



[A UN peacekeeping force for Central African Republic will begin deploying in two months, with some 2,500 troops joining African and French forces, UN and French officials said Wednesday. Bangladesh, Pakistan and Morocco have agreed to contribute three battalions to the new UN force, said France's UN Ambassador Gerard Araud.]

BURUNDI :

Le Burundi étudie une nouvelle voie routière Bujumbura-Mombasa (PAPIER GENERAL)

Par : Laura/French.china.org.cn/ le 18-07-2014

Des experts burundais et kenyans se sont réunis jeudi à Bujumbura pour analyser les voies et moyens pour accélérer la création d'une nouvelle voie routière qui reliera Bujumbura, capitale burundaise, à Mombasa, ville sur la côte du Kenya, en vue de réduire le coût des transactions commerciales.

Vincent Nzoyisaba, secrétaire permanent au ministère burundais des Transports, des Travaux publics et de l'Équipement, a déclaré à Xinhua que le Burundi, pays enclavé, fait face à des contraintes pour réduire les frais logistiques de son commerce international et régional.

"Les inefficacités du système et les coûts élevés de transport le long de deux principaux corridors desservant le Burundi, à savoir le corridor central et le corridor nord, ont été identifiés comme défis

majeurs aux affaires", a-t-il affirmé.

M. Nzoyisaba a souligné que de nombreux défis existent sur les deux corridors. Pour le corridor nord, il a pointé du doigt les difficultés liées à la circulation des camions à cause du mauvais état routier, qui provoque de gros encombrements, et les multiples arrêts sur le trajet dus notamment aux barrages policiers, les ponts bascules et les postes frontaliers.

Quant au corridor central, il subsiste de nombreux défis d'infrastructures et de facilitation. Les obstacles, a précisé M. Nzoyisaba, sont particulièrement incarnés par le grand nombre de ponts bascules de l'Autorité Tanzanienne des Routes (TANROADS), de l'Office Tanzanien des Recettes (TRA) et des postes de contrôle de la police.

C'est dans l'esprit de réduction ou d'élimination de certains de ces obstacles que les décideurs politiques burundais et la Chambre fédérale de commerce et d'industrie du Burundi (CFCIB) se sont convenus de mettre en place "un nouvel itinéraire routier régional" qui pourrait fournir des avantages économiques importants au transport routier au Burundi, a expliqué M. Nzoyisaba.

Le nouvel itinéraire proposé comme ligne de transport régional pour le Burundi, qui passe par Kobero, Nyakahura, Isaka, Nzega, Singida, Arusha et Voi, est en bon état de manière générale, a-t-il affirmé.

Ce nouvel itinéraire s'étend sur 1.545 km, contre 2.000 km pour le corridor nord. F

RWANDA :

RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

Uganda's LGBT and HIV/AIDS activists answer your questions

BY Nora Daly/pbs.org/ July 17, 2014

According to a recent United Nations report, it may be possible to control the AIDS epidemic by as early as 2030, and ultimately eradicate the disease altogether. But this goal will be impossible to reach without increasing treatment and prevention measures for the most at-risk populations.

Global health organizations have agreed that these groups include men who have sex with men, sex workers and intravenous drug users. In some nations, these populations face persecution, making them afraid to be tested or seek treatment. HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths have been on the rise in those countries, while the same rates have been falling elsewhere around the world.

In Uganda, a law passed in February makes gays and lesbians subject to harsh penalties. Individuals convicted of homosexual acts could face up to life in prison. Many HIV positive homosexuals do

not seek treatment because they fear being outed by their doctors.

The United States requires nonprofits to sign a pledge opposing prostitution before they can receive federal AIDS relief funds. This policy, in place since 2003, has been criticized by many nonprofits seeking to help sex workers, who claim that publicly opposing prostitution diminishes trust among that population.

As the International AIDS Conference prepares to convene in Australia, NewsHour reports on the persecution of these at-risk groups, and explores what steps must be taken to make an AIDS-free generation a reality.

We will be taking your questions for four activists and human rights workers who deal specifically with at-risk populations in Uganda:

Isaac Mugisha is the communications officer at Spectrum Uganda, an LGBT advocacy group based in Kampala.

Asia Russell is the director of international policy at Health GAP, a nonprofit dedicated to improving access to care for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Daisy Nakato is a Ugandan sex worker and founder of WONETHA, an organization that seeks to educate and empower sex workers in urban Uganda.

Megan Schmidt-Sane is a former WONETHA volunteer who now works for the sexual health and rights team at American Jewish World Service.

Air Uganda suspends operations indefinitely

By Prof. Dr. Wolfgang H. Thome, eTN Africa Correspondent/eturbonews.com/Jul 18, 2014

Uganda's Civil Aviation Authority's dictatorial withdrawal of AOC's for airlines flying international routes has now claimed a second victim as Air Uganda has announced the indefinite suspension of operations with immediate effect. This affirms earlier suspicion that the regulators with their actions, hiding behind misleading claims they were acting in the interest of aviation safety, are destroying aviation as we know it in Uganda. In fact new allegations are now emerging that certain individuals could have developed an interest in re-launching the defunct Uganda Airlines which is now seen as a major opportunity to 'eat big' should those keen on this white elephant project succeed to milk government and the Ugandan taxpayers of the tens if not hundreds of millions of US Dollars it would take to establish such an airline in this day and age.

Meridiana Africa Airlines (Uganda) Limited, which trades as Air Uganda, was the country's only jet airline serving international routes, flying from Entebbe to Nairobi, Mombasa, Dar es Salaam, Kilimanjaro, Juba, Mogadishu, Bujumbura and Kigali. Owned by the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development was Air Uganda, until it received the ill-conceived directive from the UCAA to surrender their AOC, operating three CRJ200 jets and was Entebbe International Airport's number one airline in terms of daily flight numbers.

All 231 staff are now bound to stare at an uncertain future, possibly facing layoffs, as in spite of initial assurances, empty assurances as it turned out, by the UCAA to process the renewal application for an AOC expeditiously and with all due haste, this turned out to have become a game of bureaucratic ping pong. The regulators in fact are showing no sense of urgency, enjoying their weekends and regular working hours instead of working flat out to resolve this issue, which was after all caused by their imminent failure of an ICAO audit, where they only escaped being cited by pulling all AOC's valid for international routes.

Air Uganda's CEO Cornwell Muleya, issued the following statement to put the record straight, and while he of course cannot accuse the UCAA of misleading the public, this is certainly the impression the public now has, no matter what utterances to the contrary the regulator's mouthpieces now make:

Start quote:

Announcement from Air Uganda – Indefinite Suspension of Operations

1. Air Uganda was started at the request of the Government of Uganda in 2007 and has a staff complement of 231, the vast majority of whom are Ugandan. Employees in other Eastern African countries and destination cities are drawn from the local labor pool. Air Uganda's normal operations are from Entebbe as its home base to Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, Bujumbura, Kigali, Mogadishu, Kilimanjaro, Mombasa and Juba. Since inception, Air Uganda has flown over three quarters of a million passengers, strengthening ties within Eastern Africa and providing direct access for Ugandans to countries in the region, making Entebbe into an aviation hub. Air Uganda has paid over US\$23.5 million in fees and taxes to the Ugandan Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), invested US\$4 million in staff training, contributed over US\$10 million in employment taxes, and injects over US\$15 million per annum directly into the Ugandan economy.
2. Air Uganda prides itself on its excellent safety record. It is certified by the aviation industry's hallmark IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) program which is an internationally recognized and accepted evaluation system designed to assess the operational management and control systems of an airline with specific reference to passenger safety. Air Uganda was IOSA certified after its first audit in 2011 and has had its certificate renewed for a further two years up to 2015. IATA is the International Air Transport Association, and its 240 voluntary members account for 84% of global air traffic. All IATA members are IOSA registered and must remain registered to maintain IATA membership. Air Uganda is a member of IATA.
3. An audit of the Ugandan Civil Aviation Authority's policies and procedures was conducted between 11th and 17th June, 2014 by the international regulator ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization) based in Montreal. Such audits are aimed at assessing the CAA's capacities rather than the airlines that operate under its supervision. It is now apparent that the audit revealed shortcomings in the CAA's oversight and regulatory capacities, consequently impacting the CAA's ability to award Air Operators Certificates. The Ugandan CAA regrettably opted on 17th June to withdraw, without consulting the airlines affected, Air Operator's Certificates (AOC) for all international commercial air operators registered in the country. Air Uganda, which is the only scheduled passenger airline affected, has inevitably suffered the greatest damage. Each carrier was requested to submit a fresh application for an AOC, and in the meantime was required to cease operations, thus forced to incur massive financial losses on a daily basis and suffer reputational damage.
4. Air Uganda has been working with the Ugandan CAA since 17th June, 2014 to implement revised procedures at the CAA required by ICAO and had expected its AOC to be reinstated in a timely and expeditious manner. Unfortunately, 31 days have elapsed and recertification is still several weeks away.
5. The result of this prolonged period of grounding has in turn affected key contracts at Air Uganda. In particular, covenants in the aircraft lease agreements require that the aircraft can remain on lease to Air Uganda only as long as the airline continues flying. The extended period of the aircraft remaining grounded has thus, sadly, triggered these covenants and Air Uganda is now contractually obligated to return the aircraft to the Lessors' chosen facility abroad. The prolonged inability to

generate any revenues has necessitated the airline's Board of Directors to suspend indefinitely Air Uganda's operations. This will unfortunately adversely impact key stakeholders, including the airline's workforce. This is all the more regrettable, as Air Uganda, after its seven years of operation, was actively looking at upgrading and enhancing all aspects of its operation.

6. Air Uganda is extremely grateful for the patronage and support of its customers and highly regrets the frustration and inevitable inconvenience suffered since the grounding. Air Uganda assures the public that it did everything under its control in the most difficult of circumstances to minimize the impact on its clientele.

Cornwell Muleya
Chief Executive Officer
Air Uganda
July 18th, 2014

End quote

As a result of the Uganda Civil Aviation action, were Air Uganda flights removed from the electronic booking and reservations systems, were all interline and code share agreements suspended, was membership of Air Uganda in AFRAA and IATA suspended and through insinuations, if not outright intended smears the reputations of the airline left in tatters. Said one aviator, despite the late hour: "Playing around by raising question on Air Uganda's safe operations, after all they are IOSA certified, is almost criminal. Those who made such suggestions hopefully will face the consequences when they are sued, in an individual and institutional capacity, for the damage they caused with their attempted character assassination. I personally feel there is not one Iota of truth in such allegations and the attempt to whitewash the CAA action has failed. They may dupe the public who perhaps do not understand the technicalities behind all of this but us aviators, they cannot fool. They are plain wrong and thankfully someone keeps pointing this out bringing the truth to light."

While one CAA mouthpiece was technically right to point out that it is by law the AOC which matters and not the IATA Operational Safety Audit which Air Uganda passed with flying colours, that is just another smokescreen put up behind which the regulators are now trying to hide. Uganda's reputation in the aviation world has taken a huge hit and the fact that regulatory staff in the region are entirely critical of the UCAA's actions, in private that is as in public they are preferring not to comment on the follies of a fellow regulator, again speaks for itself, a damning indictment of those responsible in Entebbe for this travesty of aviation administration.

Aviators and aviation pundits are united in their assessment that the fault lies squarely with the UCAA and that no amount of mitigating words can alter the fact that they failed the aviation industry in Uganda, prompting calls for "tabula rasa" at the authority to throw out arrogance, incompetence and ignorance, as one aviation source put it to this correspondent earlier in the week.

Uganda: Tullow to Challenge URA Tax Ruling

By Edward Ssekika/The Observer (Kampala)/17 July 2014

Tullow Oil Plc is to appeal against the Wednesday ruling by the Tax Appeal Tribunal that ordered the company to pay \$407 million in accumulated capital gains tax resulting from the sale of its oil blocks to China National Offshore Oil Corporation (Cnooc) and Total in 2012.

Following the completion of the farm-down of 66 per cent of its assets in Uganda to Cnooc and

Total in 2012, Tullow was issued with a capital gains tax assessment by the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) of approximately \$472m. Tullow paid 30 per cent of the assessment (approximately \$142m) as legally required to launch an appeal.

Tullow petitioned the tribunal challenging URA's tax assessment, following the \$2.9 billion transaction, arguing that the then Energy minister had exempted the company from the tax. However, the tribunal ruled that the minister did not have the authority to grant such an exemption.

"There was no enabling act that empowered the minister of Energy to grant exemptions or waivers or variations of taxes," reads the ruling. Any such grant offended the tax provisions of the tax law, including the Income Tax Act."

The ruling means that Tullow, which had already paid \$142 million (30 per cent of the contested amount), as required by the Tax Appeals Tribunal Act, in order to file the appeal, will now have to pay the balance plus the interest accrued.

But in a statement released on Wednesday soon after the ruling, Tullow said it was very disappointed by the ruling. Aidan Heavey, Tullow's chief executive officer, said he was "extremely disappointed" by the ruling, noting that the tribunal had "erred in law." He said: "We will now carefully consider all our options to robustly challenge this ruling."

The statement adds: "Tullow is very concerned by this ruling which ignores a contractual term signed by a government minister in Uganda."

Tullow is one of Uganda's largest foreign investor and a major taxpayer. Over the last 10 years, Tullow has spent \$2.8 billion in Uganda and discovered 1.7 billion barrels of oil, according to the company statement. Tullow said it spent this money on "the understanding that our contracts with the government, which contained important incentives to invest that were vital at a time when no oil had been discovered in Uganda, would be honoured."

The statement further reads that the ruling from the tribunal is lengthy and deals with a number of different issues and will therefore require significant further legal evaluation.

"However, Tullow can confirm that the tribunal has ruled against Tullow on the key issue of the express tax exemption contained in the Production Sharing Agreement for Exploration Area 2," the statement reads in part.

"A specific Capital Gains Tax exemption was included in the EA2 PSA. Tullow is extremely disappointed that the Tax Appeals tribunal ruled that the then minister of Energy did not have the legal authority to grant such an exemption."

Tullow believes that the Tax Appeals tribunal has erred in law and Tullow said it will challenge the EA2 assessment through the Ugandan courts and international arbitration but "hopes that further direct negotiation with the government can resolve this matter."

SOUTH AFRICA :

Nelson Mandela Memorabilia to Be Auctioned in South Africa

By Patrice Peck/bet.com/07/17/2014

An apartheid chess set, ostrich eggs and refrigerator magnets are a few of the unusual items up for sale.

An eclectic array of items signed by former South African president and apartheid icon Nelson Mandela will be auctioned later today in Johannesburg, BBC reports.

About \$450,000 is expected to be raised from the sale of 202 items, such as salt and pepper shakers, a signed image of Mandela meeting Michael Jackson, and a chess set featuring figures from either side of the apartheid battle. Statues, refrigerator magnets, ostrich eggs and a set of 850 Chinese telephone cards portraying Mandela's image are also up for auction.

"People always look for autographs, but there are only a handful of items signed by those celebrities. In the case of Nelson Mandela, every person can own a piece of him," Savo Tufegdzic of Stephan Welz & Co, the firm that will put the items under the hammer, told BBC.

"It is not about making money on this auction. It is actually to encourage collecting. I don't want to go and encourage people to sell Mandela items. I want to encourage them to keep them."

July 17, the date of the auction, holds significance as it is the eve of what would have been Mandela's 96th birthday. The freedom fighter, celebrated for fighting minority rule in South Africa, passed away in December.

South Africa's PayFast Enables Bitcoin for 30,000 Merchants

Jon Southurst (@southtopia)/coindesk.com/July 18, 2014

There is more good news from South Africa as major payment gateway PayFast enables bitcoin access to over 30,000 online merchants, adding it as a payment option to its platform.

The company has partnered with bitcoin exchange BitX to process the payments, allowing sellers to receive South African local currency (rand, or ZAR) and avoid bitcoin price volatility.

Jonathan Smit, Managing Director and founder of PayFast, said:

"We are not really sure what will happen with bitcoin going forward as it is still early days for the 'currency', but we're interested in contributing to the ecosystem and seeing where it goes."

He told CoinDesk that PayFast had been asked in the past about accepting bitcoin, but didn't want to be involved in the volatility. The partnership with BitX drove his decision and it was the synergy between the two companies that allowed the process to happen, and swiftly.

"Being a techie, the concept of a cryptocurrency and how it works fascinates me, and while I have been following bitcoin for a while, I'm not really an early adopter, so only very recently have I actually acquired and used bitcoin myself."

"At this stage we view bitcoin as a payment mechanism rather than a currency," he added. Listings, payments in fiat

Merchants' actual interaction with bitcoin will be minimal. Prices on a seller's website will still be listed in rand and users will be charged that amount, whatever the current exchange rate. According to the company's blog, merchants will still need to manually enable bitcoin in their account settings,

as they do with other existing payment options.

They will still, however, enjoy bitcoin's advantages like low processing fees, no chargebacks or reversals, speed, and international availability.

Marcus Swanepoel, CEO of BitX, said he was excited about the deal, which brought the benefits of digital currency to a much broader market and represented a major leap in potential volume for his company.

He said:

“At BitX we continuously aim to make it easier for individuals and businesses to buy, sell, spend and receive their bitcoin, and this partnership is a testimony of our commitment to this promise.”

Regulation and tax issues

Smit said there were no clear guidelines for bitcoin use in South Africa yet, but both PayFast and BitX were “committed to complying with any applicable regulation and have been proactively engaging with the South African regulators regarding it”.

In any case, PayFast was still dealing exclusively in ZAR, and didn't expect to face any new regulatory hurdles. BitX, an established bitcoin company with extensive experience dealing with regulators around the world, would take care of bitcoin issues.

BitX and PayFast background

BitX began as a South Africa-based exchange, but aims to take its technology to the world and emerging markets in particular.

It operates an internationally-available wallet and has been in discussions with local authorities to set up exchanges and local customer support centers in 12 key emerging markets.

PayFast, which started in 2007, is a turnkey online payment processor for businesses, charities and individuals. It doesn't charge any fixed monthly costs, and integrates with over 50 e-commerce systems and accepts credit cards, Instant EFT and voucher payment methods.

TANZANIA :

KENYA :

Kenya prosecutors given month to probe governor

Date: Jul 17, 2014/AFP

A Kenyan court on Thursday gave prosecutors an additional month to conclude their investigation into a regional governor accused of links to a spate of massacres.

Governor Issa Timamy of the coastal Lamu county was arrested in connection with last month's

killings in the town of Mpeketoni and nearby villages, which were claimed by Somalia's Al-Qaeda-linked Shebab militia but blamed by the government on local political networks.

The governor, who has fiercely denied any connection to the massacre of close to 50 people, is currently on bail after the state failed in a bid to hold him without charge.

The state had asked for two months to complete the probe before pressing charges, a request the judge rejected.

"Two months is unnecessary. One month is reasonable and fair for the prosecution to complete its investigation," Justice Martin Muya told a hearing in the port city of Mombasa.

The accusations have stoked already tense political rivalry between the ruling and opposition parties, as Timamy is a member of the opposition United Democratic Forum (UDF) party.

Speaking in court, the governor repeated his accusation that the case against him was political.

"I am a sitting governor, what interest would drive me to kill the same people who voted me in?" he asked.

"This case is part of many hurdles that I had faced since my election. When this unfortunate incident happened, they use it as an opportunity to nail me. God is on my side," he said.

Police have also arrested alleged separatists from the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC), a group that campaigns for independence for the coastal region.

Survivors of the attack in Mpeketoni reported gunmen speaking Somali and carrying Shebab flags had executed non-Muslims, saying their actions were revenge for Kenya's military presence in Somalia as part of the African Union force intervention against the Islamists.

The attackers appeared to target Mpeketoni because the town is a mainly Christian settlement in the Muslim-majority coastal region, having been settled decades ago by the Kikuyu people, the same tribe as Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta.

AFP

Danone buys 40 pct stake in Kenya's Brookside

Fri Jul 18, 2014/Reuters

PARIS, July 18

(Reuters) - French food group Danone said on Friday it was buying a 40 percent stake in Brookside, East Africa's top dairy producer, as part of plans to expand in new markets amid weak growth in Europe and a slowing economy in China.

The deal, whose financial terms were not disclosed, was sealed with the controlling Kenyatta family, and will boost Danone's earnings, Emmanuel Marchant, vice-president for corporate development, told Reuters by phone.

Africa has in recent years become a major area of expansion for Danone and other global consumer companies such as Unilever, Nestle, Pernod Ricard and Diageo, attracted by the spending power

of the growing middle class.

"Africa is an important new frontier for Danone for years to come...We can grow organically but also through acquisitions... We continue to look for nice opportunities," Marchant said.

The deal with Brookside, which had 2013 sales of around 130 million euros (\$175.8 million) and has a share of about 40 percent of the Kenyan dairy market, gives Danone access to the largest milk collection network in East Africa with over 140,000 farmers and a distribution network of more than 200,000 outlets.

Founded in 1993 in Kenya, Brookside, which also exports to Uganda and Tanzania, has a portfolio spanning from fresh to powdered milk, yoghurt and butter. (\$1 = 0.7395 Euros)

ANGOLA :

AU/AFRICA :

Ford drives plans for expansion in Africa

July 18 2014/By Roy Cokayne/iol.co.za

Ford has aggressive plans to expand its business in Africa and will be launching 25 new vehicles into the Middle East and Africa region by 2016, with 17 of these models launched into sub-Saharan Africa.

Jim Benintende, the president of Ford Middle East and Africa (MEA), said yesterday Ford had launched earlier this year its fifth business unit, MEA, comprising 67 markets that represented "the final frontier for growth within the global automotive industry".

"The MEA automotive region is expected to grow by 40 percent to 5.5 million vehicles by 2020. By creating sub-regions within Fords MEA's business unit – South Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, as well as the Middle East and North Africa – Ford is strengthening its presence in this dynamic region, which is recognised as one of the fastest growing regions in the world," he said in Sandton at the first Ford Go Further event in Africa.

Benintende said Ford recognised the massive growth potential of the African continent and the opportunities it presented and by the end of next year would have refreshed more than 50 percent of its product line-up in South Africa and 20 percent of its line-up in sub-Saharan Africa.

He said Ford was also supporting its dealer network throughout the region to better serve customer needs, which included expanding its parts and service capability throughout the Middle East and Africa to ensure the shortest possible delivery times.

Jeff Nemeth, the president and chief executive of the Ford Motor Company of Southern Africa, said South Africa remained Ford's engine of growth for the continent going forward and its vision was to become the first choice for mobility in Africa.

Nemeth said Ford launched a total of six new products into the South Africa last year, which contributed to its exceptional 40 percent year-on-year growth to 64 500 units over 2012 and the improvement in its market share to 10.4 percent.

He said the same growth trend had continued this year and Ford's sales were 26 percent higher in the first half of this year compared with the corresponding period last year.

Nemeth stressed that for Ford to ensure its sales growth in Africa, it was vital to provide an affordable product offering.

“Africa is one of the youngest markets in the world and presents a huge business opportunity.

“The buying power of African consumers is on the rise as the continent's middle class increases exponentially. Despite the infrastructure challenges, Africa has demonstrated an impressive return on foreign direct investment, which led to a 5 percent increase in foreign direct investment across sub-Saharan Africa last year alone,” he said.

Nemeth added that Ford sales had grown by almost 60 percent in sub-Saharan Africa in the past four years, with Nigeria and Angola its largest markets and accounting for 50 percent of its total sales in the region.

But he said Ford only participated in 24 of the 46 markets in sub-Saharan Africa, which meant there was a massive opportunity for growth.

Nemeth said Ford would become an even stronger contender in the commercial vehicle segment by expanding the Transit brand family across the region.

Ebola Wreaks Economic Woe In West Africa

July 17, 2014/npr.org

In eastern Sierra Leone, health officials have set up the world's largest treatment for the Ebola virus. It's getting new patients every day, in an outbreak that's killed over 600 people in West Africa. Businesses in the area are suffering, and people are finding it difficult to earn a living.

ROBERT SIEGEL, HOST:

In Sierra Leone, the largest ever Ebola treatment center has been set up. It's in a town called Kailahun. The center is getting new patients every day in an outbreak that has killed more than 600 people in West Africa. The spread of the deadly disease is having a chilling effect on life in Kailahun. Businesses in the town are suffering, and as and NPR's Jason Beaubien reports, people are finding it difficult to earn a living.

JASON BEAUBIEN, BYLINE: There's fear and frustration here as one of the poorest countries in the world tries to deal with one of the scariest diseases on the planet. The lone bank in Kailahun pulled its staff out and shut its doors a month ago. The government has banned large gatherings which means that among other things, all the schools are closed. A popular Friday market that used to attract vendors from as far away as Guinea and Liberia has been canceled. Stores are shuttered and the usually bustling dirt streets in the center of town are almost traffic-free.

DORIS KAMARA: I'm praying to God that it will actually go today, and let's get on - be free.

BEAUBIEN: Doris Kamara runs a small restaurant that's grandly titled, "Doris Kamara Fast Food Enterprise." It's just a couple of wooden tables under a tin roof, but she's got a powerful refrigerator and a view of what used to be Kailahun's crowded traffic circle. Kamara says Ebola is killing her business.

KAMARA: No money - after work people would come and sit here. We play music. They chat. They buy. Well, now they say no public gathering. So now they got from their working place - they go to their home. So people don't buy. That is our main frustration in this Ebola crisis.

BEAUBIEN: She's also frustrated that people have been warned not to eat bushmeat, which used to be one of her nightly staples, because it might carry Ebola. Making things worse, the fishermen who used to bring their catch to town have stopped coming.

KAMARA: For me to prepare good food now is very hard because no good meats - no good fish.

BEAUBIEN: Even her beer isn't selling. Kamara says she used to go through a crate of beer a day - 24 bottles. Now it takes four or five days before the crate is empty. The economic impact of Ebola goes far beyond Doris Kamara's fast food enterprise. Kailahun is the market town for the region. People used to come from Guinea and Liberia, but now it's popular markets are closed. And with Ebola circulating in the town, people are simply staying away. The motorcycle taxi drivers in Kailahun have been extremely hard-hit by the Ebola panic.

ABU SENESIE: Since the disease break out on busy street, people are afraid to move, and we only get money from these people. So at this time, very difficult.

BEAUBIEN: Abu Senesie, who drives one of the hundreds of small Chinese-made motorcycle taxis, says business has plummeted. And yet, he still has to pay the roughly \$5 a day in rent for his machine. Adding insult to injury, some people now are avoiding the moto-taxis altogether. They don't want to sit up against the driver. As part of the Ebola prevention messages, the government has warned residents to avoid touching other people. Senesie says the fear goes both ways. Now drivers are scared that passengers might be sick with the potentially lethal disease.

SENESIE: Even when you are moving with passenger, you will be afraid because you don't know. Maybe along the way if that person affected, it simply would be transferred, and you would be be affected also.

BEAUBIEN: And while that thought is often in the back of his head, he says the biggest effect of Ebola for him right now is on his wallet. Jason Beaubien, NPR News, Kailahun, Sierra Leone.

Au moins 14 soldats tunisiens tués dans une attaque

17.07.2014/RTS.ch

Au moins 14 soldats tunisiens ont été tués mercredi soir lors d'une attaque "terroriste" près de la frontière avec l'Algérie. Il s'agit du bilan le plus lourd infligé à l'armée tunisienne.

"Deux groupes terroristes" ont ouvert le feu notamment "à la mitrailleuse" sur deux points de surveillance de l'armée sur le mont Chaambi, selon le ministère de la Défense tunisien. "Le bilan est d'au moins 14 morts et 20 blessés parmi les soldats et risque de s'alourdir", a déclaré son service de presse.

"Il s'agit du bilan le plus lourd enregistré par l'armée tunisienne depuis l'indépendance du pays" en

1956, a-t-il ajouté. Ces violences interviennent alors que le pays connaissait une relative accalmie et que des élections sont prévues dans un peu plus de trois mois.
Déjà huit morts il y a un an

L'armée tunisienne traque depuis fin 2012 un groupe armé qui serait lié à al-Qaïda dans cette région montagneuse du centre-ouest du pays. Huit soldats y avaient déjà été tués il y a un an.

La Tunisie fait face depuis la révolution de 2011 à l'essor de groupes djihadistes. A la mi-juin, al-Qaïda au Maghreb islamique (Aqmi) a revendiqué pour la première fois des attaques en Tunisie.

UN/AFRICA :

Top UN officials call for effective investment in Africa

Jul 18,2014/Xinhua

UNITED NATIONS, July 17 (Xinhua) -- Top UN officials on Thursday called for increased and effective investment in Africa to help achieve the continent's development objectives.

"In recent years, Africa's economic growth has been higher than in many other regions," UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said at the debate of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on the promotion of investment in Africa.

UN economists estimate that Africa's overall growth will exceed 5 percent in 2015, driven especially by domestic demand and solid commodity prices.

"But, this positive performance must not let us become complacent," Ban said, adding that serious obstacles still exist to more inclusive and sustainable economic and social development.

"As we shape a post-2015 development agenda that will deliver a life of dignity for all, it is plain that Africa needs significant investment," he stressed.

Foreign direct investment in Africa, including that from other African countries, has steadily increased since the turn of the century, the UN chief noted.

However, he said, "much of this investment has been related to resource extraction and exports, with not enough being channeled into vital development needs."

To end extreme poverty and provide inclusive prosperity, Ban said, Africa needs enabling environments that promote investment and reduce risk, as well as the wise management of the proceeds so they support sustainable development.

"Investment is essential, and when it is the right investment, it can be effective, benefiting people, businesses and governments alike," the secretary-general said, adding that it is essential to harness all sources of investment and finance -- public and private, domestic and external -- and ensure they complement each other.

Ban's view was echoed by John Ashe, president of the UNGA, who told the meeting that Africa needs to bridge a huge financing gap.

According to Ashe, despite considerable natural resource endowments, there has not been equitable distribution of the benefits of the revenues earned from their extraction, nor have such revenues been used to boost industrialization and development strategies.

"As a consequence, critical financing gaps remain, particularly with regard to agriculture, industrialization and infrastructure development," Ashe said.

The UNGA president called on all parties to join together to take Africa's recent progress to the next level and achieve the development goals for the continent.

"Let us harness the necessary resources and political will so that Africa may flourish in prosperity and opportunity," Ashe added.

Pakistan to join UN mission for Central Africa

July 18, 2014/AFP

UNITED NATIONS : A UN peacekeeping force for Central African Republic will begin deploying in two months, with some 2,500 troops joining African and French forces, UN and French officials said Wednesday.

Bangladesh, Pakistan and Morocco have agreed to contribute three battalions to the new UN force, said France's UN Ambassador Gerard Araud.

Indonesia and Cambodia are sending engineers, while Sri Lanka will provide helicopters for much-needed patrols in rural areas.

The first contingents will begin arriving around September 15 and will beef up the 6,000 African troops serving in the African Union's MISCA force.

The head of UN peacekeeping operations, Herve Ladsous, said the new UN force will work to strengthen security at a "significantly superior" level than the current MISCA operation.

"I believe it will contribute in a powerful way to strengthen security," said Ladsous after briefing the UN Security Council on the mission.

One of Africa's poorest countries, CAR has been in crisis since the mainly Muslim Seleka rebels seized power in a March 2013 coup.

The country has been engulfed in sectarian violence, driving more than one million people from their homes.

Ladsous said the UN is hoping for more contributions for a total of 10,000 troops, but added this "will not happen overnight."

An additional 2,000 police are to join in the mission, with Senegal and Rwanda pledging to take part.

The French ambassador said the UN troops will have to carry out patrols and "show the flag" to assert their peacekeeping role.

Preparations to deploy the new UN mission come as key players in the conflict are to meet in Brazzaville on July 21 for reconciliation talks.

UN chief appoints new envoy for Africa's Great Lakes region

Jul 18,2014/Xinhua

UNITED NATIONS, July 17 (Xinhua) -- UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Thursday appointed Said Djinnit of Algeria as his special envoy for the Great Lakes region of Africa, tasked with bringing international awareness to the area's challenges.

Djinnit succeeds Mary Robinson of Ireland, who earlier this week accepted new responsibilities as

the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Climate Change, said the announcement from Ban's office.

In his new role, one of Djinnit's responsibilities will be drawing attention to the continuing insecurity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where continued fighting and a decrease in financial resources is causing millions of people to go hungry.

Most recently, Djinnit served as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA). He also served as the High-Level Representative of the Secretary-General to Nigeria, in support of efforts against Boko Haram.

Djinnit previously served as the first African Union (AU) Commissioner for Peace and Security, after holding various positions in the Organization of African Unity (OAU), including as Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

He has also worked in various diplomatic missions of his home country, including in Belgium and Ethiopia.

US/AFRICA :

CANADA/AFRICA :

Google Elephant, B.C. Man's System, Helps Save Threatened African Species

By Dene Moore, The Canadian Press/ 07/18/2014

VANCOUVER - Forget Google Earth. Try Google Elephant.

Thanks in part to a tech-savvy student at the University of British Columbia, rangers in northern Kenya and South Africa are tapping into technology to combat poaching.

Jake Wall, a PhD student in UBC's geography department, works for the conservation group Save the Elephants, where he has helped outfit almost 100 of the mammals with GPS satellite-tracking collars.

"It gives us real insight into their day-to-day behaviour. At any given point they fire up Google Earth and check on the latest locations of the elephants and what they're doing," he said.

Researchers have used satellites to track the elephants' movements for decades but Wall then designed several software algorithms to crunch the live data and reveal patterns and, more importantly, any departure from patterns in their behaviour.

"We can look for behaviour such as an elephant that starts slowing down because it becomes injured or sick," Wall said.

"We're also very concerned with elephant poaching for ivory, so one of the algorithms I designed looks at whether an animal has stopped moving for a given period of time, which would signal that

the animal has been killed."

The system alerts a network of rangers, researchers and conservationists who can be deployed to help.

The live feed also offers a glimpse into the elephants' movements, interactions and other behaviours that ultimately help conserve the humongous herbivores, many of which remain endangered because of the illegal trade in ivory.

Iain Douglas-Hamilton, founder of Save the Elephants, said the tracking has unveiled the secrets of elephants they've been looking for decades.

"This novel integration of smartphone technology has allowed movement data to leap from the realm of applied research into a vital conservation tool that is used daily by anti-poaching forces," he said in a statement.

Wall, who grew up in part in Kenya, has worked for Save the Elephants for a decade. He will return to Africa in December.

"I feel like we've really just scratched the tip of the iceberg. There's a lot of other behaviour that we could be looking for, and as tracking systems improve, our ability to collect data, and transmit it improves as well. We're kind of riding the technology wave."

Wall, whose work is published in the journal *Ecological Applications*, says the system has already allowed the team to treat injured elephants and exposed poaching incidents.

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

Court Approves \$2.2B Sale of David Jones to South Africa's Woolworths

By Vittorio Hernandez /au.ibtimes.com/ July 18, 2014

The Sydney Federal Court approved on Thursday the \$2.2 billion sale of Australian department store David Jones to Woolworths Holdings of South Africa. The go signal came after shareholders of the second-largest department store in the country approved the sale on Monday.

The court rejected some of the concerns brought up by the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC), paving the way for the sale which would result in shareholders being paid about \$3.75 each as part of the deal.

ASIC threatened to withhold a letter of consent for the sale and raised concern that Woolworths' bid for Country Road was a multimillion dollar inducement to rag trade Solomon Lew who got a 9.9 per cent stake in David Jones in June, which triggered fears that Lew would try to block the sale unless Woolworths would purchase his 11.8 per cent stake in Country Road at a premium price.

Friday, July 18, is the last to trade David Jones shares in the Australian stock market. Shareholders would receive \$4 per share cash on Aug 1.

The 176-year-old department store, an icon in Australia's retail industry, has 38 stores across the country and has become a household name, but it decided to sell out after struggling for years

against weak sales as online retailers capture a larger share of the market.

"This is a very exciting moment in the history of both Woolworths and David Joes and a major milestone in our strategy to become a leading Southern Hemisphere retailer," said Ian Moir, chief executive of Woolworths, which is not related at all to the Australian grocery giant with the same name.

EU/AFRICA :

CHINA/AFRICA :

UnionPay issues 1st credit card in Africa

2014-07-18/ Xinhua/ Web Editor: Qin Dexing

China UnionPay, China's leading bankcard network operator, announced on Thursday that it has issued its first credit card in Africa, further enlarging its global footprint.

UnionPay International, China UnionPay's international arm, jointly issued three types of credit card in partnership with Cim Finance from Mauritius, the Shanghai-based company said in a statement.

The credit cards will be accepted in 140 countries and regions including China and Mauritius without a foreign transaction fee, said the company.

China UnionPay started to issue debit cards in Africa in August, 2013.

INDIA/AFRICA :

India, South Africa vow closer bilateral ties on sidelines of BRICS summit

Jul 18, 2014/firstpost.com

New Delhi: India and South Africa have pledged to strengthen bilateral ties and work closely in international forums to advance the interests of the two countries and the developing world at large.

Meeting on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Brasilia, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and South African President Jacob Zuma described the relations between the two countries as "unique and special", forged by the strong presence of the Indian community in South Africa, said a statement from the Prime Minister's Office here Thursday.

The two leaders greeted each other on their electoral victories in their respective countries this year. Prime Minister Modi thanked President Zuma for his wise stewardship of BRICS over the last year.

Modi also extended an invitation for South African representation in the centenary celebrations of

Mahatma Gandhi's return to India in January next year. Modi noted that Mahatma Gandhi's life had created a special link between the two countries.

Zuma sought Modi's cooperation in strengthening small and medium-scale industries in South Africa. Prime Minister Modi lauded President Zuma's initiative and offered India's full support.

IANS

Chidambaram welcomes setting up of \$100 billion BRICS Bank

Press Trust of India/indianexpress.com/July 16, 2014

Welcoming setting up of the BRICS Bank, former Finance Minister P Chidambaram on Wednesday said the work initiated by United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government last year has led to its culmination in Brazil on Tuesday.

"I am delighted that the work begun by the UPA government at the BRICS Summit in South Africa has culminated in an agreement to set up the New Development Bank," he said in a statement.

Finance Minister of the BRICS countries had also worked on the idea at various deliberations on the sidelines of the Fund-Bank and G-20 meetings, he said.

On Tuesday, the member countries of BRICS nations – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – agreed to set up the USD 100 billion bank to help development of member nations and developing countries.

"I am especially happy that all outstanding issues have been resolved to the mutual satisfaction of the five countries. All five countries will contribute equal amount to the equity capital of the bank and will have equal voice and equal voting rights as founder members of the bank," he said. The bank will be headquartered at Shanghai and India's candidate will be the first president of the bank, he said.

"I congratulate the government of the BRICS countries as well as the chief negotiators on the successful conclusion of the negotiations. The BRICS Bank is an outcome of which every Indian can be legitimately proud," he said.

Month-long Indian festival in S Africa starts with exhibition

Press Trust of India/business-standard.com/July 18, 2014

A digital exhibition featuring the lives of Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela as two of the greatest leaders of the past century has kicked off a month-long Indian festival here today that will celebrate the strong bonds between India and South Africa.

Hosted jointly by the South African Ministry of Arts and Culture and the Indian High Commission, the festival will see various Indian arts and cultural activities being taken beyond the major cities of the country, as has largely been the case in the past with visiting Indian artists.

"It marks several things - the centenary of Mahatma Gandhi's return to India; 20 years of democracy in South Africa and 20 years of relations with India; and of course the birthday of the father of the nation, Nelson Mandela," said Virendra Gupta, India's High Commissioner to South Africa.

"Gandhiji's 20 years in South Africa fighting oppression here led to his Satyagraha principles which he took right back to India to energise the freedom struggle there," he said.

He said the aim of the festival is "to celebrate with this strong bonds between India and South Africa which are underpinned by the two tallest individuals that we have seen".

The Exhibition is being put up at Constitutional Hill, which was formerly a notorious prison where both Gandhi and Mandela had been jailed.

20 school children will be brought from India to participate in discussion based on the exhibition with hundreds of local pupils.

The next phase of the Festival involves the opening of a Garden of Remembrance at Tolstoy Farm, where Gandhi established a self-sufficient commune during his tenure in Johannesburg.

Long-term plans for the revival of the now derelict area are under discussion with local community organisations.

Other events during the festival will include an exhibition on the monuments of India, a cricket exhibition match, three dance groups from India showing the evolution of the art form in India, besides a film festival and musical performances.

South African Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture Rejoice Mabudafhasi echoed Gupta's sentiments about the special relationship with India.

"The Festival we are launching today is part of the agreement that we would host reciprocal festivals in each other's countries," the minister said as she thanked the High Commission for taking the festival to rural areas as well.

"That is real cooperation, as even those in rural areas will be able to participate," she said.

BRAZIL/AFRICA :

EN BREF, CE 18 Juillet 2014... AGNEWS/DAM, NY, 18/07/2014