

Kampala Extra

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REFUGEES TO GET CONFLICT MANAGEMENT TRAINING. The Office of the Prime Minister and Brac International, an NGO, have started a programme to train refugees and vulnerable communities on how to manage situations which lead to conflicts and disasters. While launching the programme in Kampala yesterday, Mr Shashanka Saadi, the Brac head of emergency preparedness and response programme, said the project is aimed at ensuring that refugees detect potential sources of disasters. [Stephen Otage]



MAKING MONEY

Fishmongers reap big

Fishermen harvest fish from one of the cages that were set up by Pearl Aquatic company in Tende Bay in Garuga Katabi Town Council in Wakiso District on Monday. Many people have been equipped with skills on how to improve fish farming, which has greatly improved people's livelihoods. PHOTO BY EVE MUGANGA

Entebbe leaders slam NFA as Kitubulu forest gets depleted

Important. The reserve measures approximately 200 acres and is one of the four important remnants of lowland forests near Lake Victoria, which help filter water pollutants and silt that threaten the lake.

BY EVE MUGANGA & AL-MAHDI SSENKABIRWA
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ENTEBBE. Local leaders in Entebbe Municipality, Wakiso District, have accused National Forestry Authority (NFA) of being responsible for the continued destruction of Kitubulu Central Forest Reserve.

Other forest reserves are Mabira in Mukono District, Zika in Wakiso District and Mpanga in Mpigi District.

Recently, part of Kitubulu forest was fenced off to allow construction of cottages and lodges for revellers. There is also a football pitch occu-

pying part of the forest. Deep inside the same forest; there is also a bar, which was supposedly sanctioned by NFA.

Local leaders claim they lack the political clout to stop destruction of the forest since the encroachers claim to have clearance from NFA.

Mr Ronald Kalema, the mayor Katabi Town Council, says he has also on several occasions received complaints from residents regarding encroachment on forests in the area, but there is nothing he can do to help the situation.

"One time, I received a letter from residents who were complaining about soldiers who were cutting trees in Zika Forest which belongs to Uganda Virus Research Institute," Mr Kalema said.

"I personally arrested one of the men who were cutting the trees in Zika forest and handed him over to police, but he was set free on the or-

NFA WORK

The National Forestry and Tree Planting Act, 2003 mandates NFA to manage all central forest reserves on a sustainable basis and to supply high quality forestry-related products and services to government, local communities and the private sector. However, over the recent years, large tracts of government forest reserves have been cleared.

ders of NFA officials," he added.

Mr Henry Semakula, the Katabi Town Council town clerk, explains that some individuals who possess permits to cut trees in central forest reserves sometimes go against the set rules and end up cutting down trees they are not supposed to remove.

"How do you expect a local council leader to confront a high-ranking government official when he turns up with a permit from NFA authorizing him to cut trees in a forest reserve?" Mr Semakula wonders.

In 2013, NFA sanctioned a private investor to cut down some trees at Kitubulu claiming that they had become old and were a danger to people living near the forest and those using the Entebbe-Kampala highway.

A total of 433.895 cubic metres

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briefly

Shs14b water system

MUKONO: Government has commissioned a new water supply system Mukono District. The Shs14b project will serve the areas of Kabembe, Kizung'u, Naggalama. While commissioning project on Tuesday, the State Water, Mr Ronald Kibuule, said the system will serve 40,000 residents. "With this new project, people will no longer use unsafe water and against unscrupulous people who take money from them with a permit to connect them to the system," he said. [Muzaale]

CAO warns ass

WAKISO: The Wakiso deputy Chief Administrator Wasswa Masokoyi, has warned community associations diverting money for development in Masokoyi warned the during their meeting headquarters yesterday said many times different based groups apply for their respective sub-counties and districts but they are not for their personal interests. [Kiggundu]

Kitubulu forest reserve depleted

Voices

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"Our hands are tied. We have on several occasions tried to stop those illegal activities in our forests but we find the encroachers with licenses given to them by National Forestry Authority,"

RONALD KALEMA,
KATABI TOWN COUNCIL
MAYOR

"Despite Entebbe being a town, forests ought to survive alongside development. So, that is part of the development and those people who were licensed to construct in the forest, are not allowed to cut down a single tree or put up permanent structures,"

FLORENCE
NAJJUMA, ENTEBBE
MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT OFFICER

"There is really no cause for alarm, the small part we allocated for eco-tourism project is just only six per cent of the entire forest. Whatever activity is done there is under the supervision of NFA. So, they [investors] don't own the land, but we gave them leases for a particular period of time,"

AISHA ALIBHAI, NFA
SPOKESPERSON

of trees were cut and NFA raised Shs35.5m from this deal.

According to 83-year-old Zebideo Katongole, one of the elders residing near Kitubulu forest, the forest cover in Entebbe was impressive in the past three decades, which added to the town's beautiful serenity, but all this is gradually disappearing.

"In the past, we used to have a very big forest cover stretching from Kigungu to Kitubulu and several swamps, which attracted different bird species, but we are today seeing houses and hotels," Mr Katongole said.

Infrastructural development plus other human activities, are both blamed for the vanishing green cover.

However, Entebbe Division chairperson, Mr Mike Mutebi, blames the wanton destruction of forests and wetlands on breakdown in law enforcement and corruption.

"Unless the powers that be, walks the talk and punish corrupt officials in government, we will lose everything as country. Majority of the people who destroy our forests are in government, but nothing is done to them," he said.

No cause for alarm?

Ms Florence Najjuma, the Entebbe Municipal Council environment officer, defended the erection of cottages and other structures in Kitubulu forest, saying they are among the projects set up to promote 'eco-diversity'.

Ms Najjuma says working with NFA, they have come up with a campaign to plant more than a million trees in different parks and streets in Entebbe to restore the area's depleted forest cover.

When contacted, the NFA spokesperson, Ms Aisha Alibhai, said the current state of Kitubulu Central Forest Reserve is not alarming as depicted by some local leaders.

She also denied reports that NFA is hatching a plan to degazette Kitubulu forest and replant a new one in Mukono District.

MUKONO to ch



Noise. An artiste performed a sound level

Evidence. Authorities noise metre will provide evidence of noise in the municipal court

BY JES
editorial@ug.

MUKONO. In an effort to curb the increasing noise levels, Mukono Municipality has procured a noise meter to help measure the amount of noise made.

According to Mr Kagimu, the Mukono Municipality mayor, the noise meter will provide them with evidence of noise polluters in court.

Shs5m has so far been used to purchase the noise meter.

"Acquiring a noise meter is a good step to fight noise pollution. Some residents have been complaining that we are not doing anything about the unbearable noise level. We shall have evidence of noise polluters," he said.