

INTERNATIONAL

WORLD BRIEFS

KENYAN CONSERVATIONIST PROPOSES AFRICAN MUSEUM

NAIROBI, Kenya (PANA)-A senior conservationist and former Kenya Wildlife Service director, Dr. Richard Leakey, has proposed the creation of an African museum to help change the face of the continent in the world. Speaking during the opening of a Commonwealth Association of Museums workshop in Nairobi, Leakey said museums in the West were full of rich African archaeological artifacts on exhibition. These were taken away from the continent over the years. Several African artists, especially those from Ghana, Uganda and Tanzania, have already complained about their art being siphoned to European and American museums. In May of this year, a German curator, Dr. Johanna Arte, claimed nearly million pieces of African art were occupying exhibition spaces in European museums.

NETHERLANDS TO SUPPORT KENYAN FARMERS

NAIROBI, Kenya (PANA)-The Dutch government is to spend over Ksh 13 million (about \$166,000) on a horticultural and dairy farming project in Kenya's marginal areas of Keiyo and Marakwet districts. The funds will be channeled through the Semi-Arid Rural Development Program or SARDEP, based in the rural town of Iten of the Rift Valley province. SARDEP's agro-based development and food security sector specialist, Ruth Mitei, told PANA in Nairobi that the funds would be used to supplement government's efforts to eradicate poverty in the region. She said the Netherlands would increase financial assistance to community-based development projects to enable residents to become self-reliant in food production. Mitei said that 8 million shillings of the total funding will go towards dairy farming to boost earnings from dairy products. She disclosed that Ksh 4.4 million would be spent on horticultural products like mangoes, pyrethrum, cassava, and groundnuts, among other cash crops. She said Sardep would spend Ksh 593,516 on poultry farming while Ksh 204,280 would be spent on fish projects. "We are mainly focusing on income generating projects that can uplift the living standard of the local community," Mitei said. To be eligible, horticultural farmers will be required to initiate community-based irrigation systems so as to avert crop failures during drought years. She explained that assistance would be withdrawn from beneficiaries whose projects will fail to generate more than Ksh 5,000 per month.

ZIMBABWE FIGHTS TO CONTROL FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE

HARARE, Zimbabwe (PANA)-Zimbabwe government agriculture officials said they had intensified efforts to control a raging foot and mouth disease that has cost the economy hundreds of millions of dollars in lost export revenue. Director of Veterinary Services Stuart Hargreaves said more than 100,000 cattle would be vaccinated, raising the number of treated animals to 400,000 since the outbreak of the disease. Foot and mouth broke out in the southern city of Bulawayo in late August, but has since spread to many areas in the country, forcing authorities to suspend all beef exports. Hargreaves said the source of the disease had yet to be identified, but suspected it originated from a game park in the south of the country where livestock could have mixed with buffaloes. Cattle in virtually the entire southern half of Zimbabwe have been quarantined to prevent the spread of the disease, whose outbreak has led to fears the country could run short of beef even for domestic consumption. But the main fear is that Zimbabwe would fail to fulfill its annual export quotas of 9,000 tons and 5,000 tons to the European Union and South Africa, respectively. The country also exports smaller amounts of beef to Asia, and had recently won a similar order from Libya.

Government offers free Internet access

By Mildred Pineda
CARACAS, Venezuela (IPS)-In an attempt to narrow the technology divide between rich and poor, the administration of President Hugo Chávez is offering the public free access to the Internet.

The Ministry of Science and Technology has set up 240 "infocenters"-each of which has 12 PCs, a printer and a scanner-in libraries, museums, art galleries, parks and other public spaces. Anyone wishing to surf the Web can do so for half an hour at a time, at no charge.

The aim is to bring the Internet to the people, in this country of 24 million, where 60 percent of the population has never used a computer,

according to official statistics.

Authorities said the infocenters complemented the Government On-Line program, through which users can log onto the government Web site, www.gobiernoenlinea.ve, to contact government offices, make appointments, lodge complaints, or apply for a passport or identity card.

Alfonso Lafuente, president of the National Center for Technology (CNTI), which is carrying out the project, told IPS that "the infocenters will help democratize the Internet for those who have no computers at home and cannot afford to visit a cybercafe."

The privately-owned

cybercafes that have mushroomed in the affluent East side of Caracas charge an average of \$3 per hour of connection.

The CNTI has installed the infocenters in large cities as well as remote areas like Venezuela's Amazon jungle region, which is only sparsely inhabited by indigenous communities, missionaries and military personnel.

Lafuente reported the state had invested \$23 million in purchases of software and equipment, Internet hook-ups, and staff training, in an effort aimed at enabling "the populace to make information technology their own."

A study by the local polling firm Datanálisis put the total number of Internet us-

ers in Venezuela at 852,000 currently, and predicted that the number would grow by 300 percent a year, to 4 million by 2005.

Minister of Science and Technology Carlos Genatios said the infocenters could add another seven million visits a year to the global information superhighway, which would also strengthen the Government On-Line program.

The minister explained that the widespread use of the Internet would help Venezuelans "exercise much closer control over what the government is doing, and boost citizen participation, cut red tape and strengthen the fight against corruption."

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Religious violence jolts Nigerian city

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP) - President Olusegun Obasanjo called out the army Saturday to combat Muslim-Christian violence raging in a northern Nigerian city, where terrified residents told of churches and homes burned and bodies piling up in the streets.

Authorities imposed a dawn-to-dusk curfew to quell the fighting, which erupted Friday night at the time of Muslim prayers - some said, when a Christian woman angered Muslims by trying to cross a street where Muslim men were praying.

There was no clear word on the death toll so far in Jos, a hilltop city of 4 million some 620 miles northeast of

Nigeria's commercial capital of Lagos.

But residents cowering in homes with their families Saturday spoke of seeing dozens dead - and the bloodletting continuing.

"It just started raining - so I looked outside, and saw three corpses lying in front of my house," one woman, Susan Akele, told The Associated Press by telephone. "This is hell."

Obasanjo authorized deployment of the army and went on state radio to appeal to religious and community leaders to calm their followers.

"I wonder what sort of Muslims and Christians start burning churches and

mosques - places where God is worshipped," Obasanjo said.

"True believers in God cannot start killing other human beings."

The explosion of violence is the latest since the introduction of Sharia, or Islamic law, in several northern states last year sparked bloody clashes between Christians and Muslims. Hundreds have died.

Nigeria, with 120 million people, is Africa's most populous nation. It is divided into predominantly Christian south and overwhelmingly Muslim north.

Northerners dominate Nigeria's military, and wielded immense power dur-

ing the 15 years of army rule, which ended in 1999 with Obasanjo's election.

Jos, whose government leaders are mainly Christian, has rejected the possibility of implementing Sharia. Until now, the city had largely been spared religious and ethnic violence that has periodically wracked other parts of Nigeria.

Religious tensions in the city had been rising following the recent appointment of a Muslim politician as chairman of a state poverty-alleviation committee.

Although the combatants were divided along religious lines, witnesses said ethnicity was playing a lesser role.

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Slaver descendant not proud or ashamed

ZANZIBAR, Tanzania (AP) - Ummi Mahsoudha Alley Hammid says she is neither proud nor ashamed of her great-great-grandfather, the African slave trader who sold tens of thousands of people into bondage in the Arabian peninsula and beyond.

"He was a very good businessman," says the 51-year-old mother of six.

Her ancestor, Hammid bin Mohammed bin Juma, was known as Tippu Tip, from the sound his guns made during raids from the Zanzibar archipelago into eastern and central Africa to round up Africans and march them to the Indian Ocean coast in chains.

"The business then was elephant tusks, slaves, salt, beads," Hammid said. "He was

a good trader who was really fearless and went to the hinterland where no other people dared to go."

The slave trade on the island of Zanzibar was abolished in 1873, but Tippu Tip's three-story house still stands, now occupied by squatters.

Nearby is the Anglican cathedral, built on the site of the slave market.

Amilka Williams, a guide and descendant of slaves, pointed to an orange circle painted in front of the altar. Here, he said, slaves were tied to a post and whipped to test their endurance; the greater the endurance, the higher the price.

"Many slaves died here," he said.

The issue of compensation is not much discussed in Tanzania, the country of

which Zanzibar is a part, though with the approach of this week's U.N. racism conference in South Africa, Foreign Minister Jakaya Kikwete added his voice to those calling for Africa's former colonizers to make restitution.

"Our poverty is evidence enough of the damage done by the slave trade and colonialism," he said before leaving for the conference.

But Hammid, the slaver's descendant, said it was all in the past. "I don't think it matters in this generation," she said in an interview.

"I don't feel pride that I am a descendant of a slaver, neither do I feel shame - just like I wouldn't have felt pride or shame for being a descendant of a slave," she said.

"They were victims of the

(See Slaver, Page 17)

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