

# Central Extra

**Daily Monitor**

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**LEADERS PETITION MINISTER.** Councillors in Nakaseke District have passed a resolution to petition the minister for Animal Industry, Ms Joy Kabatsi, over her persistent Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and the unending quarantine for the cattle corridor areas. The Nakaseke District vice chairperson, Mr Richard Mavuma, said last week that the district realised that the persistent FMD is a result of animals that are smuggled into the district from Tanzania. [Dan Wandera]



## DEATH TRAP

### Village bridge collapses

The Kyakatagwa makeshift bridge broke down after a downpour last week. The bridge connects Kabira Sub-county to Kyotera Town. PHOTO BY IVAN KIMBOWA

# Gomba leaders ban sand mining

**Illegal.** They say sand miners have been operating illegally.

BY SADAT MBOGO  
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**GOMBA.** Gomba District leaders have banned sand mining activities in three villages over environmental concerns.

According to Mr Godfrey Kiviiri, the district chairperson, illegal sand mining started in the district early last year in three swamps of Kalwanga, Kifampa and Mirambi in Kabulasoke Sub-county.

The affected swamps are part of the major water catchment areas that connect several rivers and wetlands in Gomba, Mpigi and Kalungu districts and drains directly into Lake Victoria.

"Our environment protection team asked the sand miners to present to the district licences and environmental impact assessment certificates issued to them by National Environment Management Authority, unfortunately, they didn't turn up. This clearly showed that they were lying to us [district]. This is the reason

why the district executive committee sat last week and slapped a ban on sand mining activities until further notice," he said in an interview last Friday.

Following the directive, the sand miners have also been ordered to take away their excavators from the mining sites.

Mr Musa Male, one of the affected sand miners, said they possess licenses that allow them to operate in the area and was surprised to learn that they had been ordered to vacate the area.

"We have licences and even the district officials from the environment protection department together with the chairman, have been monitoring our sites, but we wonder why they abruptly halted our operations. We are trying to negotiate with them to see whether they can allow us to resume work soon," he said.

The decision to ban sand mining comes two weeks after the government put sand, stones and murrum under the category of minerals in the new approved mining policy.

Government believes this will end unregulated sand mining across the country.

## KEY ISSUE

According to Mr Godfrey Kiviiri, the district chairperson, illegal sand mining started in the district earlier last year in three swamps of Kalwanga, Kifampa and Mirambi in Kabulasoke Sub-county.

Under the new policy, any one intending to venture into sand mining will be required to acquire a licence from the Energy Ministry.

According to the new policy, anyone who will be caught engaging in sand mining without a licence will be fined Shs500,000 or jailed for one year, or both.

### Lack support

Recently, leaders in Kalungu and Mpigi districts said they lacked the political support to stop illegal sand mining in Lwera wetland despite parliament halting the activities.

The Kalungu District chairperson, Mr Richard Kyabaggu, said the issue surrounding sand mining in Lwera was bigger for them as a district and all their efforts to stop the illegal activities have in the past failed due to 'external factors.'

Sand mining has in the past decade become a lucrative business due to the swiftly growing construction sector.

Environmentalists recently raised concern over the increasing sand mining in major swamps like Lwera,

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## brief

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**MASAKA.** Mr. Masaka District blamed the poor the district on fcs to inspect gc in rural areas. At roads committee Rehabilitation C Mr Mbabaali, sa the district Wo Babirye Kaban- attacked by ar lages because to fix the road:

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## Voices

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CHAIRPERSON

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MUSA MALE, SAND  
MINER

saying excessive excavation of sand will spark off a serious ecological disaster.

Meanwhile, this newspaper has also learnt that some heavy trucks that ferry sand from Lwera swamp to Kampala have resorted to using a longer route via Kayabwe Town to Butambala District and Gomba District instead of using the Kampala-Masaka highway.

When asked why these sand trucks pass through Gomba District, Mr Kiviiri said the truck drivers want to avoid the Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) axle load checkpoint at Buwama Town Council in Mpigi District.

"We received information that they [truck drivers] use Gomba roads to avoid checkpoints on Kampala-Masaka road, but we [executive committee] have already written to police, directing them to arrest and prosecute any sand truck driver in the district," he said.

He said such trucks should be impounded because they are destroying the new Sembabule-Kanoni-Mpigi road, which is still under construction.

## Alerted

Mr Joseph Musana, the police spokesperson for Katonga region, confirmed that police were alerted by Gomba leaders over the matter.

"We have already deployed both plain-clothed and uniformed policemen, together with UNRA enforcement team to arrest the drivers," he said last Saturday.

Mr Allan Ssempebwa, the UNRA media relations manager, said the practice of transporting wet sand is the reason truck drivers use village routes.

"Transportation of wet sand is discouraged among sand mining companies as a way of minimising road damage. If the local leaders are championing against over loading, then we have partners in road asset protection," he said.

To minimise the practice, Mr Ssempebwa said they have strengthened checkpoints on major highways.

**briefly**

Parents caution...