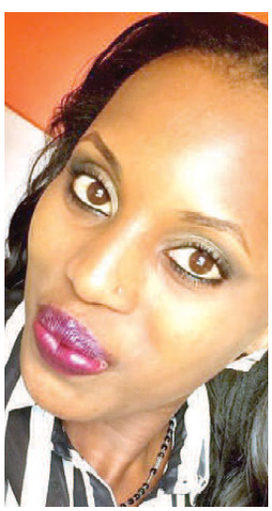
Stronger all around

We have just made it through week two of partial lockdown. Yay to us. Social distancing may be an introvert's dream, but for many others, it feels like the end of the world. Being stuck indoors makes them feel like they're losing their minds. Last weekend, we caught you up on some creative, constructive and entertaining activities you can look into to maximise your time at home, as we all strive to stay healthy amid what's going on. If you missed it, please scroll the archives. After all, we're still staying in, and with the overnight curfew introduced by the government on Wednesday, it's more serious now. This week, we rope in experts for the practical bit of it. The idea is to come out of this healthier, stronger and stable all around.

We haven't forgotten other aspects of our lives, just because. In any case, there was life before Covid-19, and there will be after! Can I get an 'Amen'?

I scream... er, I mean, ice cream... because you only live once – Y.O.L.O! Every time I lose some weight, I find it in the refrigerator – and from now henceforth, at Yolo. I'm so behind (oops), that I only just found out about this ice cream joint in town known as Yolo. Oh, you too? No worries, our foodie Ms Norari was there and writes about it in this week's issue. Go ahead and check that out, as well as our other sections that will take your mind off all what's going on.

Stay safe.



Matilda

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Wikendi

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BY MANUEL NTOYAI

The bromance is back



A strong chemistry between a producer and an artiste is one of the key things that ensures the success of the latter. For MG and Gilad Millo, it has been no different, as the chemistry between the two is evinced by the number of hits they have churned. Songs like *Unajua, Sema Milele, Rangi ya Bahari, Nakuahidi, Nairobi Yangu* and *Salama* among others were released by Gilad under the midas touch of MG, who is also known for having produced H_art The Band's *Uliza Kiatu*.

While it seems like the bromance had hit a rough patch, with Gilad opting to record elsewhere, which did not results in massive airplay as he was previously used to, recently, the Nairobi-based producer posted on social media about the reunion with Gilad, whom he termed as very talented, and said 'they can only thank God', and that for the fans, it means they should expect good music.



Trending tweet

#DJEvolve

With the Covid-19 pandemic continuing to bite on the economy, President Uhuru Kenyatta has asked government leaders to take pay cuts, with himself and his deputy taking 80 per cent cut. Following this lead, Embakasi East legislator Babu Owino took to social media to announce that he is also willing to take a 50 per cent cut to help fight the pandemic, something that irked netizens, given his altercation with DJ Evolve in January that left him hospitalised in critical condition since. DJ Evolve's bill has skyrocketed to millions of shillings, and the family is not able to clear the amount. While the MP had expressed willingness to pay the bill, it is now deemed a matter of moral obligation and not a court order as earlier ruled.



Trending picture

Apple Gabriel/Manu Dibango/Kenny Rodgers

It has been a hard week for music lovers, as three legends passed on within days of each other. Manu Dibango, née Emmanuel N'Djoké "Manu", was a Cameroonian musician and songwriter who played the saxophone and vibraphone. He developed a musical style fusing jazz, funk, and traditional Cameroonian music. His family announced his passing on March 24, after contracting coronavirus.

Michael Albert Craig aka Apple Gabriel, founding member of the reggae group Israel Vibration, passed on later in the week. Known for hit songs such as *There is No End*, he will be remembered as one of the pioneers of reggae music.

Country music Icon Kenny Rogers passed on on March 20 under hospice care in his Sandy Springs, Georgia home of natural causes. Following his death, fans have been streaming his music, leading to racking up of millions. Oh the irony!

Trending video

Trump is out of here

Despite the coronavirus gloom that has shadowed the globe, US President Donald Trump is still making headlines, as usual, for the best and not-so-best reasons, depending on which side of the fence you sit on. This week he hilariously "left" a press conference that he had addressed together with top coronavirus taskforce member Dr Deborah Birx.

The physician admitted to missing out on two daily briefings due to having a fever, and as she made her revelation, "...Saturday, I had a little low-grade fever...", the US President took a few steps back from the key medical aide jokingly saying, "oh, oh" and raising his hands as if to distance himself from her.





Beat cabin fever

EXPERTS SHED LIGHT ON FEELINGS OF GOING STIR-CRAZY AS A RESULT OF BEING CONFINED DURING THE ONGOING CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC, AS WELL AS ANXIETY STEMMING FROM THE LOOMING ADVERSE ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE SITUATION, AND OFFER TIPS TO MANAGE THE SAME. BY MATILDA NZIOKI AND HARRIET JAMES



Yoga's magic lies in helping you take your focus off of your looping thoughts and bring awareness to your body.

Remember when Kenyan netizens loved to joke '*dunia isimame nishuke*'? Well, the world has indeed ground to a halt, in ways we never expected. Our movement is limited and we are stuck in our homes for an unspecified amount of time, as we observe social distancing in a bid to curb the ongoing spread of the dreadful coronavirus.

As such, cabin fever can easily set in. This is claustrophobic restlessness as a result of being confined for an extended period of time. One feels stir-crazy, where stir means 'prison'. Not to mention, worry over the economic effects of the situation. We engaged experts to explain how to go about it all.

MENTAL HEALTH

First, I think the term 'social distancing' should be changed to 'physical distancing'. I find that 'social distancing' makes people feel alienated. It feels as though they are being told not to connect, to be by themselves. That threatens the connectedness of human nature, and I think, the reason people are still not keeping the distance. 'Physical distancing' on the other hand is clear of what is required, and people might be inclined to follow the directive more.

Human beings are social beings, and social distancing is a new concept, and anything new sometimes brings uncertainties and fears. For our African culture especially, where we like greeting, hugging and just being close to each other, connectedness is threatened in this concept, which in turn can cause anxiety and fear. Secondly, as human beings, we always want to be in control and whenever we can't, or situations cause us not to, we panic.

To maintain good mental health, connect in other ways such as phone calls and emails, as well as other technological mediums like WhatsApp, Telegram and Facebook. But, it should be managed, as taking time off social media to connect with family through sharing stories and connecting with nature by going for walks if you're able to, can also help with stress management. This is a time to bring back those story times our grandparents used to have before bedtime. It will help families bond.

People should also ensure they are maintaining a healthy lifestyle including proper diet, sleep and exercise, which helps lift the mood by reducing feelings of tension.

It is important to note things that might contribute to one's mental health being affected during this difficult time, which include;

1. Too much time spent watching and listening to media coverage on the pandemic, which can cause anxiety, fear and worry.

2. Consuming and forwarding unconfirmed material about Covid-19, which can in turn induce panic.

3. Conflict or getting on each others' nerves as a result of being in so-called confinement together for extended periods of time. Try to have some time away from each other where possible, for that me-time.

> Buy only enough for your use. It is not the end of the world, it is a season which shall pass. Hoarding will also create a dent in your finances

4. Not addressing feelings of instability by seeking help and talking to loved ones for support. If one feels overwhelmed by what is going on, and finds that it is having a very negative impact on their mental health, they should seek professional advice.

- Ruth Mwaura, psychologist and mental wellness expert

WELLNESS

One way to cure the anxious mind, burn off extra energy, lower stress levels, and take care of your physical health during social isolation is yoga. Yoga's magic lies in helping you take your focus off of your looping thoughts and bring awareness to your body, and the deep breathing required for yoga calms your nervous system – the part of your body responsible for your fight or flight response to danger (real or imagined).

All you need is a mat with enough grip to stay put when you move around on it, or, if you don't mind getting a little dirty, yoga in the grass is also a great option.

Yoga studios around the world have moved their classes online to reach students in this time of isolation, and local teachers are also offering classes. Check out @salim_rollins or @yinyogaafrica on Instagram, and @africayogaproject has started offering its famous Saturday community class online.

If you're a beginner to yoga, now is a great time to start this great habit. Simply go to YouTube and search for beginner's or gentle yoga tutorials/classes. There are also numerous yoga websites that offer a 15 to 30-day free trial, where you can test out many different styles and teachers of yoga, so, you won't lack variety. This option has the added benefit of vetting teachers, whereas YouTube does not. Check out *omstars.com, yogaworks.com, gaia.com, glo.com,* and *yogainternational.com*. That should last you through the pandemic, and help you come out of it mentally stronger and physically healthier.

-Jessi Wolz, yoga instructor and wellness expert

FINANCES

As we stay indoors during this difficult time, let us not focus on the fear of the unknown, but on what you have and what you can do. Talk about the facts of the reason we are home. Our children already know about coronavirus, but may be not the facts. Correct that as a parent. Take this opportunity to:

1. Get to know your children – their personalities, their likes, who they are and what their aspirations are.

2. Teach them soft skills.

3. Talk to them about your jobs and your financial management skills.

As you plan during this time, it is important to avoid hoarding. Buy enough for your use. It is not the end of the world, it is a season which shall pass. Hoarding will also create a dent in your finances.

Plan your days together with the family, have time for work, exercise, bonding and also time for individual time off. Introduce board games if you haven't already. You don't need to go buy them, create them together. Use your space effectively, open windows for fresh air.

Start planning for after the lockdown, because that day is coming and you need to be prepared, financially and mentally. You need to understand that the effects of this period will last for many months to come, and for some, it might be years before they recover. Look for ways to make extra money online and also for investment opportunities. The market will be down and prices will be low for some investment opportunities.

We have been given an opportunity to take a step back from our fast-paced life. Evaluate and take stock of where you are and where you want to go. Do a SWOT analysis on your life and chart a way forward. This is a good time for change and taking up new opportunities. Take advantage of it.

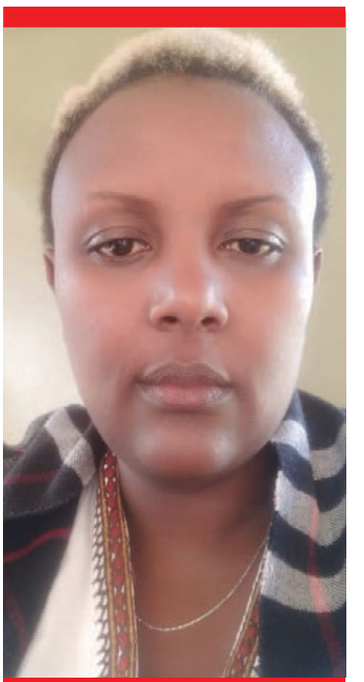
-Cathryn Mbugua, financial consultant, Attique Africa Ltd



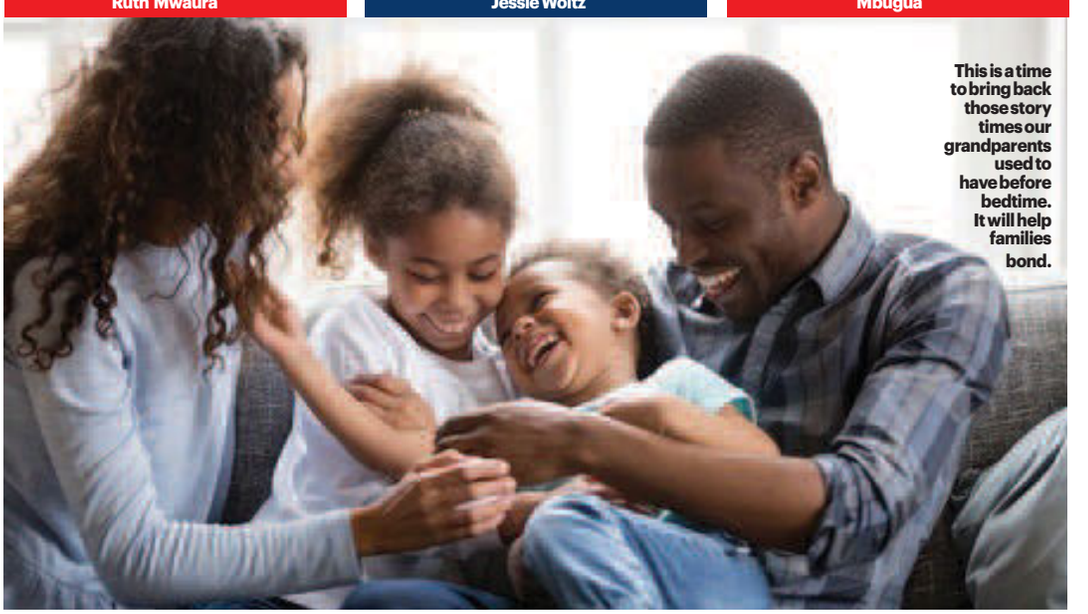
Psychologist Ruth Mwaura



Wellness expert Jessie Woltz



Financial consultant Cathryn Mbugua



This is a time to bring back those story times our grandparents used to have before bedtime. It will help families bond.



Start planning for after the lockdown, because that day is coming and you need to be prepared, financially and mentally.

BY NAILANTEI NORARI

The whisky vs brandy debate

"I take my cognac neat. Why would you take yours in a cocktail?" "I only take whisky." These are common phrases among the partying Nairobi crowd that are bandied around more for clout than anything else. If you further ask the person why they prefer whisky to brandy, they will probably drag the hangover monster and the abstract taste argument into the debate. To help you keep your clout and build a better defense for whichever side of the whisky-versus-brandy debate you are on, here are a few facts on the two drinks.

Whiskey is normally made from fermented grain, which may or may not have been malted, and then aged in charred oak barrels, while brandy is made from fermented fruits like grapes. Brandies are also aged, except for certain fruit types, normally known as whites. If brandies are made from any other fruit other than grapes, the fruit is included in the name; for instance, apple brandy is made from apples. The aging is what gives these drinks the distinctive amber colour.



A splash of cognac, anyone?

OF SCOTCH AND BOURBONS

Whiskies can further be split into bourbons and scotch. This grouping is mainly based on geography, as Scotch is a whisky made in Scotland, while bourbon is one made in the US. Scotch is normally taken neat, on the rocks or with the barest splash of water to reveal its layers of taste. Bourbon is a whiskey made from corn. For a whiskey to be considered a bourbon, the grain mash must be at least 51 per cent corn. Whiskies go particularly well with spice and hence are great in cocktails, much as purists may disagree.

On top of these two types of whiskey, we also have Rye, which can refer either to American rye whiskey, which must be distilled from at least 51 percent rye, or Canadian whisky, which may or may not actually include any rye in its production process. Go figure!



Scotch on the rocks.



How would you like your cognac?

OF BRANDY AND COGNAC

Brandy is made from distilling wines. The aging process determines the colour of the brandy. If it is not aged, the brandy is colourless or clear, and the longer it is aged, the stronger the colour of the brandy. Caramel may also be added to some brandies to adjust the colour and the flavour of the beverage. While brandy can be made from anywhere in the world, cognac, a type of brandy, can only be from the Cognac region in South West France. Cognacs, also called eaux de vie when they are just the distilled spirit before blending and aging, have to be aged for at least two years in French oak. Brandy is labelled in a certain way that shows the quality and age of the brandy. Labels include:

A.C. (aged 2 years),
V.S. (Very Special, aged 3 years)
V.S.O.P. (Very Superior Old Pale, aged at least 5 years in oak)
X.O. (Extra Old, aged at least 6 years in oak)

Vintage (the label shows the date it was placed into the cask)

Hors d'age (too old to determine age, commonly more than 10 years).

Hope these facts stand you in good stead next time you want to defend your drink. You also now know what a Remy VSOP is. You might also want to have your whisky in a lowball and your brandy in a snifter, just for added drink connoisseur points.



Whiskey on the rocks.

BY NAILANTEI NORARI

If my ex was ice cream... well, now they are



A lovely edible tower of cream and fruits with a banana coated in peanut on the side.



Creative cow indeed.

On the third floor of the Kenya Cinema building, there is a joint that everyone under 25 knows about; Yolo Icecream. I had to go back to school to learn about this ice cream joint, well worth it.

Yes, I'm back in school and I feel like an old oaf. Quite a strange feeling since I have always been the youngest, and the most fun in a room. But this is not my therapy session, so I will hold off on the ravages of age and instead tell you about Yolo.

The joint is in the stall next to one plastered with 'My Unique Glasses' signages, which I bet you won't see if you are in need of glasses. But if you are in need of ice cream, you will probably see it and go to the right stall.

Yolo has quite a long list of ice cream offerings. One gets to choose anything from several scoops of ice cream served in metallic bowls, to freak shakes laden with hills of different candies, frozen feast, and milkshakes with wanton names. There is a board on the wall behind the cashier with the list of offerings and pricing. You can either take the ice cream-based

snacks to go or sit in the free sitting area and enjoy your treat as you people watch.

There are some low lounges arranged round a table that one can choose to sit at or some high chairs at the back, where one can fraternize with other sweet-toothed fellows. On the day my friend took me there, there was quite a large crowd of campus students that I almost teared up with nostalgia. They were all good fun and well behaved; yes, I have morphed into that judgmental parent and meddling auntie with time. They were all slurping on their milkshakes and laughing with each other and leaving way too much milkshake and ice cream once they purported they were done. These campus kids have known no hunger or money woes.

Well, turns out I judged the ice cream lovers too soon too fast. When my Sleepover arrived, it was so much that I was stymied over how exactly a big bellied foodie like me was going to finish it in its entirety. It was quite good with a generous dash of sugared nuts and cookie crumble. My friend had the Makeover, or My Ex, or some other liberally named ice cream tower with fruits. It came with a banana dipped in peanut on the side. This too was a marvel of textures and flavours with the crunch of the apple and the citrus from the passion beautifully contrasting with the vanilla base.

Each of our creamy delights cost around Sh350 a pop. And since I was not going to finish my shake anyway, I left it halfway done, much like my younger counterparts, and ordered a Frozen Feast to split with my friend. A Frozen Feast is a four-bowled treat, where each bowl has a different choice of ice cream with different toppings. It tastes as crunchy and creamy as it looks. Suffice it to say, I am sugar high, but I am completely sold. If I do not go back to Yolo for the people watching, I know I will definitely be back for my ex...



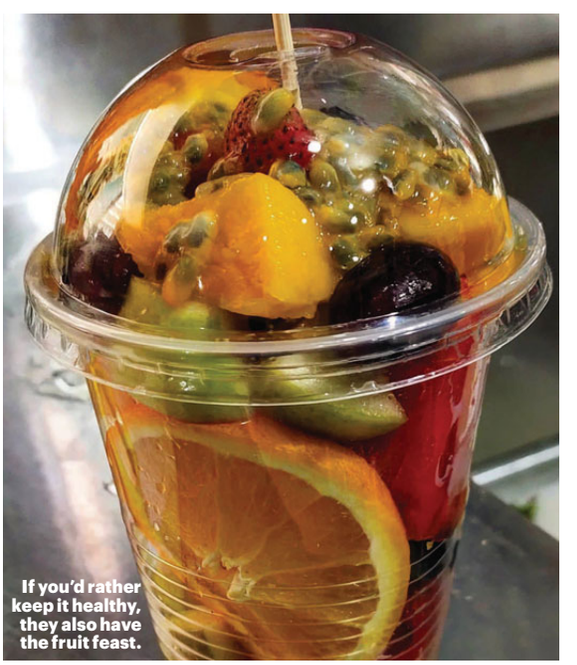
Frozen feast, version two, at Sh500 for the four-in-one.



Other offerings on the menu include Sleep Over, Battle Field and Obsession.



This one is called Dare Me. We see why.



If you'd rather keep it healthy, they also have the fruit feast.





Waffle cones with your choice of ice cream flavour.

BY ADALLA ALLAN

Timeless

The old saying "You are what you wear" still rings true, and nowadays, it is not just the shoe game or the attire that makes one, but also the small details such as the game of wristwatches, which seemed inconspicuous before, unless one had the taste for watches and jewellery like yours truly.

History has it that in the beginning, wristwatches were almost exclusively worn by women, while men used pocket watches. According to some, the world's first wristwatch was created by Abraham-Louis Breguet for Caroline Murat, Queen of Naples, in 1810. Wristwatches were then introduced to men by the US military towards the end of the 19th century. It was apparent that using pocket watches while in the heat of battle or while mounted on a horse was impractical, so, officers began strapping the watches to their wrist.

In the 21st century, watch companies have come out to produce lavish wristwatches incredibly blending with both men and women style preferences, who are ready to splash wads of cash to acquire watches that will speak their fashion sense.

It will barely take a minute to identify an individual's class upon catching a glimpse of the watch they don, going by different aspects of the watch, from the brand, the features, style, quality of material and more, which handily tell its approximate value.

Here are a few timepieces from popular watchmakers that are relatively luxurious from a functional and material perspective, while also being artistic when blended with daily wear.



A blend of matching watch, jewellery and dress.

CASIO GA 100-1A1 ANALOGUE-DIGITAL WATCH

Let's not assume that every fashion zealot has the know-how or enjoys reading the hour and minute hands on the analogue wrist ticker, hence a digital alternative.

This timepiece designed in military style fits casual wear. It is solid and tough, and shouldn't have problems handling the rough outdoors, falls, knocks and bangs. The only concern may be its relatively bulky nature, which may not appeal to those who prefer smaller faces.



ROLEX YACHT-MASTER II ANALOGUE WATCH
On the wrist, the 44mm protruding display with a strangely good weight shows many faces. The material the case and strap are made from make a big difference. In the classy steel-Everose combination, with neatly labelled blue ceramic bezel and crisp white dial with further Everose gold accents, it's a visually pleasing watch that will easily compliment various styles of daily wear.



Matching your tinepiece with your pants.



PANTHERE DE CARTIER WOMEN'S ANALOGUE WATCH
Maison de Cartier, also dubbed the jeweller of kings, has always catered primarily to the ladies with their artistic and creative designs. This collection elicits sensuality and classy femininity. Lately, they have restyled the simple Panthere de Cartier chronometer that screams royalty. Tiny screws grace the bezel design of this watch, creating a more feminine vista.



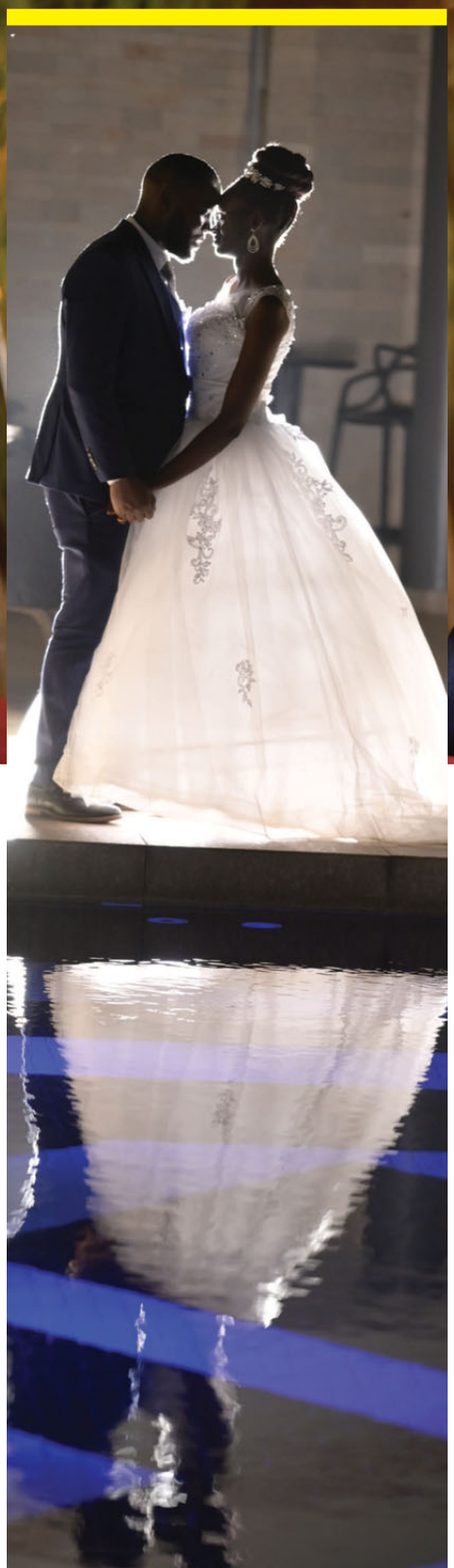
APPLE WATCH 5 SMARTWATCH
Can't find a bag in your closet that fits your get-up and don't know where to keep your phone? Apple Watch 5, the latest Apple smartwatch that shares features with a smartphone, may be the solution. Ceramic and titanium options now join the 40mm and 44mm watch range (for different wrist sizes) and they look pretty mixable with various styles of jewellery, and gladly, they are unisex.

BY MARCELLA AKINYI

Faith it till you make it



BRIDE: VERONICA WANJIRU
GROOM: HARRISON GITHAE
DATE: FEBRUARY 15, 2020
VENUE: LA CASCADA MIGUELA, RUAKA





How did you meet? Who said 'Hi' first?

Harry: We met at a fellowship, Truth Mentorship under Mr T. We were both serving in the same department. I was the lion, so I'm the one who said 'Hi' first and chased the antelope (laughs).

How did it graduate from being church mates?

The very first time I saw her was in 2016. I knew she was the girl of my dreams, but I felt in my heart that it was not yet the right time to make a move. Her brother was also my pastor, and that made things even harder. So, later on, after two years, I gained confidence and pursued her.

How did you convince her brother that you were his sister's Mr Right?

Haha, I never convinced the brother, I convinced the lady, but he automatically knew I was the right one for his sister (men of the Spirit). Actually, later, together with his wife, they confirmed our relationship and blessed us.

How was dating like, especially dating your pastor's sister?

There was no pressure at all. Our pastor respected our boundaries and my decision. Dating was good. The best thing about it was that we gave it our all, especially time. We would meet daily just to hang out.

What were some of these boundaries?

First, knowing his position as a pastor and as a brother helped us a lot in establishing these boundaries and also relating to them. Being Christians also dictated our dating life, as the Christian beliefs and values were our guiding factor. For instance, keeping pure before marriage, respect for each other and patience were some of the values that we upheld.

What was memorable about



your proposal?

We had planned for dinner with our couple friends, Danny Gift and his wife, and Vee knew that's all that was on the cards. I'm glad she didn't suspect anything. I had talked to her close friends, a band was there, so, as we were looking for a good place to sit (the rest of the team was already there), I went down on one knee and asked the big question.

How did you know it was time?

I strongly believe that when you walk with God, there are things you'll not struggle to know. I just knew in my heart. It had peace when I was asking her to be my wife.

How was the planning process?

The wedding planning was good, we were very intentional about it, because we will never have to plan for our wedding again. In fact, I was the one on top of everything, since she was very busy at her workplace.

When it came to finding vendors, some were our good friends, others were through referrals. We loved our photographer Willy Muturi for his professionalism, and his job was amazing. I just love how our photos came out.

What was memorable about your big day?

All we wanted was for the glory of God to be present, and the day was so beautiful; the dancing, people having so much fun, in short, the day was just amazing.

If you were to turn back time, what would you change about your wedding?

Nothing at all, we were happy about everything.

Any word to couples planning their wedding?

Don't let people plan their wedding in your wedding. Engage your desired providers then involve your planning committee because you can't do it alone – *harusi ni ya watu.* Also, prioritise and focus on the major things that can cause a wedding not to happen.

Vendors;
Photography: Willy Muturi
Cake: Buju Sweet Treats
Food: Incredible Meals Kitchen
Décor: Weevets Events
Bridesmaids and groomsmen outfits: Smiles Collections
Gown: Queens Bridal
Entertainment: Truth Mentorship Band









BY ADALLA ALLAN PHOTO: JOHN OCHIENG

Comfort and fun

ALEX RICCIONI
BUSINESSMAN

BIKE: HONDA GOLD WING GL1800 YEAR 2000
ENGINE: 1832CC WATER-COOLED ENGINE



Talk to us about your love for bikes

My dad was a biker, and my mum used to tell me that when I was an infant, whenever I started crying, nothing could soothe me, even breast milk. But, upon hearing my dad ignite his motorbike and rev up the engine, I would instantly start giggling due to the adrenaline. That is when they noticed my enthusiasm for bikes is inborn. I have interacted with bikes since that young age.

Did you get this bike locally?

No, it is an import from the US, where I was on a visit some time back. Renowned for the culture of cruiser bikes, they have quite some sophisticated ones. Being that bikes have been part of me for years, I promised myself to purchase one. I settled on this at a yard somewhere in Chicago, Illinois. It was certainly love at first sight.

It's fairly big, tell us about getting it here

I went for air shipping since it is faster compared to sea, which can take months, yet I wanted to have it soon after arriving back. The cargo plane got here the next day after I landed. The bike is quite heavy, weighing almost 400kg, and it cost over Sh500,000 to ship.

Any remarkable moment with it?

We have been around many parts of Africa with my spouse playing the pillion rider. With the backrest, the bike is comfortable. We took a trip to Lusaka in Zambia, passing through the DRC, Malawi, and Harare in Zimbabwe, then back. It took as a whole month, as we stayed in the countries for certain periods just for vacation.

Have you ever maxed its speed?

Yes, I do that on clear roads. Its speed reads up to 240km/h. But this calls for maximum concentration, since the slightest distruction can cause serious damage, given that on the bike, the rider and pillion act as the body.

Any drawbacks?

The bike is heavy, and it's hard to manoeuvre African roads with it, which in many instances are small, in bad condition and are laden with traffic congestion in rush hours.

Did you know?

Honda Gold Wings have made it to Cycle World's Ten Best Bikes list 18 times from 1975.

BY ADALLA ALLAN



How javs are adapting to fight against Covid- 19

While stories and panic about the Covid- 19 pestilence are unravelling each day, the public transport industry finds no choice other than executing the hygienic measures issued by the ministry of health - the nganya industry not exempted. The virus has ground the globe to a halt; I am informed that the wags that used to nag "*dunia isimame nishuke*," loosely translated to 'the earth should stop revolving so I alight', have successfully disembarked.

According to the ministry of health, the mathree industry is amongst the areas with the highest risk of spreading the virus. This industry serves 70 per cent of commuting Kenyans and has employed almost 70 per cent of the youth, according to a report by Delloite in 2018.

Nganya 254 undertook a random check at various mat stages in Nairobi to find out if the javs are adhering to the sanitary laws that were introduced by the government to curb the pandemic that has led to over 10,000 deaths globally and still counting.

We took our first check at Umoja Market. At the busy stop, we come across the hot javs of the hood and board one dubbed Scooby Doo of Salty Sacco. At the entrance, we meet John Mark, a crew member on his normal duties, shouting himself sore calling for passengers, but this time, armed with a branded bottle filled with a foamy liquid, which he informs me is a sanitizer. He offers some drops to passengers before boarding. They queue, patiently waiting to sanitize their hands before getting in and taking their seats.

After a short while, the mat, which seemed to be half full, departs the stage. One of the passengers curiously notes the stark difference, seeing as they normally carry excess passengers, to which John yells that they have to conform to the directive of social, or rather, physical distancing. "We have no option but to just abide by the law of carrying 16 passengers in a 33-seater. We cannot have more than 60 per cent in the bus," he says. Though police during this ride were not so strict on doing checks, John says they are more concerned with their passengers' health.

He adds that they are forced to charge Sh100 instead of the normal Sh80 during rush hour, to make up for the difference. "We are asking the government to subsidize fuel and sanitary products such as sanitizers for us to manage the costs and profits. This is our lone source of income," he tells *Nganya 254*.

Afterwards, I hop onto another jav to Westlands. The same case applies here, social distancing is observed, the odour of a disinfectant still fresh, indicating that it was sprayed moments before we boarded.

The conductor then begins to collect fare. "*Wapi Paybill yenu ya Lipa na M-pesa*? (Where is your M-pesa Paybill?)," an ostensively concerned woman asks when the conductor approaches her. "*Saa hii ni cashless, hatutaki magonjwa* (Now we've gone cashless, we don't want to contract coronavirus)," she adds.

"*Hakuna Lipa na M-pesa madam, unatuma Sh100 nipate ya kutoa pia* (We have don't have Lipa na M-pesa here. You send the amount directly to me, including the withdrawal fee)," the conductor sternly responds, being that the fare to Westlands was Sh70. An exchange ensues, with the passenger adamant on adhering to the hygiene guidelines, and ending up sending the money with the transaction fee.

The World Health Organisation advised people to adopt cashless systems, warning that the virus can be spread by exchanging bank notes and coins. In support of the same, Safaricom waived fees for M-pesa transactions below Sh1,000.

Further, the chairman of Matatu Owners Association Simon Kimutai urged the use of cashless transactions, adding that they are contemplating introducing a till number that will help combat the pandemic, since health should come first. "No conductor should ask for withdrawal fee of the fare sent to them. They should be the first to support and appreciate the cashless payment method," Kimutai said in a recent media interview.

BY MAYFELLOW WAITHAKA



It's a cultural problem

Truth isn't a fan favourite. In fact, it is an aspect of life that most people avoid. The truth about why our roads are dangerous is rarely discussed. One faction believes that if matatus were taken off our roads, you'd dramatically reduce the number of accidents on the roads. Another believes it's the Probox menace. Then there's the Subaru branch of the debate – the list goes on.

Most of the above might sound off, but there's truth in each one, garnished in fallacy. Each one of us plays a role in road safety, which means the absence of the same is simply a reflection of us, as a society.

1. Cyclist

I'm one of them, and I can say our role in road safety is counterproductive. Most cyclists ride as though we are a cycling society – we aren't. As a result, whenever there's a debate on who should be where on the road, cyclists tend to win the moral war and lose the mortal one. Let's embrace the culture of giving cyclist space, and they can make sure they're dressed appropriately – to be seen, and get off the road wherever possible.

2. Pedestrians

Another moral soldier. Pick your battles wisely.

3. Motorcyclists

Height of impunity. The problem is abetted by the next lot.

4. Traffic officials

I say officials because not all of them are traffic police. In the CBD, bikes ride in any direction and as a result, accidents are common. They are comfortable riding on the wrong side of the road, two feet from a city council officer. Now imagine in the rest of the country.

5. Drivers

Power without responsibility is a recipe for disaster. Just ask Zimbabwe, or a myriad of Eastern European countries. Drivers have the safety of being inside a vehicle, often with secondary safety systems. But, they have wanting habits, placing themselves, other drivers and the first three on this list at risk. The driving culture should accommodate everyone. Patience and discipline should be your guide.

We owe each other. Make that a culture.

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BY ADALLA ALLAN

APPLE WATCH TO DETECT BLOOD OXYGEN LEVELS



Apple is working on a feature that will allow the Apple Watch to detect blood oxygen levels for the first time. This feature will be a unique component of the upcoming Apple Watch Series 6 and WatchOS 7.

This is one of a number of functions Apple is working on to expand its smartwatches' health capabilities since they introduced the ability to alert wearers who are at risk of respiratory or cardiac arrest on Apple Watch 4 and 5. The two also had the ability to send alerts when a user's heart rate remains above or below a BPM (beats per minute).

Knowing the blood oxygen levels can be useful to athletes , since they can tell how well their bodies adjust to varying activity levels.



STAY-IN STORYTIME

Staying in doesn't mean no more storytime. There are a lot of online platforms to keep it alive right at home.

Renowned author and illustrator Bethany Barton is hosting three hours of enchanting storytelling featuring an all-star line-up of storytime readings on her Instagram @bethanybarton-art, including by Olivier Jeffers, Carson Ellis and Lemony Snicket.

Penguin Kids too via their Instagram account @penguinkids and Facebook page Penguin Kids Books have something every weekday at 11am, where writers and illustrators they have published read their stories.

Again, Harper Kids are on Facebook (facebook.com/harpercollinschildrens), Instagram (@HarperKids), Twitter (@HarperChildrens) and YouTube (HarperKids) every weekday at noon. The storytime features read-alouds, activities and entertainment.



NIKON DELAYS D6 CAMERA

Nikon recently announced a delay of its D6 camera, that is specially designed for professional sports photographers.

The company originally planned for a March release, but that's been pushed to some time in May due to a shortage of components, caused by actions taken to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus. The camera was expected to be a big seller ahead of the summer Olympic games in Tokyo, which have now been postponed as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.





@leepittsphotography

SHUTTERBUG: MAJID LYONNE PICHEN

On why I love photography, allow me to quote legendary American photographer Aaron Siskind: *Photography is a way of feeling, of touching, of loving. What you have caught on a film is captured forever... It remembers little things, long after you have forgotten everything.*

I took this picture in Watamu, and I love it because it's my favourite place, and the beauty of the sunrise was just amazing.

Digital SLR camera: Nikon D700
Settings:
DSLR lens tamron 24-70mm f/2.8 G2
Exposure 1/320
Aperture f/16
Focal length 42mm
Iso speed 320
Exposure program manual



COVID-19: Coping with redundancies



President Uhuru Kenyatta addressed the nation on Wednesday, outlining raft measures the government planned to undertake to respond to the ravages of Coronavirus (COVID-19).

He offered tax reprieves to workers earning up to Sh24,000 per month and reduced the rates of income tax, value added tax (VAT) and corporate taxes. Despite some of these measures as part of the economic stimulus package, the economy is predisposed to undergo a recession.

Although large corporations shall improve their cash flows from changes in the tax regime, micro, small and medium enterprises shall be hard hit in the unleveled market arenas.

With mandatory closures of open market areas, the tap of income for small traders will be closed.

Unlike large corporations whose operations are registered, small traders may have difficulties accessing any business support in the prevailing circumstances.

Employers have requested some of their employees to work from home hoping for normalcy in an uncertain future. Others have encouraged employees to proceed on paid leave while monitoring the business implications of the pandemic.

Firms in the service industry such as hospitality have closed down operations letting employees to either proceed on unpaid leave or lose employment on redundancy grounds.

Indeed, employers are faced with operational uncertainties that are forcing them to embark on unexpected restructuring to keep afloat in the pandemic quagmire.

Full time employees shall benefit from the income tax cut while those on short-term contracts, the self-employed and casual workers will be staying at home without income.

However, employers are on the watchlist of which one shall next declare employees redundant. Some employees who are presumably working from home may be experiencing sleepless nights because of the raging redundancy dark clouds.

As breadwinners, they are at a loss when discussing with family members on the next course of action in case the harmer falls on them. If you unfortunately become one of those who will be shown the exit door, know that loss of employment will be accompanied with a number of challenges. Here are some of the challenges and how you could address them while waiting for the pandemic dust to settle down.

Psychological adjustments

Regardless of the number of years you have been in employment, you can attest to a wide variety of comforts and benefits you have enjoyed. You have taken them for granted until the threat of redundancy has given you a wakeup call. The day you will be issued with the letter of termination, you will experience a deep sense of loss; bitterness against an unseen enemy and utter disorientation. It will dawn on you that you are going to lose the comradeship of co-workers; daily work routines; social status; cherished job title and the current monthly salary and other benefits.

Responses to job loss will differ from one person to another depending on how they have coped with previous losses. Some people will stay in the denial mode longer than others. However, in the early days you will be engaged in soul-searching spells asking questions such as: Why me? Why now? For how long will my unemployment last after the deadly virus is conquered? You may not have ready answers for these questions but they are normal in the process of coming to terms with loss of employment.

Discussions with family members

The family has been singled out as a common denominator when one of its members is facing any life crisis, like your sudden separation from employment. Your family is the first stopover for the social support you now require. The existing state of your family relationships will influence the extent to which you shall make any adjustments beyond leaving employment. Inform and discuss with family members the implications of job loss while allaying their real or imagined fears.

Although schools are now closed, people with school-going children should provide them with hope on continuation of schooling when they open. Begin entertaining transferring children to new schools in case the current ones are costly. Table before your family members the expected changes in lifestyle due to your loss of regular income.

Encourage them to participate in the key decisions on matters that will affect them.

Spending terminal dues

Termination on redundancy grounds will entitle you to payments such as severance pay in line with the provisions of the labour laws. Regardless of the lump sum you will receive, undertake utmost prudence in spending the money. Like any other lump sum, it will be prone to exhaustion within a short time. Break down the money into amounts for both immediate and future use. Save for the rainy day the money you do not require now for pressing living expenses.

Relocation to Rural Area

Right now you could be residing in a rented house, staff quarters or your own house. If you are in a rented house, you may decide to shift to an affordable one as you plan on what to do next. From the staff quarters you can move to a house within the urban area or later on relocate to your rural area. In case you do not have a house in the rural area, you may use part of your terminal dues to construct one. Housing will obviously not be a post-employment issue if you are living in your own house.

Samson Osero, HRD Consultant and Author of Transition into Retirement, samsonosero@gmail.com

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QUICKMONEY

Why fishermen in Lake Victoria are smiling to the bank

The coronavirus pandemic has handed Kenyan fishermen an unexpected boon - a rush of customers who now shun imported Chinese frozen fillets in favour of freshly caught fish from Lake Victoria.

Kenya bought $23.2 million (Sh2.4 billion) worth of frozen fish from China in 2018, according to the International Trade Center, almost all of its fish imports. Fishermen have long complained that the cheap imports were strangling local trade.

The coronavirus has slowed Chinese imports. Nervous customers have turned to local fish. But Kenya will soon face shortages unless imports from China resume; it produces just over a third of what it consumes.

Kenyan fishermen like 38-year-old Maurice Misodhi, whose skin has been weathered by the sun and wind during two decades on the water, have had a bumper month. Based at Dunga Beach in Kisumu, customers want every fish he catches.

Misodhi says the Chinese lockdown seemed to have dried up imports of cheaper Chinese fish.

"As fishermen we can now smile, not because people are suffering from coronavirus, but because we can now sell our fish, and at a good price," he said.

The price of a kilo of Nile perch - $2.50 (Sh250) a month ago - has shot up to Sh350. Fish trader Mary Didi usually buys from Chinese suppliers but has now turned to Misodhi.

"The supply at the Chinese importers has gone down, and many of my customers were also scared of the Chinese fish, thinking they would contract the virus," she said. "To keep the business running, I had to turn to fish from the lake."

Bob Otieno, chairman of Dunga Beach Management Unit, says sales have shot up. The beach registers a catch of between 1 and 1.5 tonnes of fish each day and sales have gone up from 50 per cent of the catch to 90 per cent in the last two weeks. Previously, fishermen would eat, barter or give away around half their catch.

"We used to have many fishermen sell their catch at low prices because of competition from the Chinese fish," he said.

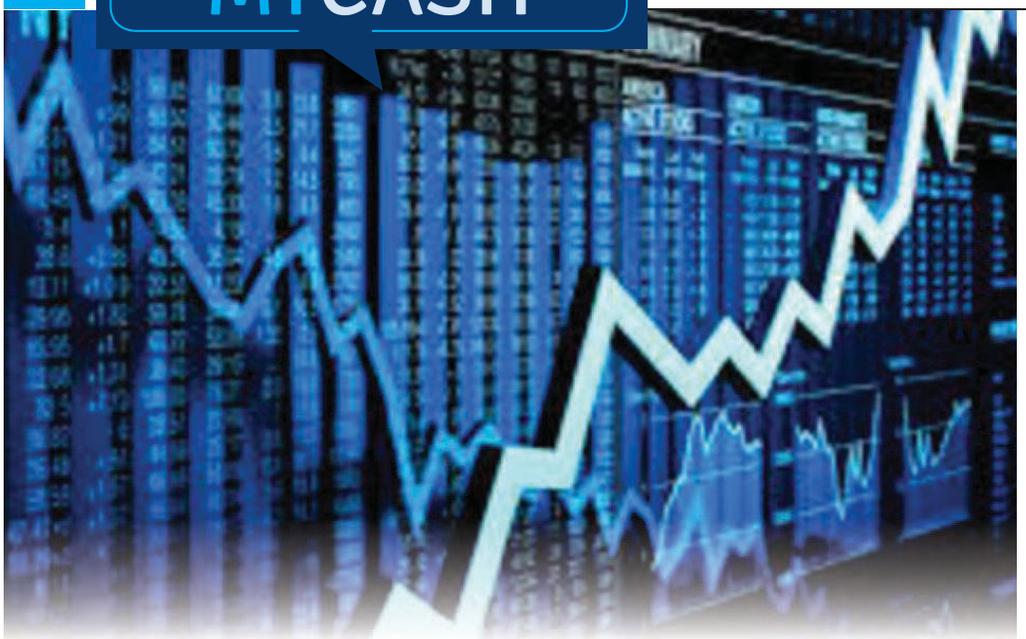
Kenya produces 180,000 tonnes per year but consumes about 500,000 tonnes, according to 2019 government figures.

Christine Adhiambo, the government's assistant director of fisheries for the lake region, said the two biggest importers of Chinese fish had not shipped from China since November and were running down stocks. Kenya could face shortages soon, she said.

"Kenya cannot satisfy its local fish demand," she said. "That is why we heavily rely on supplements from China.

–REUTERS


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Walking a tightrope amid corona storm

For money managers, it's bad enough watching the coronavirus wipe trillions of dollars off world markets' value. Even worse is not knowing how bad the outbreak really is for the economy, company balance sheets, and in turn for their portfolios.

Having torn across borders to almost 100 countries in the space of a few weeks, the virus is leaving official data releases and corporate trading statements struggling to keep up.

That means many fund managers and economists who typically use forecasts to guide investment decisions or strategy calls are disregarding them altogether.

In short, investors, a group that hates uncertainty, are groping their way through what is the worst stock market rout and growth scare in years.

Government and business efforts to contain the virus are expected to wreak the most economic damage; those responses are ongoing and asymmetric and subject to constant change as the virus threat shifts. All of this is making it much harder to forecast the hit to growth or profits.

Nor are central bankers' signals much use, given monetary firepower is more or less exhausted after a decade of deployment, said Paul O'Connor, head of multi-asset at Janus Henderson Investors, a prominent global active asset manager

"Economic data are not going to be much use at all. We face at least a month, some more weeks of weak economic data, downgrades to growth and downgrades to company earnings. Data won't tell me where the market may bottom," O'Connor said.

"Nor is there a clear circuit-breaker where policymaking is concerned."

Instead, O'Connor is using market moves to gauge when to buy or sell – like early this month when Europe's STOXX index suffered its biggest daily falls since 2008 –, he stepped in to buy, reckoning sentiment was near bottom.

As for economic data, that's getting short shrift. February US payrolls, which recently showed robust job creation and unemployment near 50-year lows, were brushed off by a plunging Wall Street that - quite simply - saw the numbers as old news.

February Purchasing Managers Indexes (PMIs) - considered one of the few forward-looking economic indicators available - showed euro zone businesses growing at their fastest pace in six months; even compiler IHS Markit dubbed them "a false dawn".

Meanwhile, economic forecasts roll in — with caveats attached. Oxford Economics (OE) cut its 2020 global growth forecasts by a half per cent, assuming a Chinese bounceback. But this hinged on "the extent to which households and firms are able and willing to go about their normal business", it added.

OE also noted that the plunge in the global composite PMI to 46.1 in February implied a world economy in recession. But it argued that past surveys had "often overstated the likely scale of global growth slowdowns after major one-off events".

The foggy outlook has sent many investors scurrying to seek investment banks' advice; Goldman Sachs said "a large volume of questions" from clients had led it to compile a set of alternative indicators for stricken markets.

Goldman suggested, for instance, tracking daily coal consumption to gauge Chinese electricity demand. In Italy it highlighted high-frequency gauges such as hotel room occupancy or road traffic in Milan to calculate economic damage.

But others like Janus Henderson's O'Connor are either watching markets for their investment steer, or tracking the coronavirus progress across continents.

They note the Chinese flow of data is dire — factory gate prices are falling and trade shrank in the January-February period at double-digit rates - but the virus tide also seems to be turning there.

Now, as more people fall sick in the United States and Europe, the risks are other countries emulate Italy's lockdown, with the associated damage to consumption and business.

"You jump in where the bomb already hit because it will be safest there," said Mike Kelly, global head of multi-asset at PineBridge Investments.

"We are pivoting to sort of buying back into China A-shares, copper... shifting the pendulum to the manufacturing direction and taking it out of things like US services."

Expectations for interest rate cuts and extra government spending are luring other investors back into the United States, Japan and the euro zone. But while many companies have warned of the virus hit to earnings, question marks will remain over cashflow and debt refinancing abilities.

Will Malcolm, portfolio manager at Aviva Investors in Singapore, is among those seeking opportunities amid the fog but noted "the unknowns".

"The market doesn't have enough information to avoid a rubbish-in, rubbish-out assessment," Malcolm said, referring to swapping vulnerable companies for others that turn out to be equally vulnerable. "You can think you can make a judgment but the risk is you end up putting the garbage in."

Those wary of bold calls are simply taking the safe option, hunkering down in gold, government bonds and the Japanese yen, assets that have made double-digit gains in three weeks.

With data unlikely to offer clarity for six to eight more weeks, buying safe-haven currencies was the default option, said Peter Kinsella, head of FX strategy at Swiss private bank UBP.

"We'll be flying blind for the next few weeks," he added.

–REUTERS

Why orange juice prices are soaring on global markets

The future price of orange juice has spiked by more than 20 per cent this month as consumers look for healthy products during the coronavirus pandemic.

While demand has risen, supply has been hit as producers struggle to export goods due to transport restrictions.

This has caused a rise in the so-called "futures" price of orange juice, which indicate its cost for delivery in the coming months.

Orange juice futures are the best performing asset so far this year.

"The Covid 19 outbreaks are hitting both the supply and demand for orange juice. The immune-boosting properties are the demand side attraction while there are simply not enough tanker spaces with airlines not flying to bring the product to markets," said Stephen Innes, chief global market strategist at broker AxiCorp.

On the supply side, there are also issues with not having enough workers as plantations introduce restrictions such as social distancing. "Traders are wondering if workers are around to man the plants here in Florida and in Brazil," said Jack Scoville at trading firm Price Futures Group in the US.

Orange juice futures have seen their biggest monthly gain since October 2015, at a time when global stock markets are being battered. In London, the FTSE 100 index is down more than 13 per cent in the last month, while on Wall Street the Dow Jones Industrial Average has fallen more than 16 per cent.

Talking about whether the spike in orange juice futures prices will mean higher prices for orange juice in stores, Mr Innes added: "The pass-on effect will be quick as orange juice producers pass the price rises onto to supermarkets and other buyers".

Most commodities have a "future" price, which can be traded on an exchange, such as the Intercontinental Exchange (ICE). Futures contracts help companies lock into a fixed price in the future to protect them from potential spikes in prices.

Futures contracts are common for soft commodities like oranges and wheat which are vulnerable to sudden price rises due to bad harvests and natural disasters. –BBC



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Okello, late bloomer with mark in women's rugby



BELOW: Janet Okello (in an orange dress) at Magharibi Michezo Awards 2019 with her two teammates who were also nominated on that Award pose for a photo. FAR RIGHT: Janet Okello in Stanbic Mwamba RFC kitty pose with her trophy after being named the 2019 Impala 7's Top Try Scorer. PD/GIBO ZACHARY



Philosopher Gautama Buddha once said, "The mind is everything and our life is shaped by our mind; we become what we think!"

It is a statement or mantra that perhaps resonates well with Kenya international rugby player, Janet Okello and her quest to become one of the best rugby player the country has ever produced.

Up and until she joined high school, Okello, fondly known as Shebesh, was not a rugby player, she knew nothing about rugby, she was an athlete, a 100m and 200 sprinter.

But in 2010 while in Form Two at Butere Girls' School, rugby was introduced in the school for the first time and Okello immediately fell in love with the sport, and life to stardom began.

"I played rugby for two years in school where we used to participate in inter-school games competition and that is where Kenya Lionesses captain, the late Aberdeen Shikoyi noticed my talent and encourage me to join Kenya Lionesses team after my Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) exams and I did exactly that," she said.

"After being introduced to rugby, I immediately chose rugby over other games. I felt it was my true sport, I knew I had talent in it and had to put it into action. Secondly, the passion in rugby grew day by day as I got inspired by our one and only Collins Injera (Kenya's top male player of his time and once the world top try scorer)," she added.

In 2013 Janet joined Kenya Lioness, and true to her vision, she has become a key figure if not iconic in the national team, helping the team to the 2016 Olympics for the first time in the country's women's rugby history, played a key role in helping Lionesses qualify for the 2018 Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia.

Besides, Janet has won many individual accolades which include being named Player of the Month of September 2017, awarded second runners up Female Player of the Year 2018 (SOYA Awards), awarded Female Player of the Year in Magharibi Michezo Awards 2019 among other accolades.

However, despite the numerous achievements both individually and collectively, her journey at the national women's rugby team has not been a walk in the park.

"Being one of the Lioness player, the journey has not been easy. There have been some ups and downs that made me feel like loosing it all, but I had to remind myself of the goal and vision I had made back in high school, a vision of being an icon of the Kenya rugby women's team," she said.

"It wasn't easy for me balancing training and making sure I lacked nothing. Sometimes I had to depend on one meal a day of which as a rugby player I needed to take four meals a day (training is intense). Walking to training and go some months without pay, challenges are many, but I persevered all that to the point I am now! It takes patience and tolerance! It takes discipline, hardwork, passion, teamwork, tolerance, all that to make it and by grace, I endured all that, and kept focus. I was embraced by my team mates and more so coach Kevin Wambua who mentored me to being the player I am today," added Janet, a first born of five, one brother and four sisters (one deceased) whose vision is to play pro-rugby in the near future, probably in the USA.

As she finished school and started training with the Kenya 7s national women's team, Shebesh also joined Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB) Women's Rugby Football Club and played for them for four years and later joined Stanbic Mwamba RFC in 2017, where she's playing her rugby football club to date.



In 2013 when she joined the national team, Janet other Lionesses stars like Celestine Masinde (centre), Philadelphia Orlando (captain), Janet Owino (hooker), among others with whom they have forged a formidable teamwork that has seen Janet emerge as the best and all time top try scorer for the national team, Kenya Lionesses.

- Gibo Zachary

Betika sponsorship could end if government invites Fifa ban



Nairobi City Stars CEO Patrick Korir the press at a past briefing . PD/ DAVID NDOLO

National Super League (NSL) council chairman Johnstone Sakwa has expressed concern the Sh90 million sponsorship deal with betting firm Betika could be jeopardized if the government trashes Fifa's directive on how to handle the Football Kenya Federation (FKF) elections.

On Wednesday, Fifa declined to form a normalization committee as requested by the Sports Dispute Tribunal (SDT) and instead extended the current term of office for sitting officials until the current impasse is resolved.

Sakwa who also chairs NSL side Nairobi Stima said sponsors will not stay if there is instability and asked the government to be careful before taking any decision that might jeopardise the current stability.

Sakwa also pointed out that players are the biggest stakeholders in football and any decision that is made should ensure that it is for their good.

"The biggest stakeholder is the player. Unfortunatley, if this stand-off is not resolved amicably, they will suffer in terms of loss of income and annulment of contracts.

"Football requires stability to attract sponsors and anything that disrupts such stability we must resist," he said.

He added: "We urge that Fifa's position on the stalemate be respected to enable us move forward and not lose out on the little that we have received. No sponsor will be willing to come and invest their money where there is chaos.

Nairobi City Stars CEO Patrick Korir said whatever decision taken by the government on this matter should strictly favor the game and not individual interests.

"For football to thrive, there has to be a conducive environment. Anyone following Kenyan football over the years should know that going to court to delay the electoral process has been a culture.

"However, our football is not in a crisis as some are claiming. This will pass but, in the meantime, we must be careful that whatever decisions we make at this time are not detrimental to the real stakeholder and that is the player."

Kibera All Stars secretary Daniel Magara has also called for adherence to Fifa's directive insisting it will help instill confidence among the sponsors.

"We have ten matches to go and this could be disrupted if the stalemate continues. We have had a good league, very competitive and the presence of a title sponsor has made it even more exciting.

- Webster Nyandika

We're all negative and safe, says Dorris after quarantine



Amid the scare of the Harambee Starlets 14-day quarantine upon arrival from a 10-day Invitational Turkish Cup early this month, calm was restored with news that all is well.

This is after the elapse of the quarantine Thursday following government directive that all inbound passengers had to go for regular tests at Mbagathi Hospital then proceed for self isolation to avert any spread and to maintain social distancing.

However the tense atmosphere that surrounded their arrival on March 12 has now been quelled and the leader of delegation and Football Kenya Federation (FKF) vice president Doris Petra (pictured)insists all is well and doubts must be put off.

Big scare

"Thankfully nobody has tested positive, we are all safe and going one with our daily routine. Our quarantine as per directive of Ministry of Health indeed ended well on Thursday and I can confirm all went well.

"The only bit of scare was Bruce Juma (physiotherapist) who had a bout of fever and sudden stomach upsets so he rushed to Kenyatta National Hospital but the positive news is that he tested negative and was told to rest after regular tests and medication. I want to tell the public and football fraternity that all is well with each and everybody who travelled to Turkey because we complied fully with the directives," Petra told People Sport on phone declaring that they had gotten the all clear from health officials.

With the ravaging pandemic particularly crippling Europe and spreading fast in Europe, authorities were instructed not to take chances and only clean cases were cleared.

Communicated regularly

"Of course it is an emotional journey for everyone particularly those who are isolated but it is for the good of our community. I am sure the girls learnt valuable lessons about hygiene and also protecting their loved ones. We communicated regularly through our Whatsapp Group and tried to comfort each other," she added.

Indeed it was confirmed that before the VP met FKF President Nick Mwendwa and CEO Barry Otieno for the rejoinder presser at Safari Park Hotel on the Sports Disputes Tribunal ruling on invalidity of the forthcoming elections, the entire team had long gone for tests.

"I want to repeat for the sake of clarity that we took precaution and could not be that reckless with our movement and interactions. My meetings with the personnel at the Federation have been also minimal," stated Petra who was in high spirits. **- Barry Silah**

Ajax starlet Nouri wakes up after two years in coma

A Dutch footballer who was left in a coma after collapsing on the pitch is 'doing well' on his road to recovery - and even reacting to watching the sport again, his loved ones say.

Ajax's Abdelhak 'Appie' Nouri sustained severe and permanent brain damage after suffering a cardiac arrhythmia attack in a pre-season friendly with German outfit Werder Bremen in July 2017.

The 22-year-old was in a coma for months but is now recovering in a house built especially for him, where he 'sleeps, eats, frowns and burps but is very dependent,' according to Dutch website AD.

Nouri's brother Abderrahim said the pair communicate through raising their eyebrows but the promising midfielder also physically reacts when watching football on television.



His father Mohammed told the site the family had been through a 'serious ordeal', adding: 'We have to take care of him at our very best. We try to do a lot ourselves.'

Meanwhile, Barcelona star and former Ajax team-mate Frenkie De Jong revealed how Nouri even played a part in securing his move to the Spanish giants.

'He talked to me a lot in a summer,' he said.

'When I sat with him, his mother came in. She then asked Appie, "Appie, where should Frenkie go? To Barcelona?" As soon as she said that, his eyebrow rose. That was a very special moment.'

Many of Europe's top players paid a series of tributes to the youngster after his collapse.

Friend and ex-team-mate Justin Kluivert adopted his number 34 when he moved to Italian side AS Roma, and dedicated a goal in the Champions League against Viktoria Plzen to Nouri.

Meanwhile, Barcelona's Ousmane Dembele sported boots with the midfielder's name on them.

Hundreds of fans also showed their appreciation by gathering outside his home in Amsterdam shortly after the incident, which was met with emotional thanks by the player's relatives.

His father and brother then appeared on the podium as Ajax celebrated winning the Eredivisie title at the Museumplein in the city centre last May.

Nouri burst onto the scene as a teenager in 2016 and was considered one of Ajax's most talented prospects.

Everton's striker Niasse grilled for flouting UK's lockdown rules

Everton star Oumar Niasse was allegedly branded a 'disgrace' by undercover police who caught him driving around with three friends during Britain's coronavirus lockdown.

The 29-year-old striker, who is said to earn around £55,000-a-week, was pulled over in Withington, Manchester last night, after officers saw him driving a friend and two women in his Mercedes without a seatbelt.

According to the Sun, one of the police officers tells the men: 'You are bang out of order, a disgrace. As a Premier League footballer you've just put everybody here at risk. What are you doing? It's totally embarrassing.'

Niasse's encounter with the law comes two days after the UK government ordered people to stay indoors to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

One witness said the police were suspicious of the football star, shining a torch in his face and asking him to spell his name.

'It is shocking that Niasse is carrying on regardless,' the witness told the Sun.

'We're not supposed to gather with more than two people in public yet everyone in that car seems to think they can do what they want.'

Officers put a call in to Everton to tell them what Niasse had been up to and the women left in an Uber, the witness said.



Costa risks the wrath of Juve chiefs after posting holiday photos

Anyone who knows Andrea Agnelli knows all too well how much the Juventus president loves the rules. He is a generous man, a hard worker who arrives at the club very early and is the last to leave. Even in the period of voluntary isolation he spends at home, he is on the phone every day to comfort players, managers and employees. Agnelli is also very generous when it comes to the players (after the club's Scudetto victory in 2018, defender Benedikt Howedes — who only made three appearances while on loan — said he received a Ferrari like the rest of the first-team squad) but he asks for the best from every member of the team. It's not an impulsive act, it's like all people who think a lot can become vindictive. Agnelli is a modern president who is respected by those at the club. He has stood by each player who chose to leave Italy during the pandemic crisis.

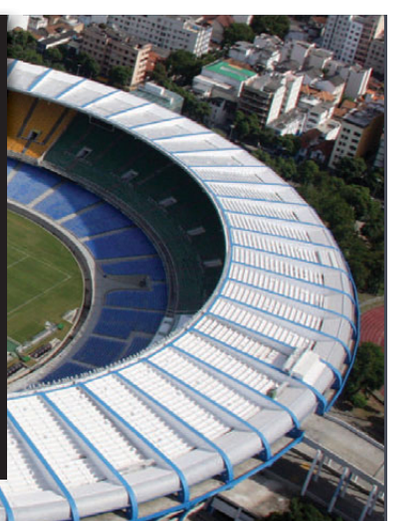


Rio converts Maracana stadium into hospital

Brazil's iconic Maracana stadium will be used as a makeshift hospital for coronavirus patients, Rio de Janeiro's state governor Wilson Witzel said on Thursday.

Health officials plan to begin using the football stadium and the adjacent Maracanazinho indoor arena by mid-April as local hospitals struggle to cope with the rising number of infections. "The logistics are at an advanced stage and should be ready within 15 days, maximum," Witzel told journalists. He added that three more temporary hospitals were being built: in the Rio neighborhood of Barra da Tijuca, and the nearby municipalities of Nova Iguacu and Sao Goncalo.

Sao Paulo's Pacaembu stadium and the Mane Garrincha stadium in Brasilia have also been converted into provisional hospitals in recent days. Brazil's health ministry has reported 2,915 confirmed coronavirus cases, 77 of which have been fatal. The Maracana was opened for the 1950 World Cup and staged the final of the 2014 World Cup, as well as the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2016 Olympic Games.



Bundesliga big four pledge financial aid for rivals

Four of Germany's biggest football clubs have pledged 20 million euros ($22 million) to help Bundesliga rivals facing financial difficulty in the coronavirus crisis, the German Football League (DFL) announced Thursday.

Bayern Munich, Borussia Dortmund, Bayer Leverkusen and RB Leipzig all of whom qualified for this season's Champions League said they would make the funds available for crisis-hit clubs in the top two German divisions, which are run by the DFL.

"This decision underlines the fact that solidarity is not an empty word in the Bundesliga," said DFL president Christian Seifert.

"The DFL is very grateful to the four Champions League participants."

The four clubs will forego 12.5 million euros of their remaining share of next season's TV rights revenues, and add a further 7.5 million euros from their own reserves. The DFL itself will be responsible for deciding how the money is distributed among clubs in the top two divisions.

"In these difficult times, it is important that the stronger shoulders support the weaker shoulders. We want to show that football stands together," said Bayern CEO Karl-Heinz Rummenigge in a statement.

"We always said that we wanted to show solidarity when clubs fall into difficulty due to this extraordinary situation and through no fault of their own," said his Dortmund counterpart Hans-Joachim Watzke. The Dortmund CEO had previously caused outrage by arguing that clubs who had made "financial and sporting mistakes" in recent years should not be bailed out by richer rivals.

In a country where few clubs are financed by billionaire investors, many Bundesliga stalwarts are concerned for their futures in the crisis.

Players at relegation-threatened Werder Bremen have offered to forego wages in order to ease the financial burden on the club, while Schalke's head of marketing Alexander Jobst has said that "the existence of the club" is at stake.



Bayern Munich's Robert Lewandowski has already doanted 1m Euros to help in the fight of corona virus. - AFP

James 'bummed' to miss Cleveland return amid COVID-19

Los Angeles Lakers superstar LeBron James *(pictured)*, musing on the potential permutations of an NBA return in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, reiterated in a podcast aired Thursday he wouldn't relish competing without fans in the stands.

"What is the word 'sport' without 'fan'?" James said on the "Road Trippin'" podcast put out via his Uninterrupted multimedia platform.

"There's no excitement. There's no crying. There's no joy. There's no back-and-forth.

"That's what also brings out the competitive side of the players to know that you're going on the road in a hostile environment and yes, you're playing against that opponent in front of you, but you really want to kick the fans' ass too."

He said a return to NBA competition which shut down March 11 after Utah Jazz big man Rudy Gobert tested positive for coronavirus would be more like glorified practice games if no fans were present.

"To get back on the floor, I would love it," he said. "I just don't know how we can imagine a sporting event without fans. It's just, it's a weird dynamic."

James joined the podcast from his home in the Los Angeles suburb of Brentwood.

He took some ribbing from hosts Richard Jefferson, and Channing Frye, both former Cleveland teammates of James, and Lakers media host Allie Clifton, when he mentioned he was speaking from his smoking room-cum-wine cellar.

James said he was training regularly in anticipation of a return to NBA action this year. The 35-year-old three-time champion said he didn't think the enforced rest just as the season was steaming toward the playoffs was a good thing.

"The narrative that I don't like: 'Well, now guys get so much rest.'

"Or, like, 'LeBron, he's 35, he's got so many minutes on his body, now he gets so much rest,'" James said. "It's actually the opposite for me because my body, when we stopped playing, was asking me, like, 'What the hell are you doing?'

"I was right there turning the corner, like, I felt like I was rounding third base, getting ready for the postseason.

"So the rest factor, I think it's a little bit overblown."

It's not yet clear when play will resume amid widespread bans on large gatherings aimed at slowing the spread of the virus.

James thinks some sort of training period and a possibly shortened end to the regular season will be needed before a post-season can begin.

"One thing you can't just do is go straight to the playoffs," James said. "Because it discredits the 60-plus games that guys had fighting for that position."

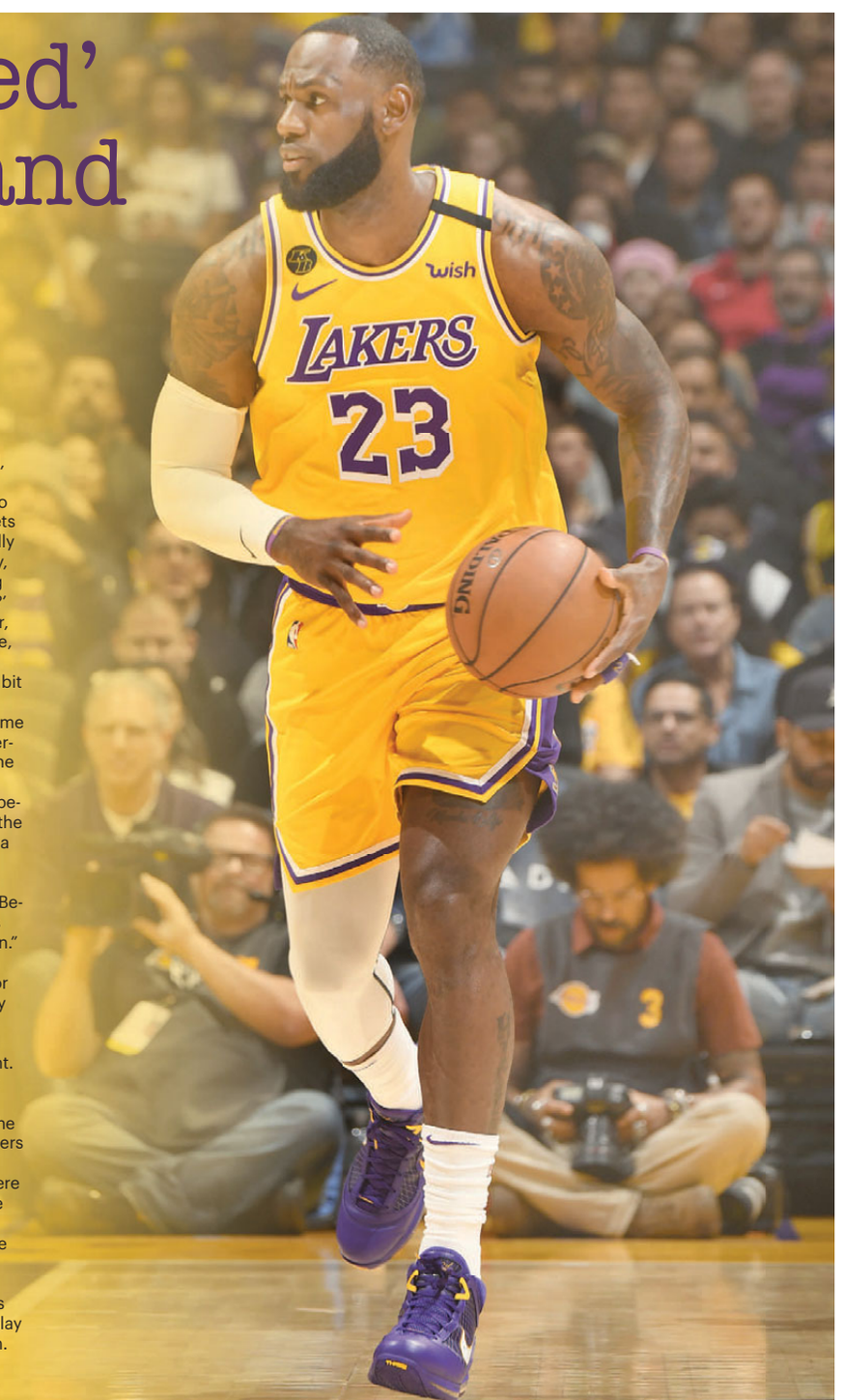
The podcasters suggested using those games to give teams battling for the final playoff spots a chance to play each other in an abbreviated play-in tournament. Top-ranked teams could face those out of the post-season hunt.

"It'll be very interesting to see what happens," James said.

The podcast came out on the day the Lakers were to have played the Cavaliers in Cleveland, and James admitted he was sorry to miss the trip to a city where he played 11 seasons and won the title in 2016.

"It's always special going back there and looking up there and look at that banner," James said.

"Think about all the great memories that we had. And then being able to play in front of my friends and family again. That would have been so cool. ... I'm kind of bummed out about that."



Key questions as Wimbledon faces shelving

The All England Club will hold an emergency meeting next week to discuss the possible postponement or even cancellation of Wimbledon in the light of the coronavirus pandemic.

What are the options for Wimbledon this year?

Wimbledon, which is scheduled to take place from June 29 until July 12, has been staged every year in peace time since 1877, shelved only during the two world wars.

However, the spread of the coronavirus has brought havoc to the 2020 global sports calendar.

Tennis is at a standstill until June 7 with the entire European claycourt season already wiped out.

There is also the issue of when the coronavirus will peak. By Thursday, there had been 170 fatalities in London alone with 578 nationwide. Around 9,500 people have been infected so far in the United Kingdom.

Health is the top issue for an event which attracts not only the superstars of the sport, but also close to 500,000 spectators each year as well as 6,000 staff and around 3,200 accredited media.

Why can't the tournament be played later in the year?

A slot has opened up in the calendar after the postponement of the Tokyo Olympics until next year.

However, Wimbledon organisers know that a postponement by a just fortnight to take advantage of that opening would solve little.

It would also mean running into the build-up to the US hardcourt season, the precursor to the August-September US Open in New York.

What would be the financial implications of a cancelled Wimbledon?

The tournament is an annual money-spinner. For example, in the 2017-2018 fiscal year, it was reported that Wimbledon generated $336 million with a pre-tax profit of $52 million. Over 90 per cent of that was ploughed into British tennis.

The BBC, which broadcasts Wimbledon, will have a two-week black hole if the event is called off. They reportedly shell out around $72 million a year for the rights.

Who would be the losers of a cancelled Wimbledon?

As well as the purely sporting implications of a binned Wimbledon, Britain's well-heeled would suffer a jolt to their busy summer social season. The Henley Royal Regatta on the River Thames, a feature since 1839, has already been cancelled.
-AFP



Serena Williams of the US reacts during her match against China's Wang Qiang in the women's singles at the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne on January 24, 2020. PHOTO: AFP



EPL side Liverpool players celebrate with the trophy after winning the 2019 UEFA Champions League. PHOTO: AFP

Economic crisis from virus pandemic begins to bite in Euro football

Europe may be the financial powerhouse of global football, but the economic impact from the coronavirus pandemic is already beginning to hit and the consequences could be disastrous for clubs across the continent.

When players at Bayern Munich, one of the world's richest clubs, have reportedly agreed to take pay cuts, it is not difficult to imagine the troubles in store for the sport as a whole.

Many clubs lack sufficient cash reserves to get them through a sustained period without revenue coming in. For example in Scotland, where clubs rely heavily on gate receipts, the situation is "clearly unsustainable".

That is the view of Aberdeen chairman Dave Cormack, who forecasts facing five million pounds ($5.9m) of costs without any money coming in over the next few months.

"No club, whatever their size, scale or level of investment, can withstand a total lack of income over a period of anything between three to six months," Cormack said.

Even the German league (DFL) which runs the Bundesliga and has annual turnover of more than four billion euros ($4.3 billion) fears a catastrophe.

"If we don't play games behind closed doors as soon as possible, there is no point wondering if we should have a league of 18 or 20 teams," said DFL chief executive Christian Seifert. "We won't even have 20 professional clubs anymore."

It is almost two weeks since leading leagues across Europe stopped. No matches means no money from gate receipts, and before long payments from broadcasters may stop too.

The sums set to be lost everywhere are eye-watering.

In England, according to reports, the Premier League faces losing 762 million pounds from domestic broadcast deals with Sky Sports and BT Sport.

Analysis by accounting firm KPMG suggests cancelling the rest of the season would cost the 'Big Five' leagues of England, Spain, Germany, Italy and France a combined total of over four billion euros.

It is therefore not difficult to see why leagues will consider restarting behind closed doors, to at least guarantee revenue from broadcasters.

After all, clubs must continue during the pandemic to pay hefty player salaries. In France, several clubs, including Marseille and Lyon, have put their players on partial unemployment to save money. It means clubs pay staff 70 percent of their salaries. The state pays the rest, albeit limited to 4,850 euros per employee, a drop in the ocean for most footballers.

In Germany, players at Borussia Moenchengladbach were the first in the Bundesliga to propose pay cuts, followed by others at Werder Bremen, Schalke and Borussia Dortmund. Bild reported that Bayern players accepted a 20 percent pay cut.

The Spanish Football Federation has announced plans for a 500 million-euro package allowing clubs in the top two divisions to receive loans of up to 20 million euros "and pay it back in five or six years", according to president Luis Rubiales.

Barcelona have the biggest revenue in world football according to the most recent Deloitte Football Money League, but they are reportedly in discussions to bring in pay cuts for all players of up to 70 percent. La Liga is considering reducing players' salaries on the whole by 20 percent if the season is not completed. Similar measures could be taken in Italy.

In England, some clubs are asking players to accept deferrals to wage payments. On Wednesday the Professional Footballers' Association union said the crisis was having a "severe impact", adding: "In order to deal with this situation, we have called for an urgent meeting with both the Premier League and the EFL (English Football League)."

-AFP

SPORTS BRIEFS

Spanish FA offers clubs loans to pay bills

MADRID: Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) president Luis Rubiales on Thursday announced lines of credit for lower-level clubs in difficulty because of the coronavirus pandemic and repeated that he hoped the season could be completed. He also told an online press conference he was willing to talk to La Liga, which runs the top two divisions, about helping its clubs. Rubiales said that semi-professional and non-professional clubs in men's and women's outdoor and indoor football "will have a line of credit that will reach up to four million euros ($4.3 million) depending on their wage bills". He said the loans would be interest free and could be repaid over two years. Some clubs are considering introducing part-time working.

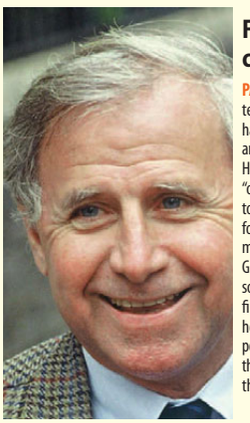
-AFP



Hearts chief braced for six-month league shutdown

GLASSGOW: Hearts owner Ann Budge has hit back at critics of her request for staff to take a 50 percent wage cut as she hinted football's shutdown could last six months. The Scottish Premiership side were one of the first football clubs to ask employees to bear the brunt of the coronavirus crisis with an immediate loss of income, with matches in Scotland indefinitely suspended. That led to criticism from some quarters about the financial state of the club. But even European giants Bayern Munich have since cut wages and Budge insisted Hearts were not in a more precarious financial position than other clubs before the crisis hit. "In line with most other clubs, we aim to hold sufficient cash reserves to cover two to three months of normal trading operations," she said in an open letter on Thursday.

-AFP



France's Euro 84-winning coach Hidalgo dies aged 87

PARIS: Michel Hidalgo, the coach of the great France team that won the 1984 European Championship, has died at the age of 87, the French players union and the French Football Federation said on Thursday. Hidalgo, who had been ill for a number of years, died "of natural causes" at home in Marseille, his family told radio station France Info. He is best remembered for his eight years in charge of Les Bleus, which culminated with the stylish team of Michel Platini, Alain Giresse and Jean Tigana winning Euro 84 on home soil, beating Spain 2-0 in the final in Paris. It was their first ever major tournament success. Prior to that, he took France to the 1978 World Cup, their first appearance at the tournament in 12 years, and then led them to the semi-finals of the 1982 World Cup, where they lost on penalties to West Germany.

v-AFP

Ighalo offered Sh51m per week by Shenhua to reject Man Utd move



Manchester United's on-loan forward Odion Ighalo (pictured) has been tempted by his parent club Shanghai Shenhua with a new Sh 51 million (£400,000)-a-week deal to extend his stay in China.

There were eyebrows raised when United recruited the Nigerian on transfer deadline day in January, but he has since made a good impression by netting four times to help the club in cup competitions.

His performances have been enough to impress the Red Devils hierarchy, and Sportsmail reported this week that the club were ready to sign him for £15million this summer when his loan deal expires on May 31.

But Shenhua are hopeful of swaying the 30-year-old with an eye watering package to keep him in the Chinese Super League for another two years, according to Sky Sports.

United's deal with the Chinese side ends a month earlier than most loan deals, and the club may have to agree an extension if they want to keep him for the remainder of the Premier League season should it continue on through the summer due to the coronavirus.

This could see him stay with United until June 30, with players' union FIFPro working on a solution to contract uncertainty amid the football shutdown.

Shanghai were recently prepared to cash in on Ighalo if United could match their valuation of £15m, and a permanent switch to Old Trafford looked on the cards with United happy to pay it.

But now the Chinese outfit are ready to increase his wages from £300,000 per week to £400,000 per week, with a two-year extension that would see him remain with the club until 2024. Ighalo is said to be flattered by the staggering new contract offer, but he is putting all of his focus on playing for the club his supported as a boy until his loan deal expires.

-Dailymail

IGHALO AT UNITED:

Games:	8
Starts:	3
Goals:	4
Assists:	1



Antoinne Griezman

Barca stars cent wage c

CORONAVIRUS: THE IMPACT ON LA LIGA:

-All football in Spain has been put on hold indefinitely as the country looks to deal with the continued spread of the coronavirus.
-La Liga was postponed for two rounds of games earlier in March as the country is in a state of emergency.
-As it stands, football will not resume until the Spanish government feels it is safe to do so.
-La Liga had taken action after a member of the Real Madrid basketball team contracted the virus.
-On Sunday, the Spanish government extended the state of emergency to April 11.
-Prior to the postponement of football, Barcelona had been leading La Liga by two points.

> A cut of 70 per cent would dramatically reduce the wages of Barca's biggest stars, with Lionel Messi currently earning a basic salary of £500,000 a week before tax, not including any bonuses or image rights.

Barcelona's board are at risk of starting a war with their quarantined stars after attempting to push through radical plans for them to take huge wage cuts of as much as 70 per cent as the coronavirus crisis continues to cause havoc in Spain.

Club directors are due to discuss the matter in a video conference today (Thursday) where the temporary laying-off non-playing staff, and amateur sportsman, and the implementation of a wage-cut across the entire club – including players – will be up for debate.

As of yet there has been no green light from the dressing room to go ahead with slashing salaries for as long as the country remains in lockdown.

Diario Sport reported on Thursday that there are differences of opinion about the degree to which players should pay the price for the consequences of the season stopping three months short.

A cut of 70 per cent would dramatically reduce the wages of Barca's biggest stars, with Lionel Messi currently earning a basic salary of £500,000 a week before tax, not including any bonuses or image rights.

Antoine Griezmann pockets £294,000 a week, Luiz Suarez takes home £290,000 a week, and Gerard Pique earns £220,000 every seven days.

In a video conference meeting last Friday, cutting players' wages was broached and WhatsApp group chats among directors and players have been in overdrive ever since.

But whenever there has been communication between the two groups, the players - led by captains Messi, Pique, Sergio Busquets and Sergio Roberto - have yet to make it clear they would back the proposal, at least not at the 70 per cent figures floated.

Barcelona are set to be harder hit financially than most clubs in the coming months. They were



Barcelona's Argentinian forward Lionel Messi holds the Golden Shoe award before the Spanish league football match FC Barcelona vs CF Granada at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona on November 23, 2013.

refuse to take 70 per ut due to coronavirus

ambitious last summer when they announced their budget for the season.

They were desperate to be the first club to break the €1billion barrier for revenue. So desperate, in fact, that when they laid out their financial plans they included the unpredictable income stream of player sales with around €120m marked down as the sum the club could bring in across the season by selling its stars.

Even without the coronavirus crisis, they were on course to fail to meet that particular target. Despite a willingness to sell players such as Ivan Rakitic and Arturo Vidal, the only business Barcelona were able to do in the summer involved relatively low-cost deals that saw B-team players and reserves such as Abel Ruiz and Carles Perez leave the club.

Barcelona had already admitted to certain problems in raising the €120m to sign Griezmann last summer. 'It hasn't been easy,' said president Josep Bartomeu of the deal. Barcelona took out a short-term loan of €35m to help pay that fee.

In January they resisted buying a striker even though they were aware that second top scorer Luis Suarez would be out for the rest of the season.

The money simply was not there to boost Quique Setien's forward options. Only when Ousmane Dembele subsequently picked up an injury, reducing options further, did they move to sign Martin Braithwaite.

One of the reasons why many Barcelona supporters and media believed Bartomeu was not likely to bring forward elections at the end of the season was that to do so he would have to present Barcelona's accounts without excessive losses and that would have been very difficult to do at this moment in time, with the club still chasing its tail following the disastrous signings of Dembele for €105 plus €40m in add-ons and Philippe Coutinho for €120m plus €40m.

Now those problems have been multiplied as all revenue streams are effectively reduced to zero by indefinite shutdown of football.

Louis Suarez



The club say the postponement of their Champions League game against Napoli alone cost them €6m. They acted quickly to shut their stadium complex but that deprives them of income from the club museum that last season generated around €60m and the club shop that last season made €86m euros.

As well as matchday and merchandising revenue disappearing, there are other problems that need to be anticipated. Some sponsors could withhold payments as they face their own financial problems, or argue that contracts are not being honoured because of the postponement of games.

And in a worse-case scenario in which the season cannot be concluded, there is a danger that television contracts will also not be honoured.

The first and easiest thing the club can do is temporarily lay-off its vast staff of non-playing employees and non-professional teams. Spanish employment law allows companies to lay-off staff for a period of time in exceptional circumstances, obliging them to re-hire those laid off when said circumstances are no longer in existence.

The so-called 'ERTE' would not be popular but the board felt if top players were also showing willing to take cuts in their own wages then it would not leave them looking like the bad guy. Likewise they hoped clubs throughout Europe could reach agreements in the form of pacts made by the European Clubs Association, or UEFA.

So far those have not been forthcoming and are considered difficult to formulate with employment laws not being uniform across countries.

Revenue streams

Bartomeu has still not ruled out reaching an agreement with players on Thursday but there is a sense that some – and it is not necessarily the highest earners – believe their contributions both on the pitch and off the pitch in a commercial sense, are what gives Barcelona its record breaking revenue streams.

They believe they should not bear the brunt of panic measures to bail the club out – at least not when a certain degree of mismanagement has made them even more ill-equipped than they might otherwise have been for such an unexpected and unprecedented moving of the proverbial financial goalposts.

The coronavirus outbreak has made it a financially turbulent time for clubs across the continent after almost all football came to a halt. The decimation of the current season has left the future of clubs in limbo, with a number asking players to take a wage cut in order to keep their clubs afloat.

Leeds United's playing squad have voluntarily taken a wage deferral to ensure that non-playing staff do not lose out, while Birmingham City have halved their players wages during this period of uncertainty.

Barcelona had been leading La Liga by two points prior to the postponement of the season due to the spread of the deadly disease.

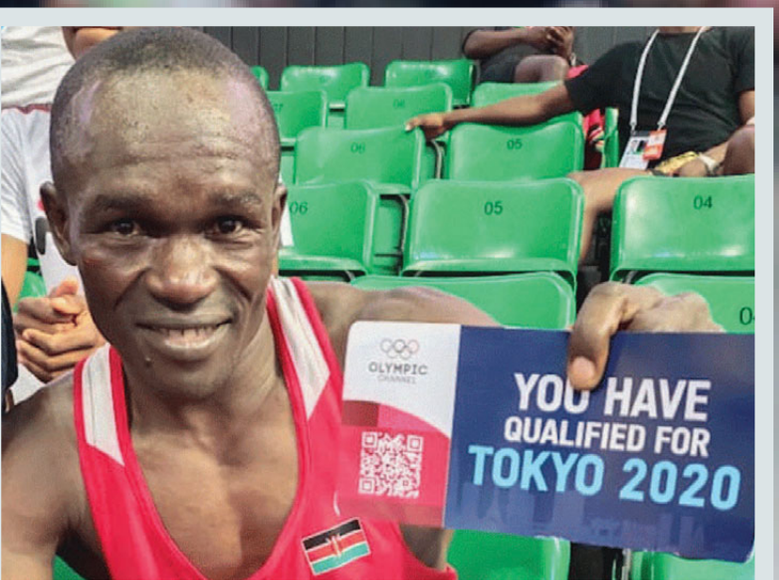
All football in Spain has been put on hold indefinitely as the number of deaths continue to rise in the country. On Wednesday, Spain's death toll eclipsed China, with 4,089 recorded deaths at time of publication. **-Dailymail**

Wikendi sport
SAT-SUN March 28-29, 2020

Athletes qualified for Tokyo 2020 will keep 2021 spots



World Marathon record holder Eliud Kipchoge who also won gold at the last Olympic Games in Rio 2016 finishes the sub two hour race in Vienna last year. INSET: Kenyan boxer Nick Okoth after he qualified for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games in Senegal last month. PD/FILE



Athletes who had already qualified for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics before they were postponed will keep their places when the showpiece takes place in 2021, sources told AFP on Thursday.

Around 57% of the 11,000 scheduled participants for Tokyo had already made sure of taking part when the International Olympic Committee (IOC) pushed the Games back to 2021 due to the coronavirus on Tuesday.

The IOC and 32 international sports federations held a teleconference on Thursday where it was decided to respect the qualification process.

"Thomas Bach (the IOC President) first explained the reasons for the postponement of the Games, then said that the athletes qualified for Tokyo 2020 would automatically be qualified for 2021," one of the participants in the conference told AFP.

"One of the main subjects was to know when and how to organise the qualifications.

"In some federations, many sportsmen and sportswomen are not qualified and it takes at least three months for the Olympic Games to organise them."

The 2020 Tokyo Games were scheduled for July 24-August 9, but after telephone discussions between Bach and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, a historic joint decision was taken for the first postponement of an Olympics in peacetime. However, there is no definite date yet for the rescheduled Games with Bach saying Tuesday the Tokyo Olympics "must be rescheduled to a date beyond 2020 but not later than summer 2021, to safeguard the health of the athletes, everybody involved in the Olympic Games and the international community".

Many Olympic sports, such as boxing, saw the vast majority of their qualifying tournaments either interrupted or cancelled due to the global health situation.

Others, such as sailing however, already had 90% of their competitors qualified.

"The allocated quotas remain allocated," confirmed another participant in Thursday's meeting.

"Thomas Bach has confirmed that a decision (on a new date for the 2021 event) will be made within the next four weeks," he said.

"Some said they prefer May 2021, others June ..."

Some federation chiefs also expressed financial concerns, claiming in advance part of the sums traditionally allocated after the Olympic Games by the IOC to the governing bodies.

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