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DATE	BUYING	SELLING
TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 2023	LS162.1565/US\$1.00	LS164.2923/US\$1.00

These are indicative rates based on results of daily surveys of foreign exchange market in Monrovia and selected cities of Liberia. These rates are collected from the Central bank, commercial banks, parallel market and the license forex bureaux. The rates are not set by the Central Bank of Liberia.
Source: Research, Policy and Planning Department, CBL.

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-US speaks of Government's bad spending priorities



Weah faces election headache

Pres. Weah

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Continental News

10 Civilians, 3 Soldiers Killed in Mali Amid 'Resurgence' of Violence

Ten civilians and three soldiers were killed and 88 jihadis "neutralized" in multiple incidents across Mali on Saturday, the government said, in a wave of bloodshed it described as a resurgence of

which is home to a Malian military camp. "Thanks to the legendary determination of our valiant armed forces, operating exclusively with their own resources, the attackers were routed, and 28 terrorists were neutralized," the statement said.

Armed Forces (FAMA) camp in Sevare and the nearby car bombings that killed and injured civilians. ... Shots were also fired toward the MINUSMA camp," the mission said in a statement Saturday.

"MINUSMA declares its readiness to provide all necessary support to the Malian authorities to conduct the required investigations."

Two local elected officials and a diplomatic source, speaking to AFP on condition of anonymity, referred to the base as a "Russian" camp. Mali's junta in 2022 began working with what it calls Russian military "instructors." Opponents say these are mercenaries from Russia's Wagner group. "It is the Russian camp and their planes that have been targeted, the camp is near the airport," an elected official told AFP. In separate incidents on Saturday, the Malian army reported it "destroyed a terrorist sanctuary in Mourdiah and neutralized some 60 terrorists in Boni," the government statement said.

Boni is also in Mopti, while Mourdiah is in the Koulikoro region near the border with Mauritania. VOA



"terrorist incidents." Early Saturday morning, suspected jihadis attacked the Sevare airport area in the central Mopti region, detonating car bombs, which killed 10 civilians and injured 61 others, the government said in a statement. The blasts destroyed some houses in the airport's surrounding area.

A local elected official earlier told AFP that Senegalese soldiers from the U.N.'s peacekeeping mission in Mali, MINUSMA, were involved in the fighting. MINUSMA's camp covers 4 hectares next to the airport and the Malian army camp.

"MINUSMA strongly condemns the 22 April attacks on the Malian

Countries Evacuate Diplomats, Citizens Out of Sudan

Countries are rushing to evacuate their diplomats and citizens from Khartoum, Sudan's capital, as fighting between the two rival factions in the Northeastern African country continues.

Canada, Egypt, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden and the United States are among the nations using aircraft and convoys to bring foreign nationals out of Sudan. More than 420 people have been killed so far, and thousands have been injured. Sudanese nationals are fending for themselves amid power blackouts and loss of internet service.

Some Sudanese have made the decision to escape in cars and buses on the dangerous roads. Samantha Power, administrator of the U.S.

said. "One-third of Sudan's population, nearly 16 million people, already needed humanitarian assistance to meet basic human needs before this outbreak of violence." United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Monday the U.N. is not leaving Sudan but has temporarily relocated "hundreds" of staff members inside and outside of the country.

"Working with humanitarian organizations on the ground, we are reconfiguring our presence in Sudan to enable us to continue supporting the Sudanese people," Guterres said at a Security Council meeting. "Let me be clear: The United Nations is not leaving Sudan. Our commitment is to the Sudanese people in support of their wishes for a peaceful and secure future. We stand with them at this terrible time." The U.N. has about 800 international staff in the country,



Jordanians evacuated from Sudan arrive at a military airport in Amman, Jordan

Kenya finds 47 bodies in 'starvation cult' probe

Kenyan police have exhumed 47 bodies near the coastal town of Malindi, as they investigate a preacher said to have told followers to starve to death. The bodies of children were among the dead. Police said exhumations are ongoing.

The shallow graves are in Shakahola forest, where 15 members of the Good News International Church were rescued last week.

Church leader, Paul Makenzie Nthenge is in custody, pending a court appearance.

State broadcaster KBC described him as a "cult leader", and reported that 58 graves have so far been identified.

One of the graves is believed to contain the bodies of five members of the same family - three children and their parents.

Mr Nthenge has denied wrongdoing, but has been refused bail. He insists that he shut down his church in 2019.

He allegedly told followers to starve themselves in order

to "meet Jesus". Kenyan daily, The Standard, said pathologists will take DNA samples and conduct tests to determine whether the victims died of starvation.

Police arrested Mr Nthenge on 15 April after discovering the bodies of four people suspected of having starved themselves to death. Victor Kaudo of the Malindi Social Justice Centre told Citizen TV "when we are in this forest and come to an area where we see a big and tall cross, we know that means more than five people are buried there".

Kenyan interior minister, Kithure Kindiki, said all 800 acres of the forest had been sealed off and declared a crime scene.

Mr Nthenge allegedly named three villages Nazareth, Bethlehem and Judea and baptised followers in ponds before telling them to fast, The Standard reports. Kenya is a religious country and there have been previous cases of people being lured into dangerous, unregulated churches or cults. BBC



Agency for International Development, announced Sunday the organization has deployed a team of disaster response experts to Sudan. She said the team will initially operate out of Kenya.

"The United States is mobilizing to ramp up assistance to the people of Sudan ensnared between the warring factions," Power said. She said the Disaster Assistance Response Team will work with "the international community and our international partners to identify priority needs and to safely deliver life-saving humanitarian assistance to those who need it most."

"At a time when many Sudanese families should be celebrating the end of the holy month of Ramadan, they are instead living in terror," Power said. Fighting between the warring factions has also erupted in Darfur. "All of this suffering compounds an already dire situation," Power

and many of them have their families living with them in Khartoum. There are also about 3,200 Sudanese nationals working for the organization.

Guterres said he is in constant contact with the warring parties. He has repeatedly called for de-escalation, an end to the fighting and talks. He urged all Security Council members to "exert maximum leverage" on the rival generals to stop fighting and return to a democratic transition. "The violence must stop. It risks a catastrophic conflagration within Sudan that could engulf the whole region and beyond," he warned. He strongly condemned the indiscriminate bombing of civilian areas and health care facilities.

"I call on the parties to stop combat operations in densely populated areas and to allow unhindered humanitarian aid operations," Guterres said. "Civilians must be able to access food, water and other essential supplies, and evacuate from combat zones." VOA

EDITORIAL

The Buchanan retreat should produce tangibles

PRESIDENT GEORGE Manneh Weah chairs a three-day cabinet retreat this week (24 -26 April) in the coastal city, Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, perhaps the last or second to the last by this administration before presidential and general elections in October. This retreat of the cabinet is very important because it provides an opportunity for the Weah Administration to not only measure performance but to outline actual deliverables since its inception in 2018.

IT ALSO sets a platform for the government to carry out some real public relations as it seeks re-election in October amid barrage of criticisms about ineptitude, accountability, corruption, mismanagement, economic hardship, gross constitutional violation and insecurity, among others.

THE GOVERNMENT has a development roadmap dubbed, Pro-poor Agenda for Development and Prosperity (PAPD). Such forum provides an opportunity to take down partisan lenses, and objectively identify weak links and how to improve them.

THE FLAGSHIP priority for the first six years has been roads that it is still battling with even as it seeks re-election. Some of those road projects were already signed by its predecessor and are being implemented, while it has its own road connectivity programs that are ongoing simultaneously.

BUT THERE are weaknesses in some sectors such as agriculture, education security, health, rule of law that need critical assessment with open mind. For instance, in the draft FY2023 National Budget Agriculture was allotted US\$5.42 million, representing 0.70 percent in a country that 100 percent relies on rice importation, its staple and other food.

EDUCATION AND Health both received a greater chunk of the budget by far than Agriculture but performance leaves much to be desired. President Weah announced all public universities tuition-free. However, state universities and colleges across the country are in financial crisis, leaving lecturers to go on strike or students protesting. The President pays WASSCE fees for 12th graders annually, but Liberia's performance on the subregional exams is nothing to write home about, as announced here recently by the Head of WAEC Monrovia Office Dai Gbotoe.

DESPITE A projected budget of US\$75.52 million or 9.71 percent for Health, health institutions across the country are barely functioning because of lack of drugs, tools and logistics. This also raises performance questions.

SECURITY AND Rule of Law were allotted a big chunk of US\$96.87 million or 12.45 percent in the 2023 draft budget, but the justice system, starting with the Police, correction, and other arms are operating below public expectations, leading to breach of confidence.

AS THE cabinet meets this week in Buchanan City under the watch of President Weah, we believe these are but few of the critical areas that need urgent attention, especially security, as the nation goes to election.

THE RETREAT is necessary and should be given the attention it deserves because it is from there government honestly measures its performance of the task it has been entrusted by the electorate.

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

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COMMENTARY

By Jim O'Neill

A BRICS Threat to the Dollar?

LONDON - Russia's war in Ukraine, Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping's recent meeting in Moscow, and China's apparent success in brokering a diplomatic rapprochement between Iran and Saudi Arabia have fueled renewed chatter about threats to the global primacy of the United States - and particularly to that of the US dollar.

I encountered such commentary in the responses to my recent Global Policy article assessing the future of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). The group is now considering an enlargement that would bring in countries like Iran and Saudi Arabia, raising questions about its criteria for membership and the role of its own New Development Bank. But would a larger and more influential BRICS-Plus really create risks to the dollar?

Perceived threats to the dollar's role in the global financial system are nothing new; they have been a frequent occurrence since I began my career in the 1980s. Obviously, if there comes a time when the US ceases to be the world's largest economy, the dollar's status will be called into question. The same was true of pound sterling in the first half of the twentieth century (though the pound was not knocked off its global perch until well after the United Kingdom had been surpassed economically).

The eclipse of the dollar would not necessarily be a bad thing for the US, given all the added responsibilities that come with issuing the world's main reserve currency. In a global economy where the US already is no longer as dominant as it once was, it is not optimal to have everyone else be so dependent on the American monetary system and the Federal Reserve's domestically driven priorities. Other economies would much prefer that their own currencies, monetary policies, and trade patterns not be so influenced by those of the US.

But the fact that a US-excluding group of emerging powers has higher aspirations for itself does not necessarily mean anything for the US-centered financial system. After all, the BRICS and potential BRICS-Plus countries face many significant challenges of their own, and it is not clear what they hope to achieve together beyond issuing symbolic statements. Crucially, the group's

most important economies are China and India, bitter adversaries that rarely cooperate on anything. Until that changes, it is fanciful to think that the BRICS or even an expanded grouping could mount any serious challenge to the dollar.

I often despair at the lack of cooperation between China and India - the world's two most populous countries by far. If they could overcome their historic animosity and develop an ambitious shared agenda for expanding trade and tackling issues like health threats and climate change, the idea of a BRICS-driven challenge to the financial and monetary status quo would become not just plausible but imminent.

In this spirit, I have long argued that China should make the first move by inviting India to help co-design elements of its signature Belt and Road Initiative. Realizing the BRI's ambitious agenda of transnational infrastructure investments in cooperation with India would make a far more powerful and lasting contribution to Asia and beyond. Otherwise, the BRI will remain a narrowly Chinese initiative that exists primarily to impose Chinese preferences on others.

The potential addition of Saudi Arabia and Iran comes with similar caveats. Yes, bringing on two major oil producers (in addition to Russia) increases the likelihood of some oil being priced in currencies other than the dollar. But unless edging out the dollar is an explicit, genuinely shared, and deeply held goal, such invoicing changes will be exciting only to niche financial writers. I have lost count of the times I have heard arguments about why oil could soon be priced in a new currency. First it was going to be the Deutsche Mark, then the yen, then the euro. It's still the dollar.

Finally, and most importantly, for any BRICS (or BRICS-Plus) member to pose a strategic challenge to the dollar, it would have to permit - indeed encourage - foreign and domestic savers and investors to decide for themselves when to buy or sell assets denominated in its currency. That means no capital controls of the kind that China has routinely deployed. Until the BRICS and potential BRICS-Plus countries can find a credible alternative to the dollar for their own savings, the greenback's dominance will not really be in doubt.

OP-ED

By Avram Alpert

Reviving Hope for the Humanities

HAMBURG - At a recent conference of German and American literary scholars, I suggested that our high-level discussions would matter only if we helped change students' lives. It is not enough to tell students how the skills developed in reading literature can "transfer" to other parts of their lives. Rather, we must help them become better interpreters of each other, so that they can become better friends, family members, and citizens.

I had anticipated that this argument would meet with skepticism or insistence that studying great works of literature is important for its own sake. To my surprise, the response went much further than that, and even included an accusation that I was condoning "tyranny." The idea that we might teach people how to live well, I was told, wrongly assumes that we ourselves know how to live well, and that we are right to impose our views on others.

There is some logic to this concern. After all, far-right politicians in many countries are currently trying to impose their values on students by banning certain subjects and books. But I was not advocating for university instructors to tell people how to live. My point was simply that we should help our students connect the classroom to their daily lives through meaningful reflection. The heated response I received speaks volumes about how some humanists have abdicated their historic role: to help people find meaning.

Too many teachers nowadays avoid engaging in serious conversations about living well. With the future of humanities instruction in doubt, this is a grave mistake. We urgently need to reconnect the humanities classroom to the age-old quest for a meaningful life, not least because there is deep yearning for this kind of education. From 2013 to 2019, sales of "self-help" books increased annually by 11% - and that was before they became an even bigger hit during the pandemic. Psychological treatment for stress and anxiety continues to rise, with reports of year-long waitlists just to see a therapist. In many countries, there simply are not enough mental-health services to meet the demand.

Moreover, as universities have gradually ceased to be centers for deep conversations about life, people have been creating their own forums for humanistic engagement. Groups like the Catherine Project, Night School Bar, and Premise are bringing people together outside of universities to hold wide-ranging discussions about life and art. It is little wonder that when universities do offer these kinds of classes, students respond. Three of Yale University's most popular courses are about happiness, death, and how to lead a life worth living. Unfortunately, these are the stand-out exceptions that prove the rule.

In the absence of thoughtful guidance, people will increasingly seek meaning elsewhere, and not always in healthy or fruitful ways. Social-science research demonstrates that when people feel adrift or deprived of meaning in their lives, they become more susceptible to authoritarian leaders. Open-minded humanists should probably worry less about the "tyranny" of helping people find meaning, and more about how the lack of meaning can lead to actual tyranny.

Given that there is massive demand for humanistic knowledge, why has such teaching been marginalized in the university? One reason is rooted in the Enlightenment's ideal of disinterested knowledge. Modern scientific investigation was supposed to free itself from "interests," especially misguided quests to deny science and follow religious dogma. But as science freed itself from oppressive theology, it also moved away from the search for meaning. Scientists rightly wanted to explain what was empirically verifiable, and there was no mathematical formula for how to live well.

Humanistic research also went down this path. For example, many scholars stopped trying to understand what poetry can teach us about how to live, and focused instead on offering formal, sociological, and historical accounts of poetry's role in human society. But as worthwhile as such research may be, it became too dominant, unwittingly leading to an academic monoculture of knowledge production that marginalizes the bigger questions of life.

The good news is that we can re-engage with these bigger questions without recreating the problems of the past. Considerate classroom discussions of big humanistic questions can help everyone (students and instructors alike) better understand what a good life can be; and the knowledge of modern scholarship about topics like ecology, identity, narrative, and interpretation can be valuable aids in adding depth and relevance to these discussions.

The coming years may offer humanists a major new opportunity to reinvent themselves as the people who can best help students explore the wonders and challenges of human existence. Since the start of the pandemic, when so many people began to question economic pieties about the increasingly career-oriented nature of college, universities around the world have reported a resurgent interest in humanistic study. In the current academic year, for example, the number of declared humanities majors at the University of California, Berkeley, surged 121% compared to last year.

To be sure, these are preliminary figures, and we will have to see if the trend continues. But even a small uptick represents a crucial opportunity for the humanities. Even as we avoid "tyrannically" imposing our own assumptions on our students, we should be equally wary of neglecting to help them understand how to live well on their own terms.

The humanities can do that, and it is an instructor's job to show students how. Our classrooms should be places where the thorniest issues of life are considered, debated, and reimagined; where meaning and purpose are kindled and cherished; and where everyone can work together to understand and appreciate the fullness of life. It falls to us to ignite new enlightenments, where we combine the best of our scientific knowledge with the wisdom to make a meaningful world for all.

OPINION

By Carlos Ominami,
Jorge G. Castañeda

Reversing Latin America's Democratic Decay

NEW YORK - Recent years have not been good ones for democracy in Latin America. Despite being home to just 8.4% of the world's population, the region accounted for 26% of total COVID-19 deaths (as of last December), and in 2020, it experienced a fall in GDP twice as steep as the global average, with tens of millions of people pushed into poverty. Just as the recovery got underway, Russia launched its war against Ukraine - dealing another blow to Latin America's economy and political stability.

Starting in the mid-1980s, following a long period dominated by military dictatorships, Latin America experienced a democratic renaissance. But its score in the Democracy Index, produced annually by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), has been declining for seven years. And popular perceptions have declined along with it: Latinobarómetro reports that, from 2010 to 2019, support for democracy across Latin America fell from 63% to 49%.

While this figure exceeded 60% in Chile, Costa Rica, and Uruguay, these are the only three Latin American countries that the EIU does not label "hybrid regimes," "authoritarian regimes," or "flawed democracies." But even here, there are disturbing trends. For example, while Chile regained the status of "full democracy" in the EIU's index in 2022, Latinobarómetro finds that only 2% of Chileans would agree. A whopping 53% consider their country a "democracy with major problems."

But perhaps the clearest indication of Latin America's democratic decline has been the proliferation of authoritarian populism. Unlike the military dictators of the past, authoritarian populists - from Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo in Nicaragua to Nayib Bukele in El Salvador - use democratic structures for anti-democratic purposes.

Mexico offers a good example of this phenomenon. President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has pursued reforms aimed at weakening trust in electoral authority - the very basis of democracy. The EIU now considers Mexico to be a "hybrid regime." And Mexico is not alone: today, the EIU considers eight Latin American countries to be ruled by hybrid regimes, up from three in 2008.

These are illiberal democracies, not outright dictatorships, and more countries are at risk of joining them. In Chile, the far-right presidential candidate José Antonio Kast, who identifies with former dictator Augusto Pinochet, won 44% of the vote in the 2021 election, and may well be highly competitive in the next one. In Argentina, would-be authoritarians have gained ground within the main opposition bloc, and a new outsider, Javier Milei, is winning support with a populist nationalist appeal couched in libertarianism.

The sharp rise in authoritarian populism in Latin America reflects what is known as "democracy fatigue" - or, more specifically, "democratic frustration." Major segments of the region's population - not least the middle class - are fed up with successive governments' failure to tackle social and economic problems, including high crime rates, soaring inflation, low salaries, inadequate education and health services, scant pensions, and precarious and overcrowded transportation.

Authoritarian populists thrive in such a context, as they promote simple solutions that are often popular in the short term. Bukele's approval rating has soared above 80%, thanks to his use of mass incarceration to rein in gang violence. But they do not generally provide lasting solutions - at least not without eroding democratic structures and principles.

At the same time, lofty rhetoric and vague promises cannot preserve democracy on their own. Delivering concrete solutions to concrete problems is essential. Here, the construction of effective welfare states in Northern Europe remains paradigmatic.

In fact, the countries that rank the highest on the EIU's Democracy Index - Norway, New Zealand, Iceland, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark - all have particularly strong social-safety nets. We at Alternativa Latinoamericana - a representative group of Latin American intellectuals and political leaders who have been working since 2020 to formulate a proposal on how to strengthen democracy in the region - are convinced that Latin America must follow suit, building strong welfare states.

But this is a medium- to long-term project, requiring leaders to overcome major obstacles, as the recent experience of Colombian President Gustavo Petro and Chilean President Gabriel Boric has shown. To hold off the immediate threat of authoritarian populism, it is also imperative to devise "fast democratic deliverables" - inventive interventions that can bring tangible results quickly.

One example - which can be replicated, adjusting for local needs - is Bolsa Família. Introduced in 2003, during Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's previous term in office, this "conditional cash-transfer program" offered benefits to households in exchange for actions supporting their ability to escape poverty, such as immunization and school attendance for children. The authoritarian-populist President Jair Bolsonaro - whom Lula defeated in last year's election - renamed the program and expanded its coverage and benefits, but eliminated these conditionalities.

Another model is Argentina's "Asignación universal por hijo o hija" - a monthly sum paid for each child under 18 years of age when their parents are unemployed, have informal jobs, or are domestic service workers. Likewise, Uruguay's National Care System strengthens social protection for dependent people over age 65, people with severe disabilities, and children under the age of three. Chile's Universal Guaranteed Pension is also worth emulating elsewhere.

But it is in the realm of security and law enforcement that progress is most urgently needed. In countries across Central and South America, the middle classes and leading economic sectors are clamoring for a reduction in violent crime and delinquency. Devising short-term solutions that uphold human and constitutional rights will be no easy feat. But without progress on this front, threats to the region's democracies will continue to grow.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

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Liberia submits 6,000 nominations for the Lonestar Cell MTN Heroes of Change Initiative

The MoMo Heroes of Change program showcases the selfless work done by individuals in their communities in health, education, youth, women's development, tech solutions, and community impact.

Lonestar Cell MTN gave Liberians two weeks to submit the names of individuals who fit the criteria. When the time period ended, 6,000

there are hundreds of people around the country doing good work in the designated Heroes of Change categories. We wanted to qualify more of these individuals but, in many cases, there was just not enough detail about the work of the nominee to move them forward," he said.

Of the 6,000 nominations two hundred will be evaluated by five prominent Heroes of Change panel of judges for

selected the judges and the Governing Council based on their expertise in health, education, youth, women's development, tech solutions, and community impact. More importantly, we were careful to ensure that the process was fair and transparent. We carefully selected the judges and the members of the Governing Council because of their history of fairness and objectivity. Then, we included three rounds of voting and included the public," she said.

Liberians will vote for their choice by sending a no-cost SMS with the nominee specific code to Lonestar Cell MTN once the 30 nominees are selected. Voting is weighted with the public having 30-percent of each vote and the judges and the Governing Council with 70-percent. Lonestar Cell MTN Mobile Financial Services General Manager, Christopher Ssali said that the response to the call for nominations has been overwhelming. "Clearly, from the response, there are thousands of Heroes out there willing volunteering their time and resources to transform their communities. Heroes of Change is looking forward to recognizing and rewarding their gallant spirit, resilience, and innovation," he noted.

The winners of the Heroes of Change will receive financial awards to continue their community work. The first to third place winners will receive \$7,000, \$2,000, and \$1,000 respectively.

further evaluation. Thirty of the two hundred will be forwarded to the Governing Council for review and then posted to Lonestar Cell MTN social media pages where Liberians can monitor the process and vote.

"A key cornerstone of Heroes of Change program is integrity," said Lonestar Cell MTN Abigail Nufeatalai, Brand and Communications Manager. "We



nominations had been received by Lonestar Cell MTN. After two days of vetting the 6,000 entries, Theo Kerion Williams of Echo House, the PR and Event Management agency facilitating the MoMo Heroes of Change program, said there were two key observations from the initial selection process.

"What we found going through the entries is that

EPA Trains Law Enforcement, Custom Officers

-To Monitor Mining, Energy and Forestry Sectors

The Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia (EPA) will on Monday, 24 April 2023 commenced a three-day training for environmental inspectors, law enforcers and custom officers aimed at building their capacities in inspecting and monitoring the mining, forestry and the energy sectors. The training workshop is also intended to empower environmental inspectors, law enforcers and custom officers of the anti-smuggling division of the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA), and environmental and port officers of the National Port Authority (NPA) on how to monitor radiation and chemical management, as well as other related and emerging environmental issues.

quality testing and analysis, investigation of environmental emergency, dissemination, awareness and education of environmental information, enforcing environmental compliance, verification of environmental studies report submitted to the Agency would also participate in the training.

Madam Danise Love Dennis Dodoo, head of corporate media and communications at

the EPA said the training is part of on-going capacity development programs under the auspices of the Department of Compliance and Enforcement.

The Department of Compliance and Enforcement is among many others charged with the responsibilities of overseeing the environmental and social impact assessment process and compliance

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Prof. Wilson K. Tarpeh, Executive Director, EPA

Mutual Benefits Assurance Company escapes writ of execution

By Lincoln G. Peters

The management of Mutual Benefits Assurance Company (MBAC) on Friday, April 21, 2023, escaped a writ of execution over an action of debt worth more than US\$ 11,226,573.85 by the Commercial Court of Liberia.

The writ of execution was issued and approved by Commercial Court Judge Eva Mappy Morgan to Emmanuel Morris, acting sheriff of the court, or his deputy for implementation.

A sheriff of the Commercial Court, well dressed in his uniform was seen with locked and chain in a black plastic bag at Mutual Benefits Assurance Company to execute the order. The execution was prevented due to the absence of the management of the company to receive the writ. However, the sheriff demanded to close the building

It can be recalled that plaintiff Bea Mountain Mining Corporation (BMC) filed a lawsuit against Mutual Benefits Assurance Company over the execution of Construction Contracts in favor of Aureus Mining.

MBAC issued various bonds for and on behalf of International Construction Engineer (ICE) But, Aureus Mining demanded payment on the bonds when ICE breached the contract.

However, ICE denied Aureus Mining's allegations of breach and countered claim.

The matter was submitted for Arbitration between ICE and Aureus and an arbitral award was rendered in favor of Aureus Mining.

Aureus now seeks to collect from MBAC about US\$14,000,000.00 on the bonds MBAC issued. BMMC now filed an Action of Debt against MBAC to



but was unable due to the absence of the management. "You are hereby commanded to seize and expose for sale the land, goods and chattels Mutual Benefits Assurance Company in the above cause of action; If the sum realized therefrom be not sufficient to pay the reasonable expense of said seizure and sale, then seize the real properties until it shall have raised the sum of eleven million, two hundred twenty-six thousand, five hundred seventy-three United States Dollars (US\$11,226.573,85).

However, if you can't find any assert, of interest, land, goods, and chattels of the defendant, you are hereby ordered to bring Mutual Benefits Assurance Company before the judge of this court to be dealt with in keeping with the law" the Writ of execution stated.

collect 14M, a judgment entered against MBAC in accordance with award plus interest.

The writ under the signature of J. Amos F. Gbowah, clerk of the court, instructed that upon receiving from said sale or otherwise, said sum of money, they are further commanded to pay over to the above name plaintiff.

"And upon receiving from said sale or otherwise, said sum of money, you are further commanded to pay over to the above-named plaintiff in these proceedings, the sum of money necessary to satisfy the judgment herein, and reserve unto yourself the said costs of court and you will make your official returns endorsed on the back of this writ as to the form and manner of its service" the writ concluded. - Edited by Othello B. Garblah

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Aggrieved PLP officials reject marriage with CDC

The factional feud in the People's Liberation Party (PLP) of the late Dr. Daniel E. Cassell appears to be far from over, as several county chairpersons and other officials reject their suspension, terming it as illegal and void.

The leadership of the PLP,

Disagreement in the PLP ensued shortly after the party joined five other political parties to endorse the CDC for the 2023 elections.

Some county chairpersons distanced themselves from the decision to take the Party to the governing Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC), on grounds that there were not

laughable, illegal, and will therefore have no bearing on their roles as members and officials of the PLP.

They called on PLP Political Leader, Tapple Doe and National Chairman Bernard DJ Blues to instead, reverse the decision to support the CDC and allow a free, fair and transparent consultation process that would eventually inform a majority decision as to which side of the political divide the PLP would support.

Two spokespersons of the aggrieved PLP officials, Oscar Holmes of Bomi County and Captain Jerry Kollie of Bong County, vowed that the CDC collaboration decision would be resisted through the National Elections Commission and in court.

According to them, the decision to take the party to the CDC was made by some members of the National Executive Committee without due consultation with or participation of the Council of County Chairpersons.

Meanwhile, the Council of County Chairpersons has again cited greed for money and lack of integrity as reasons that triggered the minority decision of some executives of the PLP to hurriedly take the party to the CDC. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*

enough consultations, and the decision did not meet the approval of majority members of the Executive Committee and vast majority of PLP partisans.

Responding to media reports here of their suspension on Monday, April 24, the affected officials described the news as

one of six political parties that recently pledged support for the re-election bid of President George Manneh Weah, announced the suspension of the Chairman of the County Chairpersons, Captain Jerry Kollie and four other county chairs for allegedly violating the party's constitution.

At the same time, Mr. Kamara has described security support of the Government of Liberia towards Muslims during the last night of prayer of the Holy Ramadan as remarkable, noting it signals an era of tolerance and co-existence.

He said that support from

the government and other well-meaning Liberians to the Muslims Community are heartily welcoming.

"We salute government

This followed completion of the Phase I of the exercise in Bomi, Gbarpolu, Grand Bassa, Grand Cape Mount, Margibi, and Montserrado counties, respectively.

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Resources wasted on vehicles for chiefs?

By Patrick N. Mensah, Maryland County

All of the vehicles and some motorbikes that President George Manneh Weah donated to traditional chiefs in Southeast Liberia are now grounded due to major mechanical faults. Mr. Weah donated 45 vehicles and 15 motorbikes to the traditional chiefs in fulfillment of a promise he made to them during a nationwide tour in 2021. In an apparent waste of resources, all of the donated vehicles and motorbikes can no longer be seen in the streets for nearly a year due to major mechanical faults and the lack of finances to maintain them.

The vehicles and motorbikes were intended to ensure efficiency in the day-to-day activities of the local county leaders.

"Although those vehicles were intended to reduce our walking, ... we are still walking [daily] because of those problems," he continued.

Chief Neal called on the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Legislative Caucus of Maryland County to address their vehicle situation.

In response, VP Taylor expressed regrets, but urged the local authorities in the county to include that in their budget during the county sitting. Madam Taylor: "I knew this could have reached this level because [of] how much these traditional chiefs are making, not to talk about buying some of these vehicles' materials. But anyway, I will inform the President concerning your request," she said.

The NewDawn newspaper has gathered that most of the traditional chiefs in the county are not placed on the government's payroll.



Following our investigations concerning the usage of the donated vehicles and motorbikes, this paper has uncovered that about a year and a half now, the vehicles donated to Maryland County have been packed along the road in one of the towns.

The chairman of the traditional council in Maryland County Nelson Neal spoke about the condition of the vehicles and motorbikes during a general citizen meeting organized by Vice President Jewel Howard-Taylor in Maryland. Neal explained that their two vehicles have been packed for a year due to mechanical faults.

Chief Neal disclosed that it will cost US\$3000 to solve the problems on each of the packed vehicles. He said they cannot afford to use their little earnings as chiefs to buy the parts needed to repair the vehicles.

"Let me say this to you Madam Taylor, we can't afford to buy just one of those nozzles, not to talk about two. So please extend this message to the President that we need his help," Chief Neal said.

This paper has gathered that the they have made several attempts to engage the Ministry of Internal Affairs through their legislative caucus, but it's yet to be done. One of the traditional chiefs who refused to be named, lamented that he was on the payroll during former President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's administration, but he was allegedly removed during the Weah-led administration. The chief claimed that he continues to work without getting paid. He said he cannot maintain his vehicle since he is not on payroll.

This paper has tried to hear from the chairpersons of both River Gee and Grand Kru Counties' traditional chiefs whose vehicles have been packed behind an unfinished building in Pleebo, Maryland County. But our efforts seem fruitless.

During the official turning over ceremony of the donation at the Samuel Kanyon Doe Sports Complex in Paynesville, Montserrado County, President Weah said the local leaders were doing a tedious job on daily.

As such, he said they could not continue to walk while performing their duties across the country.



Oscar Holmes of Bomi and Rtd. Captain Jerry Kollie of Bong

Your vote is your desire change

-ALCOP Standard Bearer urges citizens to participate in BVR
By Lincoln G. Peters

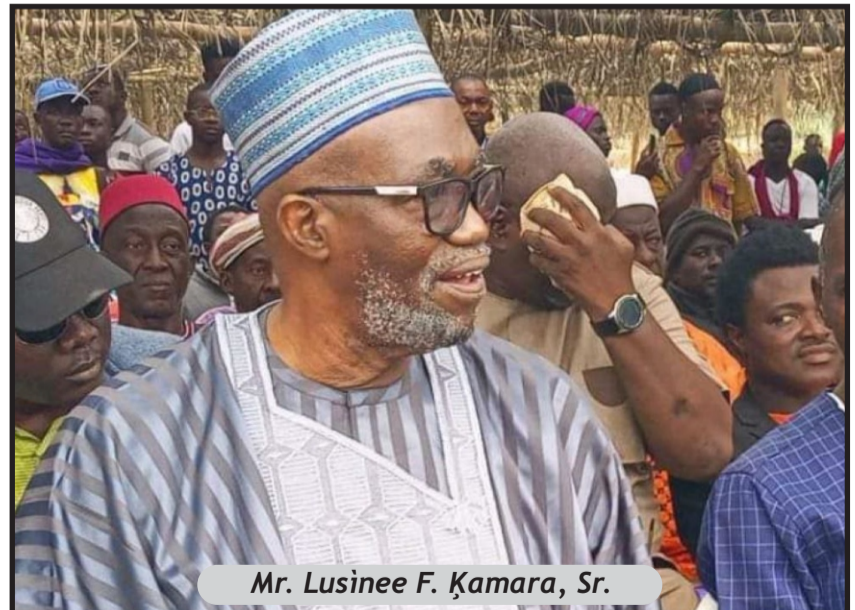
Opposition All Liberia Coalition Party (ALCOP) is urging citizens to participate in the second phase of the ongoing Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) in order to have their voices heard at the ballot box come October.

Speaking over the weekend, ALCOP standard bearer Mr. Lusinee F. Kamara, Sr., appealed to citizens within the remaining nine counties to show up for the voter registration process, adding that it's their vote that can bring the fruit they desire.

"We commend the general public for taking part in Phase One of the Voter Registration exercise. We still want to urge all other Liberians residing in the other counties to take part in Phase Two of the Voter Registration exercise. As we say Eid Mubarak to you all, we hereby urge all Liberians to hold together as one people. United we stand; but divided we fall. May Allah accept our prayers, unite our hearts and

bleed our nation, Liberia" he stated.

The National Elections Commission has kicked off phase two of the BVR process in Bong, Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, Lofa, Maryland, Nimba, River Cess, River Gee, and Sinoe



Mr. Lusinee F. Kamara, Sr.

counties.

This followed completion of the Phase I of the exercise in Bomi, Gbarpolu, Grand Bassa, Grand Cape Mount, Margibi, and Montserrado counties, respectively.

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MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Buttering their own bread

U.S. Ambassador to Liberia Mr. Michael A. McCarthy says the elite in Monrovia are treating destitute citizens in the leeward counties 'with a neglect that borders on contempt.'

In a press statement released Monday, 24 April 2023, Amb. McCarthy

feathering their own nests. The U.S. Envoy detailed that hospitals on which lives depend, where outbreaks are prevented and suffering is alleviated, did not receive any portion of the US\$100,000 or more appropriated by the legislature for them to operate.

More troubling, Amb.

unfortunately was startled and deeply troubled to encounter multiple county hospitals that received not one penny of what they were promised in the 2022 budget.

"As reported in the press last week with Tellowoyan Memorial Hospital in Lofa County, these facilities currently survive on the backs of incredibly dedicated health professionals, making do with whatever they can scrape together," said Amb. McCarthy.

"Lest you think this is the work of one political party, that notion was quickly dispelled by Liberians I talked to," he added.

The U.S. Diplomat said in one town, administrators look with anticipation mixed with fear at the brand-new, modern hospital that sits vacant, knowing that they can barely keep the existing makeshift facility going, and running the new one will require ten times the resources. He said he also visited most of the County Service Centers, and in 2022, none had received any of their budget allocation (usually around US\$13,333). According to Amb. McCarthy, one Center has not printed marriage certificates for four years because the printer broke, and their last allocation was received five years ago. Virtually all of them, he said, are beautifully electrified over the past two years with UNDP-supplied solar power systems (costing around \$35,000 - \$40,000 each). Additionally, he said they are amply staffed by (mostly) salaried employees in tidy buildings but are reduced to the job of middlemen.

He said they are limited to forwarding paperwork to Monrovia periodically for time-consuming processing, adding that their plight makes a mockery of decentralization efforts.

"The one functioning office in every center, the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA), has representatives who collect duties and regularly forward funds to Monrovia - apparently

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11

McCarthy said the blocking of resources is so complete that it must be institutional.

He added that the lack of any alarm being raised indicates a syndicate involving players at the legislature, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. While the Liberian government's spending priority seems to be its top officials, Amb. McCarthy said the United States Government is about to spend a total of over US\$40 million constructing Liberia's state-of-the-art National Reference Laboratory (NRL).

When completed, he said this facility will require US\$3 million to US\$4 million a year from the Government of Liberia to operate.

"If the Government is failing to deliver statutory appropriations of only US\$100,000 to existing hospitals, why would we ever trust annual pledges of US\$3 million for the future NRL?" said Amb. McCarthy pondered.

On his recent trip to Bomi, Gbarpolu and four counties in Southeast Liberia, Amb. McCarthy said he



Senate President Pro-Tempore Albert Chie

House Speaker Bhofal Chambers

wondered why his government would ever trust the Liberian government's annual pledges to the health sector, given its failure to deliver statutory appropriations of only US\$100,000 to existing hospitals. "As for me, should the U.S. Congress ask how the elite in Monrovia are treating destitute citizens in the leeward counties, my honest response would have to be, "those citizens are treated with a neglect that borders on contempt." Is this the best that Liberia can do?" said Amb. McCarthy. The U.S. Diplomat said he is quite sure that Liberians in leeward counties have not been told that the Legislature has spent more for the past three years buttering their own bread, allocating over US\$65 million in 2022 for salaries and operations.

Amb. McCarthy said while hospitals went without, and service centers withered on the vine, Liberia's 30 senators and 73 representatives spent sixty-five million U.S. dollars

Starts from back page

government to stand their ground and not to bow to any threat or pressure coming from President Weah and his officials."

"As I'm told, he wants to dismiss the county chair, the city mayor, and the statutory superintendent; let him go ahead to dismiss them. But he's a political disappointment to this country and never will I support him", he says

Don't bow to dismissal threat

referring to the President.

PYJ has enjoyed unlimited political power from Nimba characterized by massive support from the Gio-ethnic region, since 2006, a feat that has practically given him leverage in the national political space and positioned him as kingmaker in the last three elections.

These successes have made him a political "Darlingboy" for both the former ruling Unity

Party of ex-President Sirleaf and President Weah's governing CDC, though it appears that he is losing grip of the latter.

A political marriage consummated with the CDC in 2017 that helped propelled President George Weah to the Presidency has gone sour in recent months with Johnson withdrawing his support from Weah. **Editing by Jonathan Browne**

Gongloe to make Ramadan a National Holiday

-Ahead of 2023 Elections

By: Kruah Thompson

Ahead of the October's presidential and general elections, the standard bearer of the opposition Liberian People's Party, Cllr Tiawan Gongloe, has pledged to make Ramadan a national holiday in Liberia.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with this paper recently, Cllr. Gongloe said that Liberia is the only country in West Africa that does not have a Muslim holiday. Therefore, he says to strengthen religious tolerance practices in the country, he will ensure the day becomes a national holiday, if elected President.

Muslims in the country have persistently demanded religious holidays, petitioning the Liberian Legislature.

Public holidays in Liberia are enacted into law by the Legislature and not pronounced or declared by a president.

Muslims would have to lobby

Others from the Capitol had made similar pledge that never saw light of day.

However, Gongloe told this paper that since the day (Ramadan) is observed based on the setting of the moon, under his Presidency, the people of Liberia will recognize it by setting a specific date aside yearly to give it a higher national recognition.

According to him, he sees no reason why Muslims will not get a public holiday when both Christians and Muslims are together and worship differently.

The LPP presidential hopeful continues that there is evidence of heavy presence of Muslims across the country and they are part of the 16 tribes of Liberia.

"The chief Iman from Nimba is called Iman Siaway and he's a Gio man. Also, many people are worshipping through the Muslim faith therefore, I think we must give them a holiday", he argues.

Meanwhile, he reveals that late Interim President Dr. Amos C.



strongly with Capitol Hill especially, with individual lawmakers from constituencies to have their demand achieved.

But this is not the first time for politicians to make such promise, particularly near electioneering period when they need the Muslims' votes.

Prior to Cllr. Gongloe's latest pledge to Muslims, Nimba County Senator Prince Yormie Johnson had received petition from the Muslims Community and promised them to have their request met upon re-election but this was never done.

Sawyer issued a policy statement that when there is a national program, Christian prelate must give the invocation, while a Muslim cleric perform the benediction, adding that this move was also meant to promote religious tolerance in the country.

He vows to go beyond Sawyer by having an Iman and a Reverend at the Supreme Court of Liberia under his administration.

According to him, this will go a long way in promoting religious tolerance in the country. **Editing by Jonathan Browne**

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Your vote is your

security agencies for providing security to our people in the night of Ramadan, when Muslims got together to do night prayers. This was remarkable and it signals an era of tolerance and coexistence. This security visibility is commendable. We also love the goodwill and support of the

general public for Muslims in Ramadan", he noted.

The former Finance Minister at the same time, congratulates the Muslim Community of Liberia for the successful completion of the Holy Month of Ramadan. **Editing by Jonathan Browne**

Français

Prince Johnson prie l'ancienne présidente Sirleaf de pardonner à Boakai

Parraïn politique de longue date et sénateur du comté de Nimba, Prince Y. Johnson demande à l'ancienne présidente Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf de pardonner à son ancien vice-président Joseph Nyumah Boakai tout ce

décrit l'ancienne présidente Sirleaf comme un facteur sérieux dans les élections de 2023, car elle jouera un rôle majeur dans l'élection du prochain président du pays.

«La présidente Sirleaf est un facteur majeur dans cette élection. Vous ne pouvez tout

lui succéder aux élections présidentielles et législatives de 2017 remportées par le président sortant George Manneh Weah.

Le sénateur Johnson a soutenu M. Weah lors des élections de 2017. Il a également été dit que Mme



qu'elle a contre lui.

S'exprimant par téléphonique sur Spoon FM le week-end dernier, le sénateur Johnson a dit que l'ancienne présidente Johnson-Sirleaf a un rôle majeur à jouer dans les élections présidentielles et législatives du 10 octobre.

La sénatrice Johnson a

simplement pas l'ignorer. Elle a tout le soutien international auquel vous pouvez penser... elle a également un rôle majeur à jouer le 10 octobre», a déclaré Johnson.

M. Boakai, porte-drapeau du Parti de l'unité, fut vice-président de l'ancienne présidente Sirleaf tout au long de ses deux mandats.

Mais il n'a pas réussi à obtenir son soutien dans sa tentative de

Sirleaf et ses proches du Parti de l'unité avaient soutenu Weah au détriment de Boakai.

Certains ont affirmé que Boakai ne s'était pas engagé à protéger l'ancienne présidente et ses intérêts.

«Cependant, je vous demande de pardonner à

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 09

Mali : l'armée interpelle des combattants de la Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad près de Ménaka

Une opération de l'armée a été menée près de Ménaka, dans le nord-est du Mali, une région passée sous la domination totale de la branche sahélienne du groupe État islamique. Dans un communiqué diffusé ce 24 avril 2023, les Forces armées (Fama) annoncent avoir mené la veille une « action majeure » dans le secteur de Tin-Fadimata, avec arrestations et matériel saisi à la clé. Mais la Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad (CMA), mouvement signataire de l'accord de paix de 2015, indique que ce sont des combattants issus de ses rangs et non des terroristes qui ont été interpellés.

C'est la première fois que l'armée malienne mène une opération au sol près de Ménaka. Jusqu'ici, l'armée malienne et ses supplétifs russes s'étaient limités à quelques patrouilles à

proximité de la ville ou à des opérations aériennes.

« Douze terroristes interpellés », selon l'armée

Cette « reconnaissance offensive » a permis, selon l'état-major général des armées, d'interpeller douze « terroristes » et de saisir quatre fusils, deux grenades, ainsi que des munitions et des tenues militaires.

Cela fait des mois que les populations de Ménaka et les

groupes armés locaux signataires de l'accord de paix, qui tentent de protéger les civils face aux attaques de l'État islamique, déplorent le manque d'implication de l'armée malienne face au groupe jihadiste.

Des combattants de la CMA et deux Fama

Mais cette opération n'aurait en fait pas visé des combattants du groupe État

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Éditorial

L'augmentation des cas d'avortement au Libéria est inquiétante

L'avortement est illégal au Libéria, mais selon une étude, près de 40 000 avortements ont lieu dans le pays par an, détruisant des vies innocentes. Cette tendance devrait attirer immédiatement l'attention du gouvernement, des militants des droits et des institutions religieuses, car ce sont des meurtres qui se commettent.

Selon l'étude nationale sur l'avortement au Libéria, en moyenne 38 779 avortements ont lieu au Libéria chaque année, c'est-à-dire 30 femmes âgées de 15 à 45 ans sur 1 000 avorte chaque année.

« Le taux d'avortement n'est pas homogène. Il varie selon les régions. Le centre-nord du pays a le taux d'avortement le plus bas (6,6 sur 1000), tandis que le centre-sud a le taux le plus élevé (49,7/1000). En outre, 14 555 femmes ont reçu des soins pour des complications liées à l'avortement dans les établissements. 67% ont eu lieu dans des établissements publics et 74% dans des établissements de niveau primaire », indique le rapport.

L'étude conclut que l'avortement provoqué est courant dans le pays, la plupart des cas étant liés à des grossesses non désirées.

Quelque chose semble manquer ici. Il semble y avoir une éducation limitée sur les rapports sexuels précoces et les risques associés. Les écoles, les églises et les mosquées et les maisons, sans oublier les hôpitaux et les établissements de santé ne semblent pas jouer leur rôle.

La science reproductive doit être enseignée dans les écoles et les institutions religieuses à travers le pays pour résoudre le problème des grossesses non désirées qui, selon le rapport, est à l'origine de la prévalence des avortements dans la société.

Le rapport met l'accent sur la diffusion et la mise en œuvre complètes de la loi révisée sur la santé publique du Libéria dans toutes les communautés, les centres de santé avec la participation des décideurs politiques pour assurer l'éducation et la sensibilisation de la communauté sur le danger de l'avortement à risque, tout en tenant compte du statut juridique existant de l'avortement et du point d'accès actuel.

Les parents et les tuteurs ont leur part de responsabilité dans cette pratique non autorisée car il semble que la discipline a été jetée par la fenêtre et que les enfants, filles et garçons, sont laissés à eux-mêmes pour expérimenter sexuellement ou pratiquer des relations sexuelles précoces et incontrôlées. N'oubliez pas que la famille est la première cellule de la société, et si la discipline y est compromise, la société perd l'équilibre.

En bref, il nous faut limiter le nombre de grossesses non désirées grâce à une éducation vigoureuse et soutenue dans tous les secteurs de la société afin d'inverser la tendance.

Cela nécessite le soutien du gouvernement, en collaboration avec des partenaires. Plus tôt nous commencerons, mieux ce sera pour notre population, car le rapport n'a pas révélé le nombre de décès survenus lors de ces avortements.

Français

Prince Johnson prie l'ancienne

l'ancien vice-président Joseph Nyumah Boakai tout ce qu'il a fait et qui vous a empêché de le soutenir en 2017. Veuillez lui pardonner", a poursuivi Johnson.

"Je demande que quoi qu'il ait pu vous faire, j'ouvre la Sainte Bible, la prière du Seigneur, que nous devons pardonner à ceux qui transgressent contre nous si nous voulons que Dieu nous pardonne parce que chaque jour nous péchons", a plaidé le sénateur Johnson.

En 2017, le sénateur Johnson a déclaré que l'ancienne présidente Sirleaf

n'avait pas aidé Boakai pendant l'élection.

Il pense qu'il est maintenant temps que le mauvais sang et les différences soient mis de côté et qu'ils travaillent ensemble.

Il a suggéré que "si nous continuons à traverser nos esprits, le Seigneur ne nous entendra pas comme indiqué dans Ésaïe 55:2".

"Et donc avec ça, je veux que vous pardonniez à Boakai tout ce que vous pensez qu'il a fait contre vous. Il vous a servi pendant douze ans et donc je pense, je pense juste qu'elle n'a jamais été réceptive. Je pense que si elle lui pardonne et se repent de ses péchés, elle ira de l'avant », a-t-il conclu.

Mali : l'armée interpelle des combattants de la

islamique. « Les personnes arrêtées sont toutes membres de la CMA », explique Mohamed El Maouloud Ould Ramadane, porte-parole des ex-rebelles signataires de l'accord de paix de 2015. Qui précise que deux de ces hommes sont eux-mêmes des Fama, membres du mécanisme opérationnel conjoint (Moc). En clair des combattants issus de la CMA et intégrés dans l'armée nationale malienne dite « reconstituée », dans le cadre justement de l'accord de paix. Ces deux soldats avaient obtenu une permission pour célébrer la fin du Ramadan en famille.

Le porte-parole de la Co ordination des mouvements de l'Azawad assure que les autres combattants disposaient d'un ordre de mission, visé par la CMA et par l'armée malienne, y compris pour les armes.

Des explications qui permettent de mieux comprendre le communiqué officiel de l'armée malienne qui, après l'annonce des douze arrestations, « invite les mouvements signataires à coordonner leurs mouvements avec les Fama », afin d'« éviter toute confusion pouvant entraîner des tensions sur

le terrain ».

Plusieurs cadres de la CMA, qui déplorent une nouvelle « provocation », indiquent par ailleurs que ce sont des éléments du groupe Wagner qui dirigeaient l'opération de l'armée malienne - Bamako ne reconnaît que la présence d'« instructeurs russes » dans le pays. Les douze combattants arrêtés ont été emmenés à Ménaka. Des démarches sont entreprises par la CMA pour leur libération.

État islamique à l'offensive

Le groupe État islamique a initié il y a plus d'un an une vaste offensive dans le Nord-Est du Mali. Depuis la prise de Tidermène, le 10 avril dernier, les jihadistes semblent avoir évincé leurs concurrents d'al-Qaïda et dominant la totalité de la région. Seule la ville de Ménaka reste tenue par l'armée malienne, des groupes armés locaux signataires de l'accord de paix - MSA et Gatia - et les Casques bleus de la Mission multidimensionnelle intégrée des nations unies pour la stabilisation au Mali (Minusma). Mais la ville est dorénavant cernée par les jihadistes de l'EIS, qui ne restent jamais dans les localités attaquées mais circulent en permanence, s'assurant du contrôle du territoire sans s'y établir. Une situation qui nourrit également une certaine confusion sur le terrain.

Cummings remet en question l'intégrité de NEC



L'opposant libérien Alexander B. Cummings a mis en doute l'intégrité de la Commission électorale nationale (NEC) pour organiser des élections libres, équitables et transparentes en octobre.

Cummings est le leader politique de la Collaboration des Parties Politiques (CPP) qui est composée de l'Alternative National Congress (ANC) et du Liberty Party (LP) en crise.

S'exprimant lors du Forum de développement intellectuel de l'arrondissement de New Kru Town au cours du week-end, M. Cummings s'est dit préoccupé par la crédibilité et l'intégrité de la NEC pour mener des élections transparentes.

Il est l'un des nombreux dirigeants de l'opposition qui cherchent à affronter le président sortant George Manneh Weah lors des élections présidentielles et législatives d'octobre.

Il a dit douter que la NEC puisse organiser des élections libres et équitables sous le régime de la Coalition pour le changement démocratique (CDC), d'autant plus que le parti au pouvoir cherche désespérément à rester au pouvoir.

Selon lui, la NEC a introduit une nouvelle technologie dans le système électoral du pays sans procéder à un test ni à une évaluation pratique avant de l'intégrer dans le système.

Il a également pointé du doigt l'insuffisance du financement de

la Commission électorale nationale par le gouvernement. C'est pour lui un problème qui risque de remettre en question l'intégrité et la crédibilité de la NEC.

« Et donc, pour répondre à la question sur la confiance dans la NEC en ce qui concerne sa capacité d'organiser des élections libres et équitables, je vous dirai que nous avons de sérieuses inquiétudes », a affirmé M. Cummings.

« Nous avons également une très sérieuse inquiétude concernant le financement de la NEC et l'introduction du processus d'enrôlement biométrique des électeurs (BVR) sans procéder à un tester », a ajouté M. Cummings.

Il a affirmé que pour la première fois, le Libéria utilise le processus BVR sans pratique ni répétition avant de le mettre en œuvre.

« Nulle part dans le monde, vous n'utiliserez une nouvelle technologie sans la tester avant de l'utiliser ou de la mettre en œuvre », a déclaré Cummings.

« De plus, en raison du problème technique rencontré avec le BVR, nous avons vu comment la première phase a été menée même au point où la population des zones riches en votes a chuté. »

Le porte-drapeau de la CPP a recommandé que si la NEC veut organiser des élections libres, justes et transparentes en octobre, elle doit être financée au niveau international et local.

ExxonMobil guette quatre blocs offshore au Libéria

La Liberia Petroleum Regulatory Authority (LPRRA) a annoncé avoir reçu une demande de pré-qualification d'ExxonMobil pour quatre blocs offshore au Libéria.

Récemment, ExxonMobil a exprimé son intérêt pour les blocs 15, 16, 22 et 24 dans le bassin du Libéria et la société a maintenant officiellement demandé à être pré-qualifiée pour négocier les blocs.

La LPRRA examine actuellement la candidature d'ExxonMobil et lorsque la société aura été pré-qualifiée, l'Autorité l'invitera à négocier un accord de partage pétrolier (PSC) pour les blocs. Le processus de négociation directe est encadré par un processus en 5 phases, y compris la pré-qualification, comme indiqué dans le dossier d'information situé sur le site Web de la LPRRA (www.lpra.gov.lr). Les investisseurs intéressés sont tenus de terminer de manière satisfaisante chaque phase avant de passer à la phase suivante. La LPRRA informera les candidats de la réussite de chaque phase et les approbations et demandes de passage à la phase suivante seront expressément communiquées aux candidats.



ExxonMobil est l'une des plus grandes sociétés pétrolières et gazières internationales cotées en bourse au monde. L'entreprise a des antécédents d'exploration au Libéria. En 2013, ExxonMobil a acquis des droits pétroliers sur le bloc 13 de l'époque et a foré le puits Mesurado-1 en 2016.

Il convient de rappeler qu'en 2021, le gouvernement du Libéria, par l'intermédiaire de la LPRRA, a annoncé son intention d'ouvrir 33 blocs offshore dans le bassin de Harper et du Libéria pour une négociation directe. La décision du gouvernement d'offrir des blocs par voie de négociations directes était ancrée sur de nombreux facteurs importants, notamment le climat d'investissement, l'impact latent de la transition énergétique, le COVID-19 et son effet en cascade sur le secteur, mais aussi un appétit croissant des investisseurs pour les bassins frontaliers et la position actuelle du Libéria dans la chaîne de valeur du pétrole et du gaz.

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USAID awards UG grant for Higher Education for Conservation Activity here

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has awarded the University of Georgia approximately \$5 million for the implementation of a program entitled Higher Education for Conservation Activity (HECA)

conservation in Liberia through education, training, and technical assistance. UCL in collaboration with Alabama A&M University, Tuskegee University, the Wellesley Centers for Women at Wellesley College, the University of Liberia, and the Forestry Training Institute in

Research, and the Office of Global Engagement.

"The United States Agency for International Development (USAD) is among a comparatively small group of bilateral donors that recognize how vital forest resources are for Liberia's present and future," said Matthew Auer, Arch Professor and Dean of the UGA School of Public and International Affairs and Principal Investigator of the Higher Education for Conservation Activity (HECA) project. "This project's contribution will be in areas we know well: curriculum development, capacity-building, and social inclusion." The FBC center will oversee the development of a national forestry, biodiversity, and conservation curriculum that aligns with global standards for sustainable forest management. In addition, it will develop and deliver a multidimensional soft-skills co-curriculum to promote professional development of forest sector employees, including in areas like organizational leadership and team management. As a vital part of the program's mission, the team will design a social inclusion strategy to empower women and young people in the Liberian forestry sector. This strategy will also benefit



in Liberia. It press release issued on Monday April 24, said the timing of the project comes at a tipping point for Liberia's forests which account for roughly half of the remaining rainforest in West Africa. Over many years, forests have been degraded by unsustainable forestry practices, land conversion, and other pressures.

The Higher Education for Conservation Activity program aims to strengthen forest management and

Liberia, the team will establish a Center of Excellence in Forestry, Biodiversity, Conservation, and Green Enterprise Development ("the FBC Center"). UGA units participating in Higher Education for Conservation Activity include the School of Public and International Affairs, the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, the Odum School of Ecology, Franklin College of Arts and Sciences, Center for Integrative Conservation

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President Weah proclaims Tuesday, 'World Malaria Day' to be observed as Working Holiday

The President of the Republic of Liberia, His Excellency Dr. George Manneh Weah, has, by proclamation, declared Tuesday, April 25, 2023, as "World Malaria Day," and is to be observed throughout the Republic as a Working Holiday. According to the Proclamation, April 25, 2023, is the 15th World Malaria Day, which is being celebrated under the global theme: "Time to Deliver Zero Malaria: Invest, Innovate, implement", and a national slogan, "Zero Malaria Starts With Me." Accord to the Foreign Ministry release, the Government of the Republic of Liberia, realizing the significance of protecting the well-being of its citizens and foreign residents, has ratified the Convention on the Right of the Child to good health and nutrition and, as a member of the World Health Organization (WHO), will join other global health partners in supporting all health

programs to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC). President Weah has requested the Ministry of Health and other Government Agencies, as well as International Organizations concerned to initiate and execute programs to make the occasion meaningful.

The Presidential Proclamation said in Liberia, all-cause under-five mortality rate has declined from 94 per

1,000 live births in 2013 to 93 per 1,000 live births in 2019 and hospital admissions for severe Malaria has declined from 5% in 2016 to 3% in 2020 and the Government annual expenditure on health has remained steady in the range of 10 to 14% over the past 10 years, in fulfillment of the Abuja Declaration that calls for Members States to allocate 15% of national budget to health.



Pres. Weah

US\$390,000 polytechnic for Zogoes

By Emmanuel wise Jipoh

A polytechnic worth US\$390,000 will shortly be completed to host hundreds of disadvantaged youths, known here as Zogoes.

Those targeted are disadvantaged youth who have been rehabilitated and reintegrated in the society. The initiative is meant to buttress the government's effort in getting drug addicts off the streets.

The proposed polytechnic is expected to be completed within six months. It is an initiative of a Liberian-owned organization named Journey Against Violence (JAV). JAV seeks a drug-free society.

Its Chief Executive Officer and Founder is Evangelist Joshua Milton Blahyi, alias "General Butt-naked."

He told the New Dawn over

been hooked on drugs are rehabilitated and are empowered with TVET skills.

He stressed that there is an urgent need to apply honest efforts in saving the youthful population through rehabilitation and empowerment. Blahyi said the construction of the polytechnic for zogoes is one of the major ways of righting the many wrongs of his participation in the 14-year civil war that devastated the country.

He revealed that all the basic preparations for the opening of the JAV Polytechnic have been set in motion including the hiring of trained and experienced TVET instructors from Ghana.

Evangelist Blahyi noted that the school has been earmarked exclusively for at-risk youths.

Mr. Blahyi said the polytechnic will help most of the at-risk youths. He said most of them have lived their teenage lives on the streets, sleeping in the ghettos and



the weekend that a modern academic and Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET) center for disadvantaged youth located in Mount Barclay, along the Monrovia-Kakata highway is expected to provide hands-on skills for hundreds of war-affected youths in the country.

According to Evangelist Blahyi, beneficiaries expected to enroll at the polytechnic are disadvantaged youth or zogos who have completed rigorous full-circles of psychosocial rehabilitation.

He put the cost of the facility at around US\$390,000. He said it is being constructed by End-Time Trained Evangelistic Ministries (ETTEM) of which he is the General Overseer. Evangelist Blahyi stressed that the primary goal for the formation of the school is to ensure that war-affected and at-risk youths who have

engaging in acts of criminality for survival.

Blahyi said some of the at-risk youths have completed a rigorous circle of rehabilitation procedure, but they still need to be constantly observed by trained psychotherapists.

Evangelist Blahyi is an ex-rebel general. He fought during the country's 14 years civil war. He testified before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of his participation in the armed conflict in which 250,000 people, mostly women and children, lost their lives. Since 2006, the remorseful warlord, under the ambit of the Journey Against Violence, has dedicated himself to community-service initiatives. He has been traveling from one ghetto to another in slum communities across Montserrado County, enlisting war-affected and at-risk youths for rehabilitation and skills empowerment.

Starts from page 7

Buttering their own bread

a one-way street," he said. Amb. McCarthy revealed that it was striking that the further he went from Monrovia, the more elaborate and explicit were the reasons given for the lack of funding from the central government.

why are the much better-paid representatives and senators not paying a full 25% of their salaries?

"Why are legislators and ministers, those living on the top of the heap, given annual duty-free imports that deny the LRA much-needed

and an additional US\$10 million a year for county hospitals, even the greatest cynics concede that it would make a big difference," he stated.

Amb. McCarthy said just US\$500,000 each per year of actual maintenance (not



House Speaker Bhofal Chambers

Senate President Pro-Tempore Albert Chie

"Oh, it is challenging for the government these days." "Oh, Putin's war has made everything more difficult." "Prices have dried up the budgets." "You donor partners must fill the gaps," he quoted the locals as saying.

But he also wondered if these people are aware that, much to their credit, the LRA has surpassed projections and increased revenues for the past four years. He said the budget has climbed from US\$435,682 million in 2019 to US\$605,005 million in 2022.

"I suspect the country folk don't know that the Liberian economy grew by 3.7% in 2022," he continued.

He indicated that the U.S. Embassy withhold 25% of the salaries of its Liberian employees at the Residence and at the Embassy to pay their legally mandated income tax to the LRA.

But then he wondered

additional revenue?" he asked.

The U.S. Envoy asked if there is any reason other than the perverted version of the Golden Rule - "those that have the gold, make the rules"? He reminded the Liberian authorities that U.S. taxpayers spend around US\$60 million a year on health care in Liberia, and another US\$23 million on education. But he said the same legislature that spent US\$65 million on itself in 2022 appropriated around US\$7.1 million for grants and subsidies to county health facilities.

He said the legislature appropriated US\$2.76 million for operations at basic and secondary education (although, as he saw, that doesn't mean the funds reached their intended destinations).

"But if the legislature could just appropriate an additional US\$10 million a year to primary education (for a country that is tied in last place for average days of school attendance),

make-believe budgeted funds) on four unpaved roads (Zorzor - Voinjama; Zwedru - Fishtown; Greenville - Barclayville City; and Greenville - Buchanan) would dramatically improve the lives of more than a million of Liberia's poorest citizens.

He said it would also lower food costs, revolutionize farm to market access, and eliminate seasonal shortages of life-saving medicines and equipment. "The legislature would still have US\$43 million a year to somehow get by. Anyone interested in a pro-poor agenda?" he asked. In the past three weeks, he said he visited Bomi, Gbarpolu, and four counties in the Southeast, and he has now been to every county in Liberia. "This fulfills my promise to the U.S. Congress to be an Ambassador to all Liberia, not just Monrovia."

Starts from page 10 USAID awards UG grant for Higher

environmental and social equality goals at the same time, in creative and synergistic ways." These activities collectively strive to create a thriving forestry workforce with the knowledge to conserve Liberia natural resources while making significant advances in social inclusion. The higher education partnerships enabled by the new Higher Education for Conservation Activity (HECA) program will create lasting linkages between Liberian higher education institutions and HBCU, liberal arts, and land grant universities in the United States.

"Higher Education for Conservation Activity (HECA) is built on the premise that sustainable development must be inclusive development," said Layli Maparyan, the Katherine Stone Kaufmann '67 Executive Director of the Wellesley Centers for Women and Professor of Africana Studies at Wellesley College. "We are thrilled to have this opportunity to advance

role in securing this grant in support of Liberia's forestry, conservation, biodiversity and green enterprise initiatives," states Cynthia L. Blandford, President, and Board Chair of the University Consortium of Liberia (UCL) and Honorary Consul for the Republic of Liberia to the State of Georgia. "I am confident the Center of Excellence will be a model for the region. Many thanks to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Liberia, for their faith and trust in the UCL partners in awarding this significant grant to help train and develop the workforce of tomorrow in Liberia."

"I am so excited that our team has played a significant

Weah faces election headache

By Emmanuel wise Jipoh

President George Manneh Weah appears to face a headache in strategizing his re-election bid with his cabinet members ahead of the crucial presidential and legislative elections due October 2023. On Monday, 24 April 2023, Mr. Weah and his Cabinet Ministers began a three-day Special Cabinet Retreat in Buchanan City, Grand Bassa County. But President Weah seemed to be annoyed with his cabinet ministers as he knocked the gable to kickstart the retreat.

He looked very serious and focused without making any opening statement to commerce the sessions on Monday.

However, following a day of hard talks with his cabinet, Mr. Weah said high on the agenda of the 3-day Special Cabinet Retreat was to strategically engage his cabinet on adequate plans in preparation for the crucial October Presidential and Legislative elections.

He expressed confidence that he will be re-elected this

opposition Unity Party (UP), Amb. Joseph Nyumah Boakai. Former Coca-Cola Executive, now leader of the Collaborating Political Parties (CPP), Mr. Alexander B. Cummings is seen as one of Weah's major opponents fighting for the presidency. And a son of vote-rich Nimba County and former president of the Liberia National Bar Association Cllr. Tiawan Saye Gongloe is battling Mr. Weah for the nation's highest office.

Despite receiving criticisms for bad governance, corruption, and hardship engulfing Liberians under his rule, Mr. Weah insists that he will get re-elected this October. At the special retreat, President Weah appreciated his cabinet members for the great job done over the past five years. "We thank our Ministers and SOE [state-owned enterprises] for the great job done over the past five years," said President Weah.

"And let them know, we are going to [an] election and prepare for the election and await for the Liberia people to re-elect [us]," Mr. Weah said. Day one of the cabinet retreat saw technical working sessions which brought together all



Pres. Weah

October, though the decision rests in the hands of the Liberian people.

The incumbent faces several opposition leaders who are battling him for the presidency.

Among them is Liberia's former Vice President, now the standard bearer of the main

senior government officials and heads of SOEs. They deliberated on the next one hundred and sixty-nine days' deliverable of the government, especially centering around the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD).

Starts from page 5 EPA Trains Law Enforcement,

monitoring and inspection of projects, firms and other environmental factors that are likely to negatively impact the environment.

Madam Dodoo disclosed that the previous edition of the training was done in 2021 with key focus on monitoring high voltage transmission lines. This year's training, she noted will focus on the development of technical capacity of inspectors to adequately inspect and monitor mining sector since it is hugely contributing to environmental degradation in the country.

She indicated that the training is in fulfillment of

Section 95 of the Environmental Protection and Management Law of Liberia (EPML), which provide for the recruitment and training of environmental inspectors to serve as field agents of the Agency.

"Section 95 of the EPML also empowered the inspectors to "carry out the periodic inspections of all establishments and undertakings within such District limits of jurisdiction which manufacture, produce as by-products, import, export, store, sell, distribute, or use any substances and materials that are likely to have a significant impact on the environment to ensure that the provisions of this Law are complied with," Madam Dodoo explained.

Don't bow to dismissal threat

-PYJ cautions Nimbaians in government

By Lewis S. Teh
Nimba County Senator and chairman of the Governing Council of the opposition Movement for Democracy and Reconstruction, Prince Y.

government of threats to dismiss them if they support the opposition in the pending elections. Addressing a news conference at his residence in Paynesville outside Monrovia over the weekend, he

who they made county chairman, but no number of threats should make our people to bow.”

According to him, he has received intelligence that President Weah himself has told a citizen of Nimba that he did not name, that failure by the people of Nimba to support his (Weah's) re-election bid, they will be dismissed from every single position whether in government or at party level.

President Weah has several persons from Nimba in his government, including the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of Liberia, General Prince C. Johnson; the Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, Cllr. Cooper Kruah, and several others at junior levels.

But Sen. Johnson, once a close ally of President Weah, says such alleged threat coming from the President has put fear in Nimbians working in government, adding that upon the tipoff, he convened a meeting with some of his kinsmen aimed at encouraging them to stand their ground, as sons and daughters of Nimba.

“Today, we call you here to call on all our sons and daughters working in this



Sen. Johnson

Johnson, cautions Nimbaians working in the CDC-led government not to bow to dismissal threats if they do not support the re-election of President Weah in October.

Senator Johnson, regarded as the political godfather of Nimba says he has received complaints from several Nimbians working in

encouraged citizens of Nimba working in the CDC-led government to remain firm in their support for the opposition bloc.

PYJ: “Because we're not in support of them, so they have decided to go after our people, who are working in government; they've threatened one of our sons,

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