

Text 12

Former President Barack Obama recruited some heavy hitters from the sports world to promote COVID-19 vaccines on Sunday. Charles Barkley and Shaquille O'Neal joined the 44th president on a video chat to encourage all eligible Americans to get vaccinated. As of Monday, every adult in America who wants a vaccine will be eligible to receive one. Charles and Shaq agree: we can all help end this pandemic by getting the COVID-19 vaccine. It's the only way to keep everyone safe and help us get back to all the things we miss most - from seeing family and friends to watching sports in person.

Text 13

The impact of technology on today's youth

Technology is shaping tomorrow's society by conquering today's teenagers. Nowadays, teens seem incapable of having a quality face-to-face conversation that lasts more than 2 minutes. Experts attribute this to the lack of meaningful interaction and social habits, which are a direct consequence of modern technology. Basically, people have the need to be connected to each other 24 hours a day, 7 days a week but never in person.

This means that technology can be viewed as a social obstacle. I myself have been caught up in the technological web. When I feel the urge to see someone, I just video chat them on Skype. It is easier to see them that way than going to all the effort to be with them in person. In a sense, we are using it to take a few short cuts and simplify life for ourselves. Think about it: when you don't understand the homework, do you actually phone someone and have a long conversation about that or do you just text them hoping for a quick and concise reply?

Adapted from <https://www.islcollective.com>

Text 14

Illegal immigration from Africa to Europe

Last September, the Spanish enclaves Ceuta and Melilla witnessed a mass influx of illegal migrants from Africa, and the stream of desperate people from the continent bound for Europe has no ceased. Nonetheless, the stories of overcrowded boats arriving, or more often capsizing, at the southern European shores, often do not make front-page news. Illegal migration is not a new phenomenon for European Mediterranean countries. During the summer months, Spain, Italy, Malta and Turkey are confronted with the arrival of thousands of illegal immigrants. However, the figures for 2006 show a sharp increase in irregular migration movements. Compared to 2005, the numbers have doubled. So far this year, over 17,000 African migrants have arrived in Spain. More than 12,000 Africans have attempted to cross the ocean to the Italian island of Sicily. Europe now matches North America in its significance as a region of immigration.

From https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/130801/ISN_Special_Issues_Aug.2006.pdf

Text 15

Migration routes from Africa to Europe

The events in Ceuta and Melilla revealed that North African countries have become gateways to Europe. Migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, use these gateways as transit routes. The main arrival areas for maritime migration are located where a comparably short distance separates Europe and Africa. Previously, the main route from West Africa to Europe was through Mauritania to Morocco, where Africans attempted either to enter Ceuta and Melilla, or cross the Straits of Gibraltar. In recent years, however, immigrants have increasingly been heading for Senegal and Mauritania, where they board boats for the Canary Islands, in most cases Fuerteventura. This shift can be attributed to the effective Spanish controls in the Mediterranean. Alternatively, would-be immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa or the Horn of Africa attempt to land on the Italian island of Lampedusa from Algeria and Libya via the North and East African routes.

From https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/130801/ISN_Special_Issues_Aug.2006.pdf

TEXT 19

Human Rights Watch Accuses Taliban of Targeting, Killing Journalists

ISLAMABAD - The Afghan Taliban are deliberately targeting, intimidating and killing journalists, particularly women, according to a new report issued Thursday by an international rights group as well as VOA's own research.

Human Rights Watch found militant commanders in areas under Taliban influence use direct threats and violence to try and control the media coverage of their activities. In areas beyond their control, they use oral or written threats through phones, letters, and social media. "A Taliban caller shared a lot of information about me as proof that they have been watching me – he told me my name, my father's name, where I work, and the address of my house ... after a few days, I got a message saying 'the path you have chosen is not the right path, so you should move on from it or else we will decide what to do with you,'" a journalist in Khost province told HRW. Women journalists have faced threats not just because of their work but also due to their gender.

Adapted from <https://www.voanews.com/press-freedom/human-rights-watch-accuses-taliban-targeting-killing-journalists>

Text 20

George Floyd: 'Pandemic of racism' led to his death, memorial told.

Those gathered at Thursday's tribute stood in silence for eight minutes, 46 seconds, the amount of time Mr Floyd was alleged to be on the ground under the control of police in Minneapolis.

Hundreds attended the service, which also heard a eulogy from civil rights activist Rev Al Sharpton. It was time to stand up and say "get your knee off our necks", he said.

Addressing Thursday's memorial service, lawyer Benjamin Crump said it was "not the coronavirus pandemic that killed George Floyd".

"It was that other pandemic," he said. "The pandemic of racism and discrimination." Reverend Al Sharpton meanwhile demanded accountability. "We won't stop," he said, referring to protests that have taken place in every US state. "We're going to keep going until we change the whole system of justice."

Eulogy: (here) a speech containing great praise for someone who recently died.

Memorial service: a way of remembering a person who has died.

TEXT 21

What are human rights?

Human rights are rights we have simply because we exist as human beings - they are not granted by any state. These universal rights are **inherent** to us all, regardless of nationality, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status. They range from the most fundamental - the right to life - to those that make life worth living, such as the rights to food, education, work, health, and liberty. The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, was the first legal document to set out the fundamental human rights to be universally protected. The UDHR, which turned 70 in 2018, continues to be the foundation of all international human rights law. Its 30 articles provide the principles and building blocks of current and future human rights conventions, treaties and other legal instruments.

Adapted from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/pages/whatarehumanrights.aspx>

TEXT 4
About climate change

There are many facts related to climate to demonstrate conclusively that the problem of human-induced climate change is real. The observational evidence combined with physical understanding based on well-established physical principles makes this abundantly clear. Former United States Senator Patrick Daniel Moynihan famously said 'Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not his own facts.' The observations and data – the facts – are of mixed quality and duration, but together tell a compelling story that leaves no doubt about the human role in climate change. Changes in some phenomena, such as hurricanes and tornadoes, are confounded by the way observations are made (eg, the role of satellites) and shortness of reliable records. But the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence of important changes, and our physical understanding and climate modelling can fill the gaps. However, the facts are not enough. The role of scientists is to lay out the facts, evidence, prospects and consequences, but the decisions on what to do about them reside in the realm of politics and should involve all of society.

TEXT 5

Many politicians either do not believe in global warming or discount it. But it is not a matter of belief. From the scientific standpoint, by the time the problems associated with climate change are so blatant, it will be far too late to do anything about it. Already, the costs are substantial every year – from tens to hundreds of billions of dollars – from drought, wildfires, floods, heatwaves, storm surges, hurricanes and strife. The climate events that cause the damage are isolated events, regional in nature, and affect but few at a time. The public does not see an integrated view. A major report comes out and it is a headline for at most one day. But the problem continues, and in fact gets worse every day. Yet it is no longer news because it remains the same problem, although the problem has not been solved. It is easy for the public to set it aside. Climate change is inherently an inter-generational problem.

TEXT 6

Natural Resources: Curse or Blessing?

Are natural resources a "curse" or a "blessing"? The empirical evidence suggests that either outcome is possible. This paper surveys a variety of hypotheses and supporting evidence for why some countries benefit and others lose from the presence of natural resources. These include that a resource bonanza induces appreciation of the real exchange rate, desindustrialization, and bad growth prospects, and that these adverse effects are more severe in volatile countries with bad institutions and lack of rule of law, corruption, presidential democracies, and underdeveloped financial systems. Another hypothesis is that a resource boom reinforces rent grabbing and civil conflict especially if institutions are bad, induces corruption especially in nondemocratic countries, and keeps in place bad policies. Finally, resource rich developing economies seem unable to successfully convert their depleting exhaustible resources into other productive assets. The survey also offers some welfare-based fiscal rules for harnessing resource windfalls in developed and developing economies.

TEXT 7

Steps against global warming

Politicians are also concerned about climate change and there are now regular meetings on the subject, attended by representatives from many of the world's industrialized countries. In Kyoto, Japan in 1997, it was agreed that the most industrialized countries would try to reduce the volume of greenhouse gases. At least part of the problem of rapid climate change has been caused by too drastic deforestation. Sadly, the targets are not being met. Even more sadly, global warnings about climate changes are often still being regarded as scaremongering.

Adapted from <https://www.islcollective.com>