



PRESS REVIEW

John Paul II Justice and Peace Centre
"Faith Doing Justice"

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Plot 2468 Nsereko Road-Nsambya
P.O. Box 31853, Kampala-Uganda
Tel: +256414267372
Mobile: 0783673588
Email: jp2justice.director@gmail.com
Joshua.mutebe@jp2jpc.org
Website: www.jp2jpc.org

THEMATIC AREAS

- Education
- Environment
- Health
- Economy
- Religion and Society
- Politics
- Youth

EDUCATION

Ministry closes 100 private schools. A total of 100 private owned schools in Manafwa district have been closed over failure to meet minimum standards required, leaving hundreds of learners stranded. The Manafwa district education officer, Mr Eridada Mudangi said that out of 220 registered private schools including primary and secondary, only 109 meet the required standards to operate.

Uneb questions govt funding in USE schools. The Uneb Board has questioned the government funding in schools under the Universal Secondary Education (USE). Uneb executive secretary Daniel Odongo said the good performance in the traditional government-aided schools was a result of tuition fees parents pay to support the schools' daily activities.

Govt to recruit 2,000 science teachers. The Ministry of Education and Sports said they will recruit 2,000 science teachers to improve teaching of sciences in secondary schools. Mr Daniel Odongo, the Uneb executive secretary said performance in the science subjects remained low.

Govt plans sanitary pads for 1.2 million school girls. Hundreds of primary school-going will be relieved once government secures shs42b budgeted to buy sanitary towels to use while they are in their menstrual periods.

Drop compulsory sciences at O-Level, UNEB tells govt. Uganda National Examinations Board and the teachers unions have asked government to review the science policy which requires every student in lower secondary to study science subjects. The general secretary of Uganda National Teachers Union (UNATU) said that performance in science subjects has continued to drop and few students are now pursuing sciences at an advanced level.

Schools ordered not to hike fees. No private or public secondary school in Uganda will henceforth, for whatever reason, be allowed to increase tuition fees without the permission of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Sports.

Schools to get free food. The government is set to distribute free food to schools in different districts affected by the prolonged dry spell across the country. Vincent Ssempijja, the agriculture minister, told legislators that because of the prolonged dry spell, the population that needed food relief had increased from 1.3 million people in November 2016 to 1.58 million people in January.

ENVIRONMENT

Residents face water shortage as dam dry's up. More than 6,000 people in Gulu district are on the verge of experiencing severe water shortage as Oytino dam water levels continue to drop. The NWSC Gulu area manager, Mr Stephen Gang, confirmed that the water levels at the dam are worrying, something he attributed to the long dry spell and human activities such as farming and sand mining.

Rakai earthquake victims ask Museveni to fulfil pledge. Leaders in Kyebe and Kakuuto sub-counties in Rakai district have petitioned president Museveni over a pledge he made to earthquake victims.

Environment court in offing. The judiciary has announced plans to institute a specialised court to prosecute offenders of environmental laws in the country. the judiciary's spokesperson, Erias Kisawuzi, said by mid this year the sector would launch the utility, standards, wildlife and environment court that would, among others, tackle cases on destruction of environment.

NFA bans grazing in forest reserves. The National Forestry Authority (NFA) has banned grazing of cattle in central forest reserves in Rakai district. The NFA executive director Michael Mugisa said no herder in the district has been cleared to graze in any forest reserve and ordered deployment of both the soldiers and policemen to guard the forest reserves to arrest the culprits.

Disaster looms as 11 million Ugandans face starvation. At least 10.9m Ugandans are facing acute food insecurity in the country. Minister for Agriculture Mr Vincent Ssempijja says the food security situation is getting worse with a population that needs food increase.

HEALTH

WHO issues new cancer guidelines. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has issued new guidelines for early cancer diagnosis to improve the chances of survival for people living with cancer.

US government donates sh30b HIV drugs. The US government has provided Anti-Retroviral (ARV) drugs worth \$8.6m to National Medical Stores (NMS) to ensure that HIV-positive Ugandans across the country access these life-saving drugs. The NMS General Manager, Mr Moses Kamabare, acknowledged that the US government committed to provide ARVs worth \$8.6m as and when they are needed.

Army unveils new hospital project. Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF) engineers Brigade has started the construction of a diagnostic centre (outpatient department) and dental unit at lower Mbuya Barracks. The UPDF Chief of defence forces, Gen. David Muhoozi, officiated at the breaking of the ground for the construction of the medical facility.

Mulago to start low cost infertility treatment. Mulago national referral hospital will be the first public health facility to provide assisted reproductive technologies. A senior consultant in obstetrics and gynaecology at Mulago hospital, said

MPs okay sh411b for refurbishing health facilities. Parliament has approved a proposal by the Ministry of health seeking sh411b to construct new health facilities and improve existing ones. The health ministry had asked the finance ministry to include the sh411b in the 2017/18 in the budget, but the item was put in the category of unfunded priorities.

Intern doctors decry harassment. Intern doctors at Mbale regional referral hospital have threatened to stop work over what they described as "threats and unnecessary arrests of their colleagues."

Leaders accuse NMS of distributing empty drug boxes. Leaders and medical personnel in Karamoja region have accused National Medical Stores (NMS) of alleged distribution of empty drug boxes to health centres in the region. Mr Jimmy Ocerro, the Abim district chairperson faulted NMS for allegedly delivering empty boxes of drugs to Abim district hospital

ECONOMY

Minister urges people to trust SACCOS. The state minister for finance in charge of economic monitoring, Kasirivu Atwooki, has urged Mayuge residents to entrust Savings Credit and Co-operatives Societies (SACOOS) with their money in order for them to develop.

Confidence in Uganda's economy still low-experts. Investor confidence of doing business in the Ugandan economy has remained low one year after the general election, an economist Ms Sarah Arapta Wojega

Govt to extend renewable energy countrywide. Government is tapping into renewable energy resources to be able to extend power to off the grid areas in Uganda. Mr John Tumuhimbise, the Commissioner Renewable Energy Resource at the Ministry of Energy, said government has set up a renewable energy policy framework which sets policies for increasing uptake of renewable energy in the country.

Loan repayment culture in Uganda is weak-Mutebile. In the six months to September 2016, Ugandan commercial banks experienced some of the highest levels of loan defaulters that were upwards of about shs800b. Mr Mutebile said that it will not be until good practices are adopted by businesses, that the benefits of lower interest rates will be beneficial to the economy.

Farmers to benefit from shs424b seeds project. Farmers in Uganda will now be able to access good quality seeds after the launch of a seed pilot project aimed at multiplying the quantity of quality seeds in the market said by Mr Okasai Opolot, the Director crop resource at the ministry of Agriculture, said.

Produce goods locally to avoid taxes-minister. Trade Minister Amelia Kyabadde has asked traders to start importing equipment and set up industries to produce goods so as to cut expenses in transport and taxes.

Economists tell govt to boost productivity. Economists have told government to increase productivity in the economy if the country is to attain middle income status within the next four years.

RELIGION AND SOCIETY

Religious leaders, parents up in arms over govt policy on contraceptives. A ministry of health proposal to have school children as young as 10 years access birth control services have set off a storm with the ministry of education pointing out that it was not consulted. Archbishop of Kampala Cyprian Kizito Lwanga cautioned government about policies that contradict church teachings.

Involve clergy in HIV/Aids fight- bishop. Ankole diocese bishop Sheldon Mwesigwa has asked stakeholders in the fight against HIV/Aids scourge to involve religious institutions. Mr Umar Masereka, a senior health official, said the HIV/Aids prevalence in the district has risen to 6.1 per cent from 5.9 per cent in the recent past.

Stay united, Vatican tells feuding Arua Catholics. The Vatican, through the president of the pontifical academy for life, Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, has urged Christians in Arua to be united and stop fighting Sabino Odoki, the new bishop of Arua diocese sitting at Ediofe cathedral.

Regional clerics unite to fight extremism. Religious leaders from East Africa have called for the need by religious leaders to work together in the fight against terrorism. The co-ordinator of East African Credible Voices programme, Hadji Ahmed, said this was necessary because religion has been used to instigate violence.

POLITICS

MPs fault govt on lack of Albino policy. Speaker blamed the government for failure to institute policies that would protect the rights of albinos, a group of people whose lives are endangered both environmentally and socially. Ms Kadaga instructed her deputy Jacob Oulanyah (NRM MP, Omoro County) to task government to institute measures to protect the albinos.

Govt warns public servants on amending their age. The government through the public service ministry has warned public servants applying to change their age to stop it, insisting that such applications will not be accepted. The public service ministry permanent secretary, Ms Catherine Musingwire, revealed that her ministry had received numerous requests from public servants who want to change their dates of birth.

Museveni warns on using money. President Yoweri Museveni has warned the East African Legislative (EALA) candidates and other leaders against using money and lies in election. According to Museveni, the continued commercialisation of elections in the country impacts on the quality and competence of leaders voted into office.

FDC starts early preparations in Arua North. The Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) partly has started early groundwork ahead of the anticipated by-election in Arua North constituency, Pader district.

Lumumba faults NRM leaders over division. The NRM secretary general, Ms Justine Kasule Lumumba, has criticised the party leaders in Buhweju district over failure to secure victory for the party flag bearers during the 2016 presidential and parliamentary elections. Ms Lumumba noted that the divisions were costing the party and this could affect fulfilment of the pledges.

Govt speaks out on Besigye-Museveni talks. Government has responded to reports indicating that it is involved in behind the scene talks with the largest opposition party, the Forum for Democratic change

FDC protests govt plan to cut health budget. The Forum for Democratic change (FDC) party has protested the cuts in the social sector budgets, especially health. FDC deputy secretary General Harold Kaija said the party is concerned that the government decided to cut budget for the health sector and other social services.

YOUTH

Actors ask government to fund youth programmes. Youth actors have asked government to allocate funds in the next year's budget to implement its commitments made under the national youth policy. Ms Elone Natumanya, the coordinator of the UPFYA, described the youth policy as Uganda's comprehensive frame work to address the development of the youth in a holistic perspective.

EAC, FAO sign shs1.5b grants to tackle youth unemployment. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations and the East African Community (EAC) have signed a grant agreement intended to promote urban and rural agriculture and agribusiness in order to improve youth employment in the region.

Youth face arrest over YLP funds. Community Development Officers in Mpigi district have resolved to arrest all youth who have failed to repay funds under the Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP). The Mpigi resident district commissioner said many youth have failed to refund the money because they diverted it to organising weddings and purchasing home appliance while others used it to process documents to go and work overseas.