



Worried... Health minister Kalumbi Shangula.

Growing disregard of virus rules concerns Shangula

■ Kuzeeko Tjitemisa

Health minister Dr Kalumbi Shangula has expressed concern about the growing disregard for the Covid-19 regulations and protocols. There has been an evident disregard of Covid-19 regulations and protocols as political campaigns intensified in the last couple of weeks ahead of

tomorrow's regional council and local authority elections.

Additionally, more and more people are now seen in public without facemasks and some are failing to observe the physical distancing protocol. "I want to appeal to the public and to the Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN) to ensure that public health measures are complied with during



the voting," Shangula told *New Era* yesterday.

"During the festive season, the potential for transmission is there as individuals indulge in celebration activities and flout public health measures. We continue to remind them about this danger."

By yesterday, the country had 13 897 cumulative confirmed cases, 32 newly confirmed cases, 13 234 recoveries, 516 active cases and a total of 145 Covid-19 deaths. - ktjitemisa@nepc.com.na

Farmers give thumbs up to oil drilling

City jewellery 'thief' nabbed at village

■ Loide Jason

A man who allegedly looted a jewellery shop in Windhoek at the weekend was arrested at his village in the Oshikoto region yesterday.

The suspect allegedly broke into Sterns at Grove Mall after cutting through the roof on Saturday night.

He is due to appear in a Windhoek court this week.

"The suspect was successfully arrested by the Oshana police officials at his village in Oshikoto region. Most of the stolen items found in his possession are recovered," said Chief Inspector Elifas Kuwinga of the Namibian police.

Kuwinga further explained the value of the stolen items - mostly jewellery - was not yet determined as investigations in the matter are at an infant stage.

"The suspect is expected to appear here and our officials are still busy gathering more evidence, hence I have no much information to share. As soon as I get more information, I will share with you. The value is also not yet determined," he explained.

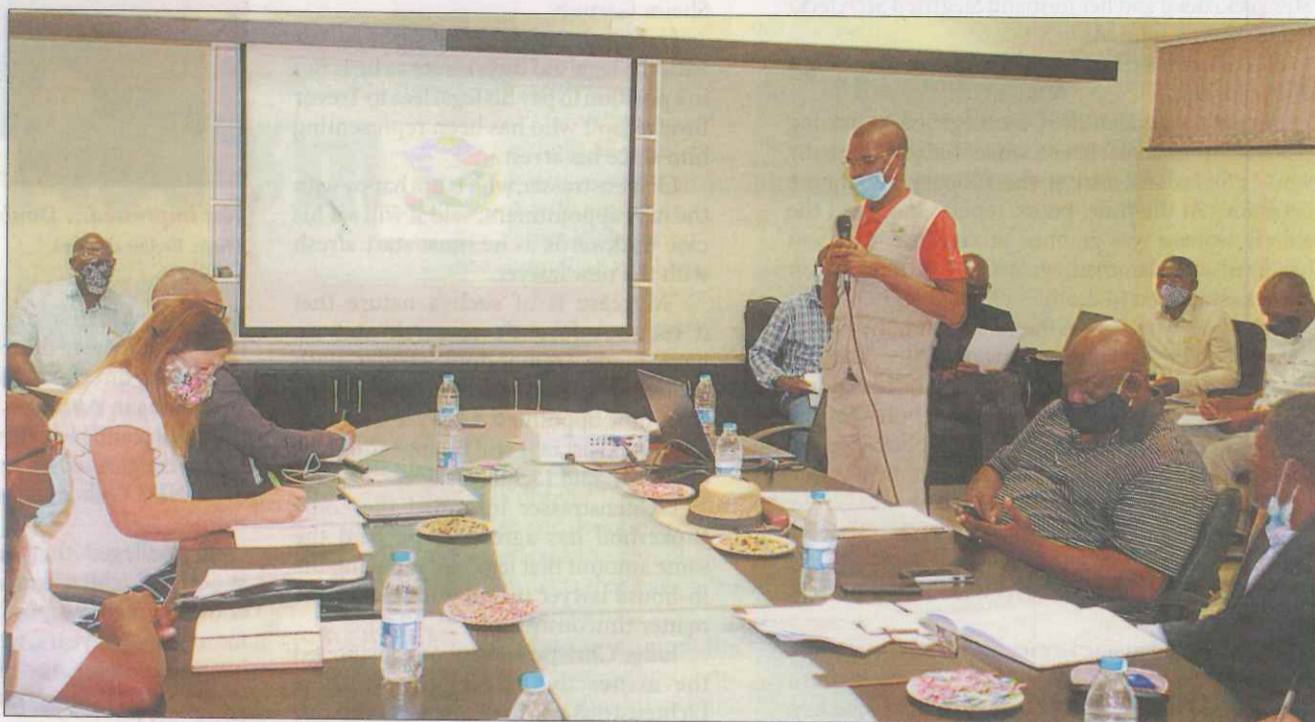
Sources said the recovered items were buried in the mahangu field at his homestead.

The Oshikoto police chief, Commissioner Armas Shivute declined to shed more light on the matter, saying robbery case is registered in Windhoek, hence all queries should be answered from the capital.

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Nabbed... Some of the recovered items allegedly stolen from a jewellery shop in Windhoek.



Content... Thimoteus Kativa, KERFU secretary, makes a point during the meeting. Photo: John Muyamba

■ John Muyamba

RUNDU - Kavango East farmers who recently raised concerns over the scheduled detailed oil and gas exploration in the region have given the project the greenlight, following a meeting with representatives of the Canadian firm Reconnaissance Energy Africa and mines and energy minister Tom Alweendo.

Reconnaissance Energy Africa has an exploration licence for oil and gas and approval was granted by the authorities for exploration activities at Kawe and surrounding villages.

"They have put together all the information to see whether the geology of that particular area is suitable for oil and gas exploration and that data have shown that there might be suitable grounds in that area of Ncaute and Kawe villages and in order to confirm whether the geology is suitable, the drilling will be done in December," said Sindila Mwiya, the project consultant hired by Reconnaissance Energy Africa. "So, community does not have to worry or panic because the drilling in December is just going to drill two wells that the company has committed to the government as part of their exploration commitment."

According to Mwiya, the two wells will be used to confirm whether the sedimentary basin or the geology governs the formation and existence of oil and gas.

"Only then we will do a seismic survey and again a new environmental

assessment will have to be done. If the seismic survey finds the traps that might contain oil and gas, then the next drilling will come in, which we call exploration well drilling. The one that will be done now is called state graphic well drilling," he said.

Some of the concerns raised by the Kavango East Regional Farmers Union (KERFU) in the meeting was that the drilling might contaminate underground water, but the experts brushed it off, saying the drilling will not cause any harm to the underground water system.

"I would like to acknowledge important information that have come out of this meeting which made us to understand the situation and the stage where we are now, as responsible farmers' union leaders," said KERFU secretary Thimoteus Kativa.

"We thought it was very necessary to have this meeting were we have now ironed out misunderstandings. Information is very important and knowledge is power. Now we have come to a point to understand what has happened."

Kativa said farmers were misinformed about the activities of the Canadian firm and started to panic, thinking of the worst.

"Please involve us in your process as we represent farmers. We understand the clarity that was given and we will convey it to farmers and assure them that we will be informed of every step the project is going to take," Kativa said.

On his part, Alweendo said the project should ensure that all

stakeholders are on board with regards to information sharing to avoid confusion.

Some concerned community members during the meeting also asked whether there were any direct benefits to the communities in the area where the project is going to take place.

"I think what transpired is the fact that the information that was there was not shared with everyone and now that we have discovered that there is a certain stakeholder with a specific interest, there is no harm for us to ensure that all stakeholders are on board. Let us just avoid all these things, let us just share more information and I think that will iron out all these disagreements," Alweendo said.

With regards to the direct benefits, Alweendo said benefits would only be accrued once a positive discovery is made.

"Let us hope we find something and when that production licence is given, then we make sure that we have good negotiations to secure benefits that will accrue to the region where the project is," he said.

The Shambyu Traditional Authority said they were consulted.

"Since it was the first level of discussions, we could not go at the villages and inform the people, so we said let us wait until they come again and then we can go and conduct meetings together in the villages when we are sure of everything," said Alois Gende who represented the traditional authority at the meeting.

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