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Continental News

Internet restricted as Tanzanians vote in key poll

Tanzanians have reported sites, including WhatsApp and Twitter, are being restricted as millions of people vote in the general election. There have also been reports of violence and that police arrested an opposition leader in the semi-autonomous archipelago of Zanzibar.

Voters have until 16:00 local time (13:00 GMT) to cast their ballots.

President John Magufuli, whose party has governed Tanzania for decades, is seeking a second term in office. His main challenger is expected to be Tundu Lissu of the biggest opposition party, Chadema, who survived an assassination attempt three years ago. He returned from Belgium in July where he had undergone rounds of treatment for gunshot wounds. In all, 15 candidates are running for president - including former foreign minister Bernard Membe, an ex-colleague-turned-critic of Mr Magufuli who defected from the ruling party.

Results for the presidential and parliamentary elections are expected to be announced within one week. Tanzanian authorities

have not addressed the apparent internet restrictions, and the country's regulatory body has not responded to the BBC's request for comment. President Magufuli, from the party Chama Cha Mapenduzi (CCM), has styled himself as a stout African nationalist and a devout Catholic waging war against foreign powers seeking to exploit Tanzania. He has been praised for pushing through big infrastructure projects while critics have said he has chipped away at freedom of expression.

He did not impose a

lockdown to restrict the spread of coronavirus and later said that God had spared Tanzania the virus.

However, the government has also stopped publishing figures for the number of people infected with the virus. Mr Lissu of the biggest opposition party, Chadema, who survived an assassination attempt three years ago, is expected to be the strongest opposition challenger.

He returned from Belgium in July where he had undergone rounds of treatment for gunshot

wounds. The BBC's Athuman Mtulya in Dar es Salaam says both Mr Magufuli and Mr Lissu have drawn huge crowds during their campaigns.

Mr Lissu's campaign was suspended for seven days after being accused of sedition by the electoral commission. He had reportedly said that Mr Magufuli was planning to rig the elections, but the commission said there were no such attempts.

Under Tanzania's electoral rules, the winning candidate requires a simple majority to become president.

Some 29.1 million people are registered to vote - six million more than the previous polls in 2015.

They include residents of the semi-autonomous archipelago of Zanzibar who vote for the islands' leaders -

including the election of a Zanzibari president - as well as in Tanzania's national election. Unlike in mainland Tanzania, Zanzibar's main opposition party is ACT Wazalendo. Its presidential candidate was arrested at a polling station on Tuesday morning and later released according to multiple reports. But police have not commented on Maalim Seif Sharif's reported arrest, and have also denied reports that officers shot three people dead on the island of Pemba on Monday.

Zanzibar has a history of contested polls, including in 2015 when they were annulled for not being free and fair. The opposition boycotted the re-run and the ruling CCM party's candidate was declared the winner. BBC



Some 29.1 million people are registered to vote - more than ever before

South Africa's president in Covid-19 quarantine

South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa is self-quarantining after a guest at a dinner he attended later tested positive for Covid-19.

The president is not showing symptoms and will perform his duties remotely, his office said in a statement.

Mr Ramaphosa is the latest world leader forced to self-quarantine.

US President Donald Trump and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson are among leaders who have contracted Covid-19. South Africa has reported about 720,000 Covid-19 cases and 19,000 fatalities, the

highest in Africa. In March, Mr Ramaphosa had imposed one of the strictest lockdowns in the world to curb the spread of the virus, but later eased restrictions.

Mr Ramaphosa would be tested "should symptoms manifest", and was currently in self-quarantine, his office said. Why was he at a dinner?

The president attended a fundraising dinner hosted by the Adopt-a-School Foundation at a hotel in the commercial hub of Johannesburg on Saturday.

Mr Ramaphosa set up the foundation in 2002 to improve schooling for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. His office said the dinner was attended by 35 guests - one of whom showed symptoms the following day and test results received on Tuesday confirmed he had Covid-19.

"The event adhered stringently to Covid-19 protocols and directives on

EU concerned over credibility of Guinea poll results



The European Union has said that although voting in Guinea was calm, "questions remain as to the credibility of the result".

It said it had taken note of the provisional results that announced President Alpha Conde's win.

The EU said it supported the diplomacy efforts by West Africa's regional bloc, Ecowas, the African Union and the UN to restore confidence.

A delegation of mediators is in the country and has met various political actors, including opposition leader

Cellou Dalein Diallo who has been prevented from leaving his house. "To this end, all actors involved in this process must be able to fully enjoy their freedom of movement and expression. It is also important that the means of communication, in particular access to the internet, are guaranteed in all circumstances," the statement added.

There have been clashes between opposition supporters and security forces across the nation since the opposition leader declared himself winner. BBC



Cyril Ramaphosa removed his mask when speaking at the dinner but has no symptoms

screening, social distancing and the wearing of masks. "The president himself removed his mask only when dining and addressing the guests," the president's office said. The statement did not say where Mr Ramaphosa is quarantining,

but South Africans are required to do so at home for 14 days.

A maximum of 250 people are currently allowed to gather indoors, but the number must not exceed 50% of the normal capacity of a venue. BBC

EDITORIAL

Weah's third-term rumor has smoke

LIBERIANS WOULD NOT be scratching their heads over news that President George Manneh Weah is contemplating on remaining in office for three terms if the claim had not come from the President's political buddy, Senator Prince Yormie Johnson of vote-rich Nimba County.

BUT SEN. JOHNSON, an insider of the Coalition for Democratic Change-led government and political buddy of President Weah, reportedly made the claim on Sunday, 25 October while preaching at his church in Paynesville City.

"WHEN THE REFERENDUM passes, this current six years is a zero year for us. After this one, President Weah is going for two more terms; that is the third term", The NEW REPUBLIC, quoted the Senator to have said while preaching on his pulpit during worship.

LIBERIANS GO TO national referendum in December to vote for reduction in the presidential term from six to five years; the Senate from nine to seven years, and the House of Representatives from six to four years, respectively after which Sen. Johnson said Mr. Weah would have an opportunity to make his case for a third term.

HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT of Liberia, including the Executive Mansion is not short of words in debunking the statement that seems to have kept many Liberians, including politicians looking over their shoulders, given current political realities in neighboring Guinea and Ivory Coast, where leaders have gone beyond their constitutional tenures and are on their way to serving third terms, respectively.

THE MINISTER OF State for Presidential Affairs Nathaniel McGill has swiftly dismissed the claim as unfounded, saying that President Weah has no intention to remain in office for long - whatever that means. Under the Constitution of the Republic of Liberia, Mr. Weah enjoys 12-year tenure in the presidency.

MINISTER MCGILL DURING a press briefing held at his residence on Tuesday said President Weah would do nothing to undermine the Constitution, as he [Weah] wants to provide leadership opportunity to younger generation of Liberians, and would not perpetuate himself in power.

DEPUTY INFORMATION MINISTER for Public Affairs, Eugene Fahngon similarly joined McGill in dismissing Sen. Johnson's allegation noting, "You want to be in office for a long time and you reducing your time already? That's the actual fact. It's not a secret. For the referendum, President Weah is saying my first term is six and I want my second term to be five and every other term after that is five. Our constitution is clear and it says two terms for president and we will respect that and if there is a need for a third term, you and I must agreed and that cannot be a secret."

PRESIDENT WEAH HIMSELF has not commented, but despite denials by the two cabinet ministers, a famous Liberian proverb says, 'where there is smoke, there is fire.' Besides, Senator Johnson is very close to President Weah. During the runoff presidential election in 2017, he took Mr. Weah on campaign trail to Nimba County and asked his kinsmen to elect the CDC leader to the presidency, which became successful. Currently, he is the conduit between President Weah and job opportunities meant for the people of Nimba. Even prior to the election in Liberia, Sen. Johnson took Mr. Weah to his spiritual father Prophet T.B. Joshua in Nigeria for prayers to win the presidency.

HOW COULD SOMEONE like Sen. Johnson who have had such very close ties with Mr. Weah before and after the presidential election that brought the latter to power, without any strain in their political marriage, announced publicly that they are seriously considering seeking third term, and officials from the Executive, who are equally participating in the misrule of the State amid continuous citizens' outcry, want the Liberian people to believe there is no such imagination? Liberians should shine their eyes and watch the writing on the wall.

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COMMENTARY

By Stephen S. Roach

China Leads Again

US President Donald Trump wears his recent experience with COVID-19 infection as some perverse badge of courage, rather than as a warning of what may lie ahead. And the adverse economic consequences of his administration's approach to the pandemic could not contrast more sharply with the robust recovery in China.

NEW HAVEN - Just as China led the world in economic recovery in the aftermath of the global financial crisis of 2008, it is playing a similar role today. Its post-COVID rebound is gathering momentum amid a developed world that remains on shaky ground. Unfortunately, this is a bitter pill for many to swallow - especially in the United States, where demonization of China has reached epic proportions.

The two crises are, of course, different. Wall Street was ground zero for the 2008 crisis, while the COVID-19 pandemic was spawned in the wet markets of Wuhan. But in both cases, China's crisis-response strategy was far more effective than that deployed by the US. In the five years following the onset of the 2008 crisis, annual real GDP growth in China averaged 8.6% (on a purchasing power parity basis). While that was slower than the blistering (and unsustainable) 11.6% average pace of the five previous years, it was four times the US economy's anemic 2.1% average annual growth over the post-crisis 2010-14 period.

China's pandemic response hints at a comparable outcome in the years ahead. The GDP report for the third quarter of 2020 suggests a rapid return to the pre-COVID trend. The 4.9% year-on-year figure for real GDP growth does not convey a full sense of the self-sustaining recovery that is now emerging in China. Measuring economic growth on a sequential quarterly basis and converting those comparisons to annual rates - the preferred construct of US statisticians and policymakers - provides a much cleaner sense of real-time shifts in the underlying momentum of any economy. On that basis, China's real GDP rose at an 11% sequential annual rate in the third quarter, following a 55% post-lockdown surge in the second quarter.

The comparison with the US is noteworthy. Both economies experienced comparable contractions during their respective lockdowns, which came one quarter later for the US. China's 33.8% sequential (annualized) plunge in the first quarter was almost identical to the 31.2% US contraction in the second quarter. Based on incoming high-frequency (monthly) data, the so-called GDPNow estimate of the Atlanta Federal Reserve puts third-quarter sequential real GDP growth in the US at around 35%. While that is a welcome and marked turnaround from the record decline during the lockdown, it is about 20 percentage points short of China's post-lockdown rebound and still leaves the US economy about 3% below its peak of late 2019.

Post-lockdown rebounds are not the real story, however. They are akin to the snapback of a stretched rubber band - or in statistical terms, the arithmetical result of restarting an economy that has just been subjected to an unprecedented sudden stop. The true test comes after the snapback, and that's where China's strategy has its greatest advantage.

China's response to COVID-19 borrowed a page from its playbook in 2008, when it ring-fenced its financial markets from the toxic fallout of the

subprime crisis. The objective back then was crystal clear from the start: address the source of the shock, itself, rather than the collateral damage the shock caused. The CNY4 trillion (\$596.4 billion) fiscal stimulus of 2008-09 worked only because China had taken strong actions to insulate its markets from a virulent financial contagion.

China's approach today is similar: first, insulate its citizens from a virulent pathogenic contagion with draconian public-health measures aimed at containing and mitigating the spread of the disease, and then - and only then - make judicious use of monetary and fiscal policy to reinforce the post-lockdown snapback. This is very different from the approach taken in the US, where the post-lockdown debate is more about using monetary and fiscal policies as front-line instruments of economic liberation, rather than relying on disciplined public-health measures aimed at virus containment.

This underscores the sharp contrast between China's COVID-first strategy and the America-first approach of US President Donald Trump's administration. In China, unlike the US, there is no political and public resistance to masks, social distancing, and aggressive testing as requisite norms of the COVID-19 era. Meanwhile, the US is in the midst of its third serious wave of infection while China continues to exercise prompt and effective control over new outbreaks. Earlier this autumn, for example, some nine million citizens in Qingdao were tested in just five days after a relatively small outbreak affecting fewer than 20 residents. By contrast, Trump wears his own experience with COVID-19 infection as some perverse badge of courage, rather than as a warning of what may lie ahead.¹

In this context, China's impressive GDP results in the third quarter stand in even sharper contrast with the precarious post-lockdown state of the US economy. Ongoing distress in the US labor market - unemployment insurance claims remained above 800,000 on a four-week moving average through mid-October, and the 7.9% national unemployment rate in September was still more than double its pre-pandemic 3.5% level - leaves America's consumer-led economy highly vulnerable to a setback. The confluence of a new COVID-19 wave with the on-again, off-again political debate over another fiscal relief package has effectively neutralized the animal spirits that have long powered economic recovery in the US.

While China's 11.2% sequential (annualized) growth in the third quarter of this year builds effectively on its post-lockdown snapback, some lingering signs of weakness are evident in several key segments of consumer services - namely travel, leisure, and entertainment. Human nature is the same everywhere, with fear and caution enduring, even in countries where aggressive containment measures are working. For those unwilling to focus on containment, like the US, the long shadow of COVID-19 speaks volumes to the ever-present perils of a double-dip recession. That is exactly what has happened in the aftermath of eight of the last 11 US recessions. The contrast with China's self-sustaining recovery couldn't be more striking.

O-PED

By Andrew Sheng
& Xiao Geng

Shenzhen's Game-Changing Reform

In an increasingly hostile external environment, sustaining progress on development requires China to adopt an updated approach to its four-decade-long process of "reform and opening up." Shenzhen - the star performer among the first cohort of special economic zones - is the ideal testing ground.

HONG KONG - Early this month, on the 40th anniversary of Shenzhen's designation as a special economic zone (SEZ), Chinese President Xi Jinping unveiled a blueprint for building the city into a trade, finance, and technology hub. Most China-watchers have focused on what this means for Hong Kong, Shanghai, or at most the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area. But such narrow assessments fail to capture the true significance of Xi's plans for Shenzhen.

In fact, Xi's tour of the Guangdong province, which culminated in his speech in Shenzhen, was reminiscent of Deng Xiaoping's famous 1992 southern tour, during which he delivered a series of speeches that formed the foundations of Deng Xiaoping Theory. In this sense, it may well mark the beginning of a new era of China's "reform and opening up."

It was Xi's own father, Xi Zhongxun, who, as the Guangdong province's first Communist Party secretary, played a central role in establishing the initial SEZs in Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou, and Xiamen (with Hainan added later). At the time, the chaos of the Cultural Revolution had pushed China's economy to the brink of collapse. With Guangdong facing severe food shortages, its residents were fleeing to Hong Kong.

That is when China decided to create designated export-processing zones, financed largely by investment from Chinese overseas, including in Hong Kong. Thanks to Hong Kong's busy port and world-class financial sector, Shenzhen was able to access new ideas, technologies, and resources that could spur entrepreneurial activity.

These experiments with market forces within China's centrally planned economy were breathtakingly daring. And they worked. Over the last 40 years, Shenzhen achieved a staggering 20.7% average annual GDP growth rate. What was once a poor fishing village now has the highest per capita GDP on the mainland, and a total GDP on par with Hong Kong's at CN¥2.7 trillion (\$402 billion).

But the world has changed significantly in recent years, and even in recent months. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the global recession it has triggered, rising geopolitical tensions, and rapid environmental degradation, no one in Beijing has any illusions that the next phase of development will be easy.

On the contrary, to sustain progress, an updated approach to reform and opening up is essential. And Shenzhen - which has performed the best among the first cohort of SEZs - is the ideal place to test that approach.

This is in line with China's approach to development, which has always been based less on a particular theory or predetermined plan than on a process of experimentation under uncertain conditions. The process always begins with a hard-nosed appraisal of existing opportunities, threats, barriers, and possible breakthrough points.

Such an appraisal is what produced China's dual-circulation strategy, which is expected to be central to China's soon-to-be-unveiled 14th Five-Year Plan, covering the 2021-25 period. Far from implying that China is "turning inward," as many have claimed, that strategy promises to improve the balance between openness to global opportunities and reliance on domestic production, distribution, and consumption.

The next step in China's experimentation process is typically to test new reforms or approaches in a particular region, before implementing successful policies more widely, using a phased, coordinated approach. That is what is set to happen in Shenzhen.

The experimentation process clearly has top-down direction, but it is managed largely at the local level. Four days after Xi's Shenzhen speech, the National Development and Reform Commission announced 40 areas where increased autonomy would be delegated to Shenzhen, in order to facilitate the pilot reforms in market development and economic integration.

For example, Shenzhen will have increased authority over the allocation of capital, land, talent, and intellectual-property rights, and greater power to create new business regulations (including dispute-resolution systems) and incentives for innovation. It will also have far more space to create internationally compatible rules (such as financial-market regulations) and systems (including education, health care, and social security), without having to await provincial- or central-government approval.

In keeping with Deng's approach of "crossing the river by feeling the stones," the governments of Shenzhen and Guangdong province, as well as relevant central-government ministries, have been tasked with identifying, within the next two years, any additional areas where increased autonomy would facilitate reforms. While it awaits the relevant powers, Shenzhen can still propose new legislation and regulations that override existing Chinese rules, though it would need approval from the National People's Congress or the State Council.

This approach significantly reduces the barriers to complex systemic reform, supporting a process that is smooth and efficient, but also sequential and incremental. It will ensure that, by the time the 14th Five-Year Plan is complete, Shenzhen has a comprehensive ecosystem of world-class institutions managing its economy, society, environment, and technological progress.

Of course, Shenzhen is not meant to thrive at the expense of the rest of China. As the city undertakes bold reforms, it should consider not only internal objectives, but also the implications for the rest of the country.

Some have argued that the Shenzhen plan is aimed specifically at eroding Hong Kong's competitive advantages. This narrow view is wrong. The truth is that Shenzhen's development would create more opportunities for all, by expanding and deepening the regional market. In his speech, Xi pledged to uphold support for the Greater Bay Area initiative, and the Shenzhen plan includes specific measures to create employment and housing opportunities for Hong Kong's young people.

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OPINION

By Nina L. Khrushcheva

Has Putin Lost His Mojo?

For most of the last decade, Russian President Vladimir Putin has been far less interested in solving domestic problems than in establishing Russia as an important, even fearsome, player on the world stage. But today, though there may be residual enthusiasm left for meddling in the US presidential election, sparring with the EU over issues large and small seems less exciting.

MOSCOW - What a difference a year makes. In the fall of 2019, Russian President Vladimir Putin seemed to be riding high. Upheaval in the West - including Donald Trump's presidency, the Brexit drama, and European feuds over issues ranging from migration to energy - had enabled him to nurture a reputation as a steady, assertive hand in global politics. Now, that steadiness has begun to look more like sclerosis, with implications that extend far beyond Russia's borders.

The COVID-19 crisis is often presented as an aberration - an unprecedented crisis demanding an unprecedented response. But, while that may be true, many of the challenges it has fueled in both Russia and the West were incipient long before SARS-CoV-2 existed.

In the United States, the pandemic has deepened economic inequality, heightened racial tensions, and exacerbated political polarization. In Europe, it has clarified just how unreliable the transatlantic relationship has become. And in Russia, it has exposed the Putin regime's inertia, fueling what is essentially a "crisis of stability."

This is the flipside of Putin's supposed steadiness, which he and his minions have long presented as the antidote to the West's meddling. The Kremlin had to intervene in Ukraine and Syria, in order to stabilize regions that were being disrupted by Western influence or adventurism. And Russia had to rewrite its constitution, in order to extend Putin's rule - possibly for life - because only he could protect Russia from the turmoil that had engulfed the rest of the world.

But as the Yeltsin-era prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, once memorably put it, "We wanted for the better, but it turned out to be like always." Immediately after the referendum, Putin's "stable leadership" became not only erratic, but also somehow dispirited.

Though Russia's handling of COVID-19 has not been as disastrous as America's, India's, or even Spain's, this is no thanks to Putin, who remained safely ensconced in the Kremlin, while governors and state institutions competed for recognition of their "superior" management of the crisis. Not surprisingly, this produced highly uneven results. In Moscow, the ubiquitous workaholic mayor, Sergei Sobyenin, has orchestrated an orderly response, despite some organizational glitches. In other areas, such as Magadan and Kalmykia, measures have been spottier.

Overall, the state offered only minimal support to small businesses and workers, despite their crucial role in driving the economy. Even Putin loyalist Alexey Kudrin, who heads the State Accounts Chamber, recently acknowledged the folly in this approach, which contrasts sharply with the Kremlin's longtime use of "bread and circuses" - public fairs, free concerts, and national holidays - to keep the people sufficiently satisfied and distracted enough not to protest.

There is a whiff of late Stalinism in this shift. In his final days, Stalin focused on hunting enemies of the people and ensuring the functioning of the security apparatus - all else be damned. After his death, piles of unopened, unsigned documents were found on his desk.

Putin, increasingly Stalinesque, seems to have become similarly bored with most of the demands of leadership. To be sure, for the better part of the last decade, he has been far less interested in solving domestic problems than in establishing Russia as an important, even fearsome, player on the world stage. But today, though there may be residual enthusiasm left for meddling in the US presidential election, sparring with the European Union over issues large and small seems less exciting.

For example, Putin had little to say about the poisoning of his main opposition rival Alexei Navalny. Whether or not Putin was directly behind the botched job, it amounted to a humiliation for him, and the Kremlin's half-hearted denials betrayed his regime's disarray.

Likewise, after protests over a rigged presidential election began in Belarus, Putin waited weeks to express his support for strongman Aleksandr Lukashenko. And when he did, there was little of the old Putin fierceness. He seemed like he was just going through the motions.

True, at the latest Valdai Discussion Club session, Putin - speaking online - affirmed Russia's status as the primary successor to the Soviet Union (while also citing the Belarusian example to claim, once again, that Russia doesn't interfere in other countries' affairs). But his declaration came across as detached and halfhearted.

Putin's response to the escalating conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, the separatist Armenian enclave in Azerbaijan, betrays a similar lethargy. When Armenia and Azerbaijan last clashed four years ago, Russia was able to quell the conflict in four days. This time around, the fighting has endured for a month and counting. Perhaps sensing that Putin is coasting, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been flexing his muscles in support of Azerbaijan.

Meanwhile, in Kyrgyzstan, widespread protests forced the government to annul the results of the October 4 parliamentary election and compelled the cabinet to resign. The Kremlin has said that an existing security treaty obliges Russia to prevent the situation from breaking down. But the country remains mired in chaos.

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Birthday Greetings



The Management and Staff of the Searchlight Communications Inc., publishers of the New Dawn newspaper extend heartfelt birthday greetings to former President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

We wish you God's continuous blessing as you celebrate another milestone of your life's journey on this 29, day of October 2020.

Your legacy as Liberia's and Africa's first female president lingers on. Your desire to pass on that legacy through the Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf Center for Women and Development, proves the true leader you are-preparing leaders to follow our foot steps.

Happy Birthday Mama.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

NEC, USAID hold interactive dialogue

A one-day interactive dialogue Zooming forum between the Board of Commissioners of the National Elections Commission, (NEC) and the United States Aid for

through its partners in preparation for the Special Senatorial Election and Constitutional Referendum slated for 8 December 2020.

A communique from Mary Zell, the Elections and Political

Internews discussed largely focused on collaboration with the NEC on Voter Education, mainly on the Referendum and on COVID-19 Health Protocols, while NDI discussed



International Development, USAID aimed at enhancing collaboration ended today in the James M. Fromayan Conference Hall.

The discussions focused largely on USAID's activities

Processes Team Lead Democracy, Rights and Governance Office to the Chairperson of NEC Davidetta Browne Lansanah requested for the meeting heard on Wednesday 28 October 2020.

collaboration with the NEC and UNDP on training for party agents and engagements between the NEC and Political Parties and IFES focused on

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11

Opposition unproductive

-Minister McGill

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

The Minister of State for Presidential Affairs Nathaniel McGill has described Liberian opposition politicians being unproductive, noting that instead, the opposition community only engages in protest and demonstrations.

Speaking recently in Monrovia, Minister McGill said the opposition community should be constructive, rather than portraying government negatively.

Currently, Liberia has two major opposition political parties, the Collaborating Political Parties which comprises Unity Party, the Liberty Party, the Alternative

National Congress and the All Liberian Party and Rainbow Coalition that groups 11 smaller political parties, including True Whig Party that held power for more than a century.

Minister McGill stated that the opposition should refocus its effort and strategies to helping Liberia's young and growing democracy.

Since the ascendancy of the Weah administration, Liberia has witnessed four major protests led by the pressure group, Council of Patriot.

McGill said while the ruling establishment does not expect the opposition community to sing praises for the government, it should be more constructive and objective in its criticisms.



'Books Before Boys' trains 38 young girls

By Lewis S. Teh

A local and non-governmental organization, Books Before Boys Inc. has graduated 38 young girls who have completed metorship program at the institution.

At the official graduation ceremony held at the Monrovia City Hall recently, the 38 girls graduated from the training initiative entitled "Giving Girls the Courage to

Lead." The girls were taught about campaign planning, public speaking, essay writing and poetry writing.

The Country Director for Books before Boys Mustapha Z. Sherman, said women have been ignored when it comes to development of education systems in Africa.

He despite changes in law and policy over the years, women still aren't fully represented in higher

education in Liberia and some parts of the world.

Books Before Boys INC through its CEO, Hellen Siah-Sayan Momoh, is changing the narrative of girls' education in Liberia.

"We are pleased to extend our thanks and appreciation to our partnering institution, Libpedia, our guests and all the facilitators for making this training initiative successful".

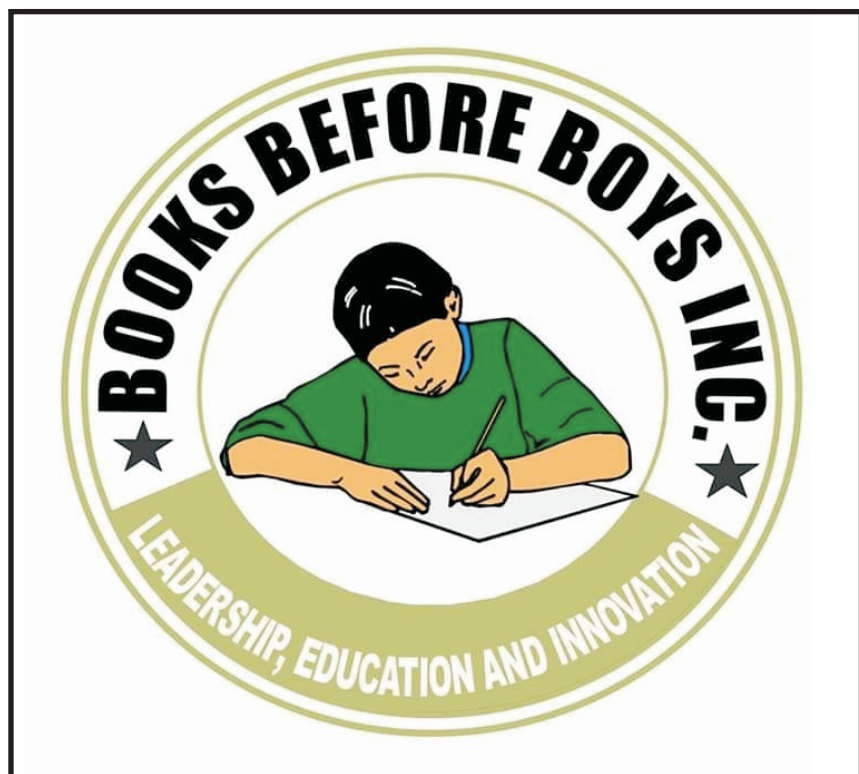
Speaking during the official graduation ceremony recently at the Monrovia City Hall, former Deputy Minister for Small Business Administration at the Ministry of Commerce Ms. Jamiama Wolokollie extolled the leadership of Books before Boys for smartly organizing the initiative aim at educating young girls.

She said while it's true the training initiative will add values to their lives, it was important also for them to stand on their own to making independent decisions.

"As we gear toward the conduct of the December 8 special senatorial election, I urge all of you young girls to make independent decisions,

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because this is about your future as young people".

Meanwhile, Monrovia City Mayor Jefferson Koijee, thanked the executives of Books before Boys INC, for organizing the training which he said will benefit the young girls.

This program today organized by this group teaching our young girls poetry writing, campaign policies and essay writing in my mind

demonstrates a sense of patriotism for the young girls and the country at lager, says Mayor Koijee.

He challenged the graduates to make maximum use of the training opportunity provided them by the institution, saying we ask you to apply this training, because not many of our people are interested in these kinds of initiative.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

ECOWAS observers arrive Abidjan ahead of the presidential election

Election Observers from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have arrived Abidjan ahead of the October 31, 2020 Presidential



H.E. Cheikh Hadjibou Soumaré

Election. Ten long-term observers have already been deployed for two weeks and have been consulting with political stakeholders for the past ten days. While eighty short-term Observers will be deployed.

The ECOWAS Election Observation Mission is headed by H. E. Cheikh Hadjibou Soumaré, former Prime Minister of the Republic of Senegal. The Head of Mission is to arrive Abidjan tomorrow, October 29, 2020.

The Authority of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government is determined to accompany the Government and people of Côte d'Ivoire through the Presidential Elections in line with the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance of 2001.

Pres. Weah applauds Czech Republic on Independence Day

President George Weah has sent a Congratulatory Message to the Government and people of the Czech Republic on the occasion marking the observance of that country's Independence Anniversary.

The Czech Republic celebrates its independence anniversary on October 28, 2020.

In his message to President

substituting between Liberia and the Czech Republic since the establishment of diplomatic relations between both nations in 1993.

On the international front, President Weah recalled with deep appreciation, the two countries' shared position on the Promotion of universal peace, human rights and freedom.

The Liberian President also expressed confidence that the



Miloš Zeman, of the Czech Republic, President Weah, on behalf of the Government and People of Liberia, extended heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to the Government and people of the Czech Republic, as they commemorate this historic milestone.

According to a Foreign Ministry release, the Liberian leader further recounted the historic harmonious relations

current ties of cordial diplomatic relations between the two countries and peoples will be translated into mutually beneficial joint economic and trade ventures.

Mr. Weah then wished for President Milos Zeman continuous good health and success in his endeavors; and for the people of the Czech Republic, enduring peace and prosperity. -Press release

Solidarity Center trains stakeholders in human trafficking

By Emmanuel Mondaye

The Solidarity Center, the largest United States - based international workers' rights organization, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor (MOL) on 27 and 28 October ended a one -day human trafficking workshop for labor leaders and key stakeholders at its offices in Mamba Point, Monrovia.

Following the intensive workshop, Moibah K. Johnson of the Civil Service Agency (CSA) told reporters that he hoped to share with members of the CSA the skills and knowledge he acquired from the workshop to adequately prepare them to combat human trafficking in Liberia, especially in work places.

He notes that the workshop gave him a better insight into the different forms of human trafficking, appealing to the organizers to extend such training to others who have no ideas about human trafficking so as to strengthen their ability to fight human trafficking.

For her part, the president of the National Teachers Association of Liberia (NTAL) Madam Mary W. M. Nyumah thanks the Solidarity Center for its continuous support to key stakeholders who are key gate-keepers in various institutions against human

trafficking.

She encourages Solidarity Center to continue to build the capacity, ability, and knowledge of key actors through most of these training workshops, noting that the training was encouraging and rewarding.

Madam Nyumah warns those

that she learned so many things that she didn't know were associated with human trafficking.

According to her, she will set-up a special human trafficking desk at her institution to monitor and report on human trafficking in the places of assignment.

Madam Carr continues that the special desk would also assist members of the



engaged in human trafficking in the country to desist, adding that their action is creating harm to the human existence.

Also speaking, the Vice President for Operations of the Civil Servant Association of Liberia Madam Edwina T. N. Carr reveals that the workshop was an eye - opener for her, noting

association to detect, identify, and report human trafficking at their assigned places of work to help eradicate the bad practice of human trafficking.

The Ministry of Labor (MOL) through a representative thanks the Solidarity Center for its

continued partnership and further training of stakeholders who have a meaningful role to play in fighting and eradicating human trafficking out of the country.

The Solidarity Center says the training is intended to increase union leaders' knowledge of trafficking and the "prevention, protection and prosecution" approach so that they can effectively protect vulnerable workers.

It also discloses that the training will help labor leaders develop critical actions that can be undertaken within their unions to protect vulnerable workers and increase coordination with the government's interventions to counter trafficking in persons. Solidarity Center is helping workers attain dignity on the job.--Edited by Winston W. Parley

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Français

Le ministre Tarpeh rejette sa nomination comme directeur de campagne

Le nouveau directeur exécutif de l'Agence de protection de l'environnement (EPA), le professeur Wilson Tarpeh, a rejeté sa nomination comme directeur de campagne de la Coalition pour le changement démocratique (CDC), mouvance au pouvoir, en vue des élections sénatoriales de mi-mandat prévues le 8 décembre, citant le code de conduite controversé de 2014.

L'ancien ministre du Commerce a récemment été nommé parmi une foule de fonctionnaires du gouvernement pour diriger la campagne du parti au pouvoir en vue des élections sénatoriales.

« Je suis disposé à supporter tous les candidats de notre parti, mais je ne participerai pas directement à la campagne, car cela constituerait une violation du code de conduite », a dit l'ancien ministre du commerce.

Le code de conduite interdit aux fonctionnaires de l'Etat nommés par le président de la

république de participer aux activités électorales.

Le code de conduite, dont l'objectif est de réguler la conduite des fonctionnaires de l'Etat, stipule en son article 5.1 que « Tous les fonctionnaires nommés par le président de la République du Libéria ne doivent pas :

a- S'engager dans des activités politiques, solliciter ou briguer des postes électifs

b- Utiliser les installations,

l'équipement ou les ressources du gouvernement pour soutenir des activités partisans ou politiques ;

c- Faire partie d'une équipe de campagne de tout parti politique d'un candidat indépendant.

Le Code stipule en outre dans la section 5.2 que tout fonctionnaire qui souhaite briguer un poste public électif

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Nettoyage de la liste électorale : des experts de l'ONU et de la CEDEAO sont à Monrovia

Une équipe d'experts de la Communauté économique des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest et du PNUD est arrivée au Libéria pour travailler avec la Commission électorale nationale pour nettoyer la liste électorale finale en vue des élections sénatoriales spéciales du 8 décembre 2020.

L'arrivée des espères fait

suite à une pression de l'opposition, en particulier des dirigeants de la Collaboration des Partis Politiques (CPP), qui avaient saisi la Cour suprême pour, entre autres préoccupations, veiller à ce que la liste électorale soit nettoyée.

Les préoccupations de la CPP sont nées des rapports persistants faisant état

d' enrôlements multiples d'électeurs dans divers centres et d'autres irrégularités.

Animant un point de presse à Monrovia ce mardi 27 octobre, la présidente de la Commission électorale nationale Davidetta Browne Lassanah a révélé que quatre experts - trois de la CEDEAO et un du PNUD travailleraient en étroite collaboration avec le personnel du centre de données de la Commission Electorale pour s'assurer du bon déroulement de l'opération de nettoyage de la liste électorale.

S'exprimant également lors de la conférence de presse, le chef technique de l'équipe de la CEDEAO, M. ChidiNwafor, a déclaré que : « Ce n'était pas la première fois que la CEDEAO aide le corps électoral libérien dans le travail technique. Lors des élections présidentielles et législatives de 2017, la CEDEAO a envoyé une équipe technique ici qui a travaillé avec la NEC dans certains domaines clés ».

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Election présidentielle en Côte d'Ivoire : le long silence de Laurent Gbagbo

Accueilli à Bruxelles où il vit depuis son acquittement par la Cour pénale internationale, l'ancien Président ivoirien, Laurent Gbagbo, a fait l'option du black-out sur l'actualité ivoirienne. Malgré tout ce qui se passe dans le pays, à cette veille d'élection présidentielle, l'ex-chef d'Etat ne se prononce pas officiellement. Un choix apparemment délibéré, mais jusqu'à quand ?

S'il est un fait qui retienne particulièrement l'attention depuis la déclaration de candidature d'Alassane Ouattara, le 6 août dernier, et le début du processus électoral qui court d'ailleurs à sa fin, puisque le scrutin aura lieu dans cinq jours en Côte d'Ivoire, c'est bien le silence de l'ancien Président, Laurent Gbagbo. Non pas que l'ancien Président se désintéresse des affaires de son pays, tant s'en

l'adhésion de leur leader. Mais l'ancien Président, lui-même, est resté totalement muet sur tout ce qui se passe dans son pays.

Parlera-t-il avant le scrutin qui se déroulera dans cinq jours ou le fera-t-il après ? Ce qui est certain, c'est que la plupart de ses partisans en Côte d'Ivoire rêvent d'entendre leur leader se prononcer directement sur l'actualité politique nationale.

Pour ce qui est de ses mouvements, sans passeport, l'ancien Président reste coincé à Bruxelles. Sa demande de délivrance d'un passeport diplomatique, en tant qu'ancien Président ayant été rejetée, il a demandé un passeport ordinaire. Là encore, la requête est restée sans suite depuis plusieurs semaines. Le



faut ! Non pas que l'envie de s'exprimer lui manque, bien au contraire !

Selon des sources proches de lui, Laurent Gbagbo, depuis Bruxelles où il séjourne après son acquittement par la CPI, aurait tenté, à deux reprises, ces derniers jours, de s'exprimer sur la situation politique ivoirienne, par message enregistré, avant de se raviser. Du dépôt de sa candidature jusqu'à son invalidation, l'ancien Président n'a absolument rien dit. Bien sûr, ses partisans s'alignent sur les positions de l'opposition vis-à-vis du scrutin. On les a vus à différentes rencontres de l'opposition; par exemple, AssoaAdou, homme de confiance de Laurent Gbagbo, était bien présent, lors du meeting du 10 octobre 2020, au stade Félix Houphouët Boigny d'Abidjan.

Quand on sait que Laurent Gbagbo garde un contact permanent avec ses fidèles dont AssoaAdou, on comprend aisément qu'ils ne peuvent prendre aucune initiative qui ne rencontre pas

régime d'Abidjan craindrait-il que le retour du natif de Gagnoa en terre ivoirienne avant le scrutin contrecarrerait ses plans ? Tout semble le prouver, surtout qu'Alassane Ouattara avait dépêché le Président nigérien, Mahamadou Issoufou, auprès de son prédécesseur pour, dit-on, négocier sa neutralité au cours de l'élection.

D'ailleurs, le Président ivoirien a clairement fait ressortir ses intentions dans ses propos, à l'occasion d'une récente interview accordée au journal Le Monde : « Laurent Gbagbo va rentrer, il n'y a aucun problème. Il a un procès en cours. Il a été acquitté en première instance par la Cour pénale internationale. Il y a une procédure d'appel et dès que cela sera terminé, je prendrai les dispositions pour qu'il puisse rentrer ».

Pendant tout ce temps, Alassane Ouattara aurait déjà eu le temps de se faire réélire.

Français

Le ministre Tarpeh rejette sa nomination

doit démissionner deux ans avant la date des élections.

Le professeur Tarpeh est sans doute le premier fonctionnaire à avoir refusé publiquement une telle nomination sur la base du code de conduite qui s'est déjà fait violer à maintes reprises par le passé. Il est devenu caduque lors des élections de 2017 lorsque

Harrison Karnwhea et d'autres ont refusé de quitter leurs postes deux ans avant de se présenter aux élections.

Tout récemment, le ministre des Affaires étrangères, Gbehzhongar Finley, a démissionné à peine quelques mois avant les élections sénatoriales auxquelles il est aujourd'hui candidat.

Nettoyage de la liste électorale :

Il a promis que pendant leur séjour, l'équipe sera disponible pour toutes suggestions des médias, de l'establishment au pouvoir et de l'opposition de sorte que le processus se déroule de manière professionnelle.

« Le mandat de l'équipe concerne les élections sénatoriales spéciales de 2020 et l'élection présidentielle de 2023. L'équipe veillera à ce que toutes les questions relatives à la collecte et au traitement des données soient traitées et que toutes les anomalies découvertes soient traitées de manière professionnelle afin que les électeurs libériens puissent avoir le meilleur », a dit M. Nwafor.

L'expert a déclaré que les conclusions des travaux seraient partagées avec le conseil des commissaires de la NEC, les autorités du PNUD, la CEDEAO et le peuple du Libéria à travers les médias.

Le Gouvernement américain redoute des risques accrus de violences électorales au Libéria

Le gouvernement des États-Unis d'Amérique a émis une alerte de niveau 3 à l'endroit des voyageurs à destination du Libéria en cette période d'élections sénatoriales spéciales prévues le 8 décembre 2020. Il craint que des manifestations fréquemment planifiées et spontanées cèdent la place à des violences.

L'ambassade des États-Unis à Monrovia exhorte ainsi tous les citoyens américains à faire preuve d'une plus grande prudence vu les prochaines élections et la criminalité.

« Les crimes violents, tels que les vols à main armée, sont courants, en particulier dans les zones urbaines et sur les plages publiques. La police locale manque de moyens pour répondre efficacement aux crimes graves », précise l'alerte publiée mardi par

Par ailleurs, le conseil des commissaires de la NEC a annoncé le début de l'exposition des photos et des détails des électeurs aux fins de consultation publique et de correction.

« L'opération commence aujourd'hui 28 octobre et se terminera le 31 octobre. La liste complète des électeurs sera affichée dans tous les centres de vote. Nous exhortons les électeurs inscrits à se rendre dans les centres d'enrôlement pour mettre à jour leurs dossiers dans les délais », a dit la commission.

Mme Lassanah a par ailleurs annoncé que la Commission Electorale Nationale a reçu 5,6 millions de dollars pour les élections sénatoriales spéciales et que le ministère des Finances et de la Planification du développement s'était fermement engagé à mettre à disposition 13 millions de dollars pour le bon déroulement du scrutin.

l'ambassade.

Elle précise également que le gouvernement américain n'est pas en mesure de fournir des services d'urgence aux citoyens américains en dehors du grand Monrovia la nuit, et qu'il est interdit aux employés du gouvernement américain de voyager en dehors de la capitale ou entre les comtés après la tombée de la nuit, sauf pour se rendre à l'aéroport international Roberts à Margibi et en revenir.

Les récents rassemblements électoraux à Monrovia et dans d'autres régions du pays se sont caractérisés par des violences, notamment des jets de pierres et des coups de machette, qui ont parfois fait des blessés.

La police nationale du Libéria a procédé à très peu d'arrestations, voire aucune, dans la plupart de ces violences susceptibles d'entraver des élections libres, équitables et crédibles.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Stephen S. Roach

La Chine de nouveau en tête

NEW HAVEN - Tout comme la Chine avait mené le monde vers la reprise économique au lendemain de la crise financière mondiale de 2008, elle joue aujourd'hui un rôle similaire. Son rebond post-COVID prend de l'ampleur, au milieu d'un monde développé qui reste sur un terrain instable. Malheureusement, c'est une pilule amère à avaler pour beaucoup - en particulier aux États-Unis, où la diabolisation de la Chine a atteint des proportions épiques.

Les deux crises sont, bien entendu, différentes. Wall Street était le point zéro de la crise de 2008, tandis que la pandémie de la COVID-19 est partie des marchés humides de Wuhan. Mais, dans les deux cas, la stratégie de réponse de crise de la Chine a été bien plus efficace que celle déployée par les États-Unis. Au cours des cinq années qui ont suivi le début de la crise de 2008, la croissance annuelle du PIB réel en Chine a été de 8,6% en moyenne (en parité de pouvoir d'achat). Bien que cela était nettement plus lent que le rythme moyen fulgurant (et insoutenable) de 11,6% enregistré au cours des cinq années précédentes, c'était tout de même quatre fois plus que le taux de croissance anémique de l'économie américaine - qui s'est élevé à 2,1% en moyenne annuelle au cours de la période post-crise 2010-14.

La réponse de la Chine face à la pandémie laisse entrevoir un résultat comparable pour les années à venir. Le rapport sur le PIB du troisième trimestre de 2020 suggère un retour rapide à la tendance pré-COVID. Le chiffre de 4,9% en glissement annuel de la croissance du PIB réel ne donne pas une idée complète de la reprise auto-entretenu qui est en train d'émerger en Chine. Mesurer la croissance économique sur une base trimestrielle séquentielle et convertir ces comparaisons en taux annuels - le concept préféré des statisticiens et décideurs américains - donne une idée beaucoup plus claire des changements en temps réel de la dynamique sous-jacente de toute économie. Sur cette base, le PIB réel de la Chine a augmenté à un taux annuel séquentiel de 11% au troisième trimestre, après une poussée à 55% à l'issue du confinement au deuxième trimestre.

La comparaison avec les États-Unis est frappante. Les deux économies ont connu des contractions comparables au cours de leur confinement respectif, intervenu un trimestre plus tard aux États-Unis. La chute séquentielle (annualisée) de 33,8% de la Chine au premier trimestre était presque identique à la contraction de 31,2% aux États-Unis au deuxième trimestre. Sur la base de données à haute fréquence (mensuelles), l'estimation appelée GDPNow de la Réserve fédérale d'Atlanta indique que la croissance séquentielle du PIB réel aux États-Unis au troisième trimestre sera d'environ 35%. Bien qu'il s'agisse d'un redressement bienvenu et marqué par rapport à la chute record pendant le confinement, ce rebond est d'environ 20 points de pourcentage plus faible que celui qu'a connu la Chine après son propre confinement, et laisse encore l'économie américaine environ 3% en dessous de son pic de la fin 2019.

Néanmoins, les rebonds post-confinement donnent une image déformée de la réalité. Ils s'apparentent au brusque retour en place d'un élastique tendu - ou, en termes statistiques, au résultat arithmétique du redémarrage d'une économie qui vient de subir un arrêt brutal sans précédent. Le vrai test vient après le rebond mécanique, et c'est là que la stratégie chinoise montre sa plus grande supériorité.

La réponse de la Chine à la COVID-19 a copié une page de son plan de 2008, lorsqu'elle avait protégé ses marchés financiers des retombées toxiques liées à la crise des subprimes. À l'époque, l'objectif était

clair dès le départ : s'attaquer à la source du choc elle-même plutôt qu'aux dommages collatéraux causés par le choc. La relance budgétaire de 4 000 milliards de yens (596,4 milliards de dollars) en 2008-9 n'a fonctionné que parce que la Chine avait pris des mesures énergiques pour protéger ses marchés d'une virulente contagion financière.

L'approche de la Chine aujourd'hui est similaire : premièrement, isoler ses citoyens d'une contagion pathogène virulente grâce à des mesures draconiennes de santé publique visant à contenir et atténuer la propagation de la maladie, puis - et seulement à ce moment - faire un usage judicieux des politiques monétaire et fiscale pour renforcer le rebond post-confinement. Ceci est très différent de l'approche adoptée aux États-Unis, où le débat post-confinement porte davantage sur l'utilisation des politiques monétaire et fiscale comme instruments de libération économique de première ligne que sur des mesures de santé publique disciplinées visant à contenir le virus.

Cela souligne le contraste spectaculaire entre la stratégie « la COVID d'abord » de la Chine et l'approche « l'Amérique d'abord » de l'administration du président Donald Trump. En Chine, contrairement aux États-Unis, il n'y a pas de résistance politique et publique aux masques, à la distanciation sociale et aux campagnes de test agressives en tant que normes requises de l'ère de la COVID-19. Pendant ce temps, les États-Unis sont au milieu de leur troisième vague grave d'infection, alors que la Chine continue d'exercer un contrôle rapide et efficace des nouveaux foyers de contamination. Au début de l'automne, par exemple, quelques neuf millions de citoyens de Qingdao ont été testés en seulement cinq jours après l'apparition d'un foyer relativement limité touchant moins de 20 résidents. En revanche, Trump porte sa propre expérience de l'infection à la COVID-19 comme un signe de courage pervers, plutôt que comme un avertissement de ce qui pourrait nous arriver.

Dans ce contexte, les résultats impressionnants du PIB chinois au troisième trimestre contrastent encore plus nettement avec l'état précaire de l'économie américaine après le confinement. La très mauvaise forme du marché du travail américain qui perdure - les demandes d'assurance-chômage sont restées supérieures à 800 000 sur une moyenne mobile de quatre semaines jusqu'à la mi-octobre et le taux de chômage national de 7,9% en septembre était encore plus du double de son niveau de 3,5% avant la pandémie - rend l'économie américaine, centrée sur la consommation intérieure, très vulnérable à un possible revers. La combinaison de la nouvelle vague de COVID-19 et du débat politique qui s'enlise à propos d'un nouveau programme d'allègement fiscal a effectivement neutralisé les 'esprits animaux' qui ont longtemps alimenté la reprise économique aux États-Unis.

Alors que la croissance séquentielle (annualisée) de 11,2% de la Chine au troisième trimestre de cette année s'appuie efficacement sur sa reprise post-confinement, certains signes persistants de faiblesse sont évidents dans plusieurs segments clés des services aux consommateurs - à savoir les voyages, les loisirs et les divertissements. La nature humaine est la même partout, avec la peur et la prudence persistantes, même dans les pays où des mesures de confinement agressives fonctionnent. Pour ceux qui ne veulent pas se concentrer sur l'endigement de la pandémie, comme les États-Unis, l'ombre durable de la COVID-19 en dit long sur le danger toujours présents d'une récession à double creux (aussi appelée « double dip » ou « reprise en W »). C'est exactement ce qui s'est produit au lendemain de huit des onze dernières récessions américaines. Le contraste avec la reprise autonome de la Chine ne pourrait pas être plus saisissant.

Judicial workers remain defiant

By Winston W. Parley

Protesting judicial staffers have defied an alleged demand that has emerged in negotiating efforts requesting them to apologize to Liberia's Chief Justice Francis S. Korkpor, Sr., to pave the way for peace, insisting that they stand by whatever actions they took to get back a portion of their salaries allegedly cut.

"We say we stand in defiance, we say we will not apologize for any other action done on the grounds of the Judiciary. Our action is guaranteed under Article 17 of the Liberian Constitution of [1986], and as such we petitioned the Chief Justice for the redress of our grievances," head of the aggrieved judicial staffers Archie Ponpon said Wednesday, 28 October.

A few number of the aggrieved judicial staffers and their leader Mr. Ponpon staged a protest Wednesday in the premises of the Temple of Justice as President George Manneh Weah and his entourage, lawmakers and diplomats visited the Judiciary to sign a book of condolence for the late Chief Justice Chea Cheapoo, Sr.

In venting anger at Chief Justice Korkpor, Mr. Ponpon threatens that he will set himself on fire on 8 November "because the Chief Justice over the time has refused and has used all draconian means to subject us, relieve us of our position, suspended me, hunting people because they participated in protest..."

Several staffers of Liberia's Judicial branch of government who took part in recent protests for salaries are facing suspensions, transfers and investigations after the government, through Finance Minister Samuel Tweah conceded to the workers' claim and assured that it would pay the first three months of their money this October.

"We are looking forward to November 8, the world of history will be made between the Chief Justice and I, including Elizabeth Boryonnoh. What is expected? It's expected is that we will light myself on fire. That is possible! It is!" Mr. Ponpon threatens.

In the protest, Mr. Ponpon alleges that Chief Justice Korkpor over the past two to three weeks has demanded through Associate Justice Joseph Nagbe that the protesters do a communication expressing their regret for their actions.

But Ponpon insists that the protesters believe that every action they took to ensure that they got their money was just, therefore they stand by their decision not to apologize.

According to Ponpon, when they assembled at the Temple of Justice and cry for hunger and thirst, it's only the Chief Justice that can address their grievances, pondering who will give them justice if the Chief Justice is vex with them.

"As such, no lawyer in this country feels comfortable to plead our case. So when we are [thirsty] and call for water, the Chief Justice only offers us vinegar..." Ponpon adds.

In the wake of Mr. Ponpon's threat to continue the protest, Pearl Brown - Bull has offered to make intervention, urging the protest leader Mr. Ponpon to submit to her the names of the 19 staffers that are affected by the suspension.

"Alright, give me the list of

talk about the matter.

In a suspension letter dated 19 October and addressed to the aggrieved judicial workers' leader Mr. Archie Ponpon, the author identified as R. Stephen Wontee, Deputy Personnel Director at the Judiciary, indicated that Ponpon accused Chief Justice Francis S. Korkpor of sending people to his (Ponpon's) house to kill him.

According to the communication, this accusation was repeated and allegedly confirmed by Mr. Ponpon at a meeting that the Chief Justice held with employees of the Judiciary at the ground floor of the Temple of Justice on 8 October 2020.

The communication continued that this is a serious allegation which the Chief Justice categorically denies as having no iota of truth, but merely intended to besmear

communication at the Judiciary Atty. Ambrose Nmah, referencing the letter addressed to Archie Ponpon to get the judiciary's response, but Atty. Nmah said the letter is clear, declining to speak further on the matter because he was not in the know.

Earlier on 13 October, Finance Minister Samuel Tweah told protesting judicial staffers that the government will restore cuts in their salaries that have necessitated their protests over the past weeks, saying this month each of them will receive US\$153 representing the first three months, in addition to their October pay.

"We're giving three months in October, and I didn't make any firm commitment in terms of timing, but I did say that we will continue to search and overtime continue to meet them," he said.

The meeting with the

beating drums and chanting Chief Justice Francis S. Korkpor's name.

It remains unclear why the judicial staffers targeted Chief Justice Francis S. Korkpor in their protests against cuts in their salaries, despite the Judiciary issuing a clarity in September informing the aggrieved employees that the cuts in salaries were not done by the Judiciary and that the cuts affected all employees in the government sector.

Minister Samuel Tweah informed the judicial workers during the meeting that 15,000 real human beings, including Immigration officers, were lifted from as low as US\$40.00 per month for years, to US\$120.

To do that, he said about 9,000 Liberians who were making more had to make that sacrifice, meaning the government took money from those who were earning more and passed it on to those who were making less.

He revealed that the government team recently identified US\$2.2m on account of some government employees who were getting two or three salaries in the same government.

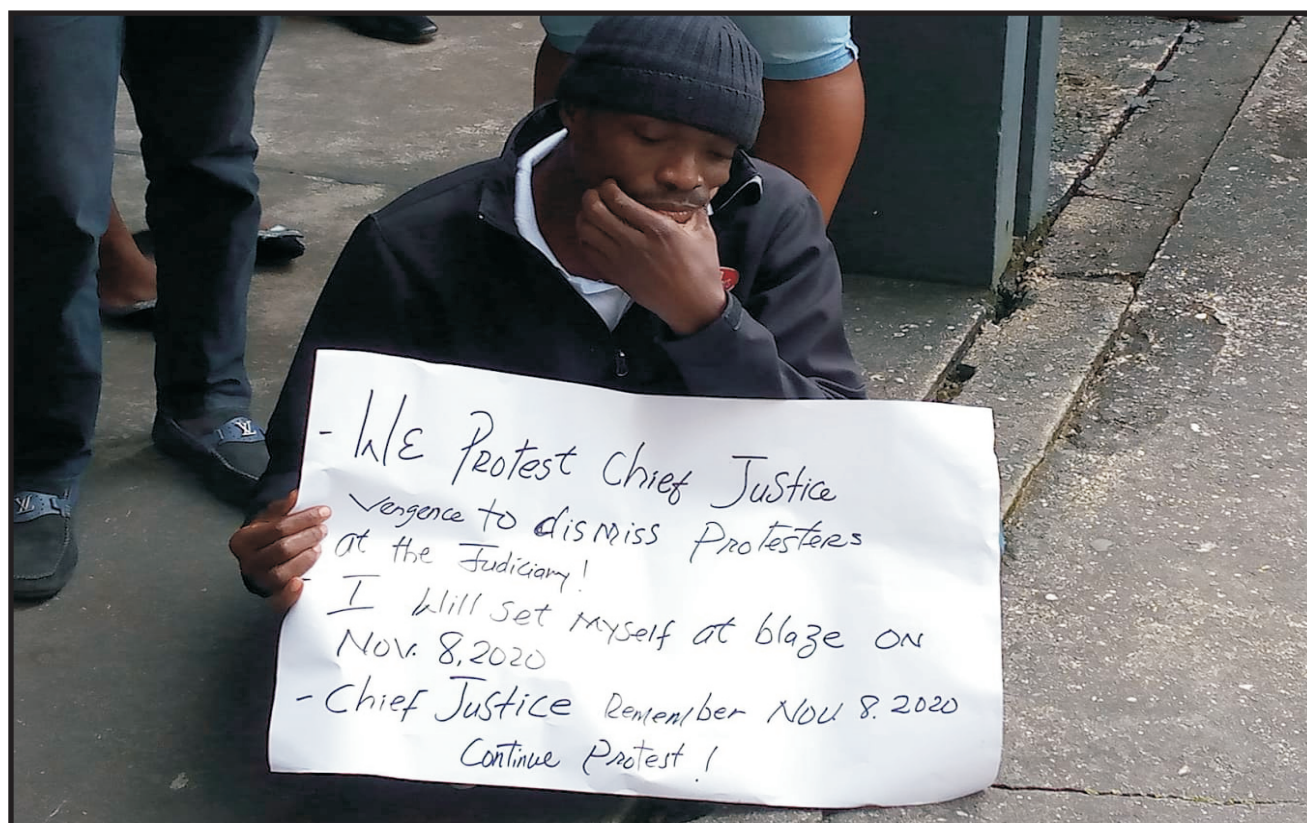
According to a presentation by the Technical Team from the Ministry Of Finance, the Judiciary's wage bill was reduced from US\$15.4m to US\$12.8m, leaving a difference of US\$2.6m.

The team indicated that ideally anybody who is working under the Judiciary is affected by 16 percent reduction which is done when the basic salary and allowance are combined.

The team noted that allowances were not taxed prior to the harmonization program, revealing also that the total payroll for the judiciary is around 2,000 or 1,800.

Based on the technical team's presentation, some of the judicial workers who for instance, are earning a basic salary of US\$125 plus an allowance which prior to the harmonization program was in the tune of US\$150, would get a combined total of US\$275 by then.

The team noted that it is the US\$275 that is supposed to be reduced by the 16 percent because the Judiciary's budget is reduced from US\$15.4m to US\$12.8m. When the 16 percent is applied to the US\$275, the employee in this category like a bailiff for instance, would be left with US\$231.



the 19 persons and I will formally write a letter to the Chief Justice, the Court Administrator, and send copy to the Chief Justice. Y'all hear?" Cllr. Bull says.

Initially Mr. Ponpon and his colleagues declined to give the list, but they later submitted it to Cllr. Bull after some time of talking to them and assuring that she will represent them.

But she discourages Mr. Ponpon against his plan to set himself ablaze, warning that it would lead him to hell if he does so.

"Archie, if you put [yourself], November 8, ablaze, guess what, you going to hell!" Cllr. Bull says. But Mr. Ponpon replies that "hell is a place for human beings too," telling Cllr. Bull that God will take care of his (Ponpon) children.

Meanwhile, Cllr. Bull notes that she will raise money to give to the protesters, pleading with them to give her the chance to

him. "In this regard, the matter has been sent to the Minister of Justice/Attorney General for full scale investigation," he added.

"In view of the above, you are hereby suspended from work effective Monday, October 19, 2020 pending the outcome of the investigation," it concluded.

In another communication dated 8 October under the signature of Civil Law Court "B" Clerk Nah J. Wollor and approved by Civil Law Court "B" Judge Scheaplor R. Dunbar, a request was made to Court Administrator Cllr. Elizabeth B. Nelson for the transfer of bailiffs Brenda Geekor and Cynthia Wildoh.

The communication cited the two bailiffs' unwillingness to work, habitual absence from work and refusal to wear uniforms.

The NewDawn has contacted the head of

Finance Minister followed a sustained protest at the judiciary with judicial staffers demanding Liberian dollars component of their salaries.

The protest was marred by anti-Chief Justice Francis S. Korkpor slogans and drumming with gallons and pot tops. In the process the protesters were dragged by riot police later in the day, and some of them including protest leader Archie Ponpon were left unconscious.

It followed failed negotiations with authorities at the Judicial branch of government that led to the aggrieved judicial staffers' protest in extension of several weeks of protests for Liberian dollars component of their salaries allegedly cut, as they assembled outside the court,

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Lawmakers to order printing of more money?

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

Amid serious shortage of Liberian banknotes in circulation, information from the corridors of the Capitol and the Executive Mansion suggests that both members of the House of Representatives and the Liberian Senate are expected to return from annual break for two week's special sitting on plan by the government to print additional local currency.

Sources close to the leadership of the two

May this year, the CBL reviewed proposals submitted in response to a Request for Proposals (RFP), and selected the most competitive bid (Crane AB), based on cost and delivery time.

As a result, the CBL intends to enter into a contract with Crane AB ("Crane") for the printing and delivery of 4 billion Liberian Dollars banknotes (in L\$500 denomination). Under the terms of the contract, Crane will print and deliver the approved amount of banknotes to the CBL in Monrovia in a reasonable timeframe.

based Kroll Associates Inc.

The Executive Governor of the Central Bank of Liberia, J. Aloysius Tarlue, Jr., had said, "the CBL will keep the Liberian people fully informed of every step in the procurement process, up to and including the arrival and injection of the additional banknotes into the Liberian economy."

The US\$3.3 billion Liberian economy of US\$677 GDP per capita has had prolonged contraction from 2018 at 1.2% throughout 2019 at 1.4% before #COVID-19 hit the



chambers say President Weah is requesting for the special sitting for the sole purpose of adopting a resolution for the printing of additional banknotes.

Commercial banks operating here are faced with liquidity crisis, which has led to restricting customers, thereby pushing the exchange rate between United States dollars and the Liberian dollars from LRD200 to LRD175 for US\$1.

Earlier, the Central Bank of Liberia had printed about LRD\$5 billion, but authorities of commercial banks claimed that said money is not in circulation as it is hardly seen in the market.

Both the House of Representatives and the Liberian Senate are yet to respond affirmatively about the return, but it has become an open secret between the executive branch and the Legislature.

On March 12, 2020, the CBL issued a RFP, soliciting proposals for the printing of additional banknotes, with a deadline for responses on or before April 8, 2020. The CBL received proposals from potential currency printing firms in advance of the deadline.

Five internationally reputable currency printing companies were invited to participate in the bidding process. Subsequently, an especially dedicated Procurement Committee for printing of the additional banknotes conducted a rigorous evaluation process of the proposals, focused on both financial and technical aspects against a set of detailed evaluation criteria.

As a result of this process, Crane was recommended by the CBL Procurement Committee as the preferred supplier to print the additional banknotes with the technical advice of U.S.-

economy even harder with possibilities of a severe plummet.

Inflation reached 31.3% by August 2019, up from 26.1% the previous year, according to the World Bank.

According to the Central Bank, printing more money will help address the lingering liquidity problem and provide the Liberian people easier access to the cash they need to pay for food, school fees, health care, and other essential products and services as the country struggles to revive economically.

The Government of Liberia has managed to contain the COVID-19 pandemic with 166 confirmed cases, 58 recoveries and 18 deaths, as of May 5. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**

Gifty Lama takes

Starts from back page

The late Gifty was a member of the Church of Pentecost in Liberia, where she served in many capacities, including deaconess, youth leader, financial secretary for the youth ministry and internal auditor for the entire Church, respectively.

Before her mysterious death, she also served as a YALI fellow to the United States.

The widower had earlier said the family would have boycotted the autopsy due to lack of trust in the system and that it would just wait for the government to turn over his late wife's body to give her a befitting burial.

On October 19, 2020 the State, through the Ministry of Justice conducted autopsies on the remains of four Liberians, including Gifty and her workmate, who died mysteriously.

Addressing a news conference subsequently after the incident, Liberia's Police Inspector General Col. Patrick T. Sudue conceded that officers of the Liberia National Police (LNP) contaminated the crime scene where both corpses were mysteriously found in a parked vehicle on the early morning of Friday, 2 October on Snapper Hill, Broad Street.

The Police IG's response was based on a reporter's

happened was that the bodies should have been extracted from the parked vehicle, and the police should have had an ambulance available to take the corps to hospital.

He attributed the police's failure to follow these steps on a huge crowd that gathered on the crime scene to witness or report the incident. "But again we had a lot of people there..., look we respect the dignity of everybody, there were lot of people there with gadgets on. People wanted to record and all like that," Col. Sudue added.

"So looking at that aspect of taking the people out of the car that was unconscious, we deemed it necessary that what we would do let them just remain on board and someone drive the vehicle to the next point," Sudue continued.

He recalled that the LNP received a call on 2 October indicating that a parked vehicle opposite the Cathedral Catholic Church on Broad Street had two persons believed to be on board and unconscious. Immediately, he said police dispatched officers on the crime scene and took the unconscious bodies in the vehicle to JFK Medical Center where the occupants were pronounced dead upon arrival.

In subsequent reaction, the Liberia Revenue Authority



question why police officers drove the car in which the two LRA employees' bodies were found instead of towing it or lifting it from the scene to protect the evidence.

Col. Sudue explained, "This is what we call contamination of the crime scene."

"Look I must say publicly that there was some errors on the crime scene but those errors on the crime scene were not significant as to destroying the evidence that we had..."

According to him, what normally should have

(LRA) where both deceased worked up to their deaths expressed shock and mourned the discovery of their bodies.

A day or two later, another government audit was reportedly involved in a car crash, resulting death followed by the death of the Head of the Internal Auditing Agency Emmanuel B. Nyenswas, who reportedly died as a result falling from a first floor of his residence, bringing the total deaths to four, less than a month. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**

Cont'd from page 6

NEC, USAID hold

reviewing findings from the draft elections assessment report.

Key technical Directors, as technicians from the NEC including Civic and Voter Education, CVE, Political Affairs and Training as well as Referendum Coordination Team were heavily engaged in

the one-day zooming discussions

Chairperson Davidetta Browne Lansanah, Co-chairperson Cllr. P. Teplah Reeves, Commissioners Boakai A. Dukuly, Barsee Leo Kpangbai, Cllr. Ernestine Morgan Awar, Floyd Oxley Saylor and Josephine Kou Gaye

represented the BOC, while representatives from a number of USAID sponsored organizations including Internews, National Democratic Institute, NDI and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, IFES form part of the discussion.



Gifty Lama takes final journey

-After weeks of controversy



By **Bridgett Milton**

Family of the late employee of the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA) Gifty Asmah-Lama whose body was found in a parked car along with a dead male workmate Albert

Peters in broad daylight in Monrovia on October 2, 2020 announces funeral and burial ceremony for the departed relative.

The late Gifty Lama was Manager for the Taxpayer Service Division of the LRA up to

her mysterious death with a colleague in circumstances Police investigators are yet to establish.

According to an announcement signed by widower of the deceased Sylvester Saye Lama, beginning November 5, 2020 at 6pm a candle lighting occurs at the venue where the bodies were discovered, upper broad street to be followed by wake-keeping on 6 November at West Point football field after which funeral follows on 7 November at F. D. Walker Memorial Temple of the Church of Pentecost in Clara Town, Bushrod Island.

Mr. Lama says the Ministry of Justice contacted the family to take delivery of the body after an autopsy conducted by the Government of Liberia to establish cause of the victims' death. Result of the autopsy is expected in the next two week, according to Police.

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Bundesliga matches to be played behind closed doors

Bundesliga matches will be played behind closed doors from November 2 after it was announced Germany would return to a partial lockdown amid a significant increase in coronavirus cases.

German chancellor Angela Merkel and the regional leaders of the 16 states decided on a raft of new measures to control the spread of the virus on Wednesday.

One of these is to prevent any supporters from attending professional sports in the country.

Ahead of the 2020-21 season, Bundesliga clubs announced they would be ready to welcome back fans if public health authorities considered it a safe step to take, having played out the final weeks of the 2019-20 season behind closed doors.

The largest attendance under the restrictions was



Borussia Dortmund's home clash with Freiburg when 11,500 fans watched on, while other clubs - including reigning champions Bayern Munich - did not reopen their stadiums due to the high number of COVID-19 cases in the surrounding area.

Dortmund's managing director Hans-Joachim Watzke accepts the decision but insists supporters were safe inside the club's stadium.

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