

## Highlights

- Nsanje district has registered its first COVID-19 case in the past 24 hours
- Thirteen new cases have been registered among residents returning from South Africa in the past 24 hours
- In total, 18 new COVID-19 cases, four new recoveries, and no new deaths have been recorded in the past 24 hours
- 3324 COVID-19 tests have been conducted to date
- 233 people have entered the country in the past 24 hours

## Background

On 31 December 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) was alerted of several cases of pneumonia of unknown cause detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China. Later the disease was named Coronavirus disease-19 (COVID-19) and the virus was named Sars-Cov2. World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

On 20 March 2020, COVID-19 was declared a national disaster in Malawi, and on 2 April 2020, Malawi registered the first cases of COVID-19. On 6 May 2020, a Presidential Taskforce on COVID-19 was appointed.

## Global situation

As of 24 May 2020, 5 204 508 (101 502 new) COVID-19 cases have been reported globally, including 337 687 (4 286 new) deaths. Out of these cases, 77 295 (3 039 new) cases and 2 073 (33 new) deaths are in Africa. **Table 1** below shows the number of reported cases and deaths in the countries that share boundaries with Malawi.

**Table 1:** Number of cases and deaths of COVID-19 in countries that share a boundary with Malawi

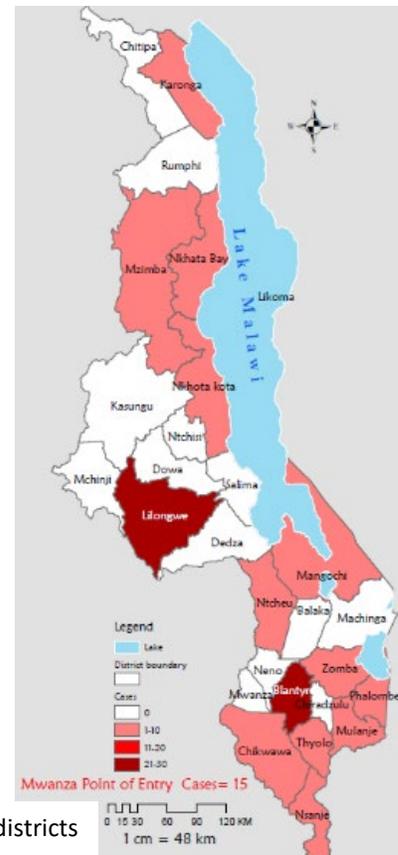
| Country    | Cumulative cases | New cases | Cumulative deaths | New deaths | Days since last reported case |
|------------|------------------|-----------|-------------------|------------|-------------------------------|
| Mozambique | 168              | 4         | 0                 | 0          | 0                             |
| Zambia     | 920              | 0         | 7                 | 0          | 1                             |
| Tanzania   | 509              | 0         | 21                | 0          | 18                            |

## Local situation

In the past 24 hours, Malawi has registered 18 new COVID-19 cases, 4 new recoveries, and no new death. Fifteen of the new cases have been reported from Mwanza point of entry; 13 residents returning from South Africa and 2 truck drivers. Nsanje, Karonga, and Blantyre have registered one new case each.

Cumulatively, Malawi has recorded 101 cases including 4 deaths. **Figure 1** is a map of Malawi showing the number of cases in each affected district. Of the 101 cases, 45 were locally transmitted while 52 were imported and 4 are still under investigation. Thirty-seven of the total cases have now recovered bringing the total number of active cases to 60. The median age of the cases is 33 years, the youngest case is aged 6 years and the oldest is 75 years and 62.4% are male. **Table 3**, and **Figures 2, 3**, and **4** show detailed distributions of the cases.

Currently, Malawi has officially closed all borders except three borders to allow transit of essential goods and services. In the past 24 hours, 233 (including 92 returnees) people have entered Malawi. Active tracing and monitoring of contacts of confirmed COVID-19 are ongoing, currently, a total of 673 contacts of COVID-19 cases have been traced out of which 442 have been tested. **Table 2** below provides a summary statistics of surveillance activities.



**Figure 1:** Map of Malawi showing the affected districts

**Table 2:** Summary statistics for COVID-19 outbreak in Malawi as of 24 May 2020

| Parameter   | Statistic |
|---|-----------|
| Cumulative confirmed cases  | 101       |
| Number of active cases  | 60        |
| Number of cases with a positive result in the past 24 hours         | 18        |
| Cumulative deaths   | 4         |
| Cumulative recoveries   | 37        |
| Suspected cases   | 3414      |
| Cumulative specimen received by the lab                             | 3414      |
| Cumulative specimen tested  | 3324      |
| Specimen received by the lab in the past 24 hours                   | 152       |
| Cumulative contacts listed and follow up(primary and secondary)     | 673       |
| Contacts tested to date   | 442       |
| PoEs* entries in the last 24 hours.                                 | 233       |
| High-risk travellers on follow up at district level **              | 3142      |
| Cumulative travellers completed 14 days follow up at district level | 1897      |

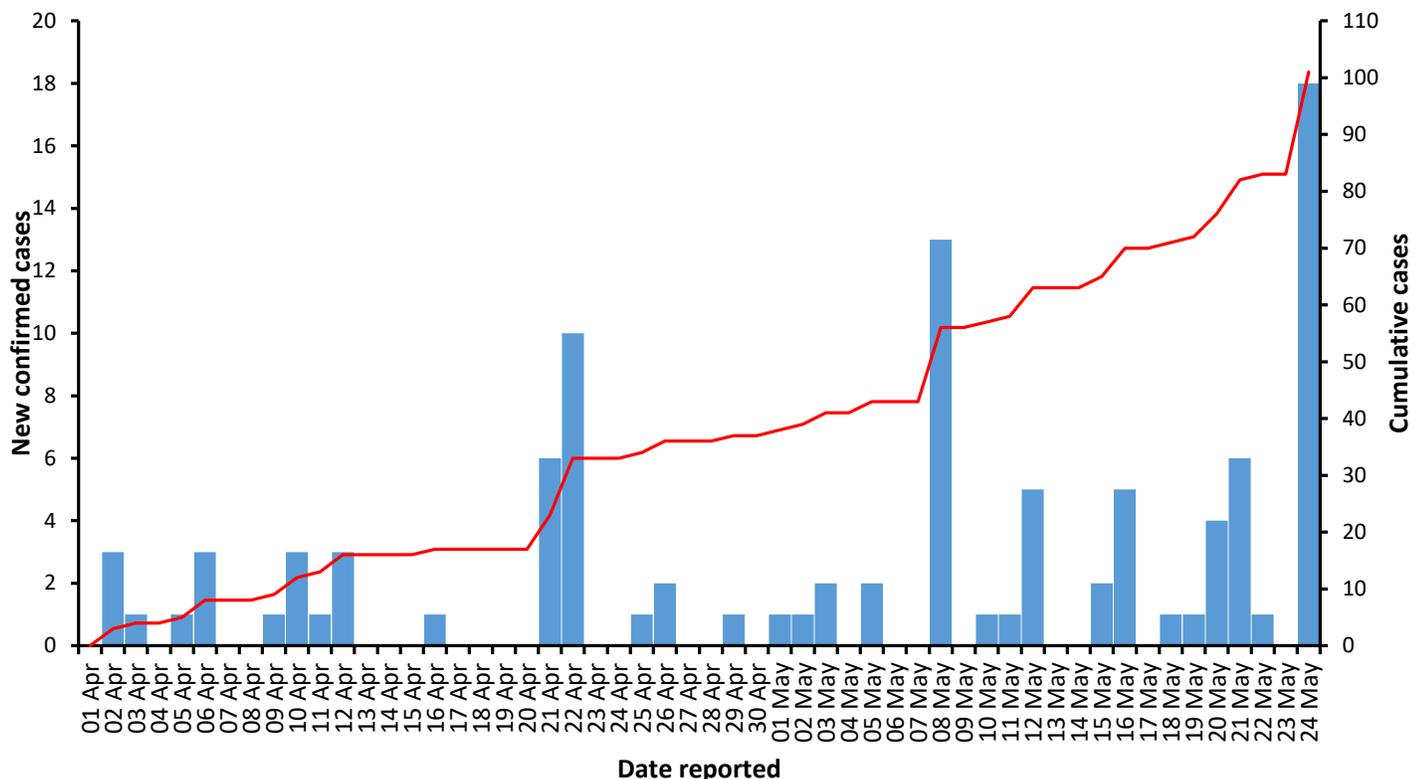
\* Point of entry

\*\*The number of high-risk travellers on follow up as district level is under-reported (few districts reported)


**Table 3:** Summary of COVID-19 cases reported countrywide as of 24 May 2020

| Reporting District | Confirmed Cases |            | Deaths   |            | Recoveries |            | Transmission Classification* |           |                     | Days since last reported case |
|--------------------|-----------------|------------|----------|------------|------------|------------|------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
|                    | New             | Cumulative | New      | Cumulative | New        | Cumulative | Imported                     | Local     | Under investigation |                               |
| Lilongwe           | 0               | 31         | 1        | 3          | 0          | 21         | 8                            | 21        | 0                   | 2                             |
| Blantyre           | 1               | 25         | 0        | 1          | 4          | 13         | 11                           | 13        | 2                   | 0                             |
| Thyolo             | 0               | 10         | 0        | 0          | 0          | 1          | 1                            | 9         | 0                   | 9                             |
| Mzuzu              | 0               | 4          | 0        | 0          | 0          | 0          | 2                            | 2         | 0                   | 3                             |
| Nkhata Bay         | 0               | 5          | 0        | 0          | 0          | 0          | 5                            | 0         | 0                   | 7                             |
| Zomba              | 0               | 2          | 0        | 0          | 0          | 1          | 1                            | 0         | 1                   | 7                             |
| Chikwawa           | 0               | 1          | 0        | 0          | 0          | 1          | 1                            | 0         | 0                   | 39                            |
| Nkhotakota         | 0               | 1          | 0        | 0          | 0          | 1          | 1                            | 0         | 0                   | 37                            |
| Karonga            | 1               | 2          | 0        | 0          | 0          | 0          | 2                            | 0         | 1                   | 0                             |
| Mangochi           | 0               | 1          | 0        | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1                            | 0         | 0                   | 12                            |
| Mulanje            | 0               | 1          | 0        | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1                            | 0         | 0                   | 10                            |
| Ntcheu             | 0               | 1          | 0        | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1                            | 0         | 0                   | 5                             |
| Phalombe           | 0               | 1          | 0        | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1                            | 0         | 0                   | 3                             |
| Nsanje             | 1               | 1          | 0        | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1                            | 0         | 0                   | 1                             |
| Mwanza PoE         | 15              | 15         | 0        | 0          | 0          | 0          | 15                           | 0         | 0                   | 0                             |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>18</b>       | <b>101</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>4</b>   | <b>4</b>   | <b>38</b>  | <b>52</b>                    | <b>45</b> | <b>4</b>            |                               |

\*Imported means that infection has been acquired from outside the country; Local transmission means that the source of infection is within the country; Under investigation means that the source of infection has not been determined


**Figure 2:** New and cumulative confirmed COVID-19 cases in Malawi by date reported as of 24 May 2020

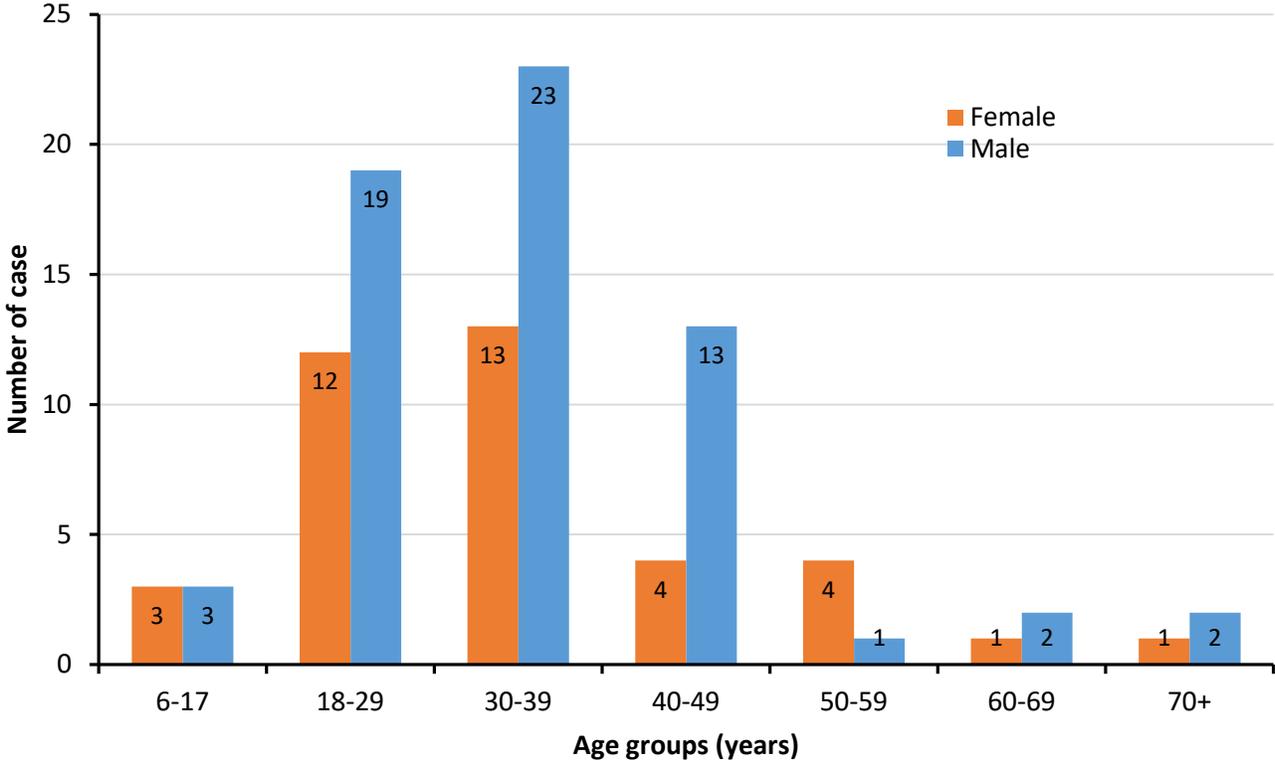


Figure 3: Age and sex distribution of COVID-19 cases in Malawi as of 24 May 2020

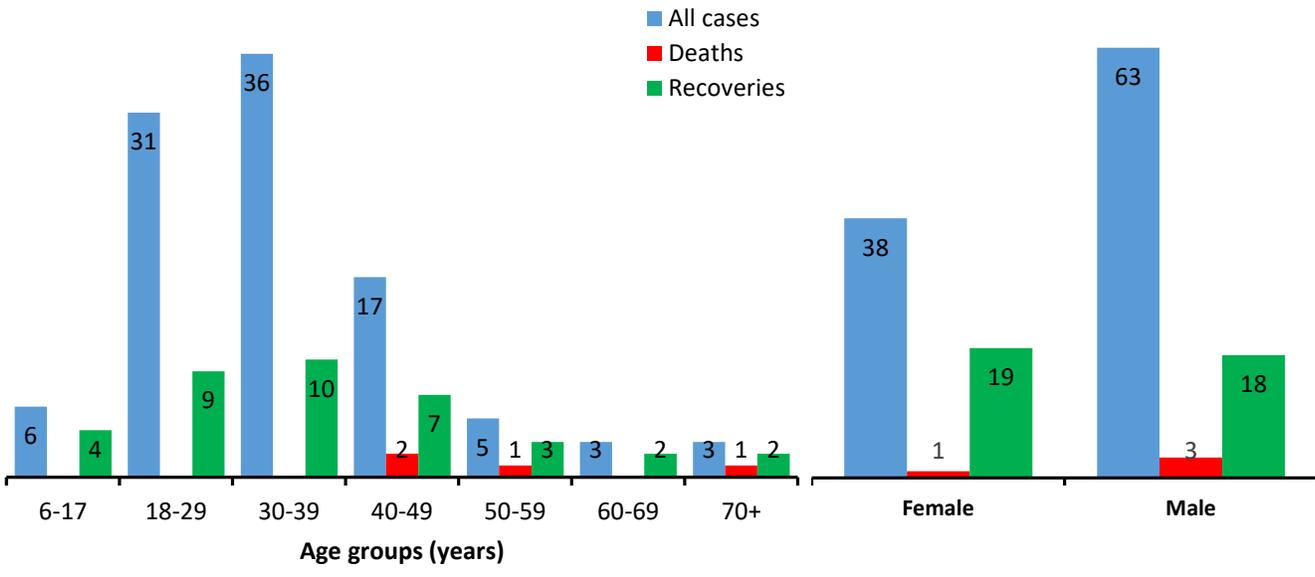


Figure 4: Distribution of COVID-19 cases, deaths and recoveries in Malawi as of 24 May 2020

## Summary of Prevention and Response Activities

### Laboratory testing

Kamuzu Central Hospital and Partners in Hope laboratories have been set up as COVID-19 testing sites bring a total of COVID-19 testing sites to 13. The other COVID-19 testing sites in the country are the National Health Reference laboratory (NHRL), College of Medicine (COM) laboratory, Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Trust (MLW), Mzuzu Central Hospital laboratory, Mzimba south district hospital laboratory, Balaka Dream laboratory, Zomba Central Hospital laboratory, Thyolo district hospital laboratory, Nsanje district hospital laboratory, Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital laboratory and Blantyre Dream laboratory. As of 24 May 2020, a total of 3324 samples have been tested, with 101 positive results, 63 pending results and 27 to be re-tested. **Table 4** below shows the breakdown of tests done by each laboratory.

**Table 4:** Laboratory testing for COVID-19 for Malawi as of 24 May 2020.

| Name of Laboratory | Cumulative samples | In the past 24hrs |                | Total       |           | Result        |            |             |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|---------------|------------|-------------|
|                    |                    | Samples received  | Samples tested | Tested      | Pending   | Indeterminate | Positive   | Negative    |
| NHRL               | 717                | 0                 | 0              | 717         | 0         | 0             | 31         | 686         |
| COM                | 977                | 13                | 0              | 942         | 25        | 10            | 28         | 914         |
| MLW                | 473                | 0                 | 0              | 455         | 4         | 14            | 24         | 417         |
| Mzuzu              | 203                | 12                | 11             | 202         | 1         | 0             | 11         | 191         |
| Mzimba             | 331                | 2                 | 0              | 303         | 28        | 0             | 0          | 303         |
| Zomba              | 79                 | 0                 | 0              | 79          | 0         | 0             | 1          | 78          |
| Balaka             | 71                 | 0                 | 0              | 67          | 4         | 0             | 0          | 67          |
| Thyolo             | 43                 | 0                 | 0              | 40          | 0         | 3             | 1          | 39          |
| Nsanje             | 10                 | 3                 | 3              | 10          | 0         | 0             | 1          | 9           |
| QECH               | 345                | 122               | 122            | 345         | 0         | 0             | 4          | 341         |
| Dream BT           | 165                | 0                 | 0              | 164         | 1         | 0             | 0          | 164         |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>3414</b>        | <b>152</b>        | <b>136</b>     | <b>3324</b> | <b>63</b> | <b>27</b>     | <b>101</b> | <b>3209</b> |

### Clinical case management

- 46 active cases are being managed as outpatients and are under self-isolation
- 13 cases from Mwanza point of entry have been institutionalized
- 1 case is hospitalized
- Cumulatively 37 cases have now recovered and 4 have died
- 3 of the active cases are health care workers from Blantyre

### Enforcement and security

- Police and MDF deployed to provide border security patrols
- Road traffic police enforcing new seating capacity for public transportation
- Control of crowds in public and private service outlets (e.g. banks)
- Joint patrols on Lake Malawi (MDF and Immigration)
- Roadblocks mounted in strategic points across the country



### Point of entry

- Monitoring personnel transporting essential goods and services
- All borders closed except 3 for essential personnel travel (e.g. petroleum services and other goods).
- Extra laboratory staff deployed to Mwanza to support sample collection for citizens repatriated from other countries

### Logistics

- Deliveries to districts of supplies from UNICEF is done
- Deliveries to districts of supplies from Chinese donation in progress – besides the districts, this also accommodates Army, Prison, and Police

### Risk communication and community engagement

- The national team deployed to northern region to strengthen district teams in community engagement and management of cases
- Continued airing of COVID-19 public service announcements on community and national radio stations.
- Daily updates through **ZODIAK radio**
- Set up interactive COVID-19 messages on **Airtel \*929#**
- Production and printing of fact sheets, posters, leaflets, and roll-up banners.
- Push messages on Airtel and TNM in both English and Chichewa.
- Community awareness meetings in progress
- Develop messaging for public service announcements to suit the current measures on lockdown.
- Mobile van units for the distribution of information, education and communication materials in Lilongwe, Blantyre, and Mangochi

### Coordination

In order to facilitate coordination and maintain focused efforts towards combating COVID-19 we hold routine and ad-hoc meetings:

- Presidential Task Force on COVID-9 was established and they meet regularly
- Weekly health cluster meetings
- Weekly meetings of technical committees for the various response pillars
- Daily surveillance technical committee meetings
- Daily emergency operation center meetings
- Implementation of the national response plan
- The orientation of district public health emergency management committees in all districts

## Case definitions

### 1. Suspect Case

- a. A patient with acute respiratory illness (fever and at least one sign/symptom of respiratory disease, e.g. cough, shortness of breath), AND a history of travel to or residence in a location reporting community transmission of COVID-19 disease during the 14 days prior to symptom onset.
- b. A patient with any acute respiratory illness AND having been in contact with a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case in the last 14 days prior to symptom onset;

### OR

- c. A patient with severe acute respiratory illness (fever and at least one sign/symptom of respiratory disease, e.g. cough and shortness of breath) AND in the absence of an alternative diagnosis that fully explains the clinical presentation



## 2. Probable case

- a. A suspect case for whom testing for COVID-19 is inconclusive. Inconclusive being the result of the test reported by the laboratory

OR

- b. A suspect case for whom testing could not be performed for any reason.

## 3. Confirmed case

- a. A person with laboratory confirmation of COVID-19 infection, irrespective of clinical signs, and symptoms.

## 4. Definition of contact

- a. A primary contact is a person who experienced any one of the following exposures during the 2 days before and the 14 days after the onset of symptoms of a probable or confirmed case:
  - i. Face-to-face contact with a probable or confirmed case within 1 meter and for more than 15 minutes;
  - ii. Direct physical contact with a probable or confirmed case;
  - iii. Direct care for a patient with probable or confirmed COVID-19 disease without using proper personal protective equipment

Note: for confirmed asymptomatic cases, the period of contact is measured as the 2 days before through the 14 days after the date on which the sample was taken which led to confirmation.

- b. A secondary contact is a person who was in contact with the primary contact or any contact which does not meet the definition of the primary contact.

## 5. COVID-19 death

COVID-19 death is defined for surveillance purposes as a death resulting from a clinically compatible illness in a probable or confirmed COVID-19 case unless there is a clear alternative cause of death that cannot be related to COVID disease (e.g. trauma). There should be no period of complete recovery between illness and death.

## Classification of transmission patterns

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**No cases:** Countries/territories/areas with no confirmed cases

**Sporadic cases:** Countries/territories/areas with one or more cases, imported or locally detected

**Clusters of cases:** Countries/territories/areas experiencing cases, clustered in time, geographic location and/or by common exposures

**Community transmission:** Countries/area/territories experiencing larger outbreaks of local transmission defined through an assessment of factors including, but not limited to:

1. Large numbers of cases not linkable to transmission chains
2. Large numbers of cases from sentinel lab surveillance
3. Multiple unrelated clusters in several areas of the country/territory/area

## Conclusion

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The Ministry of Health and partners continue in its efforts to ensure the citizens are protected from the Coronavirus outbreak and that the country is able to detect and respond to any cases that may arise.

- Daily update dashboards can be accessed from <http://covid19.health.gov.mw/>
- Toll-free call line with Chipatala Cha Pa Foni (number: **54747**).

**Prepared by: Epidemiology Unit, Public Health Institute of Malawi (PHIM), available on <https://malawipublichealth.org/index.php/resources/covid-19-daily-updates/detail>**