

Sierra Leone: Cities in the dark for weeks

Freetown, and other cities, have been plunged into darkness for weeks because electricity bills to power companies have not been paid. Karpowership, the Turkish ship that supplies most of Freetown's electricity, has effectively switched off the lights because of an unpaid bill of about \$48 million. Karpowership has reduced its power supply from 60 megawatts to six megawatts. CLSG, an Ivorian electricity supplier, has also significantly reduced its supplies to the south-eastern towns of Bo, Kenema and Koidu. The country's third major source of electricity is the state hydropower dam in the northern town of Bumbuna. However, it is currently only supplying six megawatts as the dry season has peaked and the water level is at its lowest. Karpowership is one of the largest floating power plant operators in the world and several African countries rely on it for their electricity supply. However, the company has taken a hard line on defaults. Last October, the capital of Guinea-Bissau was cut off from electricity due to unpaid bills, plunging the city into darkness.

Export duties for cut flowers lifted

The UK has abolished its 8% tax on cut flower imports for the next two years. Kenya, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, the continent's major cut flower exporters, will benefit from this decision. According to a UK government announcement, unlimited quantities of flowers from East Africa can now be transported to the UK at 0%, even if they are travelling through a third country. This is particularly important for growers who sell flowers through auction houses before they arrive in the UK. In Arusha, the flower industry currently generates an export value of around EUR 460 million per year and creates more than 4,000 jobs.

Uganda: Beauty parlour in the parliament building

The female members of the Ugandan parliament have called for the establishment of a dedicated hairdressing salon in parliament. Parliament recently got its own gym, but the female MPs say their hair gets messy from the intense workout, so few MPs are willing to use the facility. The Minister of State for Water and Environment, Beatrice Anywar, said "a beauty parlour would help meet the needs of female MPs before parliamentary sessions".

Nigeria: "Revolutionary" meningitis vaccine

Nigeria has launched the Men5CV vaccine, which protects against the five main strains of meningococcal bacteria (A, C, W, Y and X) with a single immunisation. The World Health Organisation believes that this could transform the fight against meningitis. Meningitis is hyperendemic in Nigeria. Last year, the number of meningitis cases in Africa increased by 50%. Nigeria, with its 220 million inhabitants, is one of the 26 countries on the continent where meningitis is particularly prevalent, an area known as the African meningitis belt.

Great apes seriously threatened

The increased demand for critical raw materials such as copper, lithium, cobalt and rare earths due to the energy transition is threatening Africa's great apes. According to a biodiversity study, a third of the approximately 180,000 gorillas, chimpanzees and bonobos are seriously endangered. The rainforest regions of Africa - the habitat of the great apes - are becoming ever smaller due to

deforestation. Light pollution, noise, roads and new settlements are having a major impact. In addition, great apes in these areas are being hunted more frequently and infected with diseases. Researchers found the greatest overlap between mining and chimpanzee habitat in the West African countries of Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mali and Guinea. In the latter country, 23,000 (83% of the ape population) are affected by mining

Niger: Russian soldiers arrived

The ruling junta has severed long-standing military and diplomatic ties with France and, like neighbouring Mali and Burkina Faso, has turned to Russia for support in fighting a jihadist insurgency. Russian military trainers have arrived in the capital Niamey and were seen unloading equipment from a cargo plane. The military trainers also brought an air defence system with them. Moscow is thus continuing its efforts to strengthen its influence in the troubled Sahel region of West Africa.

Tanzania: Floods claim almost 60 lives

April marks the peak of the rainy season in Tanzania. This year has seen the heaviest rainfall in recent years. The country's coastal region is one of the worst affected areas, where flooding has affected thousands of farms. According to weather experts, the El Niño weather phenomenon has exacerbated this year's seasonal rainfall. The heavy rains have also led to the deaths of at least 13 people and the displacement of around 15,000 people in neighbouring Kenya, according to the UN.

Ukraine opens embassies in Africa

One day after opening a similar embassy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ukraine inaugurated an embassy in the Ivory Coast. In March, the DRC opened a consulate in the Kyiv region of Uzhhorod, covering the Zakarpattia, Lviv and Rivne regions. The Ukrainian special envoy is currently travelling through various African countries to open several embassies to counter Russian influence on the continent.

Morocco: Vital Al Massira reservoir is shrinking

Morocco's second largest reservoir, which supplies some of the country's largest cities and is of key importance for agricultural irrigation, is drying up, analysed satellite images show. The Al-Massira reservoir, which lies roughly halfway between Casablanca and Marrakech, contains only 3 per cent of the average amount of water that was available there nine years ago, according to the figures. Six consecutive years of drought and climate change, which is causing record temperatures that lead to increased evaporation, are threatening the water supply in the North African country.

Comoros: Prison break

Dozens of prisoners have escaped by simply walking out of the main gate of the prison in the capital Moroni. The public prosecutor's office blamed negligent security staff for the early morning escape. However, a government spokesman said the escape of the 38 men had apparently been planned. Moroni Prison, the largest in the Indian Ocean Island state, is dilapidated and overcrowded. More than 200 prisoners are detained there - more than double the capacity.

More Info: <https://netzwerkafrika.de/>

Wild dogs - Sperm bank