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ZIMBABWE



MAIN STORIES

Mid-Term Budget
Review

Afrochine
Controversy

Coronavirus

HIGHLIGHTS

- President Emmerson Mnangagwa and Vice-President Constantino Chiwenga are on a new collision course over the appointment of the next Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) commander. The post is vacant following the death of Lieutenant-General Edzai Chimonyo. Chiwenga wants Lieutenant-General Engelbert Rugeje and Mnangagwa wants Major-General David Sigauke, currently Chief-of-Staff (General Staff) in the Army.
- Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Mthuli Ncube, on 29 July, presented the 2021 Mid-Term Budget and Economic Review in parliament. GDP growth for 2021 is projected to remain strong at 7.8%. The economy is targeted to grow by 5.4% in 2022.
- Government suspended Chinese firm Afrochine's operations in the Mavuradona Game Park. Afrochine alleged the cancellation of its mining grants were driven by "racism and xenophobia," after Chief Chiweshe accused Chinese nationals in Zimbabwe of being behind massive looting of the country's mineral resources.
- As of 2 August 2021, Zimbabwe had registered 109,546 coronavirus cases, 3,583 deaths and 76,665 recoveries. The government extended level four national restrictions on 13 July 2021. Information Minister Monica Mutsvangwa said all civil servants should be vaccinated and those that fall ill without having been vaccinated would not be entitled to the COVID-19 insurance.
- Zimbabwe approved the US Johnson and Johnson Covid-19 vaccine for emergency use. It is the first vaccine produced by a Western country to be licensed in the country. The approval came after the government accused the United States of trying to use COVID-19 vaccines to meddle in its internal political affairs.

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- The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) said that actions had been taken against some entities for abuse of the Foreign Exchange Auction System, manipulation of the exchange rate and non-compliance with exchange control rules and regulations.
- Mnangagwa's administration ordered Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) which defied its directive to submit work plans and activities to the Harare Provincial Development Coordinator to shut down.
- The government said it would "viciously" crackdown on businesses that may take advantage of the turmoil in South Africa to "sabotage the economy" by hiking prices of goods.
- Almost half the population in Zimbabwe was in extreme poverty in 2020 due to the combined effects of an increase in the price of basic necessities, economic contraction caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and poor harvests, according to findings from the 2020 Rapid Poverty Income Consumption and Expenditure Survey (PICES) Survey.
- The government said on 20 July 2021 that it was 'given' a stake in Kuvimba Mining House Ltd. worth \$250 million to help compensate White farmers for the seizure of their land two decades ago.
- Zimbabwe has pledged to deploy 304 non-combatant soldiers to Cabo Delgado province in northern Mozambique to help the country fight an Islamic insurgency. However, Mnangagwa's administration is struggling to mobilise sufficient resources to contribute to the SADC Standing Force.
- While condemning "illegal" US sanctions, Iran and Zimbabwe also emphasised the need for "thwarting US economic terrorism."



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- Mnangagwa's administration reportedly acquired the controversial Pegasus mobile phone snooping equipment from Israeli surveillance company NSO Group, in 2019.
- The United Kingdom has imposed an asset freeze and travel ban on Sakunda boss and Mnangagwa's adviser, Kudakwashe Tagwirei.



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