

**CHURCHES BARRED FROM  
USING SCHOOLS** >pg2

**CONCERNS OVER  
MAPHISA GOLD RUSH**  
>pg3

**COVID-19  
WATCH**

**885**  
cases

**206**  
recoveries

**9**  
deaths

# Mbuya Nehanda monument criticised

**G**overnment intention to build a state of the art monument and statue of Mbuya Nehanda has been criticised by some church leaders.

The Concern is that instead of building hospitals to deal with the emerging cases from Covid-19, the government has prioritised the statue and monument.

A prominent pastor questioned why the government was in such a hurry to build and erect the statue while ignoring the urgency on need to equip hospitals.

Responding to this move, a member of the President's Advisory Council (PAC) Pastor Shingi Munyeza said the government gave importance to the dead compared to the lives of people in the country who are going through a difficult phase in life due to the pandemic.

"This is an occult nature that seeks to appease the dead at the expense of the living. Its power is in the dead instead of the living," he said.

He went on to say that he had no issues with

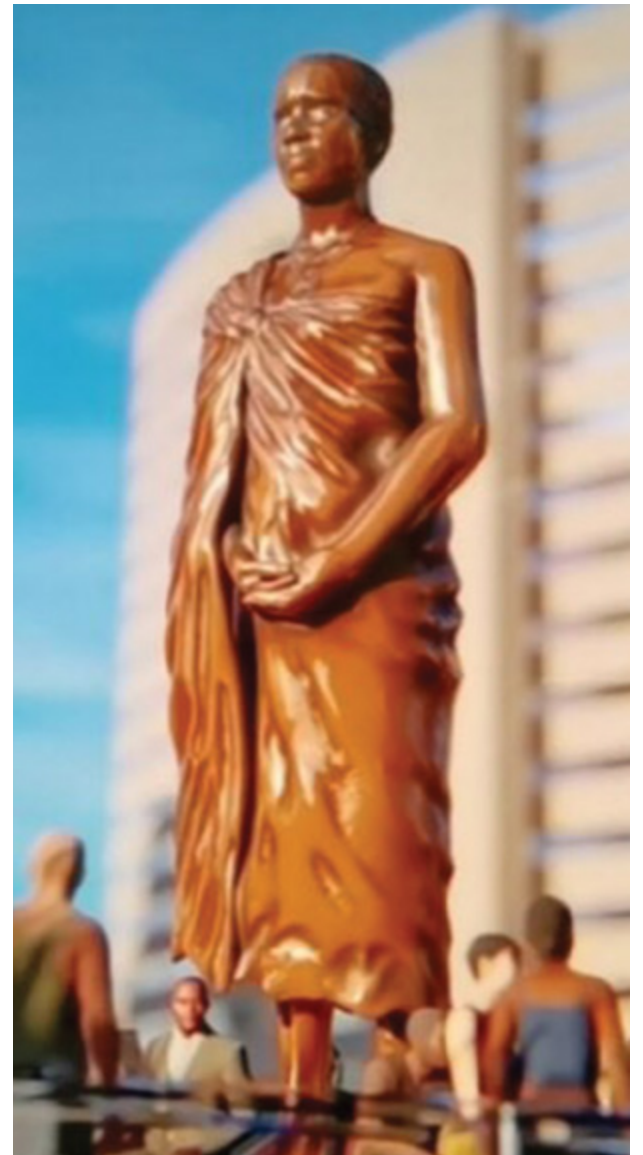
the erection of statues but the government of Zimbabwe decided to construct one at a time when the country was facing a pandemic that needed urgent attention, reaction and money.

"I have no problem with statues, but they cannot build it at the expense of the dying people. How do you build a statue whilst people are shutting down hospitals," he said.

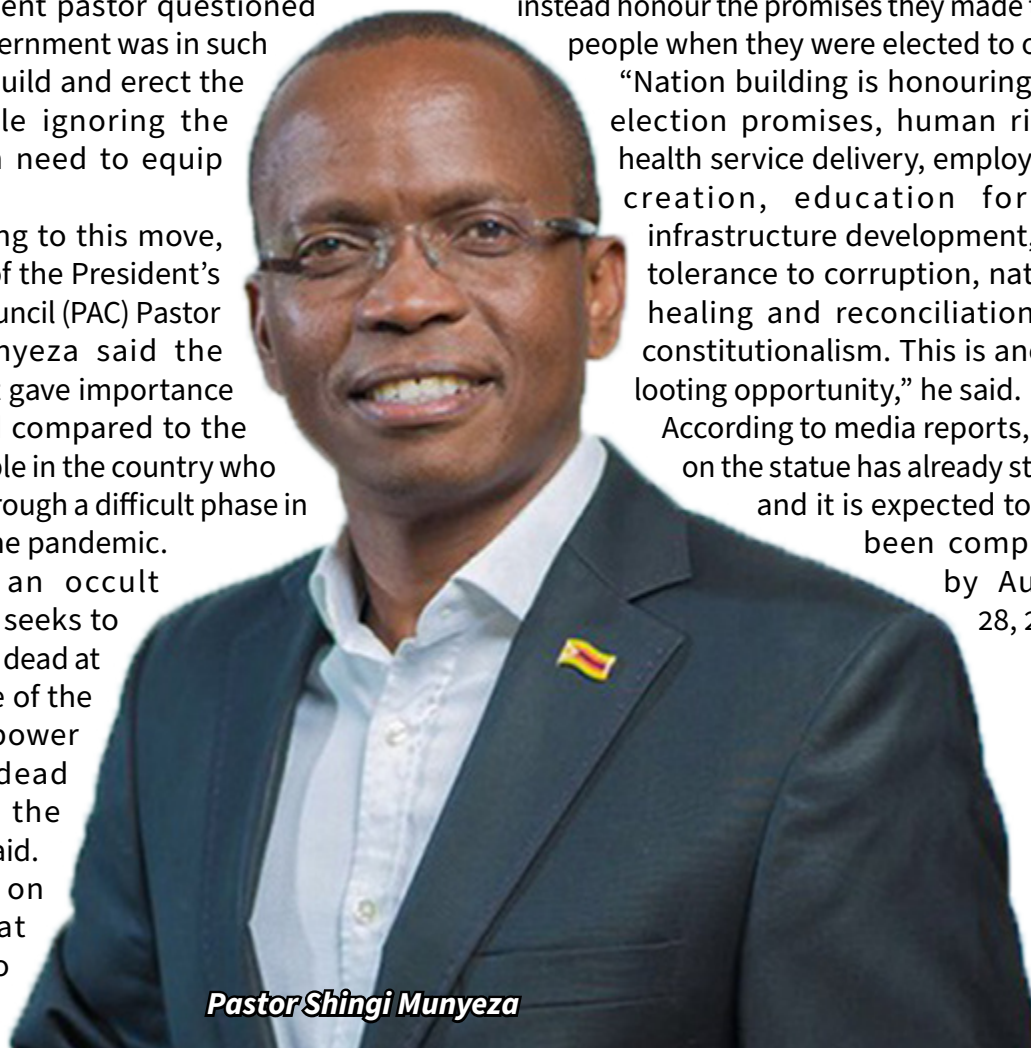
Dr Munyeza said the government should instead honour the promises they made to the people when they were elected to office.

"Nation building is honouring your election promises, human rights, health service delivery, employment creation, education for all, infrastructure development, zero tolerance to corruption, national healing and reconciliation and constitutionalism. This is another looting opportunity," he said.

According to media reports, work on the statue has already started and it is expected to have been completed by August 28, 2020.



*A rendering of the Mbuya Nehanda statue*



*Pastor Shingi Munyeza*





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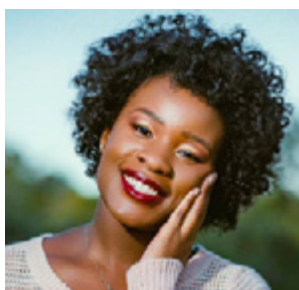
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# Churches barred from using schools

**The Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, Ambassador Cain Mathema has directed schools not to open its doors for churches.**

Some churches hire school premises for their Sunday services and had intended to start meeting again in classrooms and halls.

In a press statement released yesterday, Ambassador Mathema said it has come to his attention that there are churches that are intending to use the schools.

"It has come to the Ministry's attention that there are some organisations including churches that would like to utilise school premises and structures during this Covid-19 period and as we prepare for the reopening of schools on 28 July 2020," he said.

Ambassador Mathema said the government was focused on ensuring the safe and secure reopening that meets the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines. He said due to this schools will not be open for use by other organisations until further notice.

"Given the need to disinfect schools and make other preparations, the schools will not be open for use by other organisations. I would like to state that school is opening only for 2020 examination classes and the other levels will resume school when the health situation permits," he said.

However, churches expressed concern over the increasing number of Covid-19 cases in the city of Bulawayo. Apostle Pedzisai Sithole said there was a need for the church to pray and engage with the communities.

"We really need to pray and engage communities where we are because things are not really looking good," he said.

Pastor Edwin Ndlovu said the government should consider postponing the opening of schools to August. He said according to medical findings, Covid-19 thrives on cold conditions hence this will affect children attending school during this winter season.

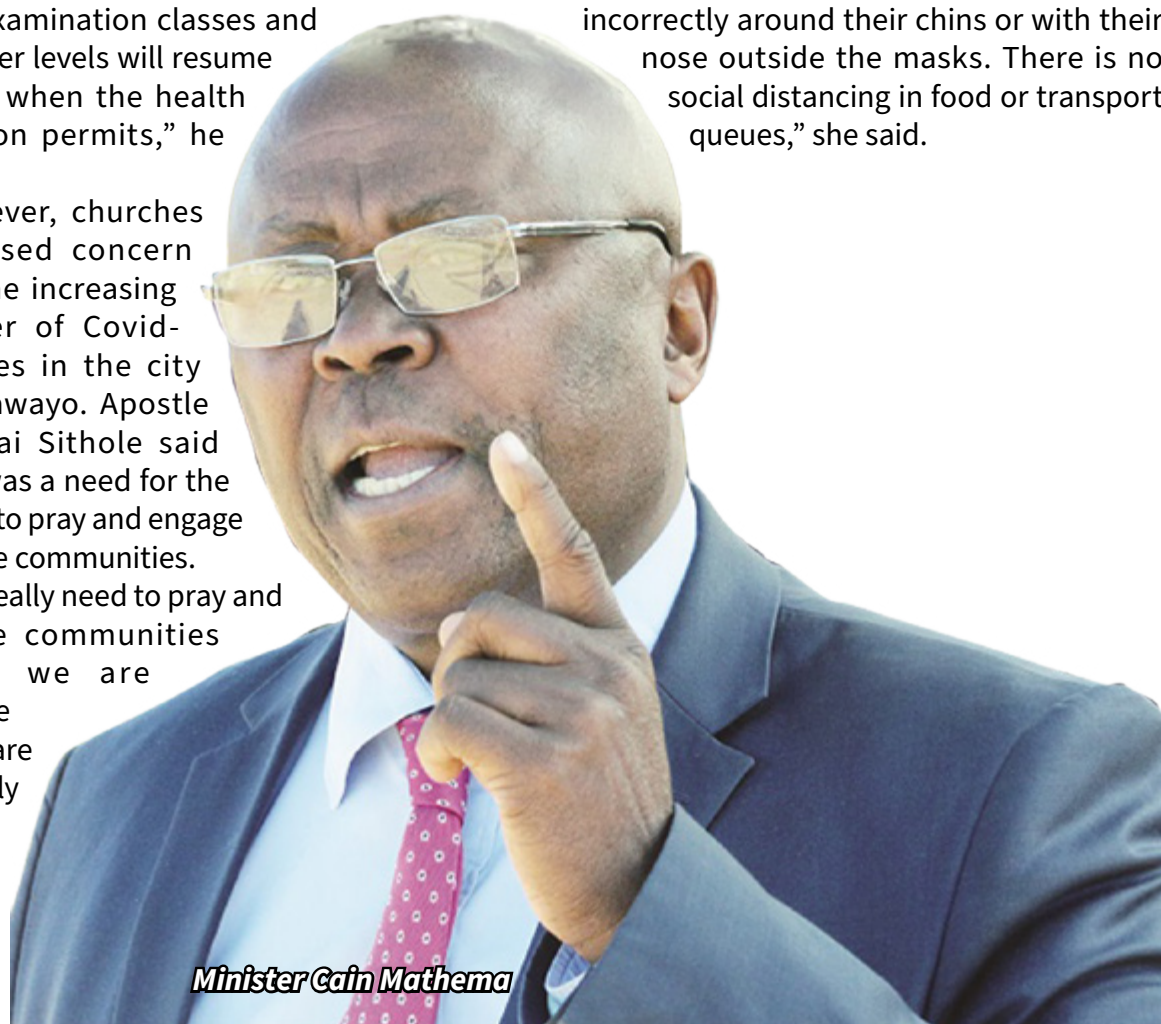
"Covid-19 thrives on cold conditions like June and July. If the government had pushed reopening of schools and churches to September maybe we could limit the spread of the virus," he said.

Writing on his twitter account, the Mpilo Clinical Director, Doctor Solwayo Ngwenya said more people are in danger of contracting the virus if strict measures are not put in place. Currently 885 people have tested positive including 206 recoveries and nine deaths.

"Unfortunately, the people and the economy do not like lockdowns. So biblical catastrophe is on the way. Frightening new figures mean deaths are coming soon," he said.

Senior Reverend Sarah Nyathi, however said these figures can be mitigated by people observing social distancing, wearing masks, hand sanitising and observing lockdowns. She said if people obey and pray, the tide can be turned.

"Unfortunately, people are wearing masks incorrectly around their chins or with their nose outside the masks. There is no social distancing in food or transport queues," she said.



**Minister Cain Mathema**



# Concerns over Maphisa gold rush

**In spite of the surge in the number of Covid-19 cases in the country, gold panners have descended on Maphisa in search of the priced mineral.**

The invasion of the area by gold planners has raised concern on the spread of the virus in the area.

In an interview with the Christian Voice, the Zimbabwe Christian Alliance (ZCA) area coordinator for Maphisa, Pastor Mlindeli Mpofu said that the situation in his area had deteriorated to alarming levels.

“It’s chaotic. There is absolutely no adherence to health regulations. Masks have literally become a passport for one to pass through roadblocks if they see policemen. People no longer wear them. Worse at these mining spots people do whatever they want to do. We fear that if the situation is not addressed a health time bomb is likely to explode”, he said.

The gold rush has attracted both young and old as people see this as an escape from hunger.

“The situation is not good, not only that they will spread Covid-19 but people are hungry and they have no option but to give in their lives and take this risk. Imagine there are old ladies of above 70 years carrying bags of ore for more than 300 metres”, lamented Pastor Mpofu.

A villager from the same area said the discovery of more rich ore deposits in Maphisa has prompted the rush of gold panners from areas such as Esigodini, Gwanda, Mberengwa and Shangani to throng the area.



**Gold panners in Maphisa**



“There is a lot of chaos at the site. Panners have been scrambling over the control of gold deposits. It seems like people are only concerned about enriching themselves than preventing the spread of the virus. What worries me is that a majority of these panners are people that are coming from other areas and who knows whether they don’t have Covid-19,” said the villager who requested anonymity.

“With the history of violent panners in Zimbabwe we are afraid that amaShurugwi will come and cause havoc in the area as they have done in areas such as Kwekwe, Nyathi, Esigodini”, the villager added.

One youth, Mncedisi Moyo from Maphisa told

the Christian Voice that he also joined the trek to Maphisa despite the dangers of contracting the virus. He added that he would rather die of Coronavirus than to perish from hunger.

“I came from the Siganda area after hearing that people were making money here in Maphisa. Yes we are aware of the dangers that are posed by the virus but there is nothing that we could do”, he said

The gold rush in Maphisa comes at a time when Matabeleland South and Bulawayo experienced a surge in the number of Covid-19 cases as a result of the proximity to virus ravaged South Africa.

## Cities and Towns Updates

**LUPANE:** Vegetable market has opened. Masks have become a normal practice. The Mabhikwa school is almost empty as most of the families that were quarantined have been discharged. Those who were isolated have been discharged after testing negative. Only two men are now remaining at the quarantine centre.

**HURUNGWE:** Life has gone back to normal in most areas of the district, vendors and flea markets have started working. The police are no longer controlling people’s movements. Bars are still operating illegally. Volume of traffic is still high in the CBD. Clinics are operating as normal but no drugs. No confirmed case of Covid-19 in the district.

**MATOBO (RURAL):** People are no longer putting on masks, they only wear them when they are going to town. There is no subsidized mealie meal and the available commodities are pegged in Rands and USD. Shops do accept bond notes, but the prices would be too high. Food situation is dire, people are spending days surviving on amacimbi and melons (amakiliwani). Mealie meal is available at shops, but villagers cannot afford to buy them. Churches opened but no sanitizers, they only hand wash. People are no longer focusing on Covid -19, but they are trying to find food for their hungry families.

**MAPHISA:** It is business as usual; people are becoming reluctant to put on masks. All shops

do sanitize but there are no temperature checks. Amakorokoza are congested in areas where they do their mining and are not wearing masks. Subsidized mealie meal is sometimes available at Zapalala but very few people get it.

**PLUMTREE:** Crime committees which were formed 3 weeks ago are bearing fruits as patrols are now being done except for a few wards that are yet to receive training. Zesa mainline between Bulawayo and Plumtree is undergoing refurbishment as a result electricity is cut every Monday and Thursdays between 8:00am and 5pm. The Grain Marketing Board (GMB) now receives very few stocks of maize for distribution to rural areas.