

#ARCHAEOLOGY

The famous railing from 'Titanic' has broken off

A 20-day subaquatic exploration relocated once-lost artifacts and documented ongoing decay.



New, high-definition images offer unexpected finds and unfortunate updates at the site of the RMS Titanic's final resting place. Released on September 2, the photos come as the first imaging and Research Expedition, undertaken by the ship's salvor-in-possession company, RMS Titanic, Inc. in over 14 years. Notably, the documentation confirms that one of the vessel's most iconic sections has succumbed to 112 years spent in the frigid North Atlantic waters, at a crushing depth of 12,500 feet below the ocean's surface.

More than 1,500 passengers and crew aboard the Titanic died while en route to New York City from Southampton, UK, during the famous tragedy on April 15, 1912. Although, its exact whereabouts was a mystery for years, an expedition led by Robert Ballard confirmed the luxury cruise liner's exact location in 1985. Since then, numerous explorers, experts, and tourists have made the frequently dangerous journey back down to document the historic archaeological site. In 1994, a US federal court granted sole 'salvor-in-possession' rights to RMS Titanic, Inc., which designated the company as the only organization legally permitted to recover artifacts from the wreck. The group and its affiliates have now overseen eight expeditions, the most recent of which took place over 20 days in July.

According to an announcement on September 2, researchers amassed over "2 million of the highest resolution images and video to date" during their latest exploration. They also successfully mapped out the ship and its debris field using LIDAR, Sonar, as well as a hyper magnetometer, a device used to zero-in on metallic objects such as ship wreckage. It was with these tools that explorers managed to relocate one historic relic in particular that many thought was long gone, a 2 foot tall, bronze statue known as the *Diana of Versailles*. According to Titanic researcher, James Penca, the *Diana of Versailles* served as a centerpiece in the



first-class passenger lounge, widely considered to be the most beautiful and detailed space on the ship. But unfortunately, when Titanic split in two during the sinking, the lounge got ripped open. And in the chaos and destruction, Diana got ripped off her mantle, and she landed in the darkness of the debris field." Penca told the BBC on August 1. Many experts theorized sediment or ocean current-scattered debris had since obscured the bronze bust. "To actually find it once again, half-buried on the ocean floor was like finding a needle in a haystack," Penca explained.

The new discoveries also highlighted the ship's increasingly fragile remains. One of the Titanic wreckage's most recognizable features has long been the railing, surrounding the Bow's forecastle deck, a section also made famous in the 1997 film's "King of the World" scene by James Cameron. Based on images taken over the summer, however, a large section of the structure has broken off and fallen from the port side prow. Given previous expeditions' documentation, the team says that this must have occurred as recently as 2022. Time is certainly not on the side of the preservationists. Given the harsh ocean conditions and the destructive capabilities of metal-eating bacteria, some observers believe that the vast majority of the Titanic's core decay within only a few decades.

#WORLD VIEW

Run for Africa- and China takes it all!

Africa is becoming 'partner of choice' for developed countries on every thing, from growing their economies to protecting their borders. This is because Africa hosts 30% of the world's mineral reserves. Around 60% of the total mining in Africa is of gold, which contributes to 22% of the world production. World's 55% of diamonds are mined in Africa. Africa will add 796 million people to the global workforce by 2050, as it will be home to the largest youngest population of the world.



● Neelopal Mishra

The Berlin West Africa Conference of 1884-1885 was a meeting at which the major European powers negotiated and formalized claims to territory in Africa. This started the scramble for Africa. Great Britain, France, and Germany began looking to Africa for natural resources for their growing industrial sectors as well as a potential market for the goods that these factories produced. The governments thereon began to safeguard their commercial interests in Africa, and began to secure treaties from indigenous peoples or their supposed representatives. The same is in play today as Africa is becoming 'partner of choice' for developed countries on every thing, from growing their economies to protecting their borders. This is because Africa hosts 30% of the world's mineral reserves. Around 60% of the total mining in Africa is of gold, which contributes to 22% of the world production. World's 55% of diamonds are mined in Africa. Africa will add 796 million people to the global workforce by 2050, as it will be home to the largest youngest population of the world. Moreover, Africa is undergoing a major shift towards providing service rather than being dependent on agriculture and extraction of minerals. By 2040, Africa will have 31 cities with a population of more than 5 million. Currently, there are only 12.

The African Landscape Today

China, India, Japan, South Korea and the ASEAN share the African geopolitical space today with the US and EU. They also are major investors in Africa as well as providers of development assistance. The US, which was focused on terrorism and other non-military threats after 9/11, is paying attention to Africa's new geopolitics. Russia is now engaging with Africa more than ever before, as are many other regional actors like Iran, UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey who are taking a growing interest in Africa's security. Russia and China are seizing political, economic and military initiative in Africa in ways that could alter the global balance of power. Mainly, China and Russia apart from India, Japan and South Korea view Africa as an opportunity to be seized. From 2007 to 2017, the US traded with Africa dropped by 54% while China's trade grew by 220%. Russia's total investment in Africa is growing by 40% since 2015. In 2019, Russia held the first ever *Russia-Africa summit*, hosting 45 African Heads of State. China holds a similar event called the *Forum on China-Africa Cooperation*. India organises *CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership*. Sub-Saharan Africa is in the centre of the crescent or 'arc of instability', stretching from the Andean region of Latin America across Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and the Caucasus and through the Northern parts of

South Asia. It remains the most vulnerable to economic disruption, population stresses, civil conflict, and political instability, as increased profits from oil, gas and metals is used to entrench corrupt, or otherwise ill-equipped governments in several regions, diminishing the prospects for democratic and market-based reforms. There is presence of foreign militaries in around 25 African countries. They often lease territories to foreign powers for military bases, mainly for domestic economic gain. Countries are also seeking external help in dealing with their internal security challenges. The US drone attacks in Somalia have helped reduce *Al-Shabaab's* capacity and French troops have contributed significantly in building the capacity of national armies in the Sahel and driving out jihadists. The competition among the various foreign militaries, to respond to hotspots in Africa, has led to a multiplicity of activities that overrode the security landscape, especially in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. This has also led to rivalry between foreign armies playing out in Africa, and may potentially have a destabilising impact on the continent. Corruption is high, press freedom low and climate change is severe in Africa. This is a fundamental threat to peace and security, as it is a cause of conflict, generating new grievances in society

or driving existing ones. Extreme digital divide exists in Africa. Only 45% of the population use mobile services and 26% use smartphones. Of these, 29% use internet in comparison to 51% in the world. A 2020 UNCTAD report estimated that \$88.6 billion, which is equivalent of 3.7 per cent of Africa's GDP, leaves the continent annually as illicit capital flight. Apart from the Russian Wagner Group, hired by the Central African Republic amongst others, South Africa's Dyck Advisory Group was hired by the Mozambican government to combat *Al-Shabaab* jihadist violence in Cabo Delgado in the north of the country. US companies like the CACI and Academi are among the most prominent private military companies present on the African continent. In addition to these, the French company, Socopex, Great Britain's Aegis Defence Services & G4S, Omega Consulting Group of Ukraine and Xelex from Germany are also active in Africa. Mostly, these Private Military Companies follow the resources for protection arrangement by enabling their owned/ backed firms to get contracts for mining. Globalization has created opportunities in African countries, but economies have not transformed enough to move away from dependence on raw materials to production. Thus, many remain on the bottom rungs of global supply chains.

China in Africa

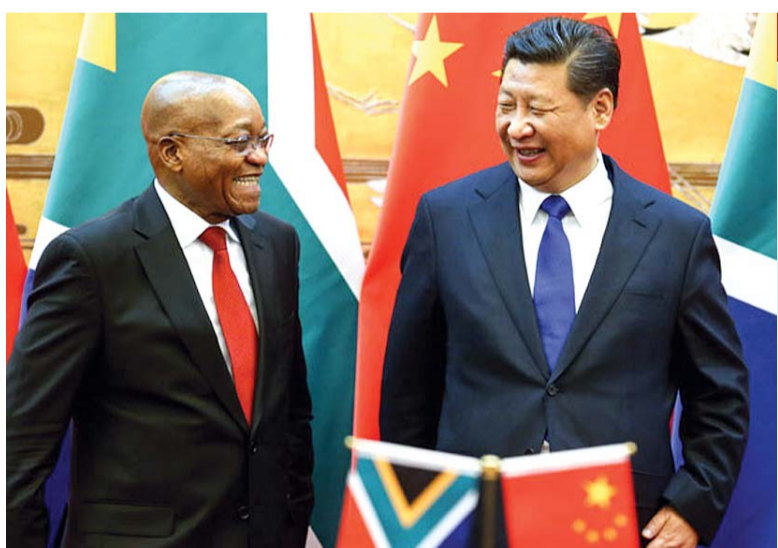
China has emerged as Saharan Africa's largest trading partner (exports and imports) in the last 20 years, with one-fifth of the region's total goods' exports and the single largest source of imports, after initiating its official 'go out' policy. China is focusing on emerging lithium supply centres, as this is a crucial metal used in electric vehicles. It is also focusing on Bauxite, Iron and Uranium. The maritime *Silk Road* is connecting China's eastern seaboard with the Indian Ocean littoral, by development of 47 ports in sub-Saharan Africa. Under the *Digital Silk Road* in Africa, Chinese provision digital infrastructures and solutions such as the Smart City and Safe City initiatives. The bundled solutions address terrorism, crime and e-governance, thus, tying the beneficiaries to proprietary technologies and entrench Chinese technological standards, giving competitive advantage to Chinese firms. At the 2021 *China-Africa Cooperation Forum*, China announced its first cutback in financial support to Africa, from \$80 billion to \$40 billion over three years. Currently, 22 African countries with low-income status are either already facing severe debt distress or are at a high risk of facing such distress. In addition, approximately 50% of China's lending to developing African countries is not included in official debt statistics. Furthermore, loans provided by China to



African countries come with higher interest rates of 4% compared to loans from Western sources, which are at 1%. Chinese projects often seem to go hand-in-hand with civil protests. Confucius institutes promote Chinese language and culture, support local Chinese teaching internationally and facilitate cultural exchanges. These are used as influence platforms and have a role as intelligence cover. A total of 61 Confucius institutes, 48 Confucius classrooms have been established in Africa. China launched a 2015 initiative to put satellite televisions in 10,000 African villages. These came with

free, pre-loaded access to Chinese stations, pumping state-sponsored content. Over the last few years, it has emerged as the largest major Arms' Supplier to Sub-Saharan Africa. Around 40 African countries have some kind of agreement with Chinese public security agencies and extradition treaties with 13 African countries. A large number of African police and law enforcement personnel and magistrates have received training in China. In Africa, China operates overseas police stations in Benin City, Nigeria Maseru in Lesotho and Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. With the help of these police posts / service stations, the Chinese government is also influencing the elections in the respective countries. Furthermore, these stations are controlling activities of the Overseas Chinese Diaspora. Chinese companies collect massive amounts of metadata, using which they better tailor their products and services to consumers, allowing them to gain influence to shape developments and policies in these markets. There is a possibility that such data would be passed on to African states with authoritarian tendencies to subvert democratic processes or control citizens. There also have been allegations of China hacking into computers at the African Union's Headquarters in 2018. To be continued...

rajeshsharma1049@gmail.com



Africa - Towards Growth and Prosperity

Thirty-four countries, i.e. about 72 per cent of Africa's citizens, have improved their governance performance since 2010 in terms of participation, rule of law, rights, transparency and accountability. The grain yields have increased in Southern and Eastern regions of Africa, and they are fast developing close trade and strategic ties with East and South Asian countries. This leads to that region being most stable and promising sub-region, politically and economically, with five African nations being among the top ten fastest growing economies. In this Age of Disruptions, the *Continental Free*

Trade Agreement has the potential to be a game changer. Africa is currently trading more with the other regions of the world than within the continent. With a view of increasing trade amongst African countries, the African Union has facilitated the creation *Africa Economic Zones Organization, African Free Trade Zone and African Continental Free Trade Area*. Proposed highways and high speed railways to connect the African continent have been envisaged by the African Union. This would help accelerate growth and prosperity in the region. For the first time, an African country

reported collecting additional taxes worth 10.6 million through the use of common reporting standard data. Around 23 countries are party to the *Multilateral Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters* to tackle tax evasion. Africa led peace operations are a crucial tool for peace and security in Africa. This would invariably lessen the dependency of African countries on foreign militaries and the UN. In almost all multilateral peace operations that were active, as of May 2023 in Africa, in many troubled regions, AU forces are deployed alongside UN force.



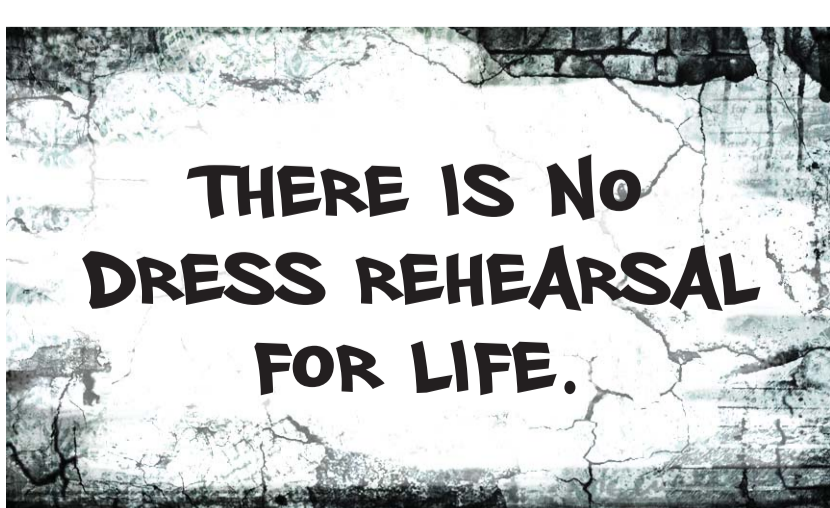
By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

THE WALL



BABY BLUES

