administrative headquarters, privately owned website *Observ’Algerie* reported on March 25th. Some protesters said they were still sleeping on the streets due to the damage caused to their homes.

The 5.9-magnitude tremor did not cause any casualties, but damaged at least 300 buildings, including homes, schools and other public buildings. A week after the quake, local authorities had not removed the rubble from the streets, even where entire buildings had collapsed, privately owned website *Tout Sur l’Algerie* reported on March 23rd, adding that the main street was still strewn with debris. The same day, state media announced that financial aid “ranging from Dinars 200,000 to 700,000” ($1,493 to $5,225) would be provided to those affected by the quake. *(Sources as referenced in text)*

**EGYPT**

**Sisi’s ‘Gifts’**

Some 60m citizens are set to benefit from a boost to their incomes.

President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi has ordered increases in salaries for the public sector and the minimum wage amid wide support from domestic media. The president ordered the increase of salaries for the state’s administrative apparatus by Egyptian pounds 37bn (around $2,4bn), according to a presidency Facebook statement on March 15th. Sisi, in a meeting with the prime minister and finance minister, also ordered the monthly minimum wage be increased to E£2,400 ($153) from the previous E£1,200. He also ordered the disbursement of two bonuses for state employees with E£7.5bn ($478m) allocated to them. The president also directed that incentives for all state employees be increased by a total cost of about E£17bn ($1.1bn). Some E£1.5bn were also allocated to state employees who are set to relocate to the New Administrative Capital, east of Cairo.

Egyptian newspapers on March 16th hailed the move on their front pages. The privately-owned *Youn7* newspaper’s main headline read “Sisi’s gifts to Egyptians”. Similarly, the state-owned *Al-Ahram al-Mas‘as*’s main headline read: “60m citizens benefit from the income increase.” State-owned *Al-Gomhuria* newspaper said: “Egyptians reap the fruits of the success of [economic] reform”.

Since 2016, Egypt has embarked on an economic reform programme that

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**Covid-19**

**Vaccine Donations and Purchases**

Some countries have made direct purchases from the manufacturers, or had donations from *China, Russia, India* and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). China has donated its vaccines to 16 African countries, and India has donated to 15, according to UN data. The UAE has donated to a number of countries, mainly in north Africa.

Recent research by the *World Bank* and the *IMF* estimates that Africa would need to spend about $12bn on acquiring and distributing vaccines in order to get sufficient coverage to stop the virus spreading. *(BBC News online 9/4)*

Vodacom Group and Vodafone Foundation will donate Rand 74m to support the vaccine roll-out to vulnerable and hard-to-reach communities across its markets in Africa. The contribution will buy cold-chain technology and provide logistics support to help to ensure the safe delivery of vaccines that need to be stored at extremely cold temperatures. Separately the organisations will donate R0.8m (R13m) to *Lesotho* to purchase vaccines. The contribution will target Phase Three of the country’s vaccination plan. That includes much of Lesotho’s public and private workforce.

“We are proud to be standing shoulder to shoulder with the *African Union* and national governments to provide practical support for what is an enormous logistical challenge for resource-limited African countries with significant rural populations,” said Shameel Joosub, CEO of Vodacom Group.

**South Africa**’s president, Cyril Ramaphosa, African Union Covid-19 champion, said: “Greater collaboration between government, business, labour and civil society is key to the success of the vaccine rollout. We committed the Vodacom Group and Vodafone Foundation. I want to call on all our private sector partners to support this new phase in our fight against the pandemic.”

AU special envoy on vaccine acquisitions, Strive Masiyiwa expressed his deep appreciation for the intervention, saying: “This is a smart, and strategic donation which will have a far-reaching impact, even beyond this pandemic.” *(techfinancials.co.za)*

**Algeria**: Algeria on April 3rd received a shipment of 900,000 doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine given as part of the international vaccine sharing initiative Covax. *(El-Khabar 3/4)*

**Djibouti**: About 300,000 doses of Sinovac were received on March 18th of which 200,000 doses were a gift from the Chinese government, while 100,000 doses were ordered by the Djibouti government. *(TV Djibouti 18/3)*

**Kenya**: The government has revoked licences for the importation, distribution, and administration of Covid-19 vaccines by the private sector. In a news conference on April 2nd, health cabinet secretary Mutahi Kagwe announced that only the government is authorised as an agent in the vaccination exercise, “until further notice”. The minister said the ban was meant “to protect the integrity of the country and ensure transparency in the vaccination exercise”.

“The vaccines being used in Kenya have been cleared by two institutions – WHO and Pharmacy and Poisons Board (PPB). If a vaccine has not been cleared by WHO, it will not be used in Kenya, whether it is being used in other countries or not,” Kagwe said.

The ban comes amid questions and concerns about the Russian Sputnik V Covid-19 vaccine that is already in the country. On March 29th, the Russian embassy in Nairobi distanced itself from the Sputnik V vaccine, saying it had been imported by a private company. The Russian jab, which is administered twice, is reportedly being sold in Kenya at 50s a dose. *(The Standard 2/4)*

**Lesotho**: A group of private companies under an initiative called the *Sesiu sa Letšoela le Beho ho* has purchased 100,000 doses of the Sputnik V vaccine from Russia. The initiative, which consists of 11 companies, has raised about US$1.7m in pledges towards procurement and distribution of vaccines. *(BBC Monitoring 30/3)*

**Mauritania**: India will give Mauritania tens of thousands of coronavirus vaccine doses as it prepares to open an embassy in the African country. Ambassador Anjani Kumar said the vaccines would arrive on April 14th. *(Sahara Media 9/4)*

**Niger**: Niger has received 25,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine donated by *India*. *(Tele-Sahel 29/3)*

**Somalia**: A plane carrying 200 doses of the Sinopharm Covid-19 vaccine landed at the Aden Adde International Airport in Mogadishu on April 11th. On April 7th, the Somali ambassador to China signed an agreement with China to send Covid-19 vaccines to Somalia. *(Radio Dalsan 11/4)*

**South Africa**: South Africa has finalised the purchase of 51m doses: 31m of Johnson & Johnson’s one-dose vaccine and 20m of Pfizer’s two-dose vaccine. Health minister Zweli Mkhize announced on April 9th.

The vaccination campaign has been moving slowly but it will accelerate with deliveries in April of 3m J&J doses and 6m Pfizer doses, Mkhize said. Further deliveries will cover the bulk of the government’s aim to inoculate 67% of the country’s 60m people by early 2022.

Criticism has mounted, from leading health professionals and ordinary South Africans, over the slow purchase of vaccines. South Africa has by far the largest burden of Covid-19 in Africa. With more than 3m confirmed cases, including 53,173 deaths, the country accounts for more than 30% of the 4.3m cases reported across the continent. South Africa accounts for nearly half Africa’s deaths from the disease. *(Associated Press 9/4)*

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