

# The Continent

with **Mai&Guardian**



Photo: Issouf  
Sanogo/AFP

## Paradise Lost

In Sierra Leone, people are told to 'sacrifice'  
their beach for a fishing harbour

# Inside:

■ **Cover story:** Black Johnson beach outside Freetown in Sierra Leone is beautiful. But it's going to have a lucrative fishing harbour built on it, forcing people to leave. In response, the state issued a one-page statement: Get over it. (p6)

■ **Massive hike in shipping costs:** A doubling, tripling and quadrupling in shipping costs is pushing up the cost of goods across the continent. Some of it is structural, some of it is Covid-19. None of it is good. (p11)

■ **Zero emissions by 2050:** To avoid catastrophe, global emissions need to get to zero in just three decades. A new plan for how this will work has been launched. (p14)



## Will Cameroon host AFCON? (p15)

Five of its stadiums are ready to host the Africa Cup of Nations next year. But the centrepiece Paul Biya Stadium is not ready. The Confederation of African Football, which runs football on the continent, might have to switch hosts. Again. Last time Egypt took over as hosts, but Cameroon is confident it will make its deadlines this time.



Illustration:  
Wynona Mutisi

Your responses to *The Oracle*, a sculpture, installed in Rockefeller Square in New York to "represent Africa", ranged from exasperated to livid. So we asked you what you'd replace it with. One of you suggested a giant screen where people could read *The Continent* while drinking Ethiopian coffee. We're obviously not in the least bit biased, and we love the idea! They do say dream big.

**MALI**

## It's all about the money, Mali

Mali's largest union began a four-day strike action this week after a pay dispute with the government could not be resolved. The National Union of Malian Workers (UNTM) which represents miners, teachers, and health workers and private sector employees called the strike in demand for better pay. The government has repeatedly said it does not have the budget to meet their demands.

The strike paralysed government offices and banks in the West African country as frustrations with the post-coup

government continued.

Mali is governed by a transitional government installed after the military removed president Ibrahim Boubacar Keita from office last August following weeks of nationwide protests over his handling of insurgency and allegations of corruption.

But frustration with the interim government boiled over after the opposition M5 movement called for its dissolution in favour of "a more legitimate" body.

**SOUTH AFRICA**

## Plea, please

Former South Africa president Jacob Zuma's trial on charges of corruption, money laundering and racketeering will begin on May 26 at the high court in Pietermaritzburg, where it is expected that he will announce his plea. Zuma is accused of receiving bribes from French arms company Thales in 1999 through his associate Schabir Shaik, who was convicted of corruption-related charges in 2005. In a separate matter, Zuma is refusing to testify at a high-level commission looking into "state capture" – corruption and looting that allegedly took place during his term in office.

**MOROCCO**

## Spain strains rock Morocco

The face-off between Spain and Morocco escalated this week after the European Union country deployed its military to the Moroccan border to expel nearly half of the 8,000 migrants who entered Europe over two days. Morocco had deliberately loosened its border controls in retaliation against Spain's decision to grant entry on medical grounds to the chief of a group that fights Morocco for the independence of Western Sahara, which Morocco annexed in 1975.

## NIGERIA

## US brings Ogun to a fraud fight

An aide to the Ogun state governor, in Nigeria's southwest, was arrested on May 14 on charges that he used the stolen identities of more than 100 residents of Washington state in the United States to obtain more than \$350,000 in unemployment benefits. Abidemi Rufai was senior special assistant on housing to the governor of Ogun state back home. Rufai faces up to 30 years in federal prison if convicted, and has denied the charges.

## BURKINA FASO

## Baptism party ends in terror

Unknown gunmen suspected of being Islamic State extremists killed at least 15 people at a baptism party in northern Burkina Faso, authorities said on Wednesday. The attack took place near the town of Tin Akoff in the extreme northern end of the Sahel region on Tuesday. After the attack residents fled the area, seeking refuge in nearby towns. It is the latest eruption of violence in the West African country that has left thousands dead in recent years.



**Baby steps: Phillip Lühl's daughters may be good to go.** Photo: Chris de Beer-Procter

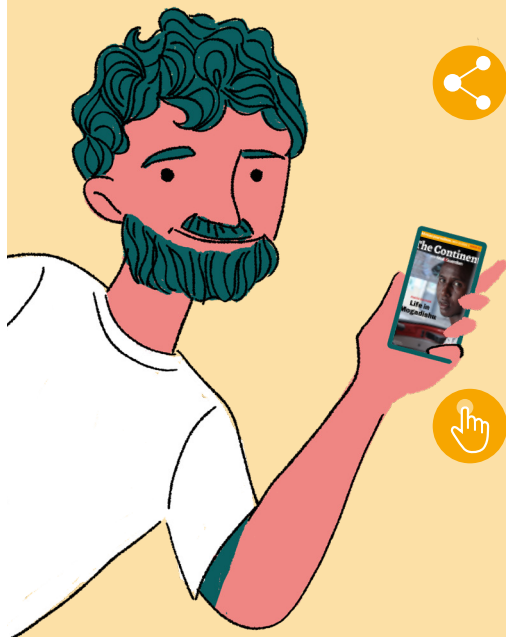
## NAMIBIA

## Door opens to barred babies

Namibia has issued travel documents to the twin daughters of a gay couple who have been embroiled in a legal fight to bring the infants home from South Africa where they were born through a surrogate in March. But the country's home affairs ministry said the documents did not grant citizenship to the kids. Namibian citizen Phillip Lühl and his husband Guillermo Delgado, from Mexico, have been fighting for their babies to receive citizenship from Namibia after they were denied entry into the country in April when authorities asked Lühl to provide a genetic link to the children. Sexual contact between men is a criminal offence in Namibia.

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Photo: Issouf Sanogo/AFP

## ‘Be willing to sacrifice’: Outrage as Sierra Leone sells off its coast

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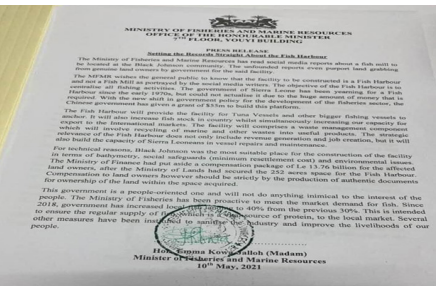
*Editorial:* Fishing communities across this continent are a crucial source of food and income. These communities also use the sea areas around them in a sustainable way. But fishing fleets from Europe, China and elsewhere have steadily stripped our oceans. This is the story of a community’s resistance to the infrastructure that could allow for even more fishing of territorial waters.

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### Abdul Samba Brima in Freetown

**B**lack Johnson, a small coastal town in the Western Area Peninsula of Freetown in Sierra Leone, is a rare

surviving ecotourism destination. Forested mountains rise up in the background. Crystal clear water splashes on black rocks before sweeping across golden sand. It’s quiet.



**Decree: The government issued a brief statement saying the Black Johnson project would enrich the country.**

But not for how long, perhaps: Plans are afoot to turn more than 100 hectares of forest and beach, here, into a commercial fishing hub.

This would mean residents would have to leave to make way for the harbour. Local fishermen would no longer be able to earn a livelihood, and there would be no place or produce for market traders to buy and sell.

In a one-page press release, Sierra Leone’s ministry of fisheries and marine resources said the proposed harbour would allow tuna vessels and other big fish vessels to anchor, and increase Sierra Leone’s export capacity. The department said the government was also setting aside 13.76-billion Leones (\$1.3-million) in compensation for affected land owners.

Conservationists, civil society and the people of Black Johnson themselves, are far from impressed, responding with consternation and resistance – mostly on social media. They say that the compensation on offer is unfair and far below the current market value of their property. On social media, the hashtag

#SaveBlackJohnsonBeach is being used to raise funds to start a judicial review.

Landowners believe that the government could be acting in contravention of section 21 of Sierra Leone’s 1991 Constitution, which makes the deprivation of property justifiable only for reasons of defence, public safety, public order, public morality, health, or town and country planning.

Tito Tommy Gbandewa is one of the affected landlords. “We do not know what is going on. Whatever plans they have are forced down on us,” he says. “We don’t know why.”

He risks losing more than a hectare of land that includes his beach resort. “If the government officials have taken money from the Chinese people to sell this place, then they better find a way to pay them back or better still find another spot – but not this one,” he warns.

Foreign influence over Africa’s fishing industry is a contentious topic across the continent, with fleets from China joining those of other nations already accused of stripping Sierra Leone of its natural resources and thereby depriving countless fishing communities of their livelihoods.

In an open letter to Sierra Leone’s President Julius Maada Bio, landowners say the deal is corrupt and must be condemned. “This must be stopped. It is exploitation of the most brutal kind. The environment will be irreparably damaged and people will suffer.”

Dr Sama Banya, of the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone, describes the proposed project as a disaster. The harbour, he says, will have a serious

**Annex: Tito Gbandewa shows where his land has been marked for 'compulsory acquisition'.**



impact on tourism and the very fishery sector it aims to support.

“Do I need to remind all those who are backing such a proposal of the disastrous environmental impact on our country? Especially the tourism and the very fish industry that it’s supposed to support.”

He points to the government’s lack of information about any feasibility studies as a clear indicator of the problems with the proposed harbour.

In the fisheries’ department press release, it merely noted: “Black Johnson was the only suitable place for the construction of the facility in terms of bathymetry, social safeguards (minimum resettlement cost) and environmental issues.”

But questions have been asked about whether other locations around the country were assessed before a decision was made.

The minister of fisheries and marine resources, Ema Kowa Jalloh, subsequently

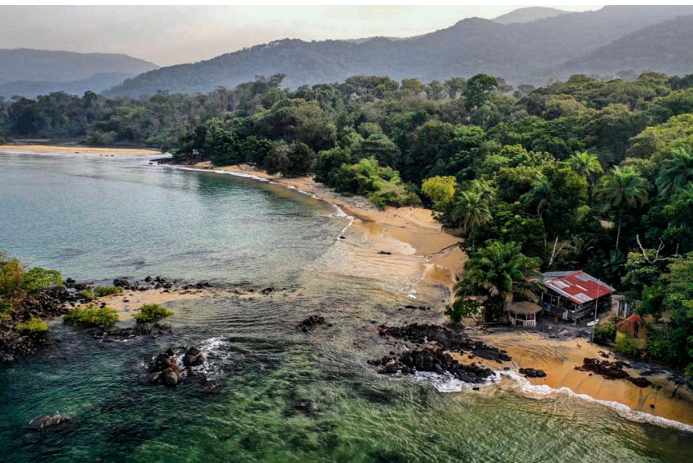
justified the government’s decision in terms of proportional costs. “Half of the land needed was government-owned, including the seafront,” she said. “The rest is acquired through compulsory acquisition.”

Jalloh added that the project would be funded through a \$55-million grant from the Chinese government and equity in the form of land from Sierra Leone.

But for Gbandewa, the resort owner, the project will mean the destruction of the community. Already, authorities have been intimidating people, he says. “They brought armed policemen and surveyors to survey the place. When they entered the village, some people ran away. Everyone was terrified.”

Kadiatu Sesay works at Tito’s Paradise, another resort nearby. She is a single parent who left her children in Freetown. She says she would be out of work if the fish factory takes over the Black Johnson beach. “This is where I live and work to





**Paradise lost: Livelihoods and maritime ecology are at risk of being destroyed by the project.**

feed my family and send my children to school. When I heard that they want to move us from this place I felt really bad. We don't want that to happen.”

The government points to its success in increasing the percentage of fish handled locally, from 30% in 2018 to 40% now. This, it said in its press release, has meant more fish – and therefore protein – for local fish markets.

It also said the fishing harbour project would have a waste management and recycling component. No further details were given. Locals say they are worried that, with fishing being an industry with large levels of local and smell pollution, the impact on any sort of ecosystems and tourism in the area will be significant.

Two human rights groups – the Institute for Legal and Advocacy for Justice, and Namati Sierra Leone – are demanding that the government release the environmental and social-impact assessment studies it purportedly

conducted, along with the report that concluded Black Johnson was the most suitable place for the proposed project. The groups are also requesting, through the Right to Access Information Act of 2013, a copy of the grant agreement between China and Sierra Leone.

Black Johnson Landowners also want the government to make public the result of an environmental impact assessment carried out as required by sections 23 and 24 of the Environment Protection Agency Act, 2008. They believe marine ecology in the region is at risk of irrevocable harm.

“It would destroy pristine rainforest, plunder fish stocks, pollute the marine environment and five individual ecosystems that are fish breeding grounds and support endangered bird and wildlife species” their open letter said.

But the minister of fisheries wants people to show patience. “If we want to be counted as a developing country,” she said, “then we must be willing to sacrifice.” ■

# Kenya

## Lamu set to rock the boat

**K**enya's bid to become a major shipping hub in Africa received a big boost on Thursday when container ship MV CAP Carmel docked at Lamu. With its new port, Kenya can continue transforming itself into a hub for transportation of goods to its landlocked neighbours.

Constructed by the Chinese state-owned China Communications Construction Company, the port in Lamu is part of Kenya's strategy to wrestle control of the transshipping industry from powerhouses like Djibouti, Salalah in Yemen and Durban in South Africa. Transshipping involves unloading goods from one ship and loading it onto another to complete a journey onwards.

This is typically done when there are no direct connections between the originating port and the final destination.

The Lamu project was first announced in 2012 but little construction took place until two years later amid concerns over potential terror attacks by the group Al-Shabab. The first phase of the scheme is now complete, with three of the proposed 20 berths finished.

The depth of the port is an advantage.



**Harbouring grudges: Fishermen at Lamu demand to be heard in a border dispute between Kenya and Somalia.**

Photo: Tony Karumba / AFP

At 17.5 metres, it is bigger than the 15m-deep port of Mombasa and this will allow larger ships to dock in Lamu.

"This port is going to be a game-changer in the region, it will play a key role in handling the cargo that are destined to other countries, directly competing with the port of Durban in South Africa," Rashid Salim, acting managing director at the port, told Kenya's *Business Daily* newspaper.

Kenya has launched a charm offensive to wrest business away from competing ports. It has reportedly sent a diplomatic delegation to Ethiopia to woo officials there. And Kenya will be charging a lower docking fee than what Djibouti is currently charging. Other sweeteners include free 30-day cargo storage and tax rebates of up to 40%. ■

# Covid-19 is taking a toll on shipping, and consumers pay the price

**Aaisha Dadi Patel**

**I**t was getting cheaper to ship things globally. With 80% of the food, tools, books and other goods that we use arriving on massive container ships, this made things cheaper. But Covid-19 has flipped that equation on its head. More demand for goods with e-commerce booming and fewer workers meant more choke points.

And it is African ports, particularly in West Africa, that have it worst. In a recent policy brief, UNCTAD – the United Nations Conference on Trade And Development – said these ports are paying some of the highest rates in the world for shipping and container freight.

Part of the reason for this is structural: Because African ports import more than they export, running a trade imbalance, vessels end up returning to busy ports, like those in China, empty. The longer the route to China, the more ships there are moving along without making an income on one leg of their journey. Ideally, the ships would be full going both ways.

The impact of Covid has exacerbated this imbalance.

The Association of Nigeria Licensed Customs Agents' Muhammed Mojeed told that country's *The Guardian* in May that shipments that would previously cost \$4,000 to bring in, now cost as much as \$14,000. Speaking to Kenya's *The Star* in April, the Shippers Council of Eastern Africa said a 40-foot container had gone

from \$1,400 to \$4,000. In South Africa's Durban port, the price has tripled.

The cost goes to consumers. RMB economist Daniel Kavishe told *The Continent* that Purchasing Managers'

**Data have shown increases for most businesses surveyed across Africa. “Respondents have indicated that their cost of inputs have gone up.”**

Index data have shown increases for most businesses surveyed across Africa. “Respondents have indicated that their cost of inputs have gone up given delays and disruptions in supply chains. We will likely see it play out in this year's inflation.”

UNCTAD calculates that it will take months before the sudden increase in costs can be absorbed across the whole maritime supply chain. ■



Image courtesy of  
Sunday Times

**MUSIC**

# ***Harari: A union of music, defiant politics and African pride***

This is an excerpt of an article by Gwen Ansell that appeared in the *Mail & Guardian*





**I**n 1976, Afro-rock ensemble Harari was voted South Africa's top instrumental group. The band, comprising former schoolmates guitarist and singer Selby Ntuli, bassist Alec Khaoli, lead guitarist Monty Ndimande and drummer Siphon Mabuse, and their group – initially christened “The Beaters” – had travelled a long journey from the Soweto district of Orlando West.

It was the era of rising Black Consciousness in South Africa, and the apartheid regime maintained tight control of its ethnically divided state radio stations to prevent the broadcast of “subversive” music. However, the Mozambique station Radio LM, the suitcases of travellers and record stores such as Kohinoor in central Johannesburg allowed township music fans to stay abreast of contemporary trends.



Images courtesy of the As-Shams archive

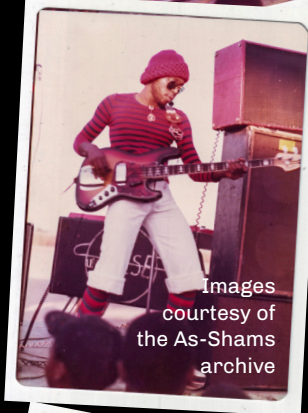


Kohinoor, under owner Rashid Vally, became the base for first the Soultown and then the more adventurous As-Shams labels. Rubbing shoulders with their jazz peers, the young Beaters rapidly built on their Soweto Soul foundations, growing an army of equally young and increasingly rebellious fans, and cutting hit albums for the Teal label.

Journalist Derrick Thema recalled: "People were out there to support Black products [and take charge] of their self-pride and dignity. Any musician who wanted to latch on to the sentiments of Black Consciousness needed to go into soul music." Beaters fans even had their own dance: the "monkey jive".

During their three-month tour of then-Rhodesia, The Beaters were inspired by the independence struggle there, and a popular music scene in which indigenous sounds were being asserted. Thomas Mapfumo and Jonah Sithole, for example, were beginning to craft their pro-independence Chimurenga music from Shona roots.

On their return, the neat Nehru jackets that had been the band's earliest stage-wear were replaced by dashikis and Afro haircuts. Harari – the title and most popular track of their debut for the As-Shams label – became a band name that, in Mabuse's words, they could better relate to "as Africans". ■



Images courtesy of the As-Shams archive



# Will Cameroon be ready for AFCON?



Dig deep: If the Paul Biya Stadium is not ready, Cameroon may lose the tournament. Again.

## Isifu Wirfengla in Yaoundé

**I**t's just seven months to the kickoff of Africa's footballing showpiece, AFCON – the Africa Cup of Nations. Twenty-four teams will compete in stadiums across Cameroon. The first and final matches will take place in the 60,000-seater stadium in the capital, Yaoundé, named for the country's President Paul Biya.

Assuming the stadium is finished in time, that is.

On Friday, inspectors from CAF – the Confederation of African Football – jetted into the country for another inspection.

During a previous visit to Yaoundé,

focused on the Warda multipurpose sports complex where the June 25 draw for the AFCON groups will take place, representatives from the confederation said everything needed to be ready by the end of October. This is when the host country is supposed to hand over the infrastructure for the tournament to the confederation.

CAF's director of competitions, Samson Adamu, also visited the Paul Biya Stadium at the time. Afterwards, and tellingly, he warned that “we want to specify that we have at most five months to finish all that is to be done here”.

Cameroon's sports minister, Narcisse Mouelle Kombi, promised that the “five-

month deadline is enough time for us to round off”. But there are signs that his promise is at serious risk of being broken.

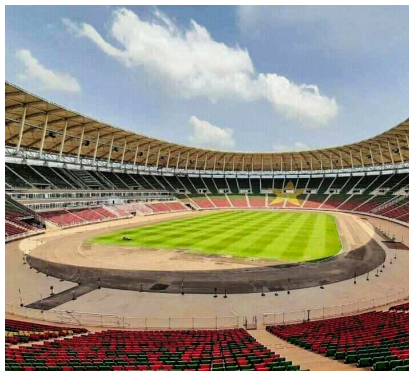
If the stadium is not ready in time, it would be an unfortunate case of history repeating itself. Cameroon was meant to host the 2019 AFCON, but delays in construction and infrastructure – along with growing Boko Haram activity and civil unrest in the English-speaking southern part of the country – prompted CAF to move the tournament to Egypt instead, with Algeria coming out winners.

Fortunately, this time around, five of the stadiums are already nearly ready for football. In a document released earlier this month, CAF said the Reunification, Japoma, Limbe Omnisport, Rounde Adjia and Ahmadou Ahidjo stadiums had pitches that were ready to host international football matches.

But the Paul Biya Stadium – the biggest, and the one with the most adjoining facilities – is *not* ready. CAF has noted that neither its turf nor its facilities are complete. Gruppo Piccini SA, the company building the stadium, recently put progress at 80% and has increased its workforce from 504 to 788.

The project started over five years ago with the view to construct a 60,000-seat stadium; two training pitches; an Olympic swimming pool; handball, basketball, volleyball and tennis courts; a gymnasium; a 70-room, five-star hotel; a museum; and a cinema hall.

To speed up construction, the government has given an additional 6.3-billion Central African francs (about \$117-million). This is on top of the more



**Pitch, please: Five of the complexes built for AFCON have pitches in playable shape, but Paul Biya is not among them.**

than \$500-million that has reportedly been spent on the construction.

The government’s top-up has not been universally welcomed, however, with critics saying the money should have been used for projects that could benefit the lives of ordinary Cameroonians.

Others care less about the spending and more about seeing competitive, international football played in their own country. Football lover Ambe Kingsley says: “It’s very important for Cameroon to take necessary action to complete the Paul Biya Stadium.”

He adds that hosting the tournament will allow the country to “prove to Africa and the world that we are capable”.

The corollary, however, goes unspoken: With the new sports complex in Yaoundé still unfinished, CAF may once again be obliged to strip Cameroon of hosting rights – and with it the prestige it had promised itself, its president and its people. ■

# 'Complete transformation' – or the world will burn



## Sipho Kings

**T**he world's energy system needs to be overhauled by 2050 if global heating is to be kept to survivable levels.

This is according to a new report by the International Energy Agency. "Net Zero by 2050" follows on the growing number of commitments by countries to be carbon neutral in just three decades.

It is a seriously ambitious goal. The world's economy has been tied to burning fossil fuel for three centuries. "The more coal and oil you burn, the faster your economy grows" has been a mantra that catapulted first the United Kingdom, then the United States, and now China into

rapid growth. That is a path developing countries also want to follow as they lift their people into better lives, and are reluctant to abandon.

But abandoning coal and oil is exactly what the science says is necessary.

While the energy agency used to be conservative in supporting a switch in the dominant global energy source, the report says all investment in new oil and gas projects has to stop today. Sales of new diesel and petrol vehicles also have to stop completely by 2035.

Much of this is already being driven by the market, with banks cutting back on funding for new fossil fuel projects. Their new fear is of so-called "stranded assets",



where they have invested in a project that cannot work and must pay back the investment because it pollutes too much.

Big oil companies, however, are still going ahead with such projects as witnessed with Total in Mozambique and Uganda, and Shell, BP, Exxon Mobil, Equinor and others in Tanzania.

In cases like this, the countries are sold the hope of a windfall from selling their natural resources. In Mozambique, this pitch saw the ruling elite gamble on projects that have since stalled, albeit for security reasons. Such gambles seem unlikely to pay off in the future.

In 2015, in Paris, countries agreed to do what they could to limit global heating to 2°C. African countries, as well as their peers from island states, pushed for this to be 1.5°C because this continent heats faster than others. As a rule of thumb, average temperatures on the continent increase at double that of the global average. So 1.5°C may mean 3°C here.

If the planet warms beyond this, the scientific consensus – collated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – it will trigger a cascade of rapid changes from severe drought and floods to the collapse of entire ecosystems. Some of this is already happening.

To keep warming below 2°C, all but two of the world's countries have submitted mitigation plans, and will resubmit them every five years, with more ambitious targets each time. At the Glasgow summit in Scotland in November, countries will meet to take to take stock of how these ambitions are being matched by reality.

Right now, analyses of those plans by



**Energy: Fossil fuels are a shortcut to future success, but will cut short any future at all. Wind and sun must prevail.**

groups such as Climate Action Tracker show not enough is being done to lower emissions. This is not surprising – the current set of international climate negotiations have been going on since 1992. In this time, emissions from industry and energy have risen by 60%.

The single biggest problem is in how the world creates and uses energy. This is where the energy agency's plan fits in.

At its core is a shift from burning oil and coal towards wind and solar, backed up by batteries and hydrogen. Today, the energy we use comes from a mix of electricity, oil, gas and biomass (wood and peat). Switching to sourcing most energy from electricity means a much less polluting system. In Africa, where nearly 700-million people don't have access to electricity, the plan also means a dramatic improvement in fortunes.

Without beating around the bush, the report says: "Achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 will require nothing short of the complete transformation of the global energy system." ■





Adrift: Baby Awa captured headlines when she was born. But her family is still struggling.

## Baby Awa melted hearts – now she’s been cast away

Luis Nhachote in Cabo Delgado

**B**aby Awa became something of a celebrity last year when she was born in a crowded homemade wooden boat as her heavily pregnant mother fled a raging insurgency in Pangane in October.

Her birth on the way south to Pemba, the capital of Cabo Delgado in northern Mozambique, was a reminder that there is hope even in despair. Well-to-do people and charities – even government figures – made it to the sandy beach of Paquitiquete where the boat had moored, to offer her and mom, Muaziza Nfalume, blankets, diapers and food.

Almost seven months later, Awa’s luck seems intricately bound to the insurgency: the outlook is bleak. She and mother have been all but abandoned and forgotten, just as Cabo Delgado province itself was forgotten for decades, earning the moniker Cabo Esquecido – the Forgotten Cape. “Awa needs help,” says Nfalume. “She needs a mattress, she needs everything.”

Mother and child live with 25 other people in Paquitiquete, in a three-

bedroom house belonging to Fatima Tawabo, who opened up her home to internally displaced people, 10 of whom sleep in a tent donated by the Red Cross. Tawabo's brother is Valigy Tawabo, the current provincial governor, who allegedly only visited "when he read on Facebook that the baby was in my home".

Some good news, at least, is that Awa's father survived the insurgency and is on the island of Ibo, where he is eking out a living as a fisherman. Occasionally he is able to send money for the family, but it is never enough. The World Food Programme (WFP) gives the homestead a voucher for 3,600 meticais (just over \$60) each month, but that does not stretch very far, either.

"Every time we go shopping, prices go up," says Tawabo. "We can buy rice, oil and sugar. For everything else we depend on people's charity."

Her home is a microcosm of Paquitiquete. The poorest of Pamba's neighbourhoods, it has continued to receive hundreds of people fleeing the insurgency in the northern parts of the province. On Wednesday, 53 more people arrived by boat, joining the growing ranks of the internally displaced – which means more mouths to feed. The luckier ones find succour and shelter with relatives; others sleep in the open.

Far from the glare of the media, another baby girl was delivered in a boat on Tuesday, a day before reaching Paquitiquete. She has been named Lizete by her mother, Lúcia, who says there were more than 40 people in the boat, including her "eldest son, Carlitos, aged seven, who witnessed the delivery". They had been travelling for seven days. On arrival, they were registered and sent to a resettlement camp in a basketball court.

If Baby Awa, who was born famous, has been abandoned and forgotten, what fate awaits Baby Lizete, whose birth went unnoticed? She, too, has neither diapers nor cot; nor blankets nor clothing.

Perhaps, once the insurgency ends, Awa and Lizete will receive houses like Baby Rosita, who was born in the branches of a tree during the 2000 floods in the southern Gaza province. But by then there may be many more Awas and Lizetes – and not very many houses. ■



**New arrival: Baby Lizete and her mother, Lucia.**

# Africa

## World leaders pledge to help post-pandemic recovery

**A**frican leaders and top officials from the European Union, European governments and the International Monetary Fund agreed this week at a summit in Paris to raise \$100-billion to revitalise African economies in a post-pandemic world.

The summit, hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron, was aimed at boosting the economies of African countries that have been decimated by the coronavirus pandemic. Macron's call for support was echoed by officials from international organisations such as the African Union, the IMF and the World Bank. More than 20 African leaders were in attendance, including Nigeria's Muhammadu Buhari, Senegal's Macky Sall and Félix Tshisekedi, president of the Democratic Republic of Congo and incumbent chair of the African Union.

Macron said Africa's financial needs are estimated to reach around \$300-billion by 2025. The \$100-billion

agreement would be financed in a variety of ways. IMF managing director Kristalina Georgieva confirmed the organisation would issue \$33-billion for Africa in special drawing rights, a foreign exchange tool used to help finance imports. The IMF chief warned against a "dangerous divergence" between advanced and emerging economies. Both the US and the European Union boosted their economies with massive relief packages to recover from the pandemic.

"This is a great opportunity for Africa," said Tshisekedi. The pandemic "left our economies impoverished because we had to use all the means we had, the few means we had, to fight against the disease".

Special attention was paid to Sudan at the summit. IMF member countries agreed to clear Sudan's debt to them as part of a wider effort for the country to get relief on its \$50-billion external debt.

Kuwait, Sudan's largest creditor, said it would support "resolution" discussions. So did Saudi Arabia. China said it had reduced and forgiven some debt.

The resolution will pave the way for Sudan to have much of its loan forgiven under the World Bank and IMF's Highly Indebted Poor Countries scheme. It signals an end to years of the international isolation Sudan endured under ousted former president Omar al-Bashir. ■

# THE QUIZ

0-4

"I think I need to start reading more newspapers."

5-7

"I can't wait to explore more of this continent."

8-10

"Like the waters off our coast, African wisdom runs deep."

- 1\_ Which coastal city is the largest in Senegal (pictured)?
- 2\_ Khartoumese is the demonym for people from which city?
- 3\_ In which country is Black Johnson Beach?
- 4\_ Kenya recently opened a port in which coastal town?
- 5\_ What currency is used in Kenya?
- 6\_ Which country will France's President

- Emmanuel Macron visit at the end of the month for the first time?
- 7\_ Who is the president of that country?
- 8\_ Name one country where Wolof is widely spoken by its people.
- 9\_ Which river crosses the equator not once but twice?
- 10\_ Ceuta is a Spanish autonomous city bordered by which African country?

Photo: Alaattin Dogru/Anadolu Agency



**How did I do?** WhatsApp 'ANSWERS' to +27 73 805 6068 and we'll send the answers to you



## *Welcome to* **Khartoum**

**In the news, Sudan is all economic crisis and political chaos. But as Khartoum resident and journalist Elzahraa Jadallah writes, there is a rich culture and history, as well as beauty for visitors to enjoy.**

Khartoum, the Sudanese capital, is a combination of three cities linked by bridges – Khartoum, Khartoum North (Bahri), and Omdurman – and each has its own flavour. The City of Khartoum is modern and vivid, but also manages to give new context to the past at its

museums (the National Museum (1) and Republican Palace Museum), and in the colonial-era buildings that are now home to the University of Khartoum.

### **Getting around and where to stay**

Many of the city's interesting sites are within walking distance downtown but ride-hailing apps like Tirhal are there if you need them. There are plenty of options for places to stay in the city, no matter your budget. Luxurious hotels like Al Salam Rotana, the Grand Holiday Villa and Corinthia are there if you're feeling fancy, but the more modest motels downtown are no less accommodating. My recommendation is the Acropole hotel downtown: good location, great vibe and excellent price.

Khartoum North or Bahri is the place to settle if you are planning a long stay, it's calm and affordable, and just like Khartoum, all services and necessities are just around the corner.





Photo: Eric Lafforgue  
/Hans Lucas

## *The city of Khartoum is modern and vivid.*

### **Food, nightlife and sightseeing**

One of the must-have experiences is going to Mugran, where the White and Blue Niles join for a long kiss on their journey up north, then visiting Tuti Island to enjoy sandy beaches and stroll past the farms along the river.

If you are looking for an unforgettable experience and a taste of the city's nightlife, Nile Street in Khartoum is for you, and there is much there to see and do. Dining by the river or even on the Nile itself onboard one of the floating restaurants, enjoying hot drinks from the local tea-sellers along Nile Street, or taking a boat trip at your leisure.

There is something for everyone in the city, whether you are on a budget and want to go to local places right

on the bank of the river, or you want a luxurious meal at the Corinthia Hotel's restaurant, with the view of the Nile and the whole city. And of course, you have options: whether it's a local place around the corner to enjoy traditional meals such as a fava beans dish with falafel, or to get your fix of a burger and fries. All options are easy to find on Google Maps.

### **Vintage Vibes**

The second, and biggest city in the capital is Omdurman, on the west side, across the bridge from Khartoum city. Most of the historical sites in Khartoum are here, such as the Mahadia sites where you can travel in history and revisit one of the most interesting eras in Sudan's past.

Without doubt, you should visit the Museum of Khalifa's House; the Tomb of Muhammad Ahmed (Mahdi) "The Tabia"; Omdurman's old gate; and Mawrada local fish market (then have a seafood meal near Parliament).

In addition to historical sightseeing, you can also enjoy a play in the national theatre, take a boat trip, or explore Omdurman's old neighborhoods which are filled with surprising sights, and visiting Omdurman's famous market.

The market **(2)** has many sections, but I recommend going to the oldest parts. The leather craft shops have many interesting and unusual offerings that would make wonderful souvenirs. But just walking through the alleys of spices and local products in Omdurman is itself a unique experience: the rich



Photo: Mahmoud  
Hajaj/Anadolu  
Agency



*Walking through the alleys of spices and local products is a unique experience, the rich colours and smells will be stuck in your memory for a long time.*

colours and smells will be stuck in your memory for a long time.

### Best time of year

Come any time of the year, although you might want to forgo Sudan's summer between March and June, if only because it can get a little **too** hot.

### More experiences!

One of the best trips I could recommend would have to be a visit to the Jabal Aulia Dam. It's perfect whether you want to take a picnic along, or enjoy some seafood at one of the places there, or

even do some fishing yourself. Getting there is easy, just order a trip on Tirhal App.

Also recommended: Marshall Nature Reserve (for birds and fish) in the middle of Khartoum; Al- Housh Restaurant in Omdurman (for a traditional meal with a view of the Nile), and the Blue Nile Sailing Club **(3)** in Khartoum, where a wonderful experience on the Nile awaits.

Lastly, do not forget to sample the water of the Nile itself, because as the saying goes: "When you drink from the Nile, you always come back!" ■



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# The pandemic hit Kenya's economy hard, now a harsh new health crisis awaits

Scovian Lillian

Though the health costs of Covid-19 are well known, the economic cost of the pandemic has received less attention. Instead, many have suggested that the pandemic has been “kind” to Africa due to much lower death rates than Europe and North America. But a report by the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) on the impact of Covid-19 on vulnerable individuals and groups shows that this is a myth, and that for many the economic cost has been brutal.

The KNCHR survey – which included 2,430 interviews with members of vulnerable groups such as youth, women and the urban and rural poor in 31 of Kenya's 47 counties – reveals that while 80% of respondents were employed before March 2020, only 34% now have a job. This suggests that a remarkable 46% of those consulted lost their jobs because of the economic disruption wrought by the pandemic. Few received direct support

from the government, with 96% stating that at no point did they receive a cash handout.

Partly as a result, 38% of respondents had been evicted from their homes since March 2020 as they were unable to pay rent. Nine out of 10 said that their landlords had not offered them any kind of reduction in rent. In turn, the insecurity caused by this situation appears to have generated significant stress and anxiety.

According to Dr Bernard Mogesa, the CEO of KNCHR, historically marginalised groups such as women, young people and persons with disability have suffered disproportionately, in part because they are more likely to be laid off than older, able-bodied men.

This cascading economic effect is not only being felt by ordinary Kenyans, but is also undermining the state's response to Covid-19. As Anne Okutoyi, KNCHR's director of research, advocacy and outreach, explains: “There have been minimal waivers on fees to the vulnerable groups in our health facilities”, meaning that many are even more at risk from illness and Covid-19 than last year.

As a result, the economic pain caused by the pandemic may yet lead to a deeper health crisis. ■



Scovian Lillian is a writer and a communications professional in Nairobi. This analysis was produced in collaboration with Democracy in Africa

# Who's kidding who, here?



## Continental Drift

Samira Sawlani

What did you dream about being when you grew up? A pilot, perhaps, with your head in the clouds? A professional footballer, with your head in the game? Or maybe even an outlaw, one step ahead of the law?

Do you wonder what those in power now once wanted to be when they were big? Or do you suppose president-for-life was always the endgame?

Just imagine Lil Yoweri telling his school buddies back in the day that one day when he's king of the world, he will have an unlimited supply of teargas and if they swear allegiance now he might invite them over to play. Or Tiny Teddy Obiang listening to his bedtime stories and deciding that when he gets to make up the stories he's going to make darn sure the "heroes" don't get any happily-ever-afters. Not in Equatorial Guinea, anyway.

We wonder. But we also wonder what the children of *those* children dream about becoming some day.

This week President Denis Sassou-Nguesso unveiled the Republic of Congo's new government, with 36 ministers in

total: one for every year he has been in power – how sweet!

But the prez also decided that his son, Denis-Christel, is now old enough to have his very own ministry – international co-operation and public-private partnerships, no less.

Lil Denis, who is still only 46, is going to have plenty to talk about at the next show-and-tell session at school! He'd better watch out for the kid from Chad, though. It looks like General Mahamat Idriss Déby not only inherited the entire country from his dearly departed dad, he also got the key to papa's crowd-suppression stash. Between Lil Déby and Big-Boy Yoweri, there sure is an awful lot of tear gas floating about the playground.

And you just know Lil Déby has already been ventilating his supplies on any and all protesters who have dared demand a return to constitutional rule (instead of the apparently hereditary hand-me-down system currently in play) in Chad.

He's also been out and about, meeting the leaders of both Niger and Nigeria – good practice for sitting at the grown-ups' table!

### Togo or not to go

Now, Faure Gnassingbé took over from his dad as Togo's president way back in 2005, so we guess he's one of the older princes of power now. But we bet he used

to try on the crown when he was little running around the presidential palace, shouting “Off with his head!” like a cute little tyrant.

Clearly he got enough practice back then, because this week the Togolese opposition figure and former government minister Djimon Ore was thrown in prison for “insulting representatives of public authority” after he branded the Gnassingbé regime a “military-clan oligarchy” that was responsible for the deaths of countless people.

**We bet he used to try on the crown when he was little ... shouting “Off with his head!” like a cute little tyrant.**

### **French kissing-up**

One of the perks of being the boss of a country is that you get invited to cool parties at the rich kid’s house.

A bunch of kid bosses have been in Paris this week at a shindig hosted by *Le Biscuit* himself, France’s President Emmanuel Macron. The theme was right up their alley too: the “financing of African economies” following the Covid-19 pandemic.

*Le Biscuit* is planning to visit Rwanda at the end of this month, and has called for vaccine waivers for the continent, and proposed a deal which would reallocate \$100-billion from the International Monetary Fund’s special reserves to ... African states? We think he said “African states”. We couldn’t hear everything

clearly so it might have been “presidential pockets”, but don’t quote us on that.

That’s a lot of extra pocket-money. Just one question: Who’s the daddy, in this scenario?

### **Childhood’s end**

We shouldn’t forget the actual children of the continent. They have dreams too. Many of them are far more modest: A night without gunshots; clean water and real food; a bed to sleep in; a home.

The international non-profit Save the Children says that “at least 2,424 children have been separated from their parents in the violence in Cabo Delgado, including 454 in the most recent violence in Pemba”.

To say it’s rough out there is to put it far too mildly. But there is also hope.

At 23 years old, she is far from a child. But Hellen Auma Wandera is young. The youngest MP in Uganda, as of this week, joining the ranks of young women standing their ground and lifting their voices in governance across Africa.

This continent is not a playground. The stakes are too high for its leaders to be considered “merely” schoolyard bullies. And they’re much too old to be treated like children.

But some of them could do with a little growing up. ■

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*Samira Sawlani is a journalist and analyst with a focus on East Africa. She holds an MA in international studies and diplomacy from the School of Oriental and African Studies, and previously worked in the humanitarian aid sector.*



## THE BIG PICTURE

**Waters of escape: Moroccan migrants step through shallow waters on the shore of the northern town of Fnideq as they try to cross the border to Spain's North African enclave of Ceuta. Amid high tensions between Madrid and Rabat, at least 5,000 people made their into Ceuta from Morocco on May 17 – the most ever to have crossed in a single day, by Spain's official reckoning. They reached the enclave by swimming or by walking at low tide from beaches a few kilometres to the south, some using inflatable swimming rings and rubber dinghies. (Photo: Fadel Senna/AFP)**



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