



*1st Edition for 2021
January*

COVID ~19 *PAPARAZZI*

Editor:
Tanya Stone
Rotary Club
of Pinelands

Dear Fellow Rotarians, Friends and Family

The year is off to a rocky start no matter where in the world you live. Covid-19 infection rates, and deaths are surging, including in South Africa. The only long-term solution is a vaccine. In many countries it is being rolled out, albeit at a sometimes glacial pace. As the New Year started the South African government was placed under extreme pressure to roll out a vaccine.

We seem to have missed a beat or not acted with requisite urgency to procure a jab.

No matter where in the world you live, the shared experiences of 2020 brought us together, even while we were apart, with digital platforms helping us to stay connected.

Let's concentrate on the big picture and be optimistic to help up move forward and to try to alleviate the negativity happening around us.

COVID-19 is unfortunately not going to go away for a while. It has been a tough year and we need to continue to stay connected and support one another.

Read articles on the latest news on vaccines and the rollouts globally.

There are encouraging news articles from last year in 2020 and achievements which are proudly South African.

Sports news around the globe, environmental articles (read about Annie, the turtle released back into the ocean), environmental heroes, stand upright for attention with vertical gardening, how Brexit changed the ham sandwich, "there is a lion on my stoep" a Limpopo man finds these wild cats lazing around on his veranda and more.....

QUOTE FOR THE DAY

You can't go back
and change the
beginning, but you
can start where
you are and change
the ending.

—
C.S. LEWIS

Statistics from
Worldometer
and WHO on
COVID-19

PLEASE NOTE:
Figures are time of
publish



The Statistics below were recorded on
16 January 2021

Confirmed cases

Updated: 16 January 2021

94,414,994

Recovered

Updated: 16 January 2021

67,457,001

Confirmed deaths

Updated: 16 January 2021

2,020,124

ACTIVE CASES

24,937,869

Currently Infected Patients

24,826,459 (99.6%)

in Mild Condition

111,410 (0.4%)

Serious or Critical

CLOSED CASES

69,477,125

Cases which had an outcome:

67,457,001 (97%)

Recovered / Discharged

2,020,124 (3%)

Deaths

Statistics from
Worldometer, WHO on
COVID-19 and
Department of Health SA

Please note: Figures are
time of publish



Latest Statistics
Figures recorded on
15 January 2021

Confirmed Cases

Updated: 16 January 2021

1,311,686

Recovered

Updated: 16 January 2021

1,062,690

Deaths

Updated: 16 January 2021

36,467

As of today the cumulative number of COVID-19 cases identified on South Africa is 1 311 686.

Province	Total cases for 15 January 2021	Percentage total
Eastern Cape	185377	14,1
Free State	69379	5,3
Gauteng	354892	27,1
KwaZulu-Natal	273452	20,8
Limpopo	44969	3,4
Mpumalanga	50988	3,9
North West	50251	3,8
Northern Cape	28965	2,2
Western Cape	253413	19,3
Unknown	0	0,0
Total	1311686	100,0

The cumulative total of tests conducted to date is 7 498 780 with 65 209 new tests conducted since the last report

Sector	Total tested		New tested	
PRIVATE	4 335 084	58%	33 296	51%
PUBLIC	3 163 696	42%	31 913	49%
Total	7 498 780		65 209	



**Statistics from
African Arguments,
Africa CDC and the
WHO on COVID-19**

Please note: Statistics
are time of publish

Latest Statistics
Figures recorded on
16 January 2021

Confirmed Cases

Updated: 16 Jan 2021

1,605,581

Recovered

Updated: 16 Jan 2021

1,322,441

Deaths

Updated: 16 Jan 2021

38,837

SOUTH AFRICA

NEWS



Important things happening in South Africa today

Staff Writer
BusinessTech
15 January 2021



Here's what is happening in and affecting South Africa today:
[\(click on links for more information\)](#)

Level 5: Experts are calling for those in hotspot areas, particularly in Gauteng, to put themselves into a self-imposed lockdown level 5. This includes just staying at home, working from home, and only going out for essential purposes. The key is to limit interaction with other people as much as possible. Gauteng is currently right in the middle of the surge and waiting for infections in the province to peak. Authorities have been criticised for not ensuring the province was equipped to deal with the surge, despite advance warning. [\[TimesLive\]](#)

Schools: The debate around the re-opening of schools amid a rapid rise of Covid-19 infections has once again flared up, repeating the same arguments from both sides of the issue, as seen last year. Unions are pushing against re-opening schools, saying with the rise in cases teachers' health and lives are at risk. Civil groups and other educators, however, argue that it is in the best interest of pupils to get back to school as soon as possible. The NCCC has reportedly recommended that the reopening of schools be delayed to February. [\[ENCA\]](#)

Hospital woes: The second wave of Covid-19 in South Africa is proving to be more harrowing for the healthcare sector, as admissions to hospitals surge, and many report record deaths. In the last week alone, over 3,600 people died, with daily deaths climbing to over 700 a day. The number of patients being put on ventilators is also rising rapidly. Worryingly, fatalities are more pronounced at public healthcare facilities, where they are struggling with beds, staff and infrastructure. [\[Mail & Guardian\]](#)

Scams: The Financial Sector Conduct Authority (FSCA) has issued a warning to the public to watch out for high-return scams being perpetuated on channels like WhatsApp and Facebook, where individuals ask users to invest in their companies, promising a high-return on the investment. The individuals and company that were brought to the FSCA's attention are Hlengiwe Ngcobo and Christian Barnley Hamilton, and the company Cyber FX Investments Inc. The FSCA said these are not registered financial service providers, and follow similar patterns to MTI and BTC Global. [\[702\]](#)

Markets: The rand continued its rally in the overnight session, clawing back significant ground and bringing much relief to importers. This comes after markets positioned themselves for a \$2 trillion stimulus package expected to be announced by Biden and is combined with a dovish Fed. The added liquidity will need to find a home and risk assets are the destination of choice. The rand starts the day at R15.12 to the dollar, R18.37 to the euro and R20.68 to the pound. Commentary by Peregrine Treasury Solutions. [\[XE\]](#)

Corruption: Investigations are raising questions around possible wasteful spending or corrupt spending regarding Gauteng's field hospitals and building capacity for Covid-19 patients – which has simply not materialised. The province promised in April 2020 to boost capacity to better deal with sick patients, yet almost 30% of hospitals are nearly full up. Hospitals being built or geared up stand incomplete or do not have staff available – begging questions on what went wrong, and how the province didn't do what it promised. [\[702\]](#)

Under the radar: A Supreme Court ruling in December against Eskom largely flew under the radar, but has now been put in the spotlight. The ruling was against Eskom's tactic of cutting power to municipalities that did not pay their electricity bills, with the courts saying this is not allowed. While Eskom has a legal obligation to get the money it is owed, the judges said that the utility had taken too long to do so, had management deeply involved in corruption, and were threatening other services, not just power supply, by doing so. [\[Daily Maverick\]](#)

Dlamini-Zuma details new lockdown rules for South Africa

Staff writer
BusinessTech



Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma has published a new gazette which confirms the extension of South Africa's level 3 lockdown and changes to some restrictions.

The gazette gives effect to the national address given by president Cyril Ramaphosa on Monday evening (11 January), in which he announced the extension as a means of combatting a surge of Covid-19 cases currently impacting the country.

Below are some of the key points of the extended lockdown, as outlined by the gazette.

Beaches

The gazette confirms the extended prohibition on the country's beaches dams, rivers and public pools in hotspot areas.

It further introduces a new definition for 'beach' to give context as to where South Africans are and are not allowed to gather or walk.

In this case, "beach" means the sandy, pebbly or rocky shore between the high-water mark and low-water mark adjacent to:

- The sea
- An estuary mouth extending 1,000 meters inland from the mouth;
- Within 100 metres of the high-water mark, excluding private property, including the sea and estuary themselves adjacent to the beach.

Borders

All land ports of entry into and out of South Africa are closed until 15 February 2021, with the following exceptions:

- The transportation of fuel, cargo and goods;
- Emergency medical attention for a life-threatening condition. with proof of such treatment;
- The return of a South African national, permanent resident, person with a long-term residence visa, spouse with a visa, child or children with visa, person with a work visa and holder of a business visa;
- Funeral purposes for family members in the first degree of kinship to the deceased person;
- Diplomats;
- The deportation of foreign nationals;
- The departure of a South African national, or permanent resident, to his or her place of employment. study or residence;
- Daily commuters from neighbouring countries who attend school in South Africa

International air travel is restricted to OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg, King Shaka International Airport in KZN and Cape Town International Airport in Cape Town.

Air travel is still permitted, subject to the traveller providing a valid certificate of a negative Covid-19 test which was obtained not more than 72 hours before the date of travel.

In the event of the traveller's failure to submit a certificate as proof of a negative Covid-19 test, they will be required to do an antigen test on arrival at their own cost and in the event of testing positive for Covid-19, they will be required to quarantine at their own cost.

Curfew

Every person is confined to their place of residence from 21h00 until 05h00 daily, unless a person is performing an essential service or has an emergency.

Any person who fails to abide by the new curfew commits an offence and is, on conviction, liable to a fine or a period of imprisonment not exceeding six months or to both a fine and imprisonment.

Closing time for the following establishments, whether indoors or outdoors, is 20h00:

- Cinemas;
- Theatres;
- Casinos;
- Museums, galleries and archives;
- Gyms and fitness centres;
- Restaurants;
- Venues hosting auctions: and
- Venues hosting professional sport.

Gatherings

An owner or operator of any indoor or outdoor facility where gatherings are held must display the certificate of occupancy which sets out the maximum number of persons the facility may hold.

The following gatherings are prohibited:

- Social gatherings;
- Faith-based gatherings;
- Political gatherings;
- Traditional council meetings

Gatherings at a workplace for work purposes are allowed, subject to strict adherence to all health protocols and social distancing measures.

Gatherings at the following venues are limited to 50 persons or less for indoor venues and 100 persons or less for outdoor venues:

- Cinemas;
- Theatres;
- Casinos;
- Museums,
- Galleries
- Archives.

Offences and penalties

Any person who is found to have breached the above regulations is liable to a fine or imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months – or both.

The gazette also notes that for the duration of the national state of disaster, any person who hinders, interferes with, or obstructs an enforcement officer in the exercise of their powers, or the performance of their duties in terms of these regulations, is also guilty of an offence.

Extended alcohol ban a slap in the face for brewers who may not survive

By Nonkululeko Njilo
TIMES LIVE



The extension of level 3 lockdown regulations, which prohibit the sale and distribution of alcohol, has been described as the death knell for many small craft brewers by the Beer Association of SA (Basa).

The move, announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa on Monday night, was unfortunate for thousands of brewers who have suffered huge financial losses since the start of the first lockdown.

“It is a great shame that government has embarked on this action with very little consultation and very little thought given to their plight,” said Basa CEO Patricia Pillay.

The association said it rejected the extension of the alcohol ban as brewers would not be able to survive.

“Already, 30% of local breweries have been forced to permanently shut their doors and 165,000 people have already lost their jobs. An extended ban on alcohol will destroy many of the remaining small businesses while doing untold economic damage to the beer sector in general, and the 415,000 livelihoods it supports.

“Over 100,000 people have already slid into poverty because of the alcohol ban in the beer industry alone,” said Pillay.

Ramaphosa said the move was necessary and would remain in place “until we have passed the peak of new infections”. However, the association said saving lives should not be at the expense of their livelihoods.

“We are well aware of the immense pressure Covid-19 has placed on our health-care system and the need for urgent interventions to curb the spread of the virus, however, this cannot be at the expense of people’s livelihoods,” said Pillay.

“Our members, especially small business owners and their employees, now have no way to put food on the table, and care for their loved ones who may also fall ill.” Pillay said an urgent meeting with the presidency and various ministries would be called “to unpack the rationale being used” for the extension of the ban and its implications for the beer sector.

“We will also resubmit our proposals to encourage moderate, responsible consumption. We will also reiterate our proposal for off-site consumption trade to be resumed within the framework of the existing curfew, restriction on gatherings and events,” she said.

The association has in the past weeks made impassioned pleas to the president to allow the sale of alcohol under strict conditions as thousands of people rely on them to make a living.

Last week, it highlighted the plight of small business owners and craft brewers who now stand to lose everything due to the third ban on alcohol sales. Among these is [Lethu Tshabangu](#) from Ukhamba Beerworx whose business will not be able to survive till the end of the month and will have to advise employees not to expect salaries at the end of January.

Tshabangu has acquired R300,000 in debt after opening a new taproom at Makers Landing at the V&A Waterfront — he has rental fees which he cannot pay as he is unable to sell any stock.

“We need to fight Covid-19 without starting other fires — the president is protecting us from Covid-19, only to kill us with hunger because we are not allowed to work,” said Tshabangu.

Another brewer, Apiwe Nxusani-Mawela of Brewsters Craft, also stands to lose everything. She had hoped to reopen soon to make a few sales to be able to pay employees but this will no longer be the case.

“We are also deeply concerned that the legitimate beer sector will never recover from this extended ban, providing a further boost to those who engaged in the illicit manufacture and trade of alcohol,” added Pillay.

“Already before Covid-19, World Health Organisation estimates indicated that a quarter (24%) of all alcohol consumed in SA was sold illicitly. We believe that illicit trading will now increase as criminal syndicates begin to entrench themselves.”

Liquor association warns of fake booze after massive bottle cap robbery

By Unathi Nkanjeni
TIMES LIVE

The SA Liquor Brandowners Association (Salba) has warned the public to avoid illegal booze after an armed robbery at one of its member company’s production facility in Durban.

According to the association, thousands of bottle caps were stolen at its facility on December 30, two days into the current alcohol sales ban during level 3 lockdown.

“One of the illicit alcohol practices is to refill used, branded bottles with illegal alcohol, reseal them and sell that to consumers. This practice poses a major health risk to consumers.”

[READ FURTHER](#)

Africa secures 270m Covid-19 vaccine doses

BBC News



A provisional 270 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines have been secured by the African Union (AU) for distribution across the continent.

All of the doses will be used this year, promises current AU head South African President Cyril Ramaphosa.

This is on top of 600 million doses already promised but is still not enough to vaccinate the whole region.

There are fears that poorer countries globally will wait far longer than richer nations to be inoculated.

Although infection numbers and death rates are comparatively lower across most of Africa, cases are spiking again in some areas.

A [new variant of Covid-19 in South Africa](#) is causing particular alarm and makes up most of the new cases. "As a result of our own efforts we have so far secured a commitment of a provisional amount of 270 million vaccines from three major suppliers: Pfizer, AstraZeneca (through Serum Institute of India) and Johnson & Johnson," President Ramaphosa said on Wednesday.

At least 50 million of the doses will be available "for the crucial period of April to June 2021," he said.

[Will any countries get left out in vaccine race?](#)

[Live tracker: Covid in Africa](#)

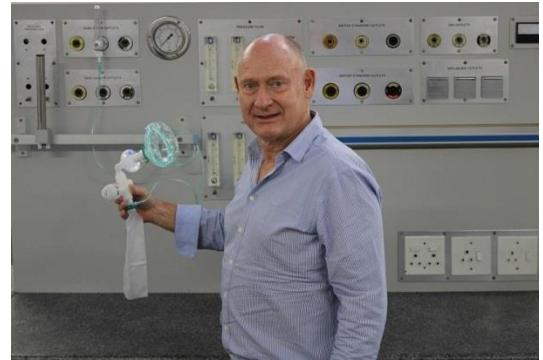
[The places worried they won't get vaccines](#)

[READ MORE](#)

Doctors are calling this new South African invention a game changer in the fight against COVID-19.

By Brent Lindeque

Feelgoodguy



Dr Craig Parker

Johannesburg, South Africa (11 January 2021) – As South African healthcare workers struggle to contain the second wave of COVID-19, some hope is at hand with the formal licencing approval of a simple, efficient, portable and cost-effective device that delivers consistently high levels of oxygen to COVID-19 patients and helps keep their lungs from collapsing.

This proudly South African invention, named OxERA (Oxygen-Efficient Respiratory Aid), could be a game-changer where there are a large number of COVID-19 patients yet a lack of skilled staff, ICU and high care facilities; and insufficient bulk oxygen supplies. It effectively bridges the gap between current standard oxygen therapy via face masks and ICU-based non-invasive or mechanical ventilation, while requiring no more oxygen flow than a standard face mask.

The device was developed by a group of East London-based volunteers that includes doctors, engineers and entrepreneurs. The South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) has now approved the OxERA device for emergency COVID-19 use, which will be manufactured and distributed by Gabler Medical.

Dr Craig Parker, a medical officer, working in anaesthetics with a background in mechanical engineering, says the group was determined to find a solution when they realised that South Africa would face similar patient loads seen in Europe during the COVID-19 pandemic, but would have limited high care capacity and fewer resources to respond.

They set up a social enterprise (a business with specific social objectives) in March 2020, trading as Umoya ('air' in isiXhosa). Drawing inspiration from sources as diverse as scuba diving equipment and 3D printing, they built a working prototype within two weeks, and a 3D-printed final design within seven weeks.

[READ FURTHER](#)

Should prisoners be prioritised for Covid-19 vaccine rollout in SA?

by Barbara Friedman
CAPE TALK



Clare Ballard of Lawyers for Human Rights outlines why prisoners are such a vulnerable group and have the right to health care.

CapeTalk listeners called and messaged on Tuesday responding to President Ramaphosa's address to the nation on Monday night, in which he stated that during phase 2 of the vaccine rollout, prisoners will also be prioritised for Covid-19 vaccinations, in the same category as teachers and other frontline workers.

Listeners felt that it was unfair for criminals to be pushed ahead of taxpayers.

Among those who will be prioritised for vaccination during phase 2 of the rollout, those in prisons will be included, along with teachers, police, municipal workers and other frontline workers. A number of people have objected to the inclusion of prisoners ahead of taxpayers.

Clare Ballard, an attorney and programme manager at Lawyers for Human Rights talks to Refilwe Moloto about why prisoners should be included in the phase 2 vaccine rollout.

Ballard notes that prisoners' have all the rights any ordinary citizen has except those that have to be relinquished on account of being incarcerated. The obvious one in that respect is liberty. It is not health. Prisoner rights to health care are deeply entrenched in the Constitution she says.

"If prisoners are a vulnerable group, which I think we have to agree that they are, then they must be entitled to adequate health care."

"They are not ordinary citizens in the sense that they are wholly dependent on the State for all of their needs. They are not equipped as you and I would be, or even an impoverished person, to take certain precautions like social distancing."

"We have run this gauntlet with tuberculosis. We know what airborne infectious diseases do in poorly ventilated overcrowded environments and to prevent a humanitarian crisis I think it is essential that they are vaccinated. I understand the anger and I am happy to discuss that."

"We are on dangerous terrain when we withhold vaccinations to certain people who are vulnerable because they are vulnerable. We are then withholding care as a form of punishment. Not all those who are in our prisons have been found guilty of a crime", Ballard notes.

"An inmate refers to anyone who is in a correctional facility, those awaiting trial, and those convicted. Awaiting trial facilities are often the most overcrowded."
Clare Ballard, Attorney - Lawyers for Human Rights

ATMs can become Covid 'super-spreaders', says gov – banks will need to obey new lockdown laws

Business Insider SA



All banks in South Africa will need to ensure that their ATMs are equipped with hand sanitisers, in accordance with the new Alert Level 3 lockdown laws gazetted on Monday 11 January. Banks have also been tasked with implementing strict social distancing protocols at all ATMs.

South Africa's fight against a second wave of coronavirus infections has led government to adjust regulations defined by the Disaster Management Act. The most recent revision, announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa during a national address on Monday night, has closed South Africa's land borders, altered the curfew hours, and implemented a new regulation for all financial institutions.

A new mandatory protocol, which places the responsibility for hand sanitising and social distancing at ATMs firmly on the shoulders of all South African banks, now forms part of the Alert Level 3 regulations.

Banks will need to "ensure that all automated teller machines (ATMs) have hand sanitisers for use by the public" and "take steps to ensure that persons queuing at the ATM maintain a distance of one and a half metres from each other".

[**READ MORE**](#)

Clicks, Dis-Chem plan to offer Covid-19 vaccines

By Ngobile Dlodla,
Reuters



South Africa's two biggest pharmacy chains Clicks Group and Dis-Chem Pharmacies said they plan to offer Covid-19 shots at their stores and provide storage and distribution facilities in the vaccine rollout programme once the government provides more details.

Health Minister Zweli Mkhize on Sunday called on the private sector, including pharmacies, to help with the rollout but the government is yet to outline how exactly they will help.

Dis-Chem and Clicks have a combined 45% dispensary market share.

Dis-Chem, with more than 180 stores, will offer the vaccines at all its clinics nationwide and is also looking to offer them at its eight drive-through Covid-19 testing stations, Dis-Chem National Clinic Manager Lizeth Kruger told Reuters.

"We will assist and put our hand up," Kruger said, adding that Dis-Chem will be involved from the second phase of the rollout, which includes vaccinating essential workers like teachers and people over 60 years old.

In the first phase the government wants to vaccinate about 1.25 million healthcare workers in the country.

Healthcare experts have said that for the government to expeditiously vaccinate two-thirds of a country of 58 million people, it will have to pool resources from the private sector at a scale never done before in South Africa.

But so far the government has not laid out a clear strategy on how it will roll out and vaccinate millions of people, even as cases of coronavirus reach record highs every day due to a new, more contagious variant identified around mid- December.

Health Minister Mkhize said on Thursday that the country plans to vaccinate 40 million people within a year to achieve herd immunity.

Dis-Chem has three big warehouses with cold chain storage and distribution facilities across South Africa and can keep vaccines at cold temperatures of between 2 and 8 degree Celsius, Kruger added.

Clicks, in an emailed response, said: "Our network is immediately ready for the distribution and administration of vaccines."

It has nurses and pharmacists in stores poised to support the implementation, it added.

Clicks runs South Africa's biggest drug distribution and bulk and wholesale supplier, called United Pharmaceutical Distributors (UPD), which currently services Aspen Pharmacare, which will manufacture the Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccine.

Malema comes out strongly in favour of Covid-19 vaccine

By Rebecca Davis
Daily Maverick

The hope among South African anti-vaxxer groups had been that EFF leader Julius Malema would take a vocal stance against the Covid-19 vaccine. But on Thursday Malema did the opposite: urging his followers to accept science and help beat the coronavirus.

"I will be the first to take it," EFF leader Julius Malema told a virtual press conference on Thursday, in reference to the Covid-19 vaccine.

Malema hit out at "unscientific" and "illogical" theories currently spreading in South Africa. Among them, the idea that the Covid-19 vaccine is a population control mechanism aimed at wiping out Africans. Malema expressed disbelief at the traction this lie had gained locally, pointing out that the majority of the South African population consumes Western medicine without falling victim to it.

"If these Western people wanted to depopulate us, they would have finished us by now," the EFF leader said. "We are eating the same medicine white people eat." While he spoke, many EFF supporters on the party's Facebook page expressed disappointment at his stance.

They had assumed Malema would oppose the vaccine on the grounds that it did not originate in Africa. But Malema was unyielding, describing EFF leaders and members as "Marxists and materialists who believe in science". The EFF leader said: "We will never win this battle if we make medicine our enemy."

[**READ FURTHER**](#)

What is the difference between a COVID-19 test and a COVID-19 antibody test?

by Glynis Horning
CLICKS PHARMACY



It's a question increasingly asked as concerns grow - especially seeing the second wave of COVID-19 that is now sweeping through other countries. What exactly are these tests – and should you have them?

What is the purpose of a COVID-19 test?

A COVID-19 test (also known as a viral or diagnosis test) confirms whether you are currently infected with the coronavirus. It needs to be done if you have symptoms – a fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, loss of taste and/or smell, fatigue, muscle pains etc – especially if you have been in contact with others who have tested positive.

How is a COVID-19 test performed?

The test uses a swab taken from your nose or throat, which is then analysed by a laboratory running a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test that looks for coronavirus genetic material.

What does it mean if you are positive following a COVID-19 test?

A positive response indicates you have the virus and need to self-isolate, and to monitor your condition and get medical help the moment you feel you need it – for example, if you have difficulty breathing.

What does a COVID-19 antibody test show?

A COVID-19 antibody test, on the other hand, is done to find out if you have already had COVID-19 without being aware of it, or after having mild symptoms you think may have been caused by the coronavirus.

How is a COVID-19 antibody test performed?

This test is done by taking a blood sample that is analysed for antibodies – proteins created by your body's immune system to fight the coronavirus. Clicks pharmacies now offer this as a 10-minute finger-prick test at all of their [clinics](#).

What do the results of a COVID-19 antibody test indicate?

The antibody test cannot indicate if you currently have the virus, as antibodies only start to show up in your blood after about one to three weeks – if you take the test too early, they may not be high enough to register as a positive. If you test negative for antibodies, you may not have had COVID-19, but then again, you may currently have a mild coronavirus infection in the early stages, before antibodies have developed.

If you test positive for COVID-19 antibodies, does this mean you're now immune to COVID-19?

If you test positive for antibodies, researchers hope that having these may give you some protection against getting COVID-19 again, or from having a more severe case. However, at present, this is still far from clear, caution authorities from Johns Hopkins Medicine, the Scientists Collective (leading South African medical scientists and academics) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). As the [CDC](#) puts it: "We do not know how much protection the antibodies may provide or how long this protection may last". All of them stress that it's essential to continue to protect yourself and others by social distancing, wearing a mask and frequently washing and sanitizing your hands.

If having the antibody test and finding you have already had COVID doesn't mean you can't get it again, is it still worth your while?

Ask your health provider. They may advise it if, for instance, you have symptoms of COVID-19, but test negative for the viral PCR test, according to the Department of Health's COVID-19 Online portal.

If your antibody test is positive, you may be able to take part in research studies to find out more about how the coronavirus affects people's health, and if you have antibodies, you may be able to donate plasma to help others seriously ill with it.

All test results should be recorded to contribute to the national data base, and a positive antibody test can help reconstruct chains of transmission and identify hot spots, notes the [Scientists Collective](#).

The COVID-19 rapid antibody test is being rolled out at Clicks clinics countrywide, and can be booked with a nurse [online here](#).

Over 1,000 Western Cape healthcare workers currently infected with Covid-19

by Qama Qukula
CAPE TALK



The Western Cape Health Department's biggest challenge right now is the increasing Covid-19 infection rate among healthcare workers.

Head of department Dr. Keith Cloete says there are 1,029 active cases among healthcare workers in the province, as of 12 January 2021. Dr. Cloete revealed this during the Western Cape government's [weekly digital Covid-19 press briefing](#) on Tuesday afternoon.

The department has recorded 8,088 cumulative healthcare worker infections in the Western Cape since the Covid-19 outbreak in March last year. To date, at least 6,967 healthcare workers have recovered from the virus, while 92 staffers have died.

Of the 1,029 healthcare workers that are currently infected, approximately 442 are nurses, 98 are doctors, 23 are radiographers, and seven are pharmacists. The other 459 active cases fall into other unidentified categories.

Dr. Cloete says the health, safety, and wellbeing of health workers is vital. However, the department has been struggling with the availability of additional staff for contract work and a decrease in volunteers.

He says on-site support to frontline staff for mental health services is being scaled up and workers deal with the psychological trauma of the Covid-19 pandemic in their professional work and personal lives.

"Our biggest challenge remains that our healthcare workers become infected. Almost 7,000 staff members have recovered. Unfortunately, 92 cumulatively to this point have died - about 60 in the first wave, and up to now, about 30 people in this second wave."

"We have this team of people that goes from facility to facility where staff can come out and share their traumatic experiences... In relation to personal family members passing away, [staff] themselves becoming ill, seeing fellow staff members becoming ill... and dealing with all that trauma... and on top of that seeing patients passing away."
"A lot of trauma has been experienced and it's really on-site support [that's needed] to work through that trauma."

Employers will have to rule on mandatory vaccination policy at work, says expert

by Qama Qukula
CAPE TALK



Each company must decide whether or not to implement a mandatory vaccination policy on a case-by-case basis, says employment law expert Imraan Mahomed.

In the absence of a law that mandates the inoculation of the entire workforce against Covid-19, Mahomed says employers will have to make their own decisions based on the nature of the business.

Mahomed, the director of Employment Law practice at Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr, says the introduction of new legislation on mandatory vaccination is unlikely in South Africa.

Employers who choose to implement a mandatory vaccination policy could use provisions in the Occupational Health and Safety Act to legally justify their position, he explains.

However, Mahomed says international evidence shows that the most effective vaccination programmes "are by consent and not compulsion."

"There's no employment legislation currently that has any provision that deals with the issue of vaccinations."

"It's going to be the prerogative of individual employers to make a call as to whether or not there is going to be a mandatory vaccination policy applicable in each workplace."

"Internationally, what we've seen in relation to vaccination programmes, is that the most effective programmes are by consent and not compulsion."

"Getting consent and buy-in that there will be a vaccination programme - on the premise where there is no legal obligation to do so - is the best manner upon which to get buy-in from workers."

Mahomed, the director of Employment Law practice at Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr

The Department of Home Affairs will be suspending some services during the adjusted level 3 lockdown.

By Qama Qukula
CAPE TALK



Home Affairs Minister Aaron Motsoaledi made the announcement during a media briefing on Tuesday 12 January 2021.

The following services have been suspended until further notice:

- Applications of Smart ID Cards, except for matriculants
- Applications for passports, except for people who fall in the categories permitted to travel in the amended Disaster Management Act Regulations
- Marriage services such as solemnisation and registration

Motsoaledi says the decision to limit services was made due to the alarming Covid-19 statistics at Home Affairs offices and the rise in demand for the issuing of death certificates.

"We are aware this will be difficult on people. Please bear with us. We are trying to save lives while providing enabling documents." Aaron Motsoaledi - Home Affairs Minister

In the first eight days of January 2021, 116 staff members nationwide have already tested positive for Covid-19.

At the same time, at least seven front office workers at Home Affairs workers have died due to the virus between 1 January and 10 January this year.

Motsoaledi says Home Affairs officers were overwhelmed by the demand for death registrations in December 2020.

The Department registered 55,676 deaths last month. On 4 and 5 January 2021, the first two working days of the year, the Department registered 10,982 deaths.

Based on the upward trend, the minister predicts that there will be an exponential demand for death certificates this month, exceeding numbers in December.

Meanwhile, Home Affairs has proposed that all births and deaths should be registered at the health facilities where they occur.

There are 156 health facilities where Home Affairs has a presence. [You can find a list of these hospitals here.](#)

Motsoaledi says mobile units will assist where offices are either closed or where there is a need for collection or death registration, and all offices have identified designated counters for death registrations.

"We are extending our operating hours to 7pm to accommodate people who need to register deaths and births up to 15 February 2021. We are doing so to enable funeral parlours and families to bury their loved ones within the requisite period for Covid-19 deaths", he said in a statement.

Applicants have been urged not to visit branches for ID collections unless they receive confirmation via an SMS.

Talks to extend relief payments from UIF to affected workers

By Sipehelele Dlodla
IOL Business Report



JOHANNESBURG - GOVERNMENT and business yesterday resumed negotiations about extending relief payments for affected workers from the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) due to economic headwinds of the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

The UIF confirmed that talks on the Temporary Employer-Employee Relief Scheme (Ters) had resumed at the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) in Rosebank, Joburg.

UIF spokesperson Lungelo Mkamba said discussions between social partners had been restarted after the scheme which has mitigated the workers' plight came to an end in October last year.

"I can confirm that discussions are taking place within the Nedlac process and once this is finalised, it will be communicated," Mkamba said.

"Covid-19 Ters payments for previous periods from April to September 15, 2020 are, however, still ongoing, as corrections are done by applicants and we reprocess the claims."

The government has often been criticised for missing the opportunity to announce a support package for businesses hard hit by the restrictions when President Cyril Ramaphosa extended the State of the National Disaster on Monday.

[READ FURTHER](#)

Qaanitah Hunter: Cabinet ratings - Government is not doing its citizens justice

By Qaanitah Hunter
News24



Cabinet ratings news24 2020

News24's Cabinet ratings: From those who flopped, those who should never be near executive office to those who scraped through.

A year ago the largest issue facing the South African executive was how to deal with our rapidly rising national debt, right-sizing (and perhaps selling off) struggling state-owned enterprises and trying to pull the state's exploding wage bill back.

Inequality and employment was our biggest issue – and along with doing running repairs to a state that had suffered greatly under grand capture, President Cyril Ramaphosa's Cabinet had their work cut out for them.

And then the coronavirus hit, and exposed a government with many ministers woefully out of their depth, and state machinery creaking thanks to a combination of ineptitude, corruption and antiquity.

Covid-19 not only showed the extent to which the state has been hollowed out, it also exposed poor decision-making and weak execution. Although Ramaphosa initially spoke a good game, and at the outset at least committed to a transparent and effective government, we saw many ministers (here's looking at Fikile Mbalula, Bheki Cele and Lindiwe Zulu) flailing when confronted with complex problems like a pandemic.

And beyond Covid-19, Pravin Gordhan (public enterprises) and Tito Mboweni (finance) also battled. The former because he simply refused to commit to market forces – and the clinical nature of balance sheets – and refused to let the deadweight that is SAA go. The latter has been vocal about the most basic reforms that the government needs to enact if it wants to create jobs and get the economy going. But he has been thwarted at every turn – does he have any political influence inside the governing party and Cabinet at all? It doesn't look like it.

In this edition of Friday Briefing, News24 runs the rule over the performance of our ministers. There may be some surprises, and some you don't agree with. Read all of 'em, and keep Qaanitah Hunter's appraisal of Ramaphosa and his Cabinet for the end ... pudding, if you will.

Click on link below to see how they scored:

[**Cabinet ministers ratings: See how they scored**](#)

The 2021 undergraduate programmes at the University of Cape Town are expected to commence in mid-March.

By Qama Qukula
CAPE TALK



The new academic year will start just three weeks after the release of the matric results, which are due to be published on Monday 22 February 2021.

The class of 2020 should get their statement of results on 23 February 2021.

UCT's Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sue Harrison, says university officials will have a very short space of time to offer final placements to matric students who had received conditional acceptance letters.

While first-years and other undergraduates will start in mid-March, the university's postgraduate programmes will start earlier sometime in late February.

UCT residences will open on 25 February 2021 for postgraduate students and on 1 March for new and returning undergraduate students, according to the university website.

"The deciding matter on our start date for 2021 is the release of the matric results."

Professor Sue Harrison, Deputy Vice Chancellor – UCT

"We're expecting them in February and we will need to work very fast with them. We usually have a bigger time between matric results coming out and students entering our programmes than we will have this year."

Professor Sue Harrison, Deputy Vice Chancellor – UCT

Some UCT students are still completing their requirements for the 2020 academic year, which is still ongoing for some faculties. The 2020 academic year for current students officially ends on Wednesday 10 February 2021, as approved by the Senate and Council.

Prof Harrison says students and staff have had to adapt and adopt new learning approaches since the start of the Covid-19, with a strong focus on online assessments. 2020 was a challenging year for UCT, but I think one of the wonderful things about it is that everybody came to the party of doing things differently. I think we ended 2020 with a group of academics that were very ready for a break and students who really had muscled through.

Vulnerable' Masi residents become first to move into R32M temporary structures

by Sara-Jayne King
CAPE TALK



Around 6 000 people were displaced when a fire tore through Masiphumelele informal settlement in the week leading up to Christmas.

Almost four weeks since last month's devastating fire in Masiphumelele, residents who were left homeless have begun moving into temporary homes.

Close to 1 000 dwellings were damaged by the fire which tore through the informal settlement on 17 December, leaving around 6 000 people displaced.

A massive aid effort coordinated by NPO Living Hope was mobilized in a bid to support those whose belongings went up in flames, while national government has provided an estimated R32 million for temporary structures, and water and sanitation facilities.

Speaking to CapeTalk on Wednesday the City's Mayoral Committee Member for Human Settlements Malusi Boozi says the temporary housing is expected to be completed within 2 to 3 weeks.

"We've been able to exercise this because of the funding coming from national government."

The City says that between 30 and 50 temporary structures are expected to be built each day, with priority being given to the elderly and disabled.

In the days after the fire, Human Settlements minister Lindiwe Sisulu said a long-term housing plan was underway for residents of Masiphumelele.

Boozi says the permanent housing solution for the township seeks to utilize alternative building technologies (ABT).

"The provincial government is currently working on sourcing the ABT entities that can assist us in establishing those, not only in Masi but in various areas."

Why you don't need to join the great WhatsApp migration

By Staff Reporter
DAILY MAVERICK



No, silly, they can't see your messages! Expert Emma Sadleir debunks WhatsApp privacy policy myths.

Virtual crowds have gathered on Facebook and Facebook Messenger – which collects more data than WhatsApp – to object to WhatsApp collecting the same amount of data.

If they had listened to the experts many could have been spared being swept up in a wild international spike in hysteria and the mass migration from WhatsApp (bought by Facebook a few years ago) to Telegram and Signal.

One of those experts is Emma Sadleir, founder of the Digital Law Company who specialises in education about that liminal space – online and social media groups.

By 11 January 2021 Sadleir had been so inundated with questions and messages that she wanted to address some of the "unfounded" hysteria in an online tutorial.

And no, your WhatsApp messages are encrypted so no one will be able to access or read them or gaze in amazement at the vanilla cake you just baked.

What WhatsApp will be able to do is see how frequently you contact someone, and perhaps later suggest them as a friend on Facebook, even though you will probably never meet and be friends in real life.

People who have migrated to Telegram, said Sadleir, had better brace themselves since the platform would soon monetise. And the bad news for the Telegrammers is that it allows larger groups than WhatsApp.

The only thing Signal collects is your number, so for those wishing to fly below the radar, it's your corner.

Watch the video by Emma Sadleir:

<https://youtu.be/gwgFiKcpyWc>

Government to keep all schools closed in South Africa – here are the new opening dates

Staff Writer
BusinessTech



The Department of Basic Education has announced that government will keep all schools closed in South Africa due to concerns around the country second Covid-19 wave.

In a media briefing on Friday (15 January), Deputy Basic Education minister Reginah Mhaule said that both public and private schools will delay their opening dates by two weeks.

The return date of independent schools will vary based on their respective calendars. For other schools, the new opening dates are as follows:

- Teachers will report to schools on Monday, 1 February
- Learners will return on Monday, 15 February
-

Mhaule said that support staff will use this additional time to prepare for schools the return of learners. She added that further meetings will take place next week to determine the readiness of schools to reopen.

A survey published by the University of Johannesburg and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) this week showed that 53% of adults think schools should remain closed until the situation improves.

19% of adults believe that schools should re-open for grade 7 and grade 12 learners only.

“The findings from the survey show that the majority of adults oppose the re-opening of schools while Covid-19 cases continue at their current high levels,” said Professor Carin Runciman, UJ Associate Professor at the Centre for Social Change

“This opposition is strongest amongst the most vulnerable and economically disadvantaged sections of society, who are less likely to have confidence in the ability of their schools to provide a safe environment for learners.

“These findings illustrate that although parents are deeply concerned about their children’s education that they are equally, if not more, concerned about the safety of their children, their families and communities.”

'You can keep him!' - Mzansi reacts to angry 'South African' who stormed US Capitol

Kyle Zeeman
TimesLIVE



A video of a man claiming to be from SA at the Capitol last week has gone viral.

A video of a protester claiming to be from SA during the storming of the US Capitol last week has gone viral, sparking fierce debate on social media.

According to the [BBC](#), several people died when an angry mob clashed with police outside the building last Wednesday. Lawmakers were meeting inside the building to formally certify Joe Biden's victory over Donald Trump in last year's presidential election, a result that has been disputed by Trump and his supporters.

In the video the man can be heard asking an interviewer if he can take the mic, saying he is “from SA” and has a message for American politicians.

“We're watching. We've had enough. OK?! We have had enough. The lamb is going to become the Lion of Judah. We have had enough. Don't tell us what to do any more. I don't take instruction too well,” he said.

The man has not yet been identified, and many social media users have encouraged those who recognise him to alert US authorities.

They also distanced themselves from the man's comments, saying he should stay in America.

[READ MORE](#)

Ex-Eskom CFO Anoj Singh must respond to state capture allegations by Monday

By Loyiso Sidimba
Political Bureau
IOL



Johannesburg – The commission of inquiry into state capture has given disgraced former Eskom chief financial officer Anoj Singh until the end of business on Monday to respond to serious allegations made against him by several witnesses.

Singh, who was also chief financial officer at state-owned rail, logistics, port and pipeline company Transnet before he was seconded to the power utility in August 2015, was due to give evidence at the commission on Wednesday but his advocate, Anneline van den Heever, said her client was not in a position to proceed with his testimony.

"Our client is not in a position to give evidence today, he is not in a position to file an affidavit as directed," said van den Heever.

Van den Heever said it was impossible for Singh to file his affidavit due to a number of reasons, including changing his legal team and waiting for the witnesses who have implicated him to conclude their testimony.

Commission chairperson Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo initially appeared to dismiss Van den Heever's explanation, saying the inquiry simply does not have time and that it would be very difficult to allow any day to be lost. The country's second most senior judge said there was no acceptable reason for Singh's failure to comply and file his affidavit.

Justice Zondo added that the history of Singh's conduct does suggest he wants to play ball.

"He is seeking to be treated differently from the way other people have been treated," he said.

According to Zondo, Singh has known from the inception of the commission in 2018 and has known for three years that at some point he will be called to testify.

But van den Heever complained that her client had not been presented with a reference file.

"In fairness to us, we need that," she said, adding that Singh has not received a transcript of his testimony at the Eskom parliamentary inquiry in January 2018.

[READ FURTHER](#)

Eskom implements stage 2 load shedding for the rest of the week

Staff Writer
BusinessTech



Eskom has announced that stage 2 load shedding will be implemented from 12h00 on Thursday (14 January) until 23h00 on Sunday evening (17 January).

The power utility said that the load shedding was necessary due to the loss of generation capacity overnight.

Two generation units at the Kusile power station have tripped due to the failure of the main coal feed conveyor belts supplying coal to the units. "In addition, a unit each at the Kriel and Duvha stations tripped due to unforeseen breakdown," Eskom said.

"We presently have four generation nits whose return to service from planned maintenance has been delayed."

Eskom said it currently has 5,358 MW on planned maintenance and another 14,748 MW of capacity remains unavailable due to unplanned maintenance, breakdowns, and the outage delays mentioned above.

The power utility said its teams are working around the clock to return as many of the affected units to service as soon as possible.

For access to other load shedding schedules, Eskom has made them available on:

<http://loadshedding.eskom.co.za/>

Smartphone users can also download the app EskomSePush to receive push notifications when load shedding is implemented, as well as the times the area you are in will be off.

WATCH | There are lions on my stoep! Man comes home to find uninvited guests lounging on the patio

Lwandile Bhengu
NEWS24



[WATCH VIDEO](#)

A Limpopo contractor came home to find about six lions lounging on the patio of his father's newly-built house.

The house is at Leadwood Big Game Estate, where animals roaming the yard are a common sight.

The video and pictures have received over 2 000 Facebook shares.

A Limpopo businessman got a roaring surprise when he visited his father's house, which is on sale, at Leadwood Big Game Estate and found uninvited guests - lions had set up camp on the veranda.

Contractor David de Beer took to Facebook this week to share a video, which has since gone viral, of about six lions lounging on the veranda with only glass separating him from the pride of lions.

"My father built the house on Leadwood and put it on the market and over December and the holiday season, it stood empty. So on Monday, we went...

"We just kept our distance and made sure if anything happened, we could get to the front door quick enough," he said.

De Beer has been building a house on the Hoedspruit estate, which is surrounded by a big game reserve, for nearly two years.

"The houses are built on stands but they are in the bush, so there are no fences between the house and you don't actually see your neighbours because they are far enough from you and there is just bush around you so the animals are able to roam free between the houses," he said.

"They are wild animals but they are careful around humans so they won't come for you unless you corner them. One just needs to be cautious; you always have to have a vehicle near you.

That lockdown baking frenzy pushed out trouble for SA's egg industry to 2021

Phillip de Wet
Business Insider SA



- Egg prices were on the way down – way, way down – in early 2020, as a recovery from avian influenza pushed up output.
- Then lockdown happened, and South Africans went crazy for baking and started making proper breakfasts, causing a huge spike in demand.
- In the end prices were down just 2.4%, says mega-producer Quantum Foods.
- But without another big change in the market, prices are definitely on their way down in 2021.

By early 2020 South Africa's national poultry flock had recovered to the kind of level it had been before [highly pathogenic avian influenza saw an estimated 4.7 million laying hens culled](#), and egg prices were starting to drop. Then lockdown hit.

The surge in demand was startling, [as some South Africans took to making proper breakfasts](#), and home baking took became something of a national pastime.

For egg producers, the timing could hardly have been better.

In the end, the JSE-listed Quantum Foods said in an annual report published this week, its average egg prices decreased by only 2.4%. With volumes up 15.4%, it still earned R134 million in extra revenue for the financial year.

Quantum sold 1.2 billion eggs on the African continent during the year, many under its own Nulaid brand.

Even with that higher demand, the company recorded R32 million less in operating profit from its egg business, thanks in part to high feed costs.

"The decline in egg prices could have been significantly worse," the company said, had lockdown not "stabilised prices".

Then the hard lockdown ended, and with just as many laying hens still around, wholesale egg prices started to drop again. Into next year feed prices may still be high, and there will still be a lot of laying hens around – but a weaker economy will not support lots of egg buying.

Nulaid and eggs in general, Quantum warned, will be "under severe financial pressure."

"However, cyclical profitability is part of the egg industry's natural cycle and might create acquisition opportunities," it said.

introduces *Beautiful News*

News24 is publishing a piece of Beautiful News every day: a film, photograph or article that portrays positive stories about South Africa and its people. A new story will go live every day at 16:14, which is the exact time that former president Nelson Mandela was released from Victor Verster prison on 11 February 1990.

Adrian Steirn, the founder of Beautiful News, is famous for his 21 Icons project that celebrated the lives of great South Africans. Steirn says that when he was conceptualising Beautiful News, he knew it had to have a home on a platform that was both proudly South African and spoke to as many South Africans as possible.

“We are delighted to bring Beautiful News to life as a destination for inspiring and positive stories about South Africa and its people. Digital platforms and multimedia content have liberated our ability to communicate and enabled people to access and share their stories. I needed a platform that would honour the ethos and intent of the project which is to enrich people’s lives with something positive, every day. Adriaan and the News24 team provide exactly that home,” Steirn says.

“It is no secret that South Africa is going through one of the most challenging periods post-1994. Bad news comes to you; you don’t have to look hard to find stories on bad governance, corruption or corporate greed. It’s much tougher to find beautiful news. South Africa is a beautiful country, loved by many despite our challenges. There are plenty of good news stories out there, but you have to look for them.

We simply have to tell them too. This is why we wanted to partner with Beautiful News and Mercedes-Benz South Africa on this extraordinary endeavour,” says Adriaan Basson, editor of News24.

A third partner in bringing Beautiful News to life is Mercedes-Benz South Africa.

“Mercedes-Benz South Africa is proud to partner with Beautiful News and 24.com on this extraordinary project to help disseminate stories that demonstrate the best in humanity and the best of South Africa,” says Selvin Govender, marketing director at Mercedes-Benz Cars.

A new Beautiful News story goes live every day at 16:14 and can be found [here](#).

For more information, visit www.news24.com. Alternatively, connect with them on *Facebook* or on *Twitter* using the #BeautifulNews hashtag

Nisha Varghese – a young South African with cerebral palsy – is teaching us all that different is really cool!

by Brent Lindeque
Goodthingsguy



East London, South Africa (15 January 2021) – Nisha Varghese, a 30-year-old from East London with cerebral palsy, is always on a mission to make people’s lives better and spent her time during the lockdown putting her thoughts into words as she published her first book!

“Cerebral palsy is a neurological condition that affects speech and movement. Because I have cerebral palsy, I can’t walk, and my speech is sometimes difficult to understand. Some people think cerebral palsy affects everybody the same way when, in fact, it affects people to varying degrees depending on how badly the brain was damaged during the injury.”

The passionate South African has been featured on Good Things Guy a number of times for all the amazing work **she continues to do for charities**, but this time she is being featured for how she spent lockdown... by writing and publishing her first book!

“Different Is Cool” is a children’s book based on the life of Varghese who despite having Cerebral Palsy and being in a wheelchair, learns to celebrate her difference and even becomes a humanitarian. The book is a stand-up and cheer kind of a story guaranteed to inspire the young and old.

We love everything that this incredible South African continues to do, despite being differently-abled!

If you would like to get your hands on her new book, **[just click here](#)**.

Listed: Every Proudly South African Accomplishment Earned in 2020

BY TYLER LEIGH VIVIER
Goodthingsguy



Many South Africans have done incredible things, and the team at Good Things Guy have spent the year capturing those stories highlighting all the awards, accolades and accomplishments.

We have separated them into a few different categories, like sports, lifestyle, education, musical and other. So let's get started.

These are all the people that flew the South African flag high in 2020 (and made us all feel proudly South African in the process).

Goodthingsguy.com

All categories have links to the accomplishments achieved. It is certainly worthwhile to read and fills us with delight and optimism.

[READ COMPLETE ARTICLE](#)

Brew Kombucha: The versatile, uniquely South African drink



by Lucinda Dordley
CapeTown,Etc

Cape Town is a very health-conscious city, and one of the food items that has gained traction here over the past few years is kombucha. Viewed as a wonder drink by many, the naturally-carbonated beverage is both refreshing and great for gut health. Some of the benefits of kombucha include it being anti-bacterial, and it also contains probiotics.

Brew Kombucha has won several awards for their outstanding drinks, and walked away with the Double Gold, Gold and Silver Awards at the 2020 Aurora International Taste Challenge – so you know your tastebuds are in good hands with their delicious products.

Their kombucha comes in three uniquely South African flavours – rooibos, African rose and buchu. And honestly, it is hard to decide which one tastes the best as each has a distinct flavour profile. The rooibos Brew is soft on the palate and has none of the sharpness associated with some kombuchas. The bottle stipulates that it makes a good mixer, and it does pair well with a dry gin. Rooibos is nostalgic and often associated with warm memories, which come flooding back after taking a sip of the kombucha.

The African rose and buchu flavours I hadn't yet encountered, and they are a treat. While Brew Kombucha is low in sugar, the rose extract in the drink makes it naturally sweeter than the average kombucha, but not overpoweringly so. It is a pleasant drink on a hot day, and one that's completely guilt-free as well.

Moving onto the buchu kombucha is an experience in itself. I anticipated that it would be bitter, as buchu is not the most pleasant herb to have, but I was pleasantly surprised by the first sip. While the flavour of the buchu is apparent, it is not strong or bitter enough to make for a bad drink.

The company sources only organic ingredients. Its rooibos comes from the Cedarberg Mountain, and its black tea comes from a carbon-neutral farm in Sri Lanka that uplifts the local community. It also makes use of cut green sugarcane from Brazil, and indigenous medicinal sources found endemically in South Africa.

Its packaging is also made of recycled materials, and the company ensures its outgoing product is 99% free of single-use plastic – a truly guilt-free drink. If you would like your own Brew Kombucha experience, you can visit one of 193 stockists in the country, or make an order directly from their website by clicking [here](#).



World News

by The Guardian and New York Times

USA: At least 3,973 new coronavirus deaths and 238,391 new cases were reported in the United States on Jan. 14. Over the past week, there has been an average of 240,199 cases per day, an increase of 27 percent from the average two weeks earlier. As of Friday morning, more than 23,371,100 people in the United States have been infected with the coronavirus according to a New York Times database. [Coronavirus US Cases](#)

Despite the shocking figures, quarantine rules in some states appear to be collapsing, with restaurants defying public health measures to reopen. Less than 3% of the US population have been vaccinated against coronavirus, leaving hundreds of millions still to be inoculated before herd immunity can be achieved.

China has recorded its first coronavirus death since May, the 4,635th death from the virus in the country. The individual died in Hebei province, which is the site of China's worst outbreak in months. The loss came as a team of [experts from the WHO landed in Wuhan](#) to investigate the origins of the virus.

Kamala Harris: How will America's next vice-president wield her power? Join the Guardian and Pulitzer prize-winning cultural critic Margo Jefferson for a live digital conversation exploring Harris's historic rise on 18 January at 4pm ET/1pm PT. [Register here.](#)

Former UN ambassador Samantha Power will lead the Agency for International Development under Joe Biden, the president-elect [announced yesterday](#). Power is a Pulitzer prize-winning author who covered war zones as a journalist, before becoming a diplomat and serving on Obama's national security council.

Israeli airstrikes on east Syria have killed 57 people, the [deadliest such strikes](#) since the beginning of the conflict. Syrian regime forces and allied Iran-backed fighters were among the dead, less than a week since the last wave of strikes.

Police are three times more likely to use force on leftwing protesters than rightwing protesters, [according to a new report](#) from a non-profit monitoring global political violence. Over the past 10 months, police officers in the US used methods including teargas and rubber bullets at a much higher percentage on Black Lives Matter demonstrations than at pro-Trump rallies. Stat of the day: more soldiers are stationed in the Capitol than in Afghanistan

At Least 35 Killed and Hundreds Injured as Quake Hits Indonesia

The 6.2-magnitude earthquake, Indonesia's third deadly disaster in a week, struck Sulawesi island, flattening a hospital, destroying homes and setting off landslides.

[NEW YORK TIMES](#)

W.H.O. team arrives in Wuhan

More than a year after a new coronavirus first emerged in China, a [team of experts from the World Health Organization arrived in Wuhan on Thursday](#) to begin hunting for its source.

Rohingya fire: A large fire tore through a crowded camp in the Cox's Bazar area of Bangladesh, [destroying hundreds of ramshackle shelters and forcing thousands of displaced Muslim refugees to flee](#) in the winter chill.

Xinjiang ban: The U.S. [banned all cotton and tomatoes from the northwestern Chinese region](#) where officials have been accused of creating a forced labor system for the million ethnic Uighur Muslims who live there.

Andy Murray [tested positive just before he was set to leave for the Australian Open](#) in Melbourne, putting his participation in the tournament in doubt.

New Zealand, which has kept its borders tightly controlled while largely vanquishing the coronavirus, will [let 1,000 international students back into the country](#) starting in April, the education minister announced on Thursday.

Deaths from the coronavirus are [skyrocketing in the U.S.](#), reaching levels never before seen, largely fueled by relentless surges in California and Arizona.

Police force in crisis: As security measures envelop Washington, the chief of police for the Capitol building and two top security officials resigned, three officers have been suspended, and [more than a dozen are being investigated](#) for their actions during the riot at the Capitol.

Britain said on Thursday that it would [ban arrivals from Latin American countries and Portugal](#) over fears of a coronavirus variant discovered in Brazil. In recent weeks, British authorities have already struggled to contain the spread of a different coronavirus variant discovered in Britain that is more contagious than its predecessors.

At least two coronavirus variants are currently circulating in Brazil, and at least one has slipped its borders, traveling to Japan. Japanese authorities found one of those variants [in four people traveling from Brazil](#) earlier this week. The variant contains a mutation that has been linked with higher contagiousness, similar to the variant found in Britain and another in South Africa.

Pfizer, Moderna vaccines could vanquish Covid today, cancer tomorrow

By Andreas Kluth
**Bloomberg
Moneyweb**



The best news about the mRNA shots from BioNTech and Moderna is that the same technique could also defeat many other diseases.

The night is darkest just before dawn, they say. Dark it certainly is right now. The more contagious variants of SARS-CoV-2 coming out of the UK and South Africa will make the pandemic worse before mass vaccination can make it better.

But take another look at some of these [new vaccines](#). And then contemplate the dawn to come — not just its first rays in the coming months but also the bright light of future years and decades. It looks increasingly plausible that the same weapons we'll use to defeat Covid-19 can also vanquish even grimmer reapers — including cancer, which kills almost 10 million people a year.

The most promising Covid vaccines use nucleic acids called messenger RNA, or mRNA. One vaccine comes from the German firm BioNTech and its US partner Pfizer. The other is from the US company Moderna (its original spelling was ModeRNA, its ticker is MRNA). Another is on the way from CureVac, also based in Germany.

Ordinary vaccines tend to be inactivated or weakened viruses which, when injected into the body, stimulate an immune response that can later protect against the live pathogen. But the process of making such vaccines requires various chemicals and cell cultures. This takes time and provides opportunities for contamination.

mRNA vaccines don't have these problems. They instruct the body itself to make the offending proteins — in this case, the ones that wrap around the viral RNA of SARS-CoV-2. The immune system then homes in on these antigens, practising for the day when the same proteins show up with the coronavirus attached.

Therein lies mRNA's bigger promise: It can tell our cells to make whatever protein we want. That includes the antigens of many other diseases besides Covid-19.

In its day-to-day function, mRNA takes instructions from its molecular cousin, the DNA in our cell nuclei. Stretches of the genome are copied, which the mRNA carries into the cytoplasm, where little cellular factories called ribosomes use the information to churn out proteins.

BioNTech and Moderna shortcut this process, by skipping the whole fiddly business in the nucleus with the DNA. Instead, they first figure out what protein they want — for example, a spike on the coat around a virus. Then they look at the sequence of amino acids that makes this protein. From that, they derive the precise instructions the mRNA must give. This process can be relatively fast, which is why it took less than a year to make the vaccines, a pace previously unimaginable. It's also genetically safe — mRNA can't go back into the nucleus and accidentally insert genes into our DNA.

Researchers since the 1970s have had a hunch that you can use this technique to fight all sorts of maladies. But as usual in science, you need huge amounts of money, time and patience to sort out all the intermediary problems. After a decade of enthusiasm, mRNA became academically unfashionable in the 1990s. Progress seemed halting. The main obstacle was that injecting mRNA into animals often caused fatal inflammation.

Enter Katalin Kariko — a Hungarian scientist who immigrated to the US in the 1980s and has heroically devoted her entire career to mRNA, through its ups and downs. In the 1990s, she lost her funding, was demoted, had her salary cut and suffered other setbacks. [But she stuck with it](#). And then, after battling cancer herself, she made the crucial breakthrough.

In the 2000s, she and her research partner realised that swapping out uridine, one of mRNA's "letters," avoided causing inflammation without otherwise compromising the code. The mice stayed alive.

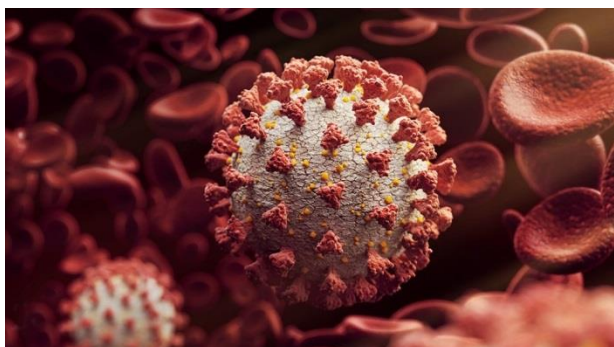
Her study was read by a scientist at Stanford University, Derrick Rossi, who later co-founded Moderna. It also came to the attention of [Ugur Sahin and Ozlem Tureci](#), two oncologists who are husband and wife and co-founded BioNTech. They licensed Kariko's technology and hired her. From the start, they were most interested in curing cancer.

Today's weapons against cancer will one day seem as primitive an idea as flint axes in a surgery room. To kill a malignant tumour, you generally zap it with radiation or chemicals, damaging lots of other tissue in the process.

[READ FURTHER](#)

More cases of SA Covid variant recorded in Australia, as Brisbane enters snap lockdown

Luke Daniel
Business Insider SA



- A family of four who travelled from South Africa to Sydney have tested positive for the more infectious 501Y.V2 variant of SARS-CoV-2.
- The discovery of the new variant has forced New South Wales to limit air travel and criminalise the refusal to wear face masks in public spaces.
- Fearing the virus' spread, Brisbane has entered a three-day snap lockdown which confines residents to their homes.

The 501Y.V2 variant, which originated in South Africa, has found its way across the world, with four more cases confirmed in Australia. The mutation, responsible for driving South Africa's second wave and solidifying international travel bans, is regarded as more infectious than the initial SARS-CoV-2 virus.

While the 501Y.V2 variant was first announced to the public on 18 December 2020, studies conducted on samples gathered in November revealed that the mutation had already spread throughout the Eastern Cape, Western Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal.

Tests conducted by the Network for Genomics Surveillance in South Africa (NGS-SA) have identified multiple mutations in the virus' spike protein, suggesting "that 501Y.V2 is significantly more transmissible than previously circulating variants".

This variant of South African origin has since been discovered in the UK, Switzerland, Finland, Japan, Zambia, France, Austria, and South Korea. Australia's first 501Y.V2 case was registered on 29 December.

Although the coronavirus' impact on Australia has been less severe compared to other parts of the world – recording 28,500 infections and under 1,000 deaths since the global outbreak – reactions to cases registered in the wake of the new variant's arrival have been strong.

[READ MORE](#)



Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Vaccine access and allocation

By the World Health Organisation (WHO)

Visit the official WHO website for information on questions answered.

[WHO - VACCINE ACCESS AND ALLOCATION](#)

Questions answered in above link:

As safe and effective vaccines for COVID-19 are approved, who should be the first to receive them?

What is WHO doing to ensure that COVID-19 vaccines will be allocated fairly?

How is WHO helping countries prepare for COVID-19 vaccines?

Brazilian Air Force flies oxygen into hard-hit Amazonian city of Manaus

From CNN's Marcia Reverdosa

The Brazilian Air Force (FAB) landed in the Amazonian city of Manaus at 2:10 a.m. (3:10 a.m. ET) Friday, carrying six cylinders of liquid oxygen, totalling 9,300 kg of charge.

The air force also flew out nine patients and five doctors from Manaus to Teresina.

This comes after the Brazilian Health Minister Eduardo Pazuello warned Thursday that the [healthcare system in Manaus is in "collapse"](#) as Covid-19 cases surge.

He said there was a low supply of oxygen and large lines to get into hospitals.

Trump impeached for 'inciting' US Capitol riot in historic second charge

BBC News

Donald Trump has become the first president in US history to be impeached twice, after being charged with "incitement of insurrection" over last week's deadly storming of Congress.
(click on links below for further information)

The House of Representatives accused Mr Trump of encouraging violence with his false claims of election fraud. He now faces trial in the upper chamber, the Senate, but not before he leaves office next Wednesday. Senators can vote to bar him from ever holding public office again.

[In a video released after the vote](#) in the House on Wednesday, Mr Trump called on his followers to remain peaceful, without mentioning his impeachment. "Violence and vandalism have no place in our country... No true supporter of mine would ever endorse political violence," he said, striking a sombre and conciliatory tone.
['Symbolic but necessary': US voters react](#)
[What happens to impeached presidents?](#)
[Troops keep watch at Capitol, one week after riots](#)

The FBI has warned of possible armed protests planned for Washington DC and all 50 US state capitals in the days before Joe Biden, a Democrat, is inaugurated as the new US president. media caption Trump: 'Violence and vandalism have no place in our country'

What was Trump charged with?

Impeachment charges are political, not criminal. The president was accused by the House of inciting the storming of the Capitol - the seat of the US Congress - with a speech on 6 January to supporters outside the White House.

He urged them to "peacefully and patriotically" make their voices heard, but also to "fight like hell" against an election that he falsely told them had been stolen.

Following Mr Trump's remarks, his supporters broke into the Capitol, forcing lawmakers to suspend certification of election results and take shelter. The building was placed on lockdown and five people died in the melee.

[Did Trump's words at rally incite the riot?](#)

[A visual guide to the Congress riots](#)

[Can Trump be removed or banned from politics?](#)

The article of impeachment stated that Mr Trump "repeatedly issued false statements asserting that the presidential election results were fraudulent and should not be accepted". It says he then repeated these claims and "wilfully made statements to the crowd that encouraged and foreseeably resulted in lawless action at the Capitol", leading to the violence and loss of life.

"President Trump gravely endangered the security of the United States and its institutions of government, threatened the integrity of the democratic system, interfered with the peaceful transition of power, and imperilled a coequal branch of government." Last week, 139 Republicans voted against accepting the result of the 2020 election and Mr Trump's defeat.

Impeachment: The basics

What is impeachment? Impeachment is when a sitting president is charged with crimes. In this case, President Trump was charged with inciting insurrection by encouraging his supporters to storm the Capitol

Could Trump be removed from office? The House of Representatives has impeached him, moving the case to the Senate for a trial. But a trial will not be carried out before Mr Trump leaves office on 20 January.

So what does it mean? A trial can happen after his term ends, and senators can vote to bar him from holding public office again.

What did lawmakers say during the debate?

For two hours on Wednesday, members of the Democratic-controlled House made statements for and against the vote in the same chamber where they hid under chairs and donned gas masks as rioters tried to force their way inside last week. National Guard troops kept watch inside and outside the Capitol. Ten of Mr Trump's Republican party joined Democrats to impeach him by 232-197.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a Democrat, said on the House floor: "The president of the United States incited this insurrection, this armed rebellion against our common country. He must go. He is a clear and present danger to the nation that we all love."

Democratic congressman Julian Castro called Mr Trump "the most dangerous man to ever occupy the Oval Office". media caption.

How did Republicans defend Trump - and who voted to impeach?

Most Republicans did not seek to defend Mr Trump's rhetoric, instead arguing that the impeachment had bypassed the customary hearings and calling on Democrats to drop it for the sake of national unity.

"Impeaching the president in such a short time frame would be a mistake," said Kevin McCarthy, the House's top Republican.

"That doesn't mean the president's free from fault. The president bears responsibility for Wednesday's attack on Congress by mob rioters."

Jim Jordan, an Ohio Republican, accused Democrats of recklessly dividing the country to pursue a political vendetta. "This is about getting the president of the United States. It's always been about getting the president, no matter what. It's an obsession."

Among members of the president's party who voted to impeach him was the third-ranking House Republican, Liz Cheney. The Wyoming representative, the daughter of former Vice-President Dick Cheney, said of the riot that "there has never been a greater betrayal by a president".

"A president cannot defend a nation if he is not held accountable to its laws."

DaShanne Stokes

What the data show about allergic reactions to COVID-19 vaccines

BY MICHAEL GRESHKO
National Geographic



A new report from the CDC reveals how rare severe reactions actually are and what people can do if they are worried about taking the shot.

As vaccination efforts against COVID-19 haltingly ramp up across the United States, the country's public health officials are confirming that severe allergic reactions to the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine are rare.

In [a study released January 6](#) by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), researchers revealed that the risk of anaphylaxis—a severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction—from the vaccine is extremely low. Based on data from people who have received the first of the two recommended doses, only about one in every 90,000 people, on average, will experience this adverse reaction. That's less than 3 percent of [the lifetime risk of dying from choking on food](#).

Technically, the chance of severe allergic reactions from the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is about 8.5 times higher than the risk from the seasonal flu vaccine, which has a rate of about one in 769,000. But experts point out it's still a tiny number: According to the study, 1.89 million people in the U.S. received the first dose of the vaccine between December 14 to December 23, and more than 99.998 percent of them did not experience anaphylaxis.

The news should help people who have concerns about taking the vaccine. According to a National Geographic-Morning Consult poll conducted in December, seven in 10 Americans say they are wary of the potential side effects of any COVID-19 vaccine, with 58 percent of the respondents saying they will get vaccinated, but not until they have seen how the shot impacts other people.

Overall, though, the data reveal that the risk of anaphylaxis is far smaller than the negative outcomes associated with COVID-19 infections, especially among older Americans. By October 2020, the disease had become one of the leading causes of death in the U.S. among people more than 45 years old, [outpacing automotive collisions, suicide, homicide, and accidental drug overdoses](#). To date, the pandemic has killed more than one out of every 1,000 Americans.

"I and my colleagues at CDC and FDA are committed to ensuring that COVID-19 vaccines are safe," [Nancy Messonnier](#), director of the CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, said in a Wednesday press briefing on the study. "I know I look forward to the day I get to roll up my sleeve and get vaccinated."

[READ FURTHER](#)

3 reasons why a negative Covid-19 test doesn't necessarily mean you're not infected

By The Washington Post



Rampant community transmission of the coronavirus and a crippled vaccine rollout have boxed people into a corner: Many are relying on negative test results, inherently limited in usefulness, as a certificate of clearance to see family and friends.

While testing is critical to containing the outbreak, a negative test result is not a free pass to forgo social distancing, mask-wearing and large gatherings. Here are a few reminders about what a negative coronavirus test means and doesn't mean.

The tests still have varying degrees of accuracy

There are two categories of tests: PCR (polymerase chain reaction) tests - considered the "gold standard" - and less-accurate antigen tests.

PCR tests use a molecular process and are processed in a lab. Faster and cheaper antigen tests detect proteins on the virus's surface.

PCR tests are your best bet for getting a sense of whether you're infected, even though those results take longer than antigen results. Still, PCR tests can result in false negatives.

That's in part because the giant cotton swabs used in many of those tests may not pick up all traces of the virus deep in your nasal cavity. The virus may have moved from your nose to your lungs or somewhere else, or the swab may not have been inserted far enough.

But nasopharyngeal swabs, which collect samples from the back of your nose and throat, are still more reliable than less invasive throat swabs and nasal swabs.

A test may not be able to detect the virus early in its course

Early in an infection, the virus may not have reproduced enough to be detectable. The false negative rate of PCR tests on the day of exposure is 100%, but falls to about 38% five days later as symptoms usually set in, according to an analysis published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*. The rate decreases further, to about 20%, after three more days.

[READ FURTHER](#)

Brexit: UK driver has ham sandwiches confiscated at Dutch border

BBC News



A Dutch TV network has filmed border officials confiscating ham sandwiches and other foods from drivers arriving in the Netherlands from the UK, under post-Brexit rules.

The officials were shown explaining import regulations imposed since the UK formalised its separation from the EU. Under EU rules, travellers from outside the bloc are banned from bringing in meat and dairy products.

The rules appeared to bemuse one driver. "Since Brexit, you are no longer allowed to bring certain foods to Europe, like meat, fruit, vegetables, fish, that kind of stuff," a Dutch border official told the driver in [footage broadcast by TV network NPO 1](#).

In one scene, a border official asked the driver whether several of his tin-foil wrapped sandwiches had meat in them. When the driver said they did, the border official said: "Okay, so we take them all."

Surprised, the driver then asked the officials if he could keep the bread, to which one replied: "No, everything will be confiscated - welcome to the Brexit, sir. I'm sorry."

The UK officially finished its formal separation from the EU on 31 December, 2020.

From 23:00 GMT on that date, the UK stopped following EU rules, with new arrangements for travel, trade, immigration and security co-operation coming into force.

A trade deal with the EU was agreed on 24 December, and a week later, UK lawmakers voted in favour of the agreement. The UK's departure means big changes for business - with the UK and EU forming two separate markets - the end of free movement, and new regulations, including those governing the import of personal goods.

Forget Twitter, Trump's son just asked Elon Musk to develop an app his dad can use Elon, can you help a boytjie out?

Kyle Zeeman
Times LIVE



US President Donald Trump may have had his Twitter account permanently suspended, but his son is already out here looking for an alternative to help his dad out.

In a recent Instagram video, Donald Trump Jr asked SA-born tech entrepreneur Elon Musk to help "save free speech".

"I am not looking for a conservative echo chamber. I want a platform to argue my ideas vs someone else's and not just people in a place telling me what I want to hear. Elon, why don't you do that? Get out there and come up with a concept. I think you are literally the guy to save free speech in America."

Elon has not yet responded to the request, but Trump Jr's request has sparked fierce debate on social media.

Musk recently endorsed messaging app [Signal](#), amid concerns about [WhatsApp's new privacy policy](#). The app is known for its stringent security and privacy settings.

Twitter on Friday deleted new tweets posted by Trump on the official US presidency account and suspended the account of his presidential campaign.

The company said accounts used by Trump to try to get around the ban could face permanent suspension, under its "ban evasion" policies.

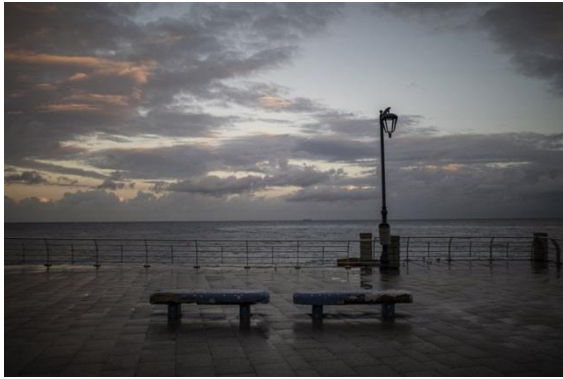
"Twitter is not about free speech," Trump wrote on the presidency's account, hinting at possibly building his own social media platform in the near future.

Trump has been banned from several other social media platforms, including Facebook, YouTube and Instagram, after his supporters stormed the US Capitol last week.

Lebanon imposes all-day curfew as the coronavirus spins out of control

Residents can only leave their homes through requesting a one-hour permit for emergency reasons.

By NBC News



An empty corniche during the first day of Lebanon's lockdown on Thursday. For the first time, even supermarkets were told to close their doors.

BEIRUT— [Lebanese authorities](#) began enforcing an 11-day nationwide shutdown and round the clock curfew Thursday, hoping to limit the spread of coronavirus infections spinning out of control after the holiday period.

For the first time, residents were required to request a one-hour permit to be allowed to leave the house for “emergencies,” including going to the bakery, pharmacist, doctor, hospital or airport.

Authorities came under pressure to take a tougher approach after the country's hospitals ran out of beds with daily infections reaching an all-time high of 5,440 cases last week in the [country of nearly 6 million people](#).

Even before the coronavirus, Lebanon was going through an unprecedented economic and financial crisis that has seen its national currency and bank sector collapse and locked depositors out of the savings. Hospitals, long considered among the best in the Middle East, struggled to pay staff, keep equipment running and secure necessary medical supplies as dollars grew scarce.

Amid the surge, many hospitals have now reached maximum capacity for coronavirus patients. Some have halted elective surgeries as they run out of beds, oxygen tanks and ventilators.

Furthermore, the country has been without a government since the [old one resigned](#) in the wake of the catastrophic [Aug. 4 explosion](#) at Beirut port, which put a [further strain on hospitals](#), inundating them with injured. At least three hospitals were destroyed. The massive explosion caused by the detonation of a stockpile of poorly stored ammonium nitrate ravaged the city, killing over 200 people and injuring thousands.

France imposes earlier curfew and tightens border control

France will impose a nationwide 6 p.m. curfew on Saturday for at least 15 days, French Prime Minister Jean Castex [announced](#) Thursday. Additional stricter measures include requiring travelers from outside the European Union to have a negative Covid-19 test and self-isolate for a week upon arrival.

Unlike the U.K., the French government has [repeatedly favored curfews](#) in an attempt to mitigate viral spread. France was already subjected to an 8 p.m. curfew.

France has the seventh highest death toll in the world. The government is especially concerned by the more-transmissible coronavirus variant first detected in Britain, which now accounts for approximately one percent of new cases.

Biden lays out \$1.9 trillion Covid relief package with \$1,400 stimulus checks

By NBC News

President-elect Joe Biden is expected to lay out his \$1.9 trillion [relief package](#) in a primetime address on Thursday — which will focus on a new round of stimulus checks to struggling Americans and an ambitious vaccine distribution plan to control the deadly pandemic.

Biden will ask the new Democratic-controlled Congress to approve the “American Rescue Plan.” A chunk of the funds — \$416 billion — will help launch a national vaccination program with a goal of vaccinating 50 million Americans and reopening schools in the first 100 days of his administration. His speech comes as the pandemic continues to worsen.

According to [NBC News' Covid-19 data tracker](#), there have been 384,375 deaths and more than 23 million cases in the U.S.

[Click here to read the full story.](#)

Pope Francis receives first Covid vaccine dose

ROME — Pope Francis has been given a Covid-19 vaccine, the Vatican confirmed Thursday.

The director of the Vatican press office, Matteo Bruni, said in a statement that both the Pope and Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI received their first doses. It was not clear which of the approved vaccines was administered.

Pope Francis said he was due to get the jab and urged others to get vaccinated in a TV interview this week. “I think that ethically we should all receive a vaccine,” said the pope, 84. “It’s an ethical choice because you are playing with your health, your life, but also the lives of others.”



Shuffling and hustling – the new sports world order

By Craig Ray
DAILY MAVERICK



The new year is only two weeks in and already major sporting events are tweaking their calendars and conditions as it becomes clear that Covid-19 is here to stay despite a global vaccine rollout.

The masters of the Masters golf tournament have decreed that only a handful of “patrons” will be able to attend the season’s first men’s major. The bosses of Formula One (F1) have already rejigged the 2021 calendar because of tough quarantine measures in Australia and China. SA Rugby has postponed the Currie Cup semifinal by a week, even though they are already in the unusual January time slot. And so it goes on.

This week has seen more sporting disruption and next week, and the week after and the week after that will no doubt be the same. Everything is fluid and sporting organisations, host cities and venues are having to be flexible. Nothing is guaranteed anymore. Just ask SA Rugby, as they sweat it out trying to find solutions to ensure the 2021 British and Irish Lions tour goes ahead.

That is one event that can’t happen without fans, for commercial and historical reasons, but F1 and golf don’t need fans as badly. Both are excellent TV products.

Changing the schedule

Fred Ridley, chairperson of Augusta National Golf Club, which hosts the Masters tournament, announced on Tuesday that it intends to limit attendance at the 85th Masters Tournament, scheduled for 5-11 April.

“Following the successful conduct of the Masters Tournament last November with only essential personnel, we are confident in our ability to responsibly invite a limited number of patrons to Augusta National in April,” Ridley said. “As with the November Masters, we will implement practices and policies that will protect the health and safety of everyone in attendance. Nothing is, or will be, more important than the wellbeing of all involved.

England batting consultant Jacques Kallis regrets enforced South Africa exit

By Simon Burnton
The Guardian



- **South Africa role ‘fell away’ because of affirmative action policy**
- **Kallis: ‘It’s tough but we understand where it comes from’**

Jacques Kallis, the legendary all-rounder who is working as England’s batting consultant for the Test series in Sri Lanka, has spoken of his regret at being forced out of a similar position with his native South Africa after their adoption of an affirmative action policy last year.

“I wasn’t allowed to be involved because Cricket South Africa said there would be no more white consultants, so unfortunately that fell away,” Kallis said before the first Test which starts on Thursday.

“I suppose it’s the way of our country – a lot of players have fallen away because of needing people of colour involved. It’s tough but we understand where it comes from. It’s the modern way of the world. It’s sad in a way that I can’t help out in South Africa, but I’m thoroughly enjoying my time in the England setup.”

After he left his role with the Proteas several players spoke to Kallis about continuing to work with him on a more informal basis, but that possibility was blocked. “Unfortunately there was that rule, so it was pretty much taken out of my hands,” he said.

CSA clarified in September that it “had not taken and will not take a decision to work exclusively with black consultants” and “put on hold” the affirmative action policy, at least temporarily, after the entire board who decided on it resigned en masse in October. Kallis said he knew nothing about the latter development, and has no plans after the end of the Sri Lanka series beyond returning home to assist his wife with raising their 10-month-old boy, Joshua.

[**READ FURTHER**](#)

Olympic swimming champion Klete Keller charged over US Capitol invasion

By Tom Lutz
The Guardian



Olympic swimming champion Klete Keller has been charged over the invasion of the US Capitol by a pro-Donald Trump mob last week.

The 38-year-old won two relay gold medals as a teammate of Michael Phelps at the 2004 and 2008 Olympics. Charges of knowingly entering or remaining in a restricted building, disorderly conduct in the Capitol building and impeding law enforcement were filed against Keller in a Washington DC court on Wednesday.

A number of people who saw videos of the Capitol invasion identified a tall man in a US Olympic team jacket as the 6ft 6in Keller. The man in the video was part of a crowd being pushed towards the exit of the Capitol by police. He did not appear to be acting violently.

The US Olympic and Paralympic Committee CEO Sarah Hirshland did not name Keller in a statement released on Wednesday, in which she condemned the Capitol violence.

“As many of you know, there are reports of an alumni Olympic athlete involved in the horrific acts at the US Capitol building last week,” read the statement. “I strongly condemn the actions of the rioters at the US Capitol. They do not represent the values of the United States of America or of Team USA.”

Keller deleted his social media accounts earlier this week and is yet to comment on the allegations against him. [Swimming website SwimSwam reported](#) that prior to the deletion, Keller had written several posts in support of Trump.

In recent years, Keller has spoken about his struggles to adapt after his swimming career ended, but he had been working as a real estate firm, Hoff & Leigh recently. The company this week said they no longer employed Keller.

“Hoff & Leigh supports the right of free speech and lawful protest,” the company wrote in a statement. “But we cannot condone actions that violate the rule of law.” Five people, including a Capitol police officer, died as a result of last week’s violence.

African Bronze a Career Highlight for Madibaz Judo Star

SAGoodNews



Madibaz judo exponent Lwazi Mapitiza achieved a major career highlight when he returned with a bronze medal from the African Judo Championships in Madagascar in December. The tournament, which took place in Antananarivo, saw the 30-year-old Nelson Mandela University sport management student competing in the under-100kg category.

The sport categorises competitors according to their weight and Mapitiza was slotted into the 91-100kg division.

He described his third place at the African champs, which he was attending for the fifth time, as the best achievement of his career.

“My goal going into the competition was to bring back a medal, hopefully a gold medal, but I was still happy to return with the bronze,” said Mapitiza, who lives in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth.

“It was a really special moment and there was a feeling of relief at the end, as well as pride in achieving what I did. “It was an improvement on the 2019 champs, where I came fifth overall, so I am definitely happy with the way things turned out.”

His aim now is to keep working hard at his craft as his success in December has provided strong motivation.

“I want to stay on top of my game and to do that I am hoping to attend as many major competitions as I can.

“The way to keep improving is to enter the sorts of tournaments where I will meet opponents of a high calibre.” Mapitiza, who was educated at Ed-U-College, VP Grey Primary and Lawson Brown High, has his path mapped out for this year.

“Firstly, I have set my sights on trying to win a gold medal at the Africa champs, which will be held in April,” he said.

“I would also love to attend at least two international Grand Prix tournaments, which would help me to prepare for the World Student Games in China in August.”

His achievement in Madagascar was made possible, he said, by the support he received from Madibaz Sport.

[READ FURTHER](#)

Proteas Women raring to go after 10 months of inaction

By Yanga Sibembe
Daily Maverick



The Proteas had a solid run at the 2020 T20 Women's World Cup, reaching the semifinals. Then Covid-19 struck and halted that momentum. Now, almost a year on, they have a chance to build up a head of steam once again.

South Africa's Proteas Women will return to action for the first time since they lost to Australia in the 2020 Women's T20 World Cup.

Hilton Moreeng's team haven't played a single game of cricket since their loss to the hosts and eventual winners of the World Cup. That was at the beginning of March 2020. Now they finally have a chance to return to the pitch as they go against Pakistan in a series that will consist of three One Day Internationals (ODIs) and the same number of T20 internationals.

All games will be played at an empty Kingsmead Cricket Ground in Durban, starting on Wednesday, 20 January. In their sights is a Pakistan side that is keen to replicate the exploits of two years ago when they drew their ODIs and narrowly lost the Twenty20 series on South African soil.

Moreeng has emphasised the importance of returning to competitive cricket and also treating this inbound series as an opportunity to ease the Proteas back into the intensity of international cricket.

The squad was scheduled to play Australia in March 2020, but the series was scrapped as Covid-19 began gripping the world.

As regulations were eased, Moreeng's charges looked to be in a position to clock some much-needed mileage on the pitch. They were poised to play England in September but with strict travel restrictions still in place, the tour of England was also curtailed.

"Firstly, for us, it has been a year since the team has had a chance to get ready for competitive cricket, post our camps, and we are happy that everyone in the group is here and we can start discussing our preparations for Pakistan," said Moreeng.

The coach also took an opportunity to thank the squad's medical team for its work and dedication towards ensuring the Proteas are set for the tour.

Russian woman who swam under Siberia's ice may have broken the world record

By Anna Chernova and Lianne Kolirin
CNN



CNN—Wearing nothing but a bathing suit, a swimming cap and an underwater mask, the 40-year-old woman plunged into a carved-out section of a frozen Siberian lake, before diving under the ice to swim in water estimated to be around 32 degrees Fahrenheit.

Footage tweeted by the English language Siberian Times shows the 40-year-old woman from Moscow entering the carved-out section of a frozen Lake Baikal, before she started the underwater ice swim.

Yekaterina Nekrasova, who took up free diving four years ago, then held her breath for a minute and a half as she covered the 85 meters (279 feet) of a frozen Lake Baikal on January 7 - the Russian Orthodox Christmas Day.

She is believed to have set a world record with her attempt. A spokeswoman for Guinness World Records told CNN they have received details of Nekrasova's attempt but have yet to verify the landmark swim.



Footage filmed from above the surface shows members of her support team following behind in wet suits, in case of emergency. According to the Siberian Times, holes were cut in the 10-inch-thick ice at regular intervals in case she needed to abort the swim.

The challenge was filmed from both above and beneath the surface. Nekrasova can be seen descending a ladder, then following a route marked by a cable for a minute and a half. At the end she exits the water by climbing up another ladder.

[**READ FURTHER**](#)

Roger Federer withdraws from 2021 Australian Open

By Homero DeLaFuente and John Sinnott
CNN



Roger Federer has withdrawn from the [2021 Australian Open](#), the tournament announced on Monday.

The 20-time major champion has not played in a tournament since reaching the semifinals at the 2020 Australian Open after getting arthroscopic surgery in his right knee.

"In the end Roger ran out of time to get himself ready for the rigours of a Grand Slam and he's very disappointed he won't be coming to Melbourne in 2021," said Australian Open tournament director Craig Tiley in a statement.

"We wish him all the best as he prepares for his comeback later in the year and look forward to seeing him in Melbourne in 2022."

Earlier in December, Federer said at the [Switzerland Sport Awards](#) that his recovery from knee surgery had taken longer than expected and was unsure he would be ready for the first tennis grand slam of the 2021 season.

"I would have hoped that I would be 100% in October. But I am still not today. It will be tight for the Australian Open," local media quoted Federer as saying after he was named Switzerland's best athlete of the last 70 years at the awards ceremony.

"I hope that there will be something to see with me next year. If not, then that's an unbelievable end point."

Manchester United moves top, but 'no hugs' in future as Premier League grapples with Covid-19 spike

By Ben Church
CNN



Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer says his team will do its best to keep within the new [Covid-19 guidelines](#) as the Premier League looks to clampdown on celebrations.

In a [document reportedly sent out to teams](#) on Tuesday, made public on social media, organizers underlined that behaviors during training and matches must change, whilst strengthening some of the protocols in place.

The league reminded teams that "unnecessary contact, particularly between opposition clubs including handshakes, high fives and hugs must be avoided" and that swapping of shirts after the game is now prohibited.

Speaking after his side's 1-0 win over Burnley on Tuesday, a result which sees United sit top of the table, Solskjaer said it's hard to keep emotions under control when passions are running high.

United players celebrated by hugging each other on Tuesday after Paul Pogba scored the only goal of the game. "It's an emotional game but we have to understand the players when they celebrate but we also understand the concern nowadays for a bit less emotion and less hugging," Solskjaer told reporters.

"But it's difficult because football brings out the best and the worst in you. Of course when you score you want to celebrate with your teammates.

"We will do our best to keep with the guidelines of course we will because we I think we all want football to carry on safely. I think mentally for many people it's a relief but we understand the situation that the country is in."

Whilst lockdown restrictions have been imposed across the UK amid [record high confirmed cases](#), elite sport has been allowed to continue, though organizers have urged clubs to abide by a strict set of rules.

2023 Rugby World Cup draw confirmed as New Zealand face host France in pool stage

By Ben Church
CNN



Three-time winner New Zealand will face host France at the [2023 Rugby World Cup](#) after the pool stage draw was made on Monday.

Both the All Blacks and France, which last hosted the tournament in 2007, will be confident of progressing through to the knockout stages after also drawing Italy in Pool A. Meanwhile, reigning champion South Africa is set to face Ireland and Scotland in Pool B whilst 2003 champion England will take on Japan, who hosted the last World Cup in 2019.

It was a case of déjà vu in Pool C, with Wales, Australia and Fiji all being paired together as they had been at the 2019 World Cup.

It will be the fourth time Wales and Australia have played in each other in the last five tournaments. Only 12 countries have qualified so far with another eight still to be confirmed by November 2022.

The 20 places have been split equally between four pools, with the top two sides going through to the quarterfinals. Seeds for the draw were made using last year's rankings after a number of teams have struggled to play matches amid the pandemic.

The tournament is set to begin on September 8, 2023, and will be played in nine cities across France, with the final being held in Paris.



South Africa won the Rugby World Cup in 2019.

Animals ruled the sporting world in 2020

By Summarizer and CNN



It's been a tough year for many, but one thing's for sure, 2020 was a good year for animals in sport. Penguins, polar bears, alligators and macaws were only some of the few who invaded the sporting world.

A bit like cats meowing and dogs barking their way across the Internet, 2020 was a bumper year for animals in sport. Dubbed "Pelé," the macaw regularly watches men's and women's national team trainings.

Izzy, Darwin, Tombo and Charlotte waddled around the locker room of the NFL's Chicago Bears before making their way to the field like their ursine counterparts.



A gigantic alligator in Florida took a stroll on the Valencia Golf and Country Club course in the rain.

Club pro Tyler Stolting, who first saw and snapped the gator, said, "I've never seen one even close to that big before."

Rounds saw monkeys sat on fences, with mongooses and impalas wandering onto the course. But that wasn't all the world's fauna had planned -- just watch the video above to see just how much animals love sport!

See the silver linings of 2020's clouds... Yes, there were a few

By Sasha Planting
Business Maverick



We are a week into the third decade of the 21st century and it's patently obvious that Covid-19 will be with us for some time, and that this will be a rocky year. But with every new year comes new energy, new optimism and hope. In this spirit, I think it is worth dwelling for a minute on 2020's silver linings.

For people who care about biodiversity, the best news of 2020 was the Chinese government's steps to ban the consumption, farming and sale of rare and exotic wild animals, in particular the critically endangered pangolin, as well as its efforts to regulate wildlife markets. This was after the now-infamous Huanan Seafood Market, in the central city of Wuhan, was declared the epicentre of the coronavirus 2019 outbreak, now simply dubbed Covid-19.

Global carbon emissions fell in 2020 as the virus made its way around the world and governments responded with the now-familiar lockdowns, curbing passenger travel. Although this was always going to be a temporary trend, the beauty of clear skies (and lungs) reminded people about the urgent need to move ahead with the green energy transition. The transition to a green economy was supported by the fact that in 2020, the cost of renewable energy continued to fall to levels that make not adopting renewables nonsensical.

A related trend, which may have little to do with Covid-19, is the continued shift towards electric vehicles (EVs). In Norway, one of the world's most EV-friendly countries, annual EV sales overtook hybrid, gasoline and diesel engines for the first time. Sorry, Elon, it seems the Norwegians favoured VW's electric cars over Tesla's.

The change in political power in the US, another of 2020's gifts, also means that the US will return to the Paris Agreement, providing a psychological and financial boost to climate change governance. In addition, China, the UK and Europe set themselves ambitious carbon targets for the next few decades that the rest of the world would do well to emulate.

Scientists across the world responded to the virus with uncommon speed and cooperation. That meant 2020 was a year of remarkable scientific achievement. Within months the virus had been decoded and, by the end of November, it had been shown that three different vaccines (with more, subsequently) would offer protection against Covid-19.

And while we are talking vaccines, a shout-out has to be given to the thousands of people in South Africa and around the world who unselfishly volunteered to participate in the vaccine trials.

All of this helped put the focus on vaccine development in South Africa. As online health publication Spotlight points out, South Africa has not produced a vaccine in 25 years. This is despite the fact that we once produced polio drops, anti-venoms, yellow fever, typhoid, rabies and smallpox vaccines.

In November, the Biovac Institute, a public-private partnership created in 2003 to revive vaccine manufacture in SA, announced that it would soon begin producing drug firm Sanofi Pasteur's six-in-one vaccine to protect children against illnesses such as polio, tetanus and hepatitis B. It is no small achievement, and it took 20 years to get to this point, with funding the biggest limitation.

In time, Aspen Pharmacare and Biovac could produce three out of the four main types of Covid-19 vaccines. Aspen has already been signed up by Johnson & Johnson to "fill and finish", rather than manufacture from scratch, its experimental vaccine. Whatever may be said about South Africa's poor efforts to procure a vaccine, this is a doff of the cap to local manufacturing capacity.

On a lighter note, in 2020 we recognised our common humanity.

We celebrated the birth of giant panda twins in China; learnt to chat to family and friends over Zoom, returned to cooking and gardening and loved it when chefs like Ezio de Biaggi, co-owner of Magica Roma in Cape Town, gave free cooking lessons on YouTube. We rocked to Jerusalema, learnt that home-schooling was hard and recognised teachers for the heroes they are. Healthcare and other essential workers too.

But perhaps the biggest positive emerging from this crisis is our recognition that we humans are capable of collective action – whether on a global, national or local scale. If the stakes are high enough, we can take on these challenges together and, most importantly of all, abandon the fears and pettinesses that usually divide us.

That has to be good, no?

ENVIRONMENT

News and Articles

Environmental heroes to inspire you in 2021

By CNN Staff



The new year is a time for resolutions, and few could be more important than choosing to do better by nature.

We all have a part to play but knowing where to start can be the hardest step. Luckily, there are plenty of inspirational people out there waiting to light a fire in all of us.

Over the past year, through its series [Call to Earth](#), CNN has highlighted environmental heroes who are protecting the planet.

Here we present a selection of green champions who could inspire you to follow their path:

[READ ALL](#)

FEEL GOOD | Eco-warriors on ice: 5 matrics to explore Antarctic with renowned adventurer Riaan Manser

Lwandile Bhengu
NEWS24



- **Five matric pupils were chosen out of hundreds to explore the Antarctic with Riaan Manser.**
- **The "Matrics in Antarctic" team will be leaving the country on 27 January.**
- **They will be in the Antarctic for five days.**

Applicants needed to submit a piece related to climate change, followed by a video of those who made it to the next round and then finally, an interview with the top 10.

"The process was a lot of fun. It was wonderful to reach out and get a sense of what is happening in the education system. What stood out was to be able to engage with these youngsters, with tomorrow's minds.

"When we talk about the environment and saving the planet, you can't be talking to people like you and me who are already in the system, you have to hear from these young students," Manser told News24.

On Monday, Basic Education Deputy Minister Reginah Mhaule announced the winners during a virtual event.

'I am a climate justice activist'

No stranger to taking the fight for climate change internationally, Melithafa is an eco-warrior from the Centre of Science and Technology, a school in the Western Cape.

[READ FURTHER](#)

A cause for shellebration: Annie, Luis, Olaf and other sea turtles successfully released!

The following blog is adapted from the joint media release of the National Sea Rescue Institute and Two Oceans Aquarium Education Foundation.

The story of rescue, rehabilitation and release is one that the [Two Oceans Aquarium Education Foundation](#) and the NSRI are incredibly proud of.



On Thursday, 15 January 2021, the Two Oceans Aquarium Education Foundation and the NSRI released some of their shelly friends back into the ocean so that they can begin their journey home in warmer waters.

"It's been such a treat to release these turtles - a total full circle," said Talitha Noble, Conservation Coordinator of the Two Oceans Aquarium Education Foundation. "And the thing with circles is that they keep going around. As we say goodbye and good luck to these strong and capable creatures, we busily get prepared for a new season of stranded and weak turtles to help and nurture and protect. [You can be apart of that. You can be a turtle rescuer, support us in their rehab and help protect the home they are released into.](#)"

The release included:

21 loggerheads - [Luis](#), [Annie](#) & 19 hatchlings

1 hawksbill turtle - Olaf

1 green turtle – Roo



These turtles were rescued and have been in the care of the Two Oceans Aquarium Education Foundation for the past year or so, after being rescued on beaches from around the Western Cape, and we couldn't be more excited to see them all back in the ocean again.

Most of the turtles that are rescued are loggerhead hatchlings that hatched on the northern beaches of KwaZulu-Natal and then caught the warm Agulhas current down the South African coastline. Once they reach the south coast and the current slows, the turtles can end up in the colder surrounding waters, which can cause the turtles to suffer from cold shock, injury and dehydration. When the turtles become compromised, strong winds and currents expel them on our beaches, between March and July every year.

Once these hatchlings arrive at the Aquarium turtle rehabilitation programme they are admitted as individual patients, and over the following months receive regular medical care, cleaning, daily feeding (twice a day!) and lots of love.

As the end of the year approaches and the turtles are healthy, have gained good weight and are behaving like strong turtles, the vet clears them for release. They receive a microchip and are then released off of Cape Point (about 20-30 nautical miles) back into the warmer water (this is usually between November and March).

Throughout the year (there is no specific season) the NSRI is also involved in the rescue other turtles of varying species and size - green turtles, hawksbills, olive ridleys and loggerheads, which are then taken to the Foundation's turtle rehabilitation programme for further care.



Read the endearing story about Annie, the loggerhead turtle and the rest of the article here:

[READ HERE](#)

AI-controlled vertical farms promise revolution in food production

by Peter Grad

Tech Xplore



When you think about it, early civilizations had a rough time when it came to dinnertime. With no supermarkets, McDonald's, or Cheesecake Factories, you pretty much had to find and prepare your own meal every day. And since Uber would not be invented for another 14,000 years, primitive peoples around 12,000 BC had to walk, sometimes for miles, and learn to hunt, fish, gather and cook for their daily meals. In the rain. Even on Sundays.

Farming evolved quite a bit since then. But with a world population hurtling towards 8 billion, we face a problem. As the 18th century economist Thomas Malthus observed, human population increases geometrically, while food production increases only arithmetically. That means the more civilization grows and thrives, the more likely it will be unable to keep up with demands for food.

While advances in food technology have helped forestall Malthus' dire predictions, there remains great concern for the future of food production as the Earth's population soars on a planet with shrinking farming real estate. National Geographic recently predicted that by 2050, there will be more than two billion additional mouths to feed while the Earth's irrigable land remains essentially the same.

A San Francisco agricultural-technical startup thinks it might just have an answer. Nate Storey, who co-founded the appropriately named Plenty, wants to reinvent farming. To do so, he has constructed climate-controlled [vertical farms](#) that are so promising, they have drawn \$400 million in funding from former Google Chairman Eric Schmidt, Amazon's Jeff Bezos and SoftBank.

These upright farms take up only 2 acres yet produce 720 acres worth of fruit and vegetables. Lighting, temperature and watering are controlled by AI-controlled robots. Sunlight is emulated by LED panels, so food is grown in optimal conditions 24/7. And water is recycled and evaporated water recaptured so there is virtually no waste.

The operation is so efficient it uses 99 percent less land and 95 percent less water than normal farming operations. "Imagine a 1,500-acre farm," Storey says. "Now, imagine that fitting inside your favourite grocery store, growing up to 350 times more. That's efficient."

It is so efficient that these rows of hanging plants produce 400 times more food per acre than a traditional [farm](#).

AI monitors growth patterns and constantly adjusts [environmental factors](#) such as temperature, water and light patterns to ensure ever-more efficient and economical output.

In an era that has seen food production lines disrupted by a pandemic, wildfires and hurricanes, Plenty's approach will play a key role in ensuring future stability in the food chain. Plenty's web site explains vertical farming "free agriculture from the constraints of weather, seasons, time, distance, pests, natural disasters and climate."

Also noteworthy is that the crops are grown "GMO-free" and use no pesticides or herbicides, according to Plenty. Plenty will soon supply more than 400 stores in California with its produce. The company says its packaging is specially designed to keep produce fresh longer and is 100 percent recyclable.

In October, Driscoll's, a leading producer of fresh berries, reached an agreement with Plenty to produce strawberries year-round in its Laramie, Wyoming-based farming operation, currently the largest privately-owned vertical farming and research facility in the world.

The Plenty website lists several products currently offered in stores, including lettuce, arugula, bok choy, mizuna and kale. If the first civilizations to invent farming back around 12,000 BC only had the convenience of vertical farming, maybe they could have saved 8,000 or so years by spending more time working on inventing the wheel. And ear pods.

Click below to watch video:

[TIGRIS FARM - VIDEO](#)



Click on link BELOW to find out what you should know about vertical farming:

[VERTICAL FARMING INFORMATION](#)

Photo of a lake in Australia resembles a tree

USA Today

The photo was taken by [Derry Moroney](#) in December. He is an amateur photographer who has been capturing aerial images of Lake Cakora for about six months.

Lake Cakora is a lake and lagoon that is sometimes open to the ocean at Brooms Head Beach. Moroney snapped the viral photo after several days of consecutive storms in the Clarence Valley, per [ABC North Coast](#).

He explained the phenomenon behind the photo to BBC.

"It's a lake that connects to a beach and also an estuary, and in the estuary and up next to the beach is a bunch of tea trees," he said. "During the big storms, as it comes back in during the high tide, all the tea tree oil runs back into it, and creates the forks and all the hooks of the tree of life."

Though the image might not look real, it's a bonafide photograph of Lake Cakora in New South Wales, Australia.



Now how beautiful is this?!!

Waste not: Company turns litter into sand, tackling global plastic pollution crisis

NEWS24

Amy Gibbings



- A pilot plant in Cape Town turns unrecyclable waste plastic into an aggregate that offers a sustainable alternative to sand in the concrete industry – while tackling the global plastic pollution crisis.
- The Costa Rica-based company aims to alleviate the pressure on the environment from increasing population growth by clearing plastic pollution from rivers and oceans.
- CEO Brett Jordaan said if the company were to replace 2.8% of sand used in the concrete industry, they'd absorb all the plastic on earth.

The Centre for Regenerative Design and Collaboration (CRDC) is addressing two major environmental problems – pollution and the need for sustainably sourced sand, with one clever solution.

During lockdown, the CRDC worked on a small pilot plant in Cape Town that converts unrecyclable waste plastic into an aggregate. This aggregate, in turn, offers a sustainable alternative to sand in the concrete industry.

The Costa Rica-based company aims to reduce plastic pollution in the environment by cleaning up rivers, beaches and oceans. It hopes to operate a large-scale facility by June 2021 that will be able to process up to 48 tonnes of waste plastic per day.

"The environmental benefits are significant. I mean not only are we pulling waste plastic out of the environment but we're also replacing sand, which is the second most traded commodity globally and it's in short supply," global CEO Brett Jordaan said.

Jordaan explained that sand utilised in concrete must have irregular grains in order to help with cohesion, which means it is typically sourced or mined from sensitive areas such as riverbeds and beaches – which gives rise to growing pressure on the industry to find sustainable alternatives.

"We can take vast quantities of unrecyclable waste plastic across all of the different types – it can be dirty, messy and co-mingled – and we turn it into a high-quality synthetic sand which goes into concrete and makes the end products stronger, lighter and better insulating," he said.

[READ FURTHER](#)

I am now the proud owner of 2 boxes of **Relate** bracelets which were delivered to me last week. There are 10 bracelets in each box and there is a special limited edition on offer. The Rotary Club of Newlands is doing a great job in promoting the special.

These bracelets will make wonderful stocking fillers for Christmas to give to family and friends and, not only is it a great gift to give, it is also a contribution towards charity projects which so desperately need finances and it provides employment for those less privileged than others. Now, how nice is that?!

I am passionate about the environment and the turmoil we face with saving our precious planet. Every little bit towards giving to the environment counts!

Have a look at the information below. You can also visit the **Relate** website and their shop. There is also a short video you can watch.

Relate bracelets are handmade and sold to make a difference and change lives. As a 100% not-for-profit social enterprise, the majority of revenue is donated to credible causes and invested in social upliftment initiatives, with a focus on creating opportunities for all involved, at every stage of a project.

Whenever you buy and wear Relate bracelets, you know that your contribution will reach the causes and people for whom it was meant, and ultimately change lives.

Visit for more information:

www.relate.org.za

www.relate.org.za/shop

www.relate.org.za/causes (have a look at the different causes you can donate to)

<https://vimeo.com/453354824> (watch the video)



FOR YOUR FAITHFUL FURRY FRIEND....

You can also buy a dog collar for your pooch....!!
Proceeds of these collars go towards the NSPCA.

Check out the website for prices or the facebook page link below: <https://fb.watch/2nmy7gSdD/>

These are five projects I am supporting, besides others. I wear my bracelets with pride! *Tanya*



This is why it is important to edit your advertisements and notices

Real advertisements

Modular Sofas. Only \$299. For rest or fore play.

Wanted: Hair-cutter. Excellent growth potential.

Wanted. Man to take care of cow that does not smoke or drink.

3-year-old teacher need for pre-school. Experience preferred.

Our experienced Mom will care of your child. Fenced yard, meals, and smacks included.

Our bikinis are exciting. They are simply the tops.

Auto Repair Service. Free pick-up and delivery. Try us once, you'll never go anywhere again.

Holcross pullets. Starting to lay Betty Clayton, Granite 5-6204.

Illiterate? Write today for free help.

Girl wanted to assist magician in cutting-off-head illusion. Blue Cross and salary.

For Sale. Three canaries of undermined sex.

Get rid of aunts: Zap does the job in 24 hours.

Christmas tag-sale. Handmade gifts for the hard-to-find person.

The rosebud on the alter this morning is to announce the birth of David Alan Belzer, the sin of Rev. and Mrs. Julius Belzer.

Supposedly, these are actual advertisements that have appeared in papers across the country.

Wanted. Widower with school-age children requires person to assume general housekeeping duties. Must be capable of contributing to growth of family.

Mixing bowl set designed to please a cook with round bottom for efficient beating.

Semi-Annual after-Christmas Sale.

And now, the Superstore--unequaled in size, unmatched in variety, unrivaled inconvenience.

We will oil your sewing machine and adjust tension in your home for \$1.00.

Tuesday at 4:00 PM there will be an ice cream social. All ladies giving milk will please come early.

Wednesday the ladies liturgy will meet. Mrs. Johnson will sing "Put me in my little bed" accompanied by the pastor.

Thursday at 5:00 PM there will be a meeting of the Little Mothers Club. All ladies wishing to be "Little Mothers" will meet with the Pastor in his study.

This afternoon there will be a meeting in the South and North ends of the church. Children will be baptized at both ends.

In a maternity ward: "No children allowed."

On a long-established dry cleaners: "38 years on the same spot."

Stay safe, healthy and take care.

**Till next time.... Tanya
(a.k.a Tatiana)**