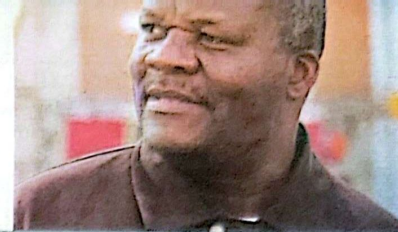


**DR Congo opposition figure heads home after crisis deal.** A DR Congo opposition leader accused of "high treason" returned to Kinshasa on Sunday two weeks after a key deal to end a political crisis in the vast African country. Roger Lumbala, head of the small opposition Rally of Congolese Democrats and Nationalists (RCD-N), was one of a few accused figures whose freedom or return from exile was agreed as part of the New Year's Eve deal. Lumbala, who allegedly backed the M23 rebellion in the country's east, arrived back in the DR Congo capital on board an Ethiopian Airlines flight, according to AFP journalists at the airport.



# Indian hospital builds new unit to operate on 500kg Egyptian woman

**Reason.** The 36-year-old woman's family says she has been stuck at home for 25 years.

BY AFRICA REVIEW

**INDIA.** An Indian hospital is building a special facility so that an Egyptian woman, believed to be the world's heaviest at 500kg (1,102lb), can soon undergo weight reduction surgery.

The facility at Mumbai's Saifee Hospital will have an operating theatre and an intensive care unit.

Eman Ahmed Abd El Aty, 36, is expected to arrive in the city on a chartered plane at the end of January.

Her family says she has not been able to leave home for 25 years.

The estimate of her weight is given by relatives.

If confirmed, she would be the world's heaviest woman alive as the current Guinness record holder is Pauline Potter of the United States who weighed 292kg (643lb) in 2010.

Ms Abd El Aty will be treated by a team of doctors led by well-known bariatric surgeon, Dr Muffazal Lakdawala.

As the patient cannot use a regular commercial flight, she will be flown to Mumbai on a chartered cargo plane along with her sister who is her main carer, a doctor at the hospital told the BBC's Geeta Pandey.

She will first need to bring her weight down before an operation can be performed.

Ms Abd El Aty suffers from thyroid and cardiac issues and will need to



**Away.** Eman Ahmed Abd El Aty lies on her bed where the family says she has been constrained for 25 years. PHOTO BY AFP

remain at the hospital for at least six months, the doctor said.

Reports say the 278 sq metre (3,000 sq ft) new facility is estimated to cost \$293,762 and will be ready by the end of the month.

**At birth**

Ms Abd El Aty's family says she weighed 5kg (11lb) at birth and was diagnosed with elephantiasis, a condition in which body parts swell due

to a parasitic infection.

By the time she was 11, her weight had risen sharply and she suffered a stroke which left her bedridden. Her mother and sister care for her.

However, Dr Lakdawala told the BBC last month that he believes Ms Abd El Aty does not have elephantiasis but suffers from obesity-related lymphoedema which causes gigantic swelling of legs.

Dr Lakdawala's patients have previ-

ously included Indian ministers Nitin Gadkari and Venkaiah Naidu, who underwent weight reduction surgery.

The Indian embassy in Cairo had initially denied Ms Abd El Aty's visa request as she was unable to travel there in person.

She was issued a visa after Dr Lakdawala tweeted to India's foreign minister Sushma Swaraj who responded with an offer of help.

## briefly

### Rebels, govt reach deal

**IVORY COAST.** Ivory Coast's government and rebel troops have reached a final deal at talks in Bouake, government sources said late Friday at the close of a tense day which saw outbreaks of gunfire at barracks across the country. Soldiers in Bouake mutinied earlier this month, firing rocket-launchers and terrifying residents of Ivory Coast's second largest city, while demanding bonuses, better pay and housing. The protests then spread to other cities, including the economic capital Abidjan, stoking security fears in the world's top cocoa producer.

### DR Congo hikes interest rate

**DR CONGO.** The Democratic Republic of Congo's central bank has doubled its base interest rate to 14 per cent in an effort to contain inflation which is currently running in double digits. Congo's interest rates stood at 7 percent previously. Inflation for December was 11.2 per cent, well over the bank's target of 4.2 per cent. Africa's leading copper producer has been battered by low commodity prices that have hit the Congolese franc. A recent report by the Central Bank suggests that the economy expected to have decelerated to a six-year low of 4.3% growth in 2016. Adding to economic woes is the political uncertainty caused by President Joseph Kabila's refusal to stand down last year.

### Case against mob drop

**EGYPT.** Egyptian prosecutors thrown out a case brought by an Egyptian woman against several members of a Muslim mob who paraded her through the streets, her lawyer said. Last May's assault in the central province began after rumors spread that the son of the 70-year-old woman had an affair with a Muslim woman —