

South Africa: Inhabited for 34,000 years

The oldest known inhabited termite mounds near the Buffels River in Namaqualand have been estimated to be 34,000 years old by radiocarbon dating, according to researchers at Stellenbosch University. The mounds existed when sabre-toothed cats and woolly mammoths were still living in other parts of the world and large parts of Europe and Asia were covered in ice. They are older than some of the earliest cave paintings in Europe. The oldest inhabited mounds before this study were found in Brazil and are about 4,000 years old. They are visible from space. The Namaqualand mounds are a termite version in the form of a "living complex", and the evidence shows that they have been consistently inhabited by termite colonies.

04.07.2024

Kenya: Protests continue

In Mombasa, the country's second largest city, hundreds demonstrated with vuvuzelas, Kenyan flags and "Ruto must go" signs. In Kisumu, demonstrators chanted for the resignation of the president, whom they blamed for the rising cost of living in the East African country, despite a heavy police presence. In Nairobi, a massive police presence closed the access roads to parliament and the president's official residence. Many stores in the city center were closed. The protests have been going on for two weeks. A week ago, the situation escalated when hundreds of demonstrators stormed parliament and set part of the building on fire.

03.07.2024

Sierra Leone: Child marriages punishable by law

President J. M. Bio has enacted a new law banning child marriages. Anyone involved in the marriage of a girl under the age of 18 will now be punished with a jail term of at least 15 years or a fine of about \$4,000 or both. Those who will be punished under the new regulations include the groom, the parents or guardians of the child bride and even those who attend the wedding. Sierra Leone is a patriarchal society where it is common for a father to force his daughter into marriage. The Ministry of Health estimates that a third of girls are married before the age of 18, which is responsible for the country's high maternal mortality rate, one of the highest in the world.

Angola: Chinese investment of US\$ 12 million

The Chinese group Huamhwa Investment has begun construction of Shopping Huambo, a large shopping center worth 12 million US dollars. The Chinese ambassador to Angola, Zang Bin, said: "The construction of Shopping Huambo shows that both the Chinese and Angolan governments are committed to promoting mutual investment. He was pleased that the investment protection agreement between China and Angola is coming into force, which is an important milestone in the relations between the two countries."

02.07.2024

Malaria vaccines

The government of Côte d'Ivoire has received the first vaccines against malaria. A total of 656,600 doses have been received, with which "initially 250,000 children aged 0 to 23 months" are to be vaccinated in 16 regions. Although the number of malaria-related deaths in Côte d'Ivoire fell from 3,222 in 2017 to 1,316 in 2020, the disease remains "the most common cause of visits to the doctor", according to the Ministry of Health. The

R21/Matrix-M vaccine has been approved by Ghana, Nigeria, Burkina Faso and the Central African Republic.

Nigeria: Kidnapped women used as suicide bombers

At least 18 people were killed and 30 injured in a series of deadly explosions at a wedding, a funeral and at a hospital in the town of Gwoza. In the past, Boko Haram has used women and girls in suicide attacks, suggesting that some of the many thousands of women and girls they have abducted over the years are among the victims. Recent figures suggest that more than half of all suicide bombers used by Boko Haram are female. Many suspect that their clothing (usually the hijab - a covering from head to toe) is a suitable means of hiding explosives.

Congo Brazzaville: Unfair contracts signed

In December, the Brazzaville government signed a contract for 950 million rand for nature conservation at COP28. In February, the government issued a permit for oil extraction in the most biodiverse protected area, the Conkouati-Douli National Park. Now a consortium of 13 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is urging donors to stop funding the park until the government revokes the permit. The NGOs believe that the state acted in bad faith when it granted the permit to a company 85% owned by China Oil and Natural Gas Overseas Holding and 15% by the state-owned company, La Société Nationale des Pétroles du Congo. The prospective area is home to an estimated 7,000 people in 28 villages, as well as western lowland gorillas, chimpanzees, leatherback turtles and elephants.

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East Africans fight against EACOP

Hundreds of people gathered outside Chinese embassies and financial institutions in 10 countries today - with another action to take place in Washington DC on July 28 - calling on China to stop financial support for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline. The demonstrations took place across Africa and Europe as part of a coordinated day of action organized by Ugandan, Tanzanian and other members of the StopEACOP campaign. Ugandan police arrested 30 activists, mostly students and community members, for illegal demonstrations against the construction of EACOP. In Tanzania, the police took away the protesters' banners and took pictures of the people affected by the project who were pictured on the banners with their statements, raising fears that these people could be harassed by security forces in the future. The 5 billion dollar project, led by TotalEnergies, aims to transport crude oil from Uganda's oil fields to a terminal in Tanga, Tanzania. After major financiers from North America, Europe, Japan and even some from Africa distanced themselves from these environmentally damaging projects, the developers have turned to China for financial support.

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