QUOTE OF THE DAY

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EDITORIAL

Afcon: Time for East Africa to come good

The 2027 Africa Cup of Nations (Afcon) will take place in June and July next year, the Confederation of African Football (Caf) president, Mr Patrice Motsepe, announced on Friday.

Mr Motsepe said reports that the tournament, co-hosted by Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, would be delayed or moved were "totally unfounded".

Doubts have been raised over whether the necessary infrastructure in the three East African countries will be ready in time to stage the finals.

While admitting that there will always be challenges, Caf reaffirmed its commitment to East Africa.

Mr Motsepe was speaking at a news conference after a meeting of Caf's executive committee in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and an inspection of facilities and infrastructure in the three host nations by officials from the continent's governing body.

The issue:
Afcon preparations.

Our view:
While Uganda has built a world class stadium in Hoima City, where are the hotels to support it? It is imperative that the government moves swiftly and help private investors to build at least two five-star hotels in Hoima.

This region should not take this endorsement for granted, especially after an extremely successful 2025 edition held in Morocco.

Upon review, everyone is aware that the North Africans raised the bar after the previous two tournaments in Cameroon and Ivory Coast.

Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania have an opportunity that has not been here for generations since the region last hosted the prestigious event in 1976 in Ethiopia.

Let's get the basics right. Clearly, some of the infrastructure needed for the Afcon is behind schedule even after the testing that happened when the region hosted the delayed 2024 Africa Nations Championship (Chan) last year.

For example, there is no clear communication on when the refurbishment of the Mandela National Stadium, Namboole will start yet it's critical to Uganda having a slice of the Afcon proceeds.

Beyond football, Kenya and Tanzania have done a fairly good job on trying to improve their transport infrastructure with the railway lines.

It's not possible for Uganda to catch up within the remaining 15 months but the lesson we can learn is to invest quicker in the railway system from hereon.

In addition, the biggest beneficiary of events like this is the hospitality sector. While Uganda has built a world class stadium in Hoima City, where are the hotels to support it?

It's very urgent for the government to move swiftly and help private investors to build at least two five-star hotels in Hoima as these are a minimum requirement for Caf.

While the Kabalega Airport is not far from completion, there is also the need for a good hospital within a few kilometres of the stadium in case of emergencies during the tournament.

All this must be done within the strict timelines as seen with the completion of the Hoima City Stadium not long ago.

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