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Mr. Gabriel Nyanka



Chief Cyril Allen

P10

Fire erupts in CDC

Shooter's mother faces interrogation



Alleged shooter Jovanus Turay

P11

-After son allegedly kills female student

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Continental News

Defiant Zuma dismisses court deadline as 'a sham'

South Africa's ex-President Jacob Zuma has rejected as "a sham" a request by the country's top court to suggest what punishment he should face if found guilty of contempt of court.

He faces possible sanctions for failing to appear in February before the Zondo Commission, a judicial inquiry into corruption during his presidency.

Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng had given Mr Zuma until Wednesday to file an affidavit, no longer than 15 pages, to the Constitutional Court.

But in a 21-page letter to the chief justice, the former president said that he had come to the conclusion that there was an "inexplicable judicial antipathy" towards him.

Mr Zuma, who resigned as president under pressure in 2018 facing numerous allegations of corruption, has repeatedly cast himself as a victim of conspiracy.

The BBC's Pumza Fihlani in

Johannesburg says it might have seemed a bizarre request from Justice Mogoeng - to make of a person accused of breaking the law suggest his own punishment - but by bending over backwards and extending him every possible courtesy, he may have hoped to pre-empt Mr Zuma's complaints that he has been treated unfairly.

However, if that was the

plan, it backfired as Mr Zuma reiterated at length that he had no faith in the judiciary.

"My decision not to participate in the contempt of court proceedings was based on my belief that my participation would not change the atmosphere of judicial hostility and humiliation reflected in its judgment against me," he

said.

The courts had joined the political narrative in which he was "routinely a subject of political ridicule and commentary", the 79-year-old anti-apartheid veteran said.

The Zondo Commission was controlled by his "political foes", he added.

The former president said he had a constitutional right "to be presumed innocent, to remain silent and not to testify in proceedings".

"I do not accept that I committed contempt of court when I decided not to participate in the commission

proceedings in circumstances where my rights would be violated."

In his letter, he argued that the Zondo Commission, which he set up, had not been established correctly.

"What the Zondo Commission has done is inexcusable and I will live to see my vindication when - after squandering billions of much needed public revenue, an independent court reviews and set aside the findings of the commission on the basis that it was not established in accordance with our constitution." BBC



Jacob Zuma denies corruption charges

Trapped children die in Niger school blaze

At least 20 children have died after they became trapped in a fire at a school in Niger's capital, Niamey.

It started late on Tuesday afternoon when the children were in lessons, many in straw-hut classrooms.

The flames blocked the school gate, so most pupils had to escape over a wall, said a teacher's union official

quoted by Reuters.

Most of those who did not manage to escape were attending the school's nursery, officials say. The government-run junior and pre-school in the Pays Bas district of the city had a mixture of brick and straw-hut classrooms, BBC Hausa's Tchima Illa Issoufou reports from Niamey.

In total 28 straw classrooms were completely destroyed and

some of the school's 30 permanent classrooms were also damaged, she says. Straw-hut classrooms are often built as overflow areas for lessons in schools when there are not enough brick ones, our reporter says.

A man who lost his six-year-old son in the fire urged the government to construct safe schools for children.

"Let's not put everything in the hands of God, let's not put everything in the hands of the state," he told the BBC. "We have lost 20 children in a fraction of a second - we must call on the state to say that hut classes should no longer exist anywhere in the country." Fire service commander Sidi Mohamed told public television that firefighters attended the scene quickly, but "the power of the fire was enormous", the AFP news agency reports. Parents were waiting at the Pays Bas Primary School on Wednesday morning to find out about arrangements for burying their children, our reporter says. Muslim burials usually take place within 24

Suez Canal ship held over \$900m compensation claim

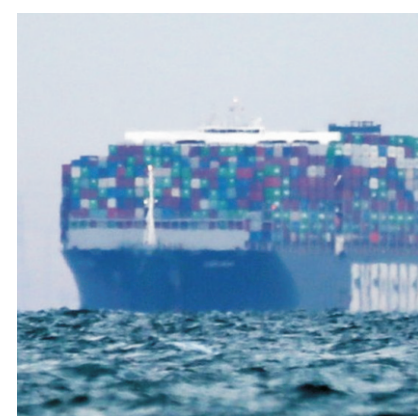
Egypt will impound the giant container ship that blocked the Suez Canal last month until its Japanese owner pays \$900m (£652m) in compensation.

One of the Ever Given's insurers, UK Club, said the Suez Canal Authority had rejected its offer to settle the claim. It described the claim, which includes \$300m for a salvage bonus and \$300m for loss of reputation, as "extraordinarily large" and "largely unsupported".

The Ever Given is anchored in the Great Bitter Lake, the canal's midway point.

The 400m-long (1,312ft), 220,000-tonne ship became wedged diagonally across the waterway on 23 March after running aground amid high winds and a sandstorm that affected visibility.

It was freed six days later, after a salvage operation involving a flotilla of powerful tug boats and dredging vessels that shifted an estimated 30,000 cubic metres (1.1m cubic ft) of mud and sand. More than 400 vessels had to wait to pass through the 193km (120-mile) canal, which connects the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea and provides the shortest sea link between Asia and Europe. The chairman of the Suez Canal Authority (SCA), Osama Rabie, said on Tuesday that the Ever Given had been

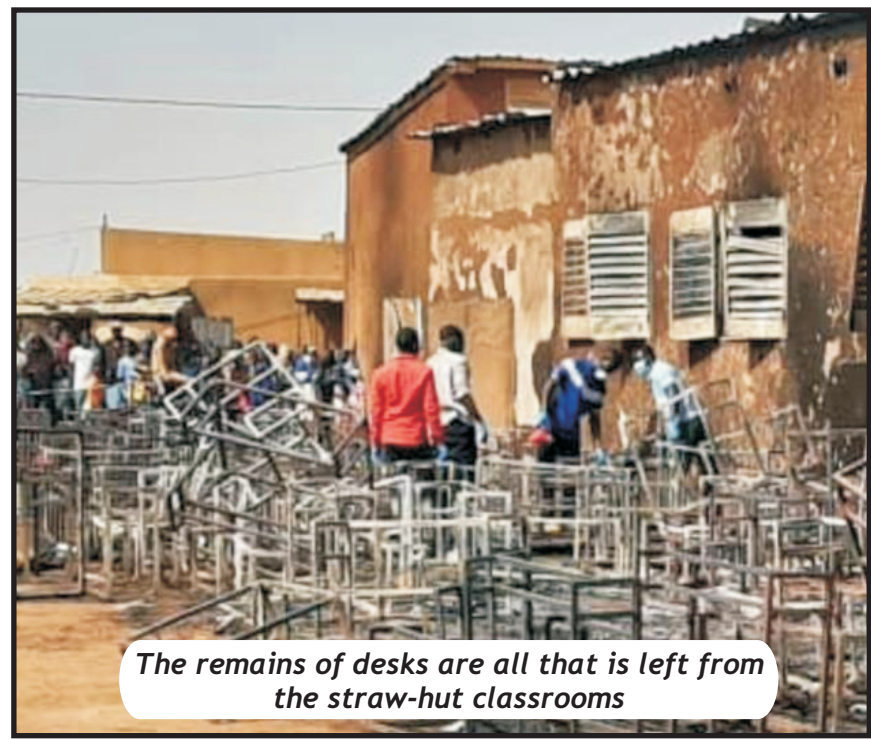


"seized due to its failure to pay \$900m" in compensation, Egyptian state media reported.

The figure was based on the "the losses incurred by the grounded vessel as well as the flotation and maintenance costs", he added. UK Club - which insured the ship's owner Shoei Kisen Kaisha for third-party liabilities, including damage caused to infrastructure or claims for obstruction - said in a statement that it had been negotiating in good faith with the SCA "despite the magnitude of the claim".

"On [Monday], a carefully considered and generous offer was made to the SCA to settle their claim," it added. "We are disappointed by the SCA's subsequent decision to arrest the vessel."

"We are also disappointed at comments by the SCA that the ship will be held in Egypt until compensation is paid, and that her crew will be unable to leave the vessel during this time." BBC



The remains of desks are all that is left from the straw-hut classrooms

hours of a death. Teachers' union official Mounkaila Halidou said there were about 800 students attending the school. "Those who died were mostly in the pre-school," he

said. It is not yet clear what caused the fire.

Niger is the world's poorest nation, according to the UN's development rankings for 189 countries. BBC

EDITORIAL

The US\$20,000 probe at the Liberian Senate

THE LIBERIAN SENATE is probing itself over claim by a staffer that senators on Capitol Hill in Monrovia recently received US\$20,000 bribe to sign a resolution, approving request by the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) to print new family of Liberian bank notes, totaling more than US\$48 Billion.

SENATE PRESIDENT PRO-TEMPORE Albert T. Chie has instructed the Secretary of the Senate to review the accusation made against the body and report to the leadership following the Easter Break.

THAT THE ALLEGATION came from the Administrative Assistant in the office of Grand Bassa County Nyonblee Karnga Lawrence tends to indicate there is smoke in the Senate, particularly when this same body in 2020 distributed money totaling about US\$180,000 among its members and kept silent after it signed a joint resolution with the House, approving President Weah's COVID-19 Stimulus Package.

IT TOOK OPPOSITION Senator Abraham Darius Dillon of Montserrado County who went public and disclosed that each senator received US\$6,000 of the amount for what he termed "operational cost." The following day, Nimba County Senator Prince Yormie Johnson, appeared on radio and confirmed that he received US\$7,000 of the amount for 'special or extra sitting' and then, the Pandora box came to light amid public outcry.

WE HOPE THIS is not a replay of that ugly scenario from 2020 that received widespread public condemnation at a time Liberians were facing total lockdown characterized by lack of food and money.

WE UNDERSTAND THAT already, Senator Nyonblee Karnga Lawrence has suspended her Administrative Assistant Daniel Sando for one month without salary for accusing members of the Senate, while the entire leadership of the Liberian Senate headed by Pro-Tempore Albert Chie has called for an investigation.

WE LOOK FORWARD to outcome of the investigation. But it is hardly possible the Senate would indict itself for corruption or receiving money for the approval of the CBL's request to print new family of bank notes.

ADDITIONALLY, DANIEL SANDO is already being punished by his boss for the allegation he made, and would not be prepared to persist any further without proof. The only option he has available is to succumb and say that he lied, which could even bring more heavier punishment.

BUT WHAT COULD have led him to make such allegation against the entire Liberian Senate that includes his boss, Senator Nyonblee Karnga Lawrence? Why such suspicion in the first place if there were no smoke? Something smells here, given past history at the Senate.

WE CAN ONLY but advise senators on Capitol Hill to conduct themselves transparently before their staff to avoid such suspicion that leaves a stain on public perception about them, particularly when the whistle is blown from within because it clearly presents a likelihood of believability more so when staffers at the Capitol generally have seen the Liberian dollar component of their monthly salary disappeared without remedy despite several investigations by the leadership.

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+231-775407211 Managing Editor: Othello B. Garblah; Editor-In-Chief: Jonathan

COMMENTARY

By Lindsay Coates,
John Floretta

How to Stop the Poverty Pandemic

WASHINGTON, DC/CAMBRIDGE - Globally, extreme poverty is increasing for the first time in 20 years. Although some poor countries are now receiving COVID-19 vaccines, the pandemic is set to drive nearly 150 million people into extreme poverty by the end of 2021, reversing decades of progress.

But the world has a huge opportunity to help prevent this outcome, and not only through more generous aid and vaccine distribution. Lower-income countries also need assistance in adapting and scaling more robust social protection and livelihood programs. Such initiatives build resilience, enabling people to weather future economic crises. And collaborations between enterprising non-profits and researchers can help guide the way.

Careful, high-quality research to evaluate the effectiveness of specific social policies and programs in different contexts has increased markedly in the past two decades. A particularly rigorous approach known as randomized evaluation employs a methodology similar to that of medical trials to assess the real-life effects of promising innovations.

This research has identified a range of effective measures to reduce extreme poverty, including schemes to enroll more girls in school, help the unemployed find jobs, and support voters in making more informed election choices. The tremendous value of this research was recognized in 2019 when the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences was awarded to three of its pioneers, Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo of MIT and Michael Kremer of Harvard.

A vivid example of how social policy research-and-development collaborations can make a real difference to those whose livelihoods have been upended by the pandemic is the Graduation Approach, whose effectiveness Banerjee and Duflo have studied. Established and led by BRAC, the largest NGO based in the Global South, the Graduation Approach involves a holistic sequence of interventions that are evidence-based, highly adaptable to local contexts, and designed to meet the multidimensional needs of people in extreme poverty.

Graduation participants are provided with an income-generating asset such as a cow, a sewing machine, or a cash transfer. In addition, they receive wraparound support for the following 18-36 months, including training on how to generate income from the asset, life skills coaching, consumption support, access to a savings account, and links to government assistance.

BRAC previously collaborated with a team of economists from the London School of Economics on a randomized evaluation to study the Graduation program's impact on poverty in rural Bangladesh. The results were impressive: the move to self-employment increased the poorest participants' earnings by an average of 37% over four years. But could the approach be effective and scaled in other contexts?

To answer this question, nonprofits working in seven countries, from Pakistan to Peru, were

trained to run the program while rigorous evaluation continued. Researchers from MIT's Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) and Innovations for Poverty Action conducted six concurrent randomized evaluations in each country. These coordinated studies found the Graduation Approach to be one of the most effective of the evaluated programs for helping people propel themselves out of extreme poverty.

In nearly every country, Graduation program participants improved their economic outcomes. They successfully launched small businesses, and their increased income led them to explore other ways to make money. Participants also reported improved psychological well-being, including an increased sense of hope. A follow-up study published in November 2020 found that these positive effects persisted for up to ten years after the program ended.

To date, BRAC has reached more than 2.1 million households in Bangladesh, where the program originated, with a "graduation" rate of 95%. As of 2018, more than 100 organizations in nearly 50 countries have piloted or implemented Graduation programs.

The Graduation Approach's worldwide expansion and proven ability to break the cycle of extreme poverty shows that designing innovative programs, collaborating with researchers to test them rigorously, and establishing trusted partnerships with governments can result in great strides toward scaling up the most effective schemes. High-quality research demonstrating the Graduation Approach's effectiveness across contexts helped BRAC, J-PAL, and other partners convince donors and governments that the model can help vulnerable people create sustainable livelihoods and make social protection policies more inclusive and effective.

As BRAC scales Graduation globally through direct implementation and with partners, it has identified important lessons that can inform similar efforts. Above all, adherence to the key underlying principles driving a program's impact is essential, while also adapting the model to each context. An ethos of learning and critical self-evaluation is central to program success, as Graduation's 20-year evolution in Bangladesh has shown. And by examining a program's effects on different population groups and continuing to tweak and test its components, like the size and type of livelihood packages provided, we can continue to leverage research to empower people in extreme poverty.

The scale of the Graduation Approach after years of iteration and evaluation points to areas where philanthropy and aid can be especially useful. These include investment in social policy innovations, rigorous evaluation of whether and how they work, and partnerships with governments to apply globally sourced knowledge to their own programs.

Our experience shows that innovative and evidence-based approaches, when executed well, can dent poverty. With the pandemic threatening to reverse hard-won global gains, the need for policy-relevant research, and for scaling effective solutions, has never been more urgent.

OPINION

By Daron Acemoglu

Biden's Great Tax Rebalancing

BOSTON - US President Joe Biden's spending plans have been grabbing headlines, and rightly so. The administration's relief package and infrastructure plan could remake the US welfare state by bolstering the social safety net and increasing spending on transportation, broadband, and education.

But with US government spending likely to remain high after the COVID-19 pandemic, tax revenues must increase, because additional borrowing can finance only so much. Hence, the Biden administration has proposed the equally sweeping Made in America Tax Plan, which would increase corporations' share of tax revenues.

Raising the corporate tax rate is the best option. In the first decade after World War II, taxes on individual incomes and social insurance receipts made up about 50% of federal tax revenues, while corporate taxes accounted for another 30%. But since then, the former category has increased steadily, reaching about 85% of total federal tax revenues, while the corporate share has fallen below 10%.

Moreover, US corporate profits have never been higher, while the share of national income accruing to labor has declined from about 66% to 58%, indicating that workers have been paying an ever-larger share of total taxes even as they have been getting a diminishing share of the economic pie. My own research finds similarly high imbalances in the effective marginal tax rates on labor (more than 25%) and on capital investments such as software and equipment (5%).

These marginal rates are what guide corporate investment decisions. Under the current US tax structure, corporations have much stronger incentives to pursue excessive automation than to employ, train, and properly pay workers. But automation is not the only technological path open to US businesses. With different incentives, they would instead invest in technologies designed to make workers more productive. All told, the deep imbalances in the current tax structure are costing the US economy not just in terms of employment, but also in decreased productive efficiency and growth.

While the Trump administration's 2017 tax bill slashed the corporate tax rate from 35% to 21%, the corporate share of total tax revenues has been declining for a half-century. Many businesses have become private partnerships or S-Corporations, which are exempt from corporate income taxes. Another major contributor to this trend has been depreciation allowances, which enable corporations to deduct investment expenditures from their taxable income.

Biden's promise to increase the headline corporate tax rate from 21% to 28% is therefore an important step, but insufficient in itself. It will neither level the playing field between capital and labor, nor stop US-based corporations from engaging in "tax inversions" to flee to other jurisdictions or from shifting their profits to foreign subsidiaries. Footloose corporate profits have been a leading factor in the long-term reduction of tax rates on capital and corporations, and multinationals would still have a full bag of tricks for reducing their reported US profits, such as internal financial transactions to increase their debt obligations in the United States and using foreign subsidiaries to overcharge their US branches (transfer pricing).

Fortunately, the Biden plan includes a second pillar to address precisely this problem: a global minimum corporate tax.

In theory, the idea is simple. Ideally, tax rates would be hiked substantially in Ireland, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Panama, the British Virgin Islands, and other jurisdictions that allow corporations to evade their tax obligations through "arbitrage." If not, a company headquartered in the US and subject to the 21% global minimum corporate tax rate that reports all of its profits in Ireland, where the corporate tax rate is 12.5%, would be assessed additional US taxes equivalent to 8.5% of its profits.

Of course, the policy would be more complicated in practice. Low-tax jurisdictions have come to rely so much on tax-dodging international businesses that they have spurned coordination. Faced with the global minimum tax rate in the US, some may be tempted to relocate their headquarters to such countries (which is why the Biden tax plan also includes provisions to prevent evasive corporate flight). If some of the most notorious tax havens refused to cooperate, any new international framework would fail.

This is where US leadership comes in. The US has incredible fiscal power, not just as the world's largest economy, but also as the regulatory headquarters of the global financial industry. If US policymakers lead with enough conviction, other countries will be forced to follow. Biden's tax plan already contains provisions to prevent tax inversions and includes proposals for limiting tax deductions for multinationals engaged in tax arbitrage. The US can also take legal action against foreign financial institutions involved in tax fraud and systematic innovation, and can work multilaterally to bring greater harmonization to the international taxation of corporate incomes.

If implemented fully, a global minimum corporate tax rate would revolutionize international capital taxation. But even this would not solve America's fiscal problems. To reverse the unfair and inefficient reduction of the corporate tax burden, the Biden administration must also end excessively generous depreciation allowances and broaden the tax base, so that companies cannot avoid taxes simply by changing their legal status.

Greater corporate taxation should be accompanied by other measures to encourage investment and innovation. In addition to subsidizing research and development, the state can do more to help increase the supply of well-trained engineers, scientists, and skilled workers, and to facilitate the diffusion of technological know-how.

With a more level playing field between capital and labor, companies can be induced to develop and adopt new technologies that increase worker productivity, rather than continuing the trend of excessive automation that has shaped the US economy for the past two decades. Part and parcel of this effort will be action to end the dominance of just a few companies in the technology sector.

A fairer tax system would not solve all of America's economic problems on its own. But it would be a significant step in the right direction, helping workers and the economy while also stemming the alarming rise in federal debt.

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O-P-E-D

By Nouriel Roubini

Is Stagflation Coming?

NEW YORK - There is a growing debate about whether the inflation that will arise over the next few months will be temporary, reflecting the sharp bounce-back from the COVID-19 recession, or persistent, reflecting both demand-pull and cost-push factors.

Several arguments point to a persistent secular increase in inflation, which has remained below most central banks' annual 2% target for over a decade. The first holds that the United States has enacted excessive fiscal stimulus for an economy that already appears to be recovering faster than expected. The additional \$1.9 trillion of spending approved in March came on top of a \$3 trillion package last spring and a \$900 billion stimulus in December, and a \$2 trillion infrastructure bill will soon follow. The US response to the crisis is thus an order of magnitude larger than its response to the 2008 global financial crisis.

The counter-argument is that this stimulus will not trigger lasting inflation, because households will save a large fraction of it to pay down debts. Moreover, investments in infrastructure will increase not just demand but also supply, by expanding the stock of productivity-enhancing public capital. But, of course, even accounting for these dynamics, the bulge of private savings brought by the stimulus implies that there will be some inflationary release of pent-up demand.

A second, related argument is that the US Federal Reserve and other major central banks are being excessively accommodative with policies that combine monetary and credit easing. The liquidity provided by central banks has already led to asset inflation in the short run, and will drive inflationary credit growth and real spending as economic re-opening and recovery accelerate. Some will argue that when the time comes, central banks can simply mop up the excess liquidity by drawing down their balance sheets and raising policy rates from zero or negative levels. But this claim has become increasingly hard to swallow.

Central banks have been monetizing large fiscal deficits in what amounts to "helicopter money" or an application of Modern Monetary Theory. At a time when public and private debt is growing from an already high baseline (425% of GDP in advanced economies and 356% globally), only a combination of low short- and long-term interest rates can keep debt burdens sustainable. Monetary-policy normalization at this point would crash bond and credit markets, and then stock markets, inciting a recession. Central banks have effectively lost their independence.

Here, the counter-argument is that when economies reach full capacity and full employment, central banks will do whatever it takes to maintain their credibility and independence. The alternative would be a de-anchoring of inflation expectations that would destroy their reputations and allow for runaway price growth.

A third claim is that the monetization of fiscal deficits will not be inflationary; rather, it will merely prevent deflation. However, this assumes that the shock hitting the global economy resembles the one in 2008, when the collapse of an asset bubble created a credit crunch and thus an aggregate demand shock.

The problem today is that we are recovering from a negative aggregate supply shock. As such, overly loose monetary and fiscal policies could indeed lead to inflation or, worse, stagflation (high inflation alongside a recession). After all, the stagflation of the 1970s came after two negative oil-supply shocks following the 1973 Yom Kippur War and the 1979 Iranian Revolution.

In today's context, we will need to worry about a number of potential negative supply shocks, both as threats to potential growth and as possible factors driving up production costs. These include trade hurdles such as de-globalization and rising protectionism; post-pandemic supply bottlenecks; the deepening Sino-American cold war; and the ensuing balkanization of global supply chains and reshoring of foreign direct investment from low-cost China to higher-cost locations.

Equally worrying is the demographic structure in both advanced and emerging economies. Just when elderly cohorts are boosting consumption by spending down their savings, new restrictions on migration will be putting upward pressure on labor costs.

Moreover, rising income and wealth inequalities mean that the threat of a populist backlash will remain in play. On one hand, this could take the form of fiscal and regulatory policies to support workers and unions - a further source of pressure on labor costs. On the other hand, the concentration of oligopolistic power in the corporate sector also could prove inflationary, because it boosts producers' pricing power. And, of course, the backlash against Big Tech and capital-intensive, labor-saving technology could reduce innovation more broadly.

There is a counter-narrative to this stagflationary thesis. Despite the public backlash, technological innovation in artificial intelligence, machine learning, and robotics could continue to weaken labor, and demographic effects could be offset by higher retirement ages (implying a larger labor supply).

Similarly, today's reversal of globalization may itself be reversed as regional integration deepens in many parts of the world, and as the outsourcing of services provides workarounds for obstacles to labor migration (a programmer in India doesn't have to move to Silicon Valley to design a US app). Finally, any reductions in income inequality may simply militate against tepid demand and deflationary secular stagnation, rather than being severely inflationary.

In the short run, the slack in markets for goods, labor, and commodities, and in some real-estate markets, will prevent a sustained inflationary surge. But over the next few years, loose monetary and fiscal policies will start to trigger persistent inflationary - and eventually stagflationary - pressure, owing to the emergence of any number of persistent negative supply shocks.

Make no mistake: inflation's return would have severe economic and financial consequences. We would have gone from the "Great Moderation" to a new period of macro instability. The secular bull market in bonds would finally end, and rising nominal and real bond yields would make today's debts unsustainable, crashing global equity markets. In due time, we could even witness the return of 1970s-style malaise.

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FEATURE

FEATURE

How Africa's women traders are poised to drive regional integration

African women represent more than 70 per cent of workers in the informal sector. However, many women continue to face barriers to trade opportunities, such as access to raw materials, increased economies of scale, integration into regional and global value chains, technological challenges, and access to finance to name a few.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in partnership with the UN Development Programme (UNDP), is delivering a series of 3-day capacity building workshops in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire for women traders and producers in the ECOWAS region with the aim of guiding them on market entry and operations under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The first workshop kicked off Monday April 12 in Accra, Ghana - the headquarters of the AfCFTA

The workshop aims to foster direct linkages between SMEs in the ECOWAS region and SMEs and trade groups in Central, East and Southern Africa and various trade facilitation agencies will provide practical information to guide market entry and operations for SMEs. Sessions include topics on: understanding the AfCFTA, ECOWAS and the AfCFTA, importing and exporting in the AfCFTA, AfCFTA opportunities in Central, East and Southern Africa, financing scaling in the AfCFTA, and operational tools of the AfCFTA.

Women and youth, two groups with the potential to drive the transformation of Africa's economies, must be mainstreamed into national and continental frameworks in order to guarantee and fully harness the benefits of the AfCFTA. "Women must lead the way for economic independence in Africa," emphasized Silver Ojakol, Chief of Staff at the AfCFTA Secretariat. "40% of intra-African trade is dominated by micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs). These businesses are mostly managed by women and youth and form a

an African market for goods and services covering 1.2 billion people and a combined Gross Domestic Product of US\$3 trillion, building on the progress towards integration achieved in regional economic communities such as ECOWAS. All ECOWAS member states have signed the AfCFTA Agreement, and 12 of 15 member States have deposited instruments of ratification.

Representing the Ministry of Trade and Industry in Ghana, Mrs. Kosi Yankey, CEO of the Ghana Enterprises Agency, urged the participants to "work together and not in silos", adding, "we want an inclusive strategy for implementation. 80% of businesses are SMEs and we cannot implement the AfCFTA without focusing on SMEs. That would leave out a whole generation of economic development in any nation."

The AfCFTA will create opportunities for traders, producers, service providers and investors originating in the ECOWAS region to source cheaper inputs, scale businesses, increase exports, especially of value-added products, and develop beneficial regional value chains; intra-African trade records a higher incidence of trade in higher value goods, highlighting market opportunity for producers originating in ECOWAS.

The workshop series is part of a larger capacity building programme on the AfCFTA, which commenced with a training of trainers in Freetown, Sierra Leone on 7-9 April. A second workshop will convene French and Portuguese-speaking traders and trade associations in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire on 20-22 April. The series is also organized in partnership with the AU Commission, AfCFTA Secretariat, UN Economic Commission for Africa, the International Trade Centre, Afrexim Bank and GIZ.**

About ECOWAS

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established on May 28, 1975 through the Lagos treaty. ECOWAS is a 15-member regional body with a mandate of promoting economic integration in all fields of activity of its member states. As one of the pillars of the African Economic Community, ECOWAS was set up to foster economic integration by creating a borderless region where the population has access to its abundant resources under a sustainable environment, promote good governance

and democracy. For more information, please visit www.ecowas.int.

About UNDP

UNDP is providing support to the implementation of the AfCFTA at national, regional and continental levels. This support includes direct support to countries, capacity building for small and medium scale enterprises, fostering linkages between SMEs in different regions, research, and support for the development of trade-enabling technologies through the Accelerator Labs. In 2020, UNDP published The Futures Report: Making the AfCFTA Work for Women and Youth, a narrative by producers, traders and policy officials on the critical importance of small and medium scale enterprises in driving intra-African trade.



Secretariat and convenes 20 women traders from the 5 English-speaking member states of the ECOWAS region (Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Gambia). They represent the agricultural, agroprocessing, textiles, and arts and crafts sectors, as well as trade development agencies.

Dr. Bolanle Adetoun, Acting Director of the ECOWAS Gender Development Centre, who represented ECOWAS Commissioner for Social Affairs and Gender, Dr. Siga Fatima Jagne, commented that women traders "play critical roles in African economies. The capacity building programme is intended to highlight opportunities within the AfCFTA for ECOWAS traders, especially women, and contribute to an understanding of strategies and approaches to enhance value addition for goods and services within the framework of the AfCFTA."

significant segment of the export portfolio within Africa."

The 3-day workshop will highlight the requirements for exports to various African countries, discuss e-commerce as a tool for exploring new markets, and provide an overview of financing instruments that can be utilized by women-led SMEs as they scale across borders.

"Women are Africa's traders. If you look at any market, and in fact any border of this continent, the majority of traders will be women," remarked Silke Hollander, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative in Ghana. "However, women remain at the lower rung of value chains in the agricultural and services sectors. The AfCFTA must account for and address the challenges women face."

Trading under the preferential terms of the AfCFTA commenced on 1 January 2021. The AfCFTA will create

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Mrs. Clar Weah seeks ECOWAS Parliamentary Action on women issues

Liberian First Lady, Ambassador Clar Marie Weah has reminded ECOWAS Parliamentarians convening in Monrovia of critical issues affecting women and girls across the sub-region, craving the regional parliamentary body's utmost attention to find lasting solutions.

Mrs. Weah named the increased wave of sexual gender based-violence (SGBV), female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage, teenage pregnancy and limited access to sexual and reproductive health rights among others.

"Sadly it must be said that even where there has been progress in peace-building and security across member states, over the last ten

ECOWAS Region."

According to the Liberian First Lady, the meeting's theme was indicative of the need for a common approach to ensuring that no girl or woman in the region is deprived of any opportunity on the basis of her gender.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Weah has also admonished participants of the ongoing meeting to ensure that their deliberations and quest for women and girls empowerment be inclusive of all women and not a few groups.

"The broad scope of the theme on empowerment of women in the ECOWAS region, speaks of the lofty goals and targets that we all need to set our eyes on over the coming days of talks, discussions and deliberations," said Mrs. Weah.

She continued: "We should

President George Weah-led Government's unequivocal commitment and support to the promotion of women empowerment and the protection of their rights, citing significant strides in tackling rape and other forms of violence towards women and girls.

The First Lady further reaffirmed her commitment to true women empowerment, as she outlined numerous projects being undertaken to that effect through her personal initiative, the Clar Hope Foundation.

Established in June 2018 with the vision of creating an equitable society in Liberia, by restoring the hope of disadvantaged children, youth and women through education, health and other opportunities to better their lives, Clar Hope Foundation operates on four pillars - health, education, gender equality and economic empowerment.

The ongoing sitting of the ECOWAS Parliamentary joint committee marks the third events hosted in Liberia since September 2019.

For this, Mrs. Weah has expressed profound gratitude on behalf of the people of Liberia, to the ECOWAS parliament for selecting Monrovia, for its delocalized meeting. Considering Liberia's record of producing great female leaders including the likes of Angie Brooks Randall - the First female President of the UN General Assembly and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Africa's first female democratically elected president among others, Mrs. Weah was confident that the meeting was in the right place at the right time.

"I wish to state that you will not find a larger selection of experts in the sub-region who can assist in generating qualitative discussions on the subject-matter than in Liberia. As Africa's oldest Republic, Liberia has always placed a high value on the pursuit of good governance of the people which includes achieving parity in all facet of life."

Also speaking, the Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament, Rt. Honorable Sidie Mohamed Tunis and House Speaker Dr. Bhofal Chambers both pledged their commitment to the advancement of women and girls on the continent.

not just be discussing about the empowerment or elevation of a certain class of the women folk in ECOWAS, or women in politics, public space or the private sector; we should not just be talking about women in business or in boardrooms, we should be talking about all women, of all races and from all walks of life.

"Across every sector and in every corner of our region, we are here to talk about taking serious steps to ensure that every woman and every female in our region has access to all that she needs to ensure that she fulfils her potential and contributes to the development of her society."

Mrs. Weah, however, praised ECOWAS and others for the frantic efforts toward guaranteeing gender equality, access to education for the girl-child and better health facilities for women.

Sher also assured the

Cummings tests negative

-Awaits wife second Covid-19 result

Former Coca-Cola Executive, Mr. Alexander Cummings' Covid-19 result returned negative on Wednesday days after his entire household went into isolation following his wife Teresa's positive result.

"My test result is back. I am negative. The test results for the other members of our extended family are also back, and they are all negative. I thank God for these results," Cummings posted.

In a statement posted on Wednesday, the Political Leader of the Alternative National Congress said he continued to be "grateful for your prayers and outpouring of love as we deal with the unexpected situation of a positive test result for my wife."

Cummings told his followers that he had to cut short his 5-days visit to Nimba and return to Monrovia after news that his wife had tested positive for the virus.

Cummings: "On last Tuesday, April 6, 2021, I embarked on a 5-day visit to Nimba County. I returned to Monrovia on yesterday to attend the graduation ceremony of a vocational institute, and to spend time with my wife, Teresa, before her travel out of the country which was scheduled for today.

While in Gbarngaenroute to Nimba this morning for the conclusion of my working visit, I received a call from my wife. She had tested positive with COVID-19. I immediately returned to Monrovia to be with my wife. At the moment, Teresa is fine. I am also fine and not



First Lady Clar Marie Weah, addressing the opening session of the ECOWAS Parliament's Joint Committee Meeting Tuesday, April 13, 2021

decades, this has not been translated into actions to eliminate violence against women and girls," the First Lady asserted.

Mrs. Weah was speaking on Tuesday, April 13, 2021, during the opening ceremonies of the 5th ECOWAS Parliament's delocalized meeting of the joint committee on Social Affairs, Gender and Women Empowerment; Education; Science and Culture; and Health at the Ministerial Complex in Congo Town.

The five-day sitting of the parliamentary joint committee which attracted a host of high profile personalities including President George Weah, members of the 54th legislature, and prominent women, is being convened under the theme: "Empowerment of Women in



"Teresa continues to be well and is with her usual smile, energy, and grace, all of which have helped me cope with my own concerns for and about the love of my life for almost forty years.

"...I have decided to remain at home, next to Teresa, to be with her, at least until the weekend, when she is tested again, and the results are known. Once again, we are grateful for the expressions of your uplifting thoughts and prayers for our family."

Mr. Cummings and wife Teresa Cummings went into self-isolation, following the latter's covid-19 positive result last week.

In a brief statement issued over the weekend, Mr.

presenting any symptoms.

However, as a result of the positive result and consistent with the health protocols, Teresa's travel is postponed. I have also initiated arrangements to take the Covid-19 Test on tomorrow, and will be self-quarantining immediately.

I apologize to the people of Nimba for canceling the last leg of my visit at the last minute. I urge everyone to continue to abide by the preventive health measures. COVID-19 is real, and unfortunately, is still with us.

Please keep my family in your prayers, as ours will be that you continue to act to keep yourself and your love ones safe."

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MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Magistrate sent to court for rape

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan
in Bong County

Police in Gbarnga, Bong County have charged and sent to court the Assigned Magistrate at the Bong Mines Magisterial Court for allegedly raping a 13-year-old girl in the area.

The Bong County Detachment of the Liberia National Police (LNP) started investigating the matter in February this year following a tip-off from relatives of the survivor.

The 13-year-old rape survivor, told a team of LNP fact-finding officers that while

victim explained that she refused the accused's proposal.

The survivor said since then, defendant Richard has allegedly been tempering with her, threatening to kill her if she told anyone the situation.

In conversation with judicial reporters Tuesday following the defendant's transfer to court, police investigator Solomon Dennis, Sr., recounted that the teenager had told police that she went to the defendant's house with a friend (name withheld) and got attacked there by the accused.

The survivor, according to police narrated that while sitting on the porch of the defendant's house and witnessing movies on his DVD player, the accused allegedly called her in his room and forcibly took off her clothes, tied her mouth with a piece of cloth and sexually offended her.

Further, Solomon quoted the survivor as saying that Magistrate Richard K. Flomo, Jr., in a move to encourage the teenager, had earlier offered \$6,000 Liberian Dollars to the survivor as school fees before inviting her to his house and allegedly

returning from escorting her older sister at a nearby area in the region in February, she met defendant Richard Flomo along the road and he allegedly proposed to her for the first time.

According to police, the



Richard K. Flomo, Jr., aged 54, is currently being transferred to the Gbarnga Central Prison pending court trial. Magistrate Richard Flomo is the son of former Bong County Senator Cllr. Richard Flomo, Sr.

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First Lady saddened by Cyber-Ed fatal shooting

...Calls for heightened school safety measures

First Lady Clar Marie Weah is saddened by the fatal shooting of a female student at the Cyber-Ed Christian School of Excellence in Monrovia, and extends heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.

The deceased, identified as 16-year-old Precious Ireland, was reportedly shot by a male

the death of the adolescent girl as a huge loss.

Mrs. Weah, however, urged the bereaved family to remain calm as police are investigating the incident.

Meanwhile, the Liberian First Lady asserted that the recent shooting incident underscores the urgency of instituting rigorous measures to



schoolmate while on campus on Tuesday, April 13, 2021.

In a statement issued Wednesday, April 14, 2021, Mrs. Weah is quoted as saying that as a mother she understands how painful it is to lose a daughter to such an unfortunate incident which could have been prevented.

The First Lady described

ensure the safety of students and staffers at various schools across the country.

She urges the Ministry of Education and partners to work along with school authorities to prevent the recurrence of the fatal shooting and other incidents capable of disrupting teaching and learning processes at schools.

Min. Kemayah underscores Women Empowerment at ECOWAS summit

Liberian Foreign Minister Deema Maxwell Saah Kemayah, Sr. has disclosed that President George Manneh Weah is exerting frantic efforts to making gender mainstreaming a matter of urgency in the formulation and implantation of policies and programs to enhance greater participation of women in national leadership.

Foreign Minister Kemayah added that Mr. Weah would like to see a sense of belongingness of the women of Liberia in all spheres of public life, in accordance with the Flagship National Development Plan of the Government of Liberia - The 'Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development' (PAPD).

Foreign Minister Kemayah opined that Mr. Weah, in his Annual Message to the Liberian Legislature on January 25, 2021, announced the submission of a Bill to

amend the Domestic Violence Act and other laws to provide enhanced and greater protection for victims of sexual and gender-based violence in Liberia;

He named the establishment of Gender and Social Inclusion Units in all government ministries, agencies and commissions; the adoption of the Gender Based Violence Comprehensive Prevention Strategy of "Leaving No One Behind" in order to heighten the

protection and empowerment of women, girls and marginalized members of the Liberian society as some of the bill submitted by the President.

The Dean of the Cabinet made these remarks at the Fifth Legislature Delocalized meeting of the joint Committee on: Social Affairs, Gender and women empowerment, education, science, culture and health



held on Tuesday, April 13, 2021 at the Ministerial Complex, Congo Town.

According to a Foreign Ministry release, the Fifth Legislature Delocalized meeting of the joint Committee will run from 13-17 April 2021 under the theme: "Empowerment of Women in the ECOWAS Region"

"To this end, Liberia takes pride for producing the First and only African Female President of the United Nations General Assembly, Her Excellency the Late Ambassador Angie Elizabeth Brooks-Randolph; as well as Africa's First democratically elected Female President, Her Excellency Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and the First Female and current Vice President of the Republic of Liberia, Hon. Chief Dr. Jewel Howard Taylor", he emphasized.

The Liberian Foreign

Minister, who delivered a goodwill message at the meeting, cautioned participants at the seminar on women empowerment to consider policies, programs and institutional platforms to further strengthen and deepen existing mechanisms towards ensuring greater ties between the Parliament and the people it represents.

The Liberian Foreign Minister further urged the participants at the summit to focus on the protection and participation of women in politics, governance, security, peace and conflict resolution; in fulfillment of the ECOWAS National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, and the Supplementary Act on the Equality of Rights between Women and Men for Sustainable Development in the ECOWAS Region.

Français

LANALA Finances, la première compagnie de micro-finance digitale voit le jour en Guinée

Le monde des microfinances s'est agrandi en République de Guinée avec la création de LANALA Finances, un nouveau-né du GROUPE LANALA Holding composé préalablement de LANALA Assurances SA et LANALA Assurances VIE. Le Directeur Général LANALA FINANCES, Bernard GOUMOU a procédé au lancement des activités de la première compagnie de microfinance digitale en République de Guinée ce lundi 12 avril 2021 au siège de l'institution sis Almamy à la Rue ka.038 dans la commune de Kaloum.

Parlant des motivations du Groupe LANALA Holding, le Directeur Général Adjoint, Mr Labila Doré a dans son intervention déclaré que « Nous sommes partis des études qui ont été faites sur le terrain, nous savons qu'il y a beaucoup de microfinances qui sont là, cependant les clients estiment que les produits et services que ces microfinances offrent ne sont pas très adaptés à leur besoin de financement. Partant de ces études, nous nous sommes fixés des objectifs et des stratégies pour répondre

à leurs besoins »

La Responsable juridique et contentieux, Marie Bambette Camara, a abondé dans le même sens pour dire : « Nous avons constaté qu'il y a une catégorie de personnes qui n'a pas accès au crédit ; notamment les sérès, le boutiquier du quartier, les associations de mototaxis et autres catégories. L'objectif et la valeur ajoutée du service juridique de LANALA Finances, c'est de tout simplement les amener avoir des documents

juridiques, les accompagner sur cet aspect pour qu'ils puissent avoir facilement accès au crédit. Chez LANALA Finances, on reçoit tout le monde. On permet à ces personnes qui n'ont pas de papier de les obtenir pour avoir accès au crédit » A-t-elle déclaré.

Dans la présentation de son institution financière, le Président de la cérémonie de lancement des activités de

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Mort de Thomas Sankara: la justice décide de la mise en accusation de l'ex-président Compaoré

Ce mardi, le tribunal militaire a décidé de la mise en accusation de l'ex-président Blaise Compaoré pour attentat à la sûreté de l'État, complicité d'assassinat et recel de cadavres dans le dossier de l'assassinat de l'ancien chef de l'État Thomas Sankara. Gilbert Diendéré, ancien bras droit de Blaise Compaoré, est lui aussi poursuivi. Au total, 14 personnes doivent comparaître devant le

tribunal dans ce dossier.

Poursuivi pour attentat à la sûreté de l'État, complicité d'assassinat et recel de cadavres, l'ex-président devra se présenter devant le tribunal pour un procès. Selon la décision judiciaire, il existe suffisamment de charges contre l'ancien dirigeant pour les faits de recel de cadavres et le tribunal maintient le mandat d'arrêt international contre celui qui vit en exil en Côte d'Ivoire.

Mandat maintenu aussi pour

Hyacinthe Kafando, poursuivi pour assassinat et attentat à la sûreté de l'État. Il est le présumé chef du commando qui a procédé à l'assassinat du capitaine Thomas Sankara et ses compagnons. Également accusé dans cette affaire, le général Gilbert Diendéré, proche de Blaise Compaoré. Dans ce dossier, quatorze personnes sont renvoyées devant la justice.

Dans le même temps, le tribunal militaire a ordonné la mise en détention de toutes les personnes dont les charges ont été confirmées. Les mandats d'arrêt sont donc maintenus contre ceux qui sont à l'étranger.

Fin de plusieurs années d'enquête et de procédure

L'équipe de défense du général Gilbert Diendéré, détenu aujourd'hui dans le cadre d'un autre dossier, avait soulevé l'exception de prescription. Étant donné que l'affaire n'avait connu de traitement judiciaire durant des dizaines d'années, elle devrait être considérée

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Éditorial

Le registre national d'identification devrait redoubler d'efforts

Le gouvernement du Libéria veut que l'ensemble de la population obtienne des cartes d'identité nationales, surtout les fonctionnaires, mais il se peut que le registre national d'identification, l'organisme d'État chargé de délivrer ce papier n'ait manifestement pas de moyen, au point que les citoyens font la queue pendant des semaines ou des mois pour avoir leurs cartes d'identité.

Le plus dégoûtant encore, c'est que le gouvernement a fait de la possession de la carte une condition sine qua non pour chaque fonctionnaire d'avoir accès à son salaire. En plus, les utilisateurs de téléphones portables sont harcelés pour mettre à jour l'enregistrement de leur numéro en se servant de leur carte d'identité nationale. Pourtant, il faut environ deux à trois mois aux demandeurs pour obtenir une carte d'identité, car le système du registre national est défaillant.

Le groupe de travail national chargé du nettoyage de la masse salariale de l'état a publié une circulaire, avertissant qu'à compter du mois d'avril 2021, les fonctionnaires qui ne disposent pas de carte d'identité nationale ne recevront pas de salaire. Mais concernant le dysfonctionnement des prestations de services au niveau du registre national, aucune mesure n'a été prise.

Il est important que le gouvernement prévoie des mesures d'accompagnement pour chaque politique mise en place, sinon les résultats escomptés pourraient être désastreux. En réalité, tout processus aléatoire finit par créer des inconvénients aux personnes qui devraient en bénéficier.

Compte tenu de la ruée actuelle vers les cartes d'identité et de l'incapacité du Registre national à répondre à la demande, l'on assiste à de sérieux compromis qui pourraient entraîner des conséquences imprévues et inattendues que la nation pourrait regretter ultérieurement.

Nous nous félicitons certes de la délivrance d'une pièce d'identité nationale appropriée à chaque Libérien, mais encore faut-il que le processus soit correctement soutenu tant sur le plan financier que technique. À quoi sert l'annonce d'une politique qui manque de planification appropriée. Cela n'a aucun sens.

Nous appelons les autorités du registre national d'identification à redoubler d'efforts pour répondre à la demande. Il ne suffit pas de forcer les gens à se faire délivrer des cartes d'identité. Il faut prévoir un service efficace.

Le Libéria ne dispose pas d'un système biométrique synchronisé qui améliorerait l'accès facile et réduirait les coûts sur les dépenses nationales, selon la Commission de la gouvernance, un groupe de réflexion gouvernemental.

Dans l'état actuel des choses, presque tous les services, y compris les passeports, les banques, les admissions universitaires et les services mobiles, entre autres, sont pré-conditionnés par des cartes d'identité nationales.

Nous semblons mettre la charrue avant les bœufs, en tant que nation qui n'a pas contribué à faire avancer le Libéria. Comme l'a dit le président, il est temps de calibrer pour garantir un pays meilleur.

Français

LANALA Finances,

LANALA Finances, Dr Bernard GOUMOU, Directeur Général de Lanala Finances dira que « Lanala Finances est une institution de microfinance agréée pour collecter l'épargne et accorder des prêts à ses clients... LANALA Finances est une institution qui s'est bâtie avec une équipe jeune, dynamique et expérimentée et ayant pour leitmotiv "l'innovation" »

Pour Dr Bernard Goumou, Directeur Général de LANALA Finances : « Lanala finances a pour mission fondamentale de promouvoir l'inclusion financière afin de contribuer à l'amélioration du niveau de vie de nos population en général et en particulier celles qui ont un accès difficile au crédit ou à toute forme de financement ».

C'est pour cela que selon lui, LANALA Finances se distingue par 4 points, il dira :

- Nous avons des équipes d'agents mobiles dotés des TPE (terminaux de paiement électronique) qui se déplacent vers les clients facilitant ainsi toutes leurs opérations (ouverture de compte, dépôts, retraits etc...)-
- Nous avons des applications, en occurrences l'application mobile clients, l'application Portefeuille électronique, la biométrie, les SMS Banking qui permettent de faire des opérations bancaires sécurisées sans se rendre dans une agence.

- Nous assurons un accès diligent au crédit.

- Nous mettons met à disposition de nos clients de petits crédits via les opérateurs de téléphonie mobile.

Ainsi pour Dr GOUMOU, chez LANALA finances, c'est la microfinance qui se déplace vers les clients

« LANALA finances est une microfinance digitale. A l'instar de toute la planète qui se digitalise, nous avons choisi dès le départ d'épouser la tendance. Par conséquent le digital occupe une place prépondérante à LANALA

Finances et cela à travers la digitalisation totale de ses opérations, son réseau d'agents mobile disponible à tout temps, son wallet pour faciliter les paiements électroniques des clients ».

Avant de terminer son intervention Dr GOUMOU a lancé un appel à la population guinéenne en ces termes : « A toute la population guinéenne, sachez que Lanala Finances a été créée pour vous dans un seul but, vous aider à la réalisation de vos projets en vous apportant le financement nécessaire et adéquat. Tout a commencé avec LANALA Assurances que vous avez accueilli et plébiscité. Nous avons continué avec LANALA Assurances Vie que vous avez d'ailleurs soutenue, aujourd'hui, l'œuvre se poursuit avec LANALA Finances. Par Conséquence, qu'importe votre activité, votre âge ou votre revenu, vous êtes les bienvenus chez Lanala Finances ». A-t-il conclu.

En clair, LANALA Finance se donne le devoir de multiplier les points de services et la visibilité de l'institution, assurer la proximité avec la clientèle, minimiser le risque sur le convoyage de cash, renforcer la collecte d'épargne. Permettre également aux pauvres dames d'avoir accès à un financement et de leur donner une éducation financière.

Toujours dans la logique de mieux servir les populations cibles et de participer à l'inclusion financière souhaitée, LANALA Finances développe un projet de « Bank to Wallet/wallet to bank » pour une diversification de l'offre de services et l'amélioration du service à la clientèle avec des coûts réduits. Ainsi la mise en œuvre de « Bank to Wallet » va permettre le mouvement de fonds entre Wallet (compte électronique via Smartphone) et le compte bancaire d'un même client (dépôt, retrait, consultation solde...)

Précisons que LANALA Finances, casse tous les codes en permettant aux populations d'avoir un compte bancaire à seulement 500 Fr Guinéen.

Mort de Thomas Sankara:

comme prescrite, selon ces avocats qui évoquaient les textes en vigueur. Une exception rejetée par le tribunal.

En revanche, il n'y aura pas de procès pour cinq autres personnes qui étaient citées dans l'affaire, mais qui sont décédées.

Parmi elles figurent Nacoulma Wampasga, le colonel-major Alain Laurent

Bonkian, Tasseré Dianda ou encore Salam Yerbanga. Thomas Sankara était un président adulé par la jeunesse de son pays. Elle avait vu en lui notamment l'homme capable de lutter contre la corruption.

Sa mort avait provoqué un immense choc en octobre 1987 quand le leader de la révolution et 12 de ses compagnons étaient abattus criblé de balles en pleine réunion à Ouagadougou.

COMMENTAIRE

By Lindsay Coates,
John Floretta

Comment stopper la pandémie de pauvreté

WASHINGTON, DC/CAMBRIDGE - Au niveau mondial, l'extrême pauvreté est en augmentation pour la première fois depuis 20 ans. Bien que certains pays pauvres commencent à recevoir des vaccins contre le COVID-19, la pandémie est vouée à plonger près de 150 millions de personnes dans l'extrême pauvreté d'ici la fin de l'année 2021, mettant à mal plusieurs décennies de progrès.

Une opportunité majeure s'offre néanmoins au monde de prévenir cette issue, et pas seulement au moyen d'aides plus généreuses ou d'une plus large distribution de vaccins. Les pays à revenu faible ont également besoin de soutien dans l'adaptation et le développement de programmes plus solides en matière de protection sociale et de moyens de subsistance. Les initiatives de ce type bâtissent en effet la résilience, et permettent aux population d'affronter de futures crises économiques. Les collaborations entre organismes bénévoles et chercheurs permettent par ailleurs de guider cette démarche.

Les recherches approfondies de grande qualité autour de l'efficacité de mesures et programmes sociaux spécifiques dans différents contextes se sont multipliées ces vingt dernières années. Une approche particulièrement rigoureuse, appelée évaluation randomisée, emploie une méthodologie comparable à celle des essais médicaux pour estimer les effets d'innovations prometteuses dans le monde réel.

Ces recherches ont identifié un ensemble de mesures efficaces dans la lutte contre l'extrême pauvreté, dont certains programmes consistant à scolariser davantage les jeunes filles, à aider les personnes sans emploi à trouver une activité, ainsi qu'à informer les électeurs pour leur permettre de faire des choix de vote plus éclairés. La valeur précieuse de ces recherches a été reconnue en 2019 lorsque le prix Nobel de sciences économiques a été décerné à trois pionniers de cette discipline, Abhijit Banerjee et Esther Duflo du MIT, ainsi que Michael Kremer.

Une illustration parfaite de la manière dont les collaborations de recherche et développement en sciences sociales peuvent créer une réelle différence pour ceux dont l'existence a été bouleversée par la pandémie réside dans le programme « Graduation », dont l'efficacité a été étudiée par Banerjee et Duflo. Créé et dirigé par le BRAC, plus grande ONG des pays du Sud, le programme Graduation implique une séquence globale d'interventions fondées sur des éléments de preuve, hautement adaptées aux contextes locaux, et conçues pour répondre aux besoins multidimensionnels des populations confrontées à l'extrême pauvreté.

Les participants au programme Graduation se voient fournir un actif créateur de revenus. Il peut s'agir d'une vache, d'une machine à coudre, ou encore d'un transfert d'argent. Ils bénéficient également d'un soutien complet pendant 18 à 36 mois, qui prévoit une formation sur la manière de générer des revenus grâce à l'actif fourni, un coaching de vie, un soutien à la consommation, l'accès à un compte d'épargne, ainsi qu'une mise en relation avec l'assistance de l'État.

Le BRAC a collaboré avec une équipe d'économistes de la London School of Economics, dans le cadre d'une étude randomisée concernant l'impact du programme Graduation sur la pauvreté dans les campagnes du Bangladesh. Les résultats se sont révélés impressionnants : le passage à l'autoentreprise a permis en moyenne d'augmenter de 37 % sur quatre ans les revenus des participants les plus pauvres. Cette approche pourrait-elle toutefois fonctionner à plus grande échelle dans d'autres contextes ?

Pour répondre à cette question, plusieurs organismes à but non lucratif issus de sept pays, du Pakistan jusqu'au Pérou, ont été formés pour appliquer le programme en parallèle d'une évaluation rigoureuse. Les chercheurs de l'Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) du MIT et ceux de l'organisation

Innovations for Poverty Action ont mené six évaluations randomisées simultanées dans chaque pays. Ces études coordonnées ont révélé que l'approche Graduation constituait l'un des programmes évalués les plus efficaces pour permettre aux individus de s'extraire de l'extrême pauvreté.

Dans quasiment chacun des pays concernés, les participants du programme Graduation ont vu leur situation économique s'améliorer. Ils ont pu lancer avec succès de petites entreprises, et l'augmentation de leurs revenus les a conduits à explorer d'autres moyens de générer des entrées d'argent. Les participants ont par ailleurs rapporté une amélioration de leur bien-être psychologique, notamment un plus grand sentiment d'espoir. Une étude de suivi publiée en novembre 2020 a révélé que ces effets positifs perduraient jusqu'à dix ans après l'achèvement du programme.

À ce jour, le BRAC est venu en aide à plus de 2,1 millions de ménages au Bangladesh, pays de création du programme, avec un taux de réussite de 95 %. En 2018, plus de 100 organisations, dans près de 50 pays, avaient déjà piloté ou mis en œuvre un programme Graduation.

La propagation de l'approche Graduation à travers le monde, et sa capacité avérée à rompre le cycle de l'extrême pauvreté, démontrent combien l'élaboration de programmes innovants, la collaboration avec des chercheurs dans le cadre d'une évaluation rigoureuse de ces programmes, ainsi que la mise en place de partenariats de confiance avec l'État, peuvent aboutir à de formidables avancées en direction d'une généralisation des programmes les plus efficaces. Les recherches approfondies autour de l'efficacité de l'approche Graduation dans différents contextes ont permis au BRAC, au J-PAL ainsi qu'à d'autres partenaires de convaincre donateurs et gouvernements de la capacité de ce modèle à soutenir les personnes vulnérables, dans la création de modes de subsistance, et en direction de mesures de protection sociale plus inclusives et plus efficaces.

Le BRAC développant l'approche Graduation à travers le monde, via une mise en œuvre directe ou en collaboration avec des partenaires, il en a tiré plusieurs enseignements importants, susceptibles d'éclairer les démarches similaires. Par-dessus tout, l'adhésion aux principes sous-jacents qui fondent l'impact d'un programme est absolument essentielle, de même que l'adaptation du modèle à chaque contexte. La philosophie d'apprentissage et d'autoexamen critique s'inscrit au cœur du succès du programme, comme le démontre l'évolution du programme Graduation au Bangladesh sur une période de 20 ans. En examinant par ailleurs les effets d'un programme sur différents groupes de populations, ainsi qu'en continuant d'ajuster et de tester ses composantes, telles que l'envergure et le type d'aide à la subsistance fournie, nous pouvons continuer de tirer parti des études pour venir en aide aux personnes confrontées à l'extrême pauvreté.

L'ampleur de l'approche Graduation, après des années de mise en œuvre et de points d'évaluation, souligne certains domaines dans lesquels la bienfaisance et les aides peuvent se révéler particulièrement utiles : l'investissement dans les innovations de politique sociale, l'évaluation rigoureuse de leur fonctionnement, ainsi que les partenariats avec les gouvernements, permettant à ceux-ci d'appliquer à leur propre programme un certain nombre de connaissances acquises à travers le monde.

Notre expérience démontre que les approches innovantes et fondées sur des éléments de preuve, lorsqu'elles sont correctement exécutées, peuvent permettre de réduire la pauvreté. La pandémie menaçant aujourd'hui d'anéantir plusieurs avancées durement acquises, la nécessité de recherches pertinentes sur le plan des mesures politiques, ainsi que de solutions efficaces à plus grande échelle, n'a jamais été aussi urgente.

Fire erupts in CDC

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

The chairman emeritus of the National Patriotic Party (NPP) Chief Cyril Allen describes President George Weah's Advisor on Communications as a 'sycophant' who want to seek attention at the expense of others that have worked tirelessly to make the Coalition for Democratic Change-led administration serve the Liberian people in the possible way they can.

The ruling Coalition is made up of the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) of President George Manneh Weah; the NPP of Vice President Jewel Howard - Taylor and the Liberian People Democratic Party (LPDP) of former House Speaker J. Alex Tyler.

Speaking to reporters Wednesday, April 14, at his 11th Street Sinkor office in Monrovia, Chief Allen, who works in the current administration as head of the Board of Directors of the National Social Security and Welfare Corporation, says recent statement by Mr. Nyanka that the NPP should be grateful to the Congress for Democratic Change for bringing her back to political life was made in the contest of attention seeking, only intended to plant a seed of hatred among stalwarts of the three collaborating political parties.

"These are young people of second or third generation of leaders who survive on lies, falsehood and say all kinds of things in the ears of the President, only to be given attention and be given or [get] a better place in government. They did the same to my friend Doe (slain President Samuel Doe) my dear brother and friend Taylor (imprisoned former President Charles Taylor). So Doe is dead and Taylor is in jail. So as national leaders, you have to be very careful and mindful about gossips," he warns.

He narrates the NPP brought to the Coalition for Democratic Change numerical strength, intellectuals, and infrastructure that the Coalition never had during the campaigning of 2017.

He notes under the NPP's regime, three additional counties were created, acts were passed that were useful to past administrations and the current leadership of the country, adding, the NPP has over the time built national leaders from second and third generations that are helpful to the development of the country.

President George Manneh Weah's advisor on communications Mr. Gabriel Nyanka said here this week the National Patriotic Party (NPP) must be grateful to the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) because the NPP had become a "striped frame of a vehicle" and could bring nothing to the tripartite arrangement to rule as the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC).

"[The] NPP must be grateful to the Congress for Democratic Change. Kelvin, we know in this town that the NPP had become a striped frame of a vehicle and could bring nothing to the table, save the experience that you talked about. And that was all. Even money, they did not have," Nyanka claimed during a live talk show on Prime FM Tuesday, 13 April.

Nyanka further questioned the sort of experience the NPP brought to the table, pondering if the foreign policy constructs of the NPP government which ruled Liberia under imprisoned ex- president Charles Taylor was the mutilation of limbs in neighboring Sierra Leone and whether this is what the CDC government should follow, among others.

However, Allen counters that Nyanka is like an 'ant' that the NPP cannot use hammer to kill, instead, the party will treat [him] as nobody in that anything further will give Mr. Nyanka undeserving attention and relevance that he does not earn honestly.

He says the National Patriotic Party of jailed ex-President Charles Taylor has men whose intellectual prowess and creativities can protect their leader and that the NPP standard bearer, current Vice President of Liberia, Madam Jewel



Mr. Gabriel Nyanka

Chief Cyril Allen

Howard-Taylor has all it takes to be a leader and the Vice President of the country. He adds that the Madam Taylor possesses the competence, integrity, qualifications, charisma and leadership that got her to the Vice Presidency, as standard bearer of the NPP.

He further brands Mr. Nyanka as someone, who only survives on regimes or government jobs, saying, "During the time we were in the bushes campaigning, asking our people to give us the opportunity to serve, I did not record seeing him around. He was with the Unity Party, but now the CDC is at the helm of national powers; he's now creating hates among the three political parties only for him to be seen as hero here."

Speaking in Kakata, Margibi County recently where the NPP hoisted its flag, Allen said, "I wonder why people don't turn the pages of NPP's history, you will find hydro engineers, agriculturists, medical doctors, and technically trained professionals who can be a greater service to the country and its people. The NPP is a party of opportunities and a place where the minds are developed for the better." -Editing by Jonathan Browne

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA) MONTERRADO COUNTY)



IN THE SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, CIVIL LAW MONTERRADO COUNTY SITTING IN ITS MARCH TERM, A.D. 2021.

BEFORE HIS HONOUR: J. KENNEDY PEABODY...ASSIGNED CIRCUIT JUDGE PRESIDING
 IN RE: ELIZABETH K. WALLOE-BIMBA MONROVIA, LIBERIA
PLAINTIFF
 VERSUS
 ROLAND F. BIMBA
 ALSO OF THE SAME ADDRESS

DIVORCE FOR INCOMPATIBILITY OF TEMPER

WRIT OF SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA, TO THE SHERIFF/DEPUTY SHERIFF OF MONSERRADO COUNTY, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA, GREETINGS:

YOU ARE HEREBY COMMANDED TO SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION THE ABOVE NAMED RESPONDENT/DEFENDANT(S) IN THE ABOVE ENTITLED CAUSE OF ACTION, TO APPEAR BEFORE THE SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT, MONTERRADO COUNTY, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA, SITTING IN ITS MARCH TERM, A.D. 2021, SAME BEING THE 15TH DAY OF MARCH, A. D. 2021, AT THE HOUR OF 10:00 A.M.

YOU ARE FURTHER ORDERED TO SUMMONS THE RESPONDENT/DEFENDANT (S) HEREIN TO FILE HIS ANSWER TO THE PLAINTIFF(S) COMPLAINT, ON OR BEFORE THE 15TH DAY OF APRIL, A.D. 2021, THAT UPON THEIR/HIS/HER FAILURE TO APPEAR, JUDGMENT BY DEFAULT WILL BE RENDERED AGAINST HIM/HER/THEM.

MEANWHILE, YOU WILL RETURN THE ORIGINAL WRIT OF SUMMONS TO MY OFFICE ON/OR BEFORE THE 15TH DAY OF APRIL, A. D. 2021, WITH THE OFFICIAL RETURNS ENDORSED ON THE BACK OF THE ORIGINAL AS TO THE MANNER OF ITS SERVICE.

COURT'S SEAL

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL OF COURT THIS 5TH DAY OF APRIL, A.D. 2021.

ELLEN HALL-KAMARA CLERK OF COURT

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA) IN THE CIVIL LAW COURT, SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,
 MONTERRADO COUNTY) MONTERRADO COUNTY, SITTING IN ITS SEPTEMBER
 TERM, A. D. 2020.

BEFORE HIS HONOR: KENNEDY PEABODYRESIDENT CIRCUIT JUDGE

Elizabeth K. Walloe_Bimba , City of Monrovia,
 County Of Montserrado, Republic of Liberia.....PLAINTIFF

VERSUS

Roland F. Bimba also of the same addressDEFENDANT

PLAINTIFF'S COMPLAINT

AND NOW COMES, Plaintiff in the above entitled cause of Action most respectfully complains of the Defendant in manner and forms as follows to wit:

1. That Plaintiff and Defendant are citizens of the Republic of Liberia; and currently the Plaintiff is residing in the City of Monrovia, Montserrado County, Republic of Liberia; while the Defendant living in Foya City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia
2. Plaintiff submits and says that because the marital vow between the above named couple has become difficult and irreconcilable; as such the marriage relationship has deteriorated such that cohabitation between them has become worrisome and difficult, most especially with an unabated departure of the Defendant from the plaintiff and the Children. Now that Defendant has left without prior arrangement and/or marital discussion, as couple, the only best reasoning any reasonable person may arrive at is that the Defendant has abandoned the Plaintiff, hence the complaint as the only available option to Plaintiff, having failed after all efforts made to get back her husband .
3. That as a result of the abandonment, the relationship between the parties referenced hereinabove has become difficult and unbearable, most especially when Defendant has left without effectively relating to the Plaintiff and their children.
4. That under our law, abandonment and incompatibility of temper are grounds for a party to request a court of competent jurisdiction to sanction a divorce between parties to a marital contract and/or agreement, as in the instant case where the Defendant has abandoned the Plaintiff and children and he is living elsewhere without the Plaintiff's knowledge, consent and/or prior arrangement, hence this complaint.
5. Plaintiff submits, avers and says that she has no other reason or reasons for filing in for this divorce, excepts that of abandonment, her husband leaving her without prior arrangement to live elsewhere, and that all planning and efforts made to reunite with the husband proved futile.

WHEREFORE AND IN VIEW OF THE FOREGOING, Plaintiff prays this Honorable Court for a Decree, dissolving the marriage contract entered into by Plaintiff and Defendant, and declaring them two separate and distinct persons both in law and equity, as if such marital contract was never entered into by the Parties. Plaintiff also prays this Honorable Court to grant unto her such other and further relief as the law directs and deems legal.

Respectfully submitted:
 The above named Plaintiff
 By and thru herself and/or her legal
 Attorney.

Counselors/Attorneys-At-Law

Dated this 28th day of July, A. D. 2020.
 \$5.00 Revenue stamps affixed on the original

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA) IN THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE OF THE PEACE FOR
 MONTERRADO COUNTY) AND IN MONTERRADO COUNTY, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA.

Elizabeth K. Walloe_Bimba , City of Monrovia,
 County Of Montserrado, Republic of Liberia.....PLAINTIFF

VERSUS

Roland F. Bimba also of the same addressDEFENDANT

DIVORCE FOR INCOMPATIBILITY OF TEMPER & ABANDMENT

PLAINTIFF'S AFFIDAVIT

PERSONALLY APPEARED BEFORE ME, a duly qualified and commissioned Justice of the Peace for and in Montserrado County, Republic of Liberia, Madam Elizabeth K. Walloe-Bimba , Plaintiff in the above referenced case who made OATH according to law and facts that all and singularly the allegations of both law and facts that are set forth and contained in the foregoing, Plaintiff's Complaint are true and correct to the best of her knowledge and belief and as to those matters of information, she verily believes them to be true and correct.

SWORN AND SUBSCRIBED TO BEFOREME THIS 28th DAY OF July, 2020.



Justice of the Peace, Mont. Co., R. L.

Elizabeth K. Walloe-Bimba /AFFIANT

\$3.00 Revenue stamps affixed on the original copy.

Shooter's mother faces interrogation

By Winston W. Parley

Suspect Jovanus Oliver Turay's mother is facing police interrogation in Monrovia surrounding his acquisition of a pistol that he allegedly used early Tuesday morning, 13 April to kill his colleague, the late female student Precious Ireland on campus.

"She's undergoing interrogation and it continues," the spokesman of the Liberia National Police (LNP) Moses Carter told the NewDawn via mobile phone Wednesday, 14 April.

Carter says "From what we gathered is that the gun actually belongs to her former husband," adding that police have been informed that the unnamed owner of the gun died about a year ago.

old Matthew Gonkerwon who is listed as a person of interest, were picked up early Tuesday morning at 8:00 AM by the Anti-Robbery Unit of the Liberia National Police (LNP).

Police spokesman Moses Carter told journalists Tuesday that the School's Principal Mr. J. Emmett Chapin told the Police during preliminary investigation that he was urgently called at 7:45AM by one of his colleagues and informed of a gunshot sound on campus.

Carter explained that Mr. Chapin quoted eyewitnesses and students saying they saw the victim and the two suspects seated in one of the classrooms on the Cyber-ED Christian School of Excellence campus listening to music via an earpiece.

According to him, the principal further narrated that the eyewitnesses said they saw

school.

"A student brought a handgun to school this morning. While a majority of the students were eating breakfast in designated locations, this student slipped away to show off the gun to a friend and it accidentally went off," the school stated.

"Staff, emergency medical personnel, Police, and all responded quickly. Parents were informed of the emergency. Regrettably, the student did not survive the shooting. The gun was retrieved and the student is in the custody of the Police. A full investigation is being undertaken by the Liberia National Police (LNP)," the school adds.

The Cyber-ED Christian School of Excellence assures that it will meet with parents to answer any questions and concerns they have, noting that for the privacy of the students and their families, it is not releasing names at this time.

"We are currently in touch with grief counselors and therapists to assist us with comforting and help with guiding our student body through the grieving process. Please join us in prayer for the bereaved family whose daughter lost her life today," it continued.

Earlier in a message sent to parents, the school wrote expressing regret to inform them that there had been an emergency at the school.

"The children are safe. We will update you when we have more details. Please be in prayer," the text message said.

The school says it is saddened beyond words to inform parents that a student brought a gun to school on Tuesday and shot a colleague.

"While a majority of the students were eating breakfast in designated locations, this student slipped away to show it off to a friend and it accidentally went off. The gun was retrieved and the student is in custody now. Parents who can, may pick their students up by noon today," the message reads.

"Please be in prayer for the Ireland family whose daughter was shot. An emergency parent meeting will be held tomorrow at 6pm," it concludes.



Alleged shooter Jovanus Turay

Immediately following the fatal shooting of Precious Ireland on the Cyber-ED Christian School of Excellence campus Tuesday in Sophie Community, Congo Town, police picked up suspect Jovanus Oliver Turay and a person of interest, Matthew Gonkerwon, for allegedly gunning down the deceased.

She was rushed to a hospital for medical attention, but was pronounced dead upon arrival by nurses on duty. The incident moved parents to rush on the campus to take their children to safety.

"The Liberia National Police has arrested and is investigating two 11th grade students of the Cyber-ED Christian School of Excellence situated in Sophie Community, Congo Town for allegedly shooting victim Precious Ireland on her neck with a 9mm pistol," the police authorities said Tuesday, 13 April hours after the incident.

According to the police, 16 - year - old suspect Jovanus Oliver Turay and 17 - year -

victim Precious lying unconscious following a gun sound.

The police revealed that the parents of the main suspect, JosiaSaah and SylvanusTuray who live in the USA, have been cooperating with the police here to bring their legal representations to extract statements from the suspected juveniles.

Following the incident, the Cyber-ED Christian School of Excellence initially sent out text messages to parents alerting them of the incident and later issued a press statement surrounding the situation.

In the press statement, the Cyber-ED Christian School of Excellence notes that it is with heavy hearts and much despair to inform parents of a tragic incident that had occurred at the

Magistrate sent

Cont'd from page 7

penetrated her forcefully.

Meanwhile, defendant Richard K. Flomo, Jr., declined to make any statement in relation to the allegation levied against him by the rape survivor but promised to speak on the matter upon his appearance in court.

In accordance with Section 14. 70 (a) of the Revised Penal Code of Liberia, coupled with the minor's statement and the medical report, the Women and Children Protection Section of the LNP on 12 April charged Magistrate Flomo and

forwarded him to court for trial.

Our Bong County correspondent who followed the defendant to court says the court has not scheduled a date for the first hearing.

However, our correspondent says there is a likelihood that the hearing might start anytime this week.

Several citizens of the county have expressed disappointment in Magistrate Flomo, calling for justice in the matter.--Edited by Winston W. Parley

RANCH LIBERIA

00007285

ARCH TERM A.D. 2021

BEFORE HIS HONOUR: SCHEAPLOR R. DUNBAR ASSIGNED CIRCUIT JUDGE PRESIDING:

THE PETITION OF MARFRED POUR OF THE CITY OF MONROVIA, MONTSERRADO COUNTY, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA, PETITIONER PRAYING THIS HONORABLE COURT FOR A DECREE OF CHANGE OF NAME TO BE CHANGED, REGARDED, CALLED AND KNOWN AS "MARFRED S. JERUE"

COURT'S DECREE OF CHANGE OF NAME

The Petitioner filed a Petition requesting this Honorable Court to order the Change of his name from MARFRED POUR TO "MARFRED S. JERUE"

During the hearing, the Petitioner testified that the Change of his name requesting this Honorable Court is intended to reflect his true family name and render his identity more explicit and absolute.

After conducting the necessary interrogations requested by law in these proceedings, the Court observed that the intention is just and legal and that there is no objection to the change of his name proposed by him therefore it is adjusted as follows:

That the Petitioner having shown with justification and satisfaction that he was born on July 13, 1998 in Toulepleu, Republic of Ivory Coast. unto the union of MR. ALFRED JERUE and MRS. AGNES JERUE that the Change of his name will substantially promote his interest in all of the understandings and help to establish his just identity more firmly, and being satisfied that he has met all legal requirements for the Change of his name in this jurisdiction, it is therefore DECREED as follows:

That the petition having been heard, same is hereby ordered granted and we now render that the name MARFRED POUR be changed to MARFRED S. JERUE beginning this 29th day of March A.D. 2021 THIS DECREE shall be registered in the Office of the Registrar of DEEDS and other Official Documentations within(10) days from this date and also be published twice in any recognized Newspaper operating in the Republic of Liberia within twenty(20) days from this date. AND IT IS HEREBY SO ORDERED.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND IN OPEN COURT, THIS 30th DAY OF MARCH, A.D. 2021

COURT SEAL: *S. R. Dunbar*
SCHEAPLOR R. DUNBAR
ASSIGNED CIRCUIT JUDGE PRESIDING
SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, CIVIL LAW COURT

REGISTERED ACCORDING TO LAW IN VOLUME 04-2121 PAGE(S) 0007285

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BCM Liberia Investment dismisses reports



BCM Liberia Investment Limited has dismissed media reports that it is indebted to its employers for over a-five month period, saying, it settled its obligations to the company's employees before shutting down full operations.

The Management in a press statement issued Wednesday April 14 clarified that the company stopped full operation since September 2020 due to the second wave of the COVID-19, which the World Health Organization declared as a Pandemic. The outbreak of COVID-19 affected many

investments around the world, not precluding Liberia, the company said in its press release issued in Monrovia.

The Company further opined that the impact of the COVID-19 led to the closure of laboratories in Liberia, something which also impacted its operations negatively.

As a result of the closure of laboratories, the Company Management explained that it had to send all drill samples out of the country for testing and the delay impacted further drilling work. BCM Liberia Investment Limited also pointed out that there are less than five provisional staffers of the company who are managing the Concession facilities in Grand Bassa County, until it resume full operations.

The five provisional staffers are being compensated appropriately and as such, there is no planned protest as it is being invalidly reported in some quarters of the media.

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Foden finally ends Guardiola's last-four wait

Pep Guardiola preached the Champions League semi-finals for the first time as Manchester City manager after a second 2-1 win over Borussia Dortmund.

City had exited Europe's premier club competition at the quarter-final stage in each of the prior three seasons and faced the same fate again on Wednesday when Jude Bellingham opened the scoring after 15 minutes at Signal Iduna Park.

That effort would have



been enough to take Dortmund through on away goals after a 2-1 defeat in the first leg in Manchester, but Emre Can's second-half handball allowed Riyad Mahrez to level from the penalty spot.

Although BVB attempted to chase the game again, Phil Foden - the match winner eight days earlier - struck once more to maintain City's quadruple bid and tee up an intriguing last-four encounter with Paris Saint-Germain.

This was good preparation

for that stern test, at least for 45 minutes, with Bellingham superb again and belatedly able to net his first Champions League goal, having had an effort ruled out in the first encounter.

Mahmoud Dahoud's shot ricocheted to the feet of the England midfielder, who calmly controlled just inside the area and placed a fine finish high to Ederson's left, the goalkeeper's palm only helping the ball find the top corner.

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