

MWENDOKASI MBAGALA

Wakazi Dar sasa wakerwa ahadi hewa za Udart



Tumesikia mara kadhaa huduma ingeanza leo, hakuna kinachotelelela. Mabasi tumeona yakiingizwa kwenye karakana tangu juzi. Ni vema mamlaka ziwe zinatoa ahadi za kitaalamu, si za kisiasa.

Deogratius Kisinde, mkazi Mbagala

Wananchi wakerwa ahadi hewa za Udart

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Dar es Salaam. Baada ya huduma ya mabasi yaendayo haraka (mwendokasi) katika barabara ya Mbagala kukwama kuanza jana kama ilivyoahidiwa awali na Wakala wa Mabasi Yaendayo Haraka (Dart), wachumi na wadau mbalimbali wamejitokeza kutoa malalamiko pamoja na ushauri wa nini kifanyike ili huduma hiyo ianze kutekelezwa.

Akieleza sababu ya kushindwa kutimiza ahadi hiyo, alipozungumza na Mwananchi jana, Mtendaji Mkuu wa Dart, Dk Athuman Kihamia, alisema imetokana na kutokamilika kwa miundombinu muhimu yakiwamo mageti janja na kituo cha kujazia gesi.

"Mabasi yamewasili, lakini hatutaweza kuanza kutoa huduma leo kama tulivyoahidi kwa kuwa baadhi ya miundombinu haijakamilika.

"Mageti janja kwa ajili ya ukataji wa tiketi bado hayajafungwa, na kituo cha kujazia gesi kilichopo kwenye karakana ya Mbagala nacho hakijakamilika. Hata hivyo, taarifa rasmi kuhusu maendeleo ya ujenzi huo tutaitoa baada ya wiki moja," alisema Dk Kihamia, wakati ambao abiria wa Mbagala walikuwa wakijiandaa kuanza kupata ladha mpya ya usafiri wa umma.

Mkurugenzi Mkuu wa Kampuni ya Mofat, Muhammad Abdallah Kassim,

Mabasi mapya ya mradi wa Mwendokasi Mbagala- Kariakoo yakiwa katika barabara ya Kilwa, eneo la Kipati jijini Dar es salaam. Picha na Nasra Abdallah



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Jumla ya mabasi ya Mwendokasi yaliyowasili nchini Agosti 29 mwaka huu.

alipozungumza na Mwananchi wakati wakipokea mabasi hayo mwishoni mwa wiki, alisema hawatapokea fedha taslimu kwa malipo ya nauli na badala yake abiria wanapaswa kutumia kadi za Dart au za benki ambazo tayari zitafanya kazi na mfumo huo.

"Sisi hatupokei fedha taslimu. Abiria ataweka fedha kwenye kadi na kisha atatumia kufanyi. Mageti tayari yamewasili na kazi ya kuyafunga katika vituo mbalimbali inaendelea," alisema Kassim.

Mabasi hayo 151 yaliwasili katika karakana ya Mbagala Rangi Tatu usiku wa Agosti 29, mwaka huu, baada ya kutoka bandarani, shughuli iliyo-chukua takribani siku mbili.

Kampuni ya wazawa ya Mofat ndiyo iliyopewa jukumu la kuleta magari katika awamu ya kwanza ya mradi huo, ambao ni wa pili kutekelezwa ukitanguliwa na ule wa Kimara, imekabidhiwa kuleta mabasi 255 kati ya 755 yanayohitajika kwa mradi mzima.

Ahadi zilizowahi kutolewa

Wiki iliyopita, Dk Kihamia aliliambia gazeti The Citizen kwamba huduma ingeanza rasmi jana, na kubainisha kuwa utumiaji wa tiketi ungetumika kwa mpito wakati wakisubiria mageti janja yafungwe.

Pia, Agosti 13, mwaka huu, Waziri Mkuu, Kassim Majaliwa alipokagua miundombinu hiyo aliagiza sehemu zilizobaki zikamilishwe ili huduma ianze ndani ya mwezi huo.

Hata hivyo, wakati Majaliwa akiagiza hayo, moja ya changamoto iliyokuwa imebaki ni ujenzi wa kipande cha barabara katika eneo la Kamata, ambacho bado hakijakamilika.

Mbali na changamoto za barabara, vituo vya mwendokasi navyo havikuwa na mageti ya kisasa kwa ajili ya mfumo wa kulipia kwa kadi.

Ukiacha ahadi ya Dk Kihamia na agizo la Waziri Mkuu, pia Julai 7, 2025 katika mahojiano maalumu na Mwananchi, Ofisa Mkuu wa Uendeshaji wa Kampuni ya Mofat, Mabrouk Masasi,

alieleza kuwa mara tu magari hayo yatakapowasili nchini wangeanza kutoa huduma, hata kama yangekuwa machache kuliko idadi inayohitajika.

Wallchosema wachumi, wananchi

Wakitoa maoni yao kuhusu danadana hizo, baadhi ya wachambuzi wa masuala ya uchumi akiwemo Profesa Humphrey Mushi, walisema miradi inapocheleweshwa huongeza gharama.

Profesa Mushi alisema zipo sababu za kufika huko kwa kueleza kuwa kunakuwepo na mipangilio mibaya ya rasilimali fedha iliyotengwa kutekeleza mradi husika.

"Inapaswa mkishatenga fedha kwa ajili ya kutekeleza jambo fulani basi lifanyike hadi likamilike, lakini kwa bahati mbaya sana fedha zinazotengwa katika miradi mikubwa kwenye nchi hii huwa watendaji wakizigawa na kuzifanyia mambo mengine, na hapo ndipo mradi unakwamia katikati.

"Hivyo, mwisho wa siku katika utekelezaji wake, badala ya kuona matokeo yake baada ya mwaka mmoja itakuchukua miaka minne hadi mitano kuyaona," alisema Profesa huyo.

Alitolea mfano, kama unataka kuboresha elimu, unapaswa kuwa na walimu wa kutosha, vifaa na majengo, lakini si kusema mwaka huu utafanya hivi, mwakani utafanya hivi, na mwaka keshokutwa utafanya vile.

Hata hivyo, katika ushauri wake, mchambuzi huyo alisema ipo haja ya Watanzania kubadilika, ikiwemo kukamilisha miradi



Mradi wa BRT mimi nasema ni mradi pekee ambao wateja wake wako wengi, lakini biashara haina

faida, biashara inakufa. Kwa hiyo, hii ni dalili ya kuwepo kwa ombwe la kiuongozi na utawala bora."

Mchambuzi, Dk Abel Kinyondo

kabla ya wakati, jambo alilosema Taifa la China ndilo limekuwa likifanya hivi, jambo linalowasaidia kupunguza gharama.

"Kwa kuwa ni watu ambao wamekuwa wakipewa kujenga miradi mingi hapa nchini, ni vema wakaigwa," alisema.

Mchambuzi, Dk Abel Kinyondo alisema mradi kama wa Udart ume-pangwa ili kutatua tatizo, hivyo unapocheleweshwa ufanisi uliopangwa kuletwa unakuwa hauonekani.

"Tatizo hilo linakupa mashaka kuwa hata baadaye mradi ukija kuzinduliwa matatizo ya kiuongozi hayataisha kwa sababu mradi kama wa BRT siyo mpya kwa kuwa umekuwa kwa muda sasa, lakini ni moja ya miradi inayoendeshwa kwa hovyo.

"Inabidi tujipange kwa maana ya uongozi na kiutawala bora. Isiwe tu mradi umezinduliwa, lakini yale yanayotakiwa kutokea kutokana na mradi kuwepo kwa maana ya faida zake ziwepo. Tuuache kuona sasa watu wanaacha kupanda kwenye mabasi kupitia dirishani, watu wanajazana kwenye vituo bila kuwepo magari, magari yanayopakani ni mengi kuliko yaliyoko barabarani," alieleza.

Alibainisha kuwa mradi wa DART ulitakiwa uwe na ufanisi kiasi kwamba mwenye gari yake aone ufahari kuliegisha gari lake na kupanda mwendokasi kuliko kuendesha kwenenda ofisini au kokote kule.

"Lakini kunapokuwa na mradi kama huo halafu mtu anaona ni bora apande daladala, inavunja moyo na ukizingatia miradi iliyotekelezwa kupitia mabasi hayo imetumia fedha nyingi, na ni fedha za mlipakodi," alisema.

Hata hivyo, ucheleweshaji huo ume-wavunja moyo baadhi ya wakazi wa Mbagala, akiwamo Deogratius Kisinde, aliyesema, "Tumemsikia mara kadhaa Mkurugenzi wa Dart akiahidi huduma ingeanza leo, lakini hakuna kinachotelelela. Mabasi tumeona yakiingizwa kwenye karakana tangu juzi. Ni vema mamlaka ziwe zinatoa ahadi za kitaalamu na si za kisiasa."

Naye Alphonse John alisema anachokiona katika utoaji ahadi hewa katika miradi kama hiyo ni viongozi kuhofia vibarua vyao.

John alisema kutokana na hilo, wamekuwa wakiaidhi vitu ilhali wanajua bado hawajavikamilisha, ilimradi tu kuwaridhisha wakubwa zao na kulinda vibarua vyao, jambo ambalo halileti picha nzuri wala haliwasaidii wananchi.

Mabasi hayo, yenye urefu wa mita 18, yatakayobeba abiria 160 kila moja, yanatarajiwa kusafirisha kati ya abiria 325,000 hadi 400,000 kwa siku mara huduma itakapoanza. Safari zitakuwa zikifanyika kutoka Mbagala hadi Gereza, Kivukoni na Moroco, Wilaya ya Kinondoni, jijini Dar es Salaam.

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USAFIRISHAJI

Uzinduzi wa Mwendokasi Mbagala wakwama tena

Na Mwandishi Wetu

AHADI ya kuanza rasmi kwa huduma ya mabasi mapya ya Mwendokasi kati ya Mbagala na Gereza jijini Dar es Salaam kupitia mradi wa ushirikiano kati ya serikali na sekta binafsi (PPP) imeshindwa kutimia, licha ya mabasi hayo kufika nchini tangu Agosti mwaka huu.

Mabasi hayo, jumla ya 151 kati ya 255, yalitajwa kuanza kazi rasmi jana, lakini hali imekuwa tofauti huku sababu kuu zikitajwa kuwa ni kutokamilika kwa kituo cha kujazia gesi na magezi ya kisasa ya kukatia tiketi, maarufu magezi janja.

Akizungumza na Nipashe jana, Mkurugenzi wa Wakala wa Mabasi Yaendayo Haraka (DART), Dk. Athuman Kihamia, alikiri kuwa huduma hiyo haijaanza kama ilivyotarajiwa kutokana na miundombinu hiyo muhimu kutokamilika.

"Ni kweli mabasi yako tayari na yamehifadhiwa kwenye karakana ya Mbagala, lakini hadi sasa bado hatujakamilisha miundombinu ya gesi na magezi ya kielektroniki ya kutolea tiketi. Hivyo, hatuwezi kuanza kutoa huduma bila hayo," alisema Dk. Kihamia.

Aliongeza kuwa taarifa rasmi ya maendeleo ya miundombinu hiyo itatolewa ndani ya wiki moja ijayo, baada ya tathmini kukamilika.

Mkurugenzi Mkuu wa Kampuni ya iliyoingia mkataba wa kuendesha huduma hiyo kwa mfumo wa PPP, Muhammad Kassim, alisema hakutakuwa na malipo ya fedha taslimu katika mradi huo.

"Abiria wote watalazimika kutumia kadi maalum za DART au benki kwa ajili ya kukatia tiketi. Mfumo wote ni wa kielektroniki," alieleza.

Baadhi ya wakazi wa Mbagala wameonesha kukatishwa tamaa na kile wanachokiita ahadi zisizotekelezwa kuhusu huduma hiyo ya usafiri.

"Tulijua kuanzia leo (jana) shida ya usafiri inakuwa historia, lakini sasa ni kama mchezo wa kuigiza. Wakati wanatangaza kuwa huduma itaanza Septemba Mosi, hawakujua kuwa miundombinu haijakamilika?" alihoji Mwanajuma Hussein, mkazi wa Mbagala.

Mmoja wa maafisa wa Wakala wa Mabasi Yaendayo Haraka (U-DART), ambaye hakutaka kutajwa jina lake, alisema kuwa hakujawahi kutangazwa rasmi kuwa Septemba Mosi ndiyo siku ya uzinduzi, bali ilikuwa ni matarajio tu.

"Watu wasikurupuke kusema tumetangaza tarehe ya uzinduzi. Hatukufanya hivyo. Tutasema rasmi siku ya huduma kuanza mara tu mambo yote yatakapokamilika," alisisitiza.

Aliongeza kuwa uzinduzi huo utafanyika kwa siku maalum na kwa taarifa rasmi kwa vyombo vya habari, na kuwataka wananchi kuwa wavumilivu.

Wananchi kadhaa wamesema kuwa mradi huo umekuwa ukisusua kwa muda mrefu, huku viongozi mbalimbali wakifika Mbagala na kutoa ahadi zisizotimika.

"Kila mara viongozi wanakuja, wanatoa ahadi, wanataja tarehe. Leo hii hakuna chochote kimeanza. Kama haiwezekani, bora watuambie ukweli kuliko kutufanya tuendeleo kuwa na matarajio ya uongo," alisema mkazi mwingine.



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Askari wa Kikosi cha Usalama Barabarani Mkoa wa Dar es Salaam, akimhoji dereva wa bajaj baada ya kumkamata kwa kubeba mzigo mkubwa wa mabomba katika eneo la Fire jana. **PICHA: IMANI NATHANIEL**

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Latra to
spearhead
clean
energy
drive in
transport
sector



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Latra to spearhead clean energy drive in transport sector

BY HELLEN
NACHILONGO

Dar es Salaam. The Land Transport Regulatory Authority (Latra), in partnership with the Ministry of Transport, is set to promote green energy adoption, policy dialogue and innovation in the transport sector during the forthcoming Sustainable Transport Week.

The event, scheduled for 26–29 November, follows Tanzania's first-ever participation in World Sustainable Transport Day, observed annually on November 26.

Latra director general, Mr Habibu Suluo, said at the weekend that this year's commemorations will be marked under the theme "Green transport and innovation," which highlights the importance of inclusive, resilient and environmentally friendly transport systems in advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

He said the event will convene stakeholders from Tanzania, the East African Commu-



nity (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to deliberate on the future of road, rail and cable transport.

"The commemorations will feature conferences and innovation showcases. Govern-

ment institutions, the private sector, and both regional and international partners are expected to take part, with a strong emphasis on clean energy solutions, digital technologies and transport systems that cater for people with special needs," he

said.

According to him, the platform will also celebrate excellence in the transport sector, with Latra recognising outstanding service providers in public transport, cargo logistics, ticketing systems, vehicle track-

ing solutions and cable transport operations. Journalists and advocates championing improved land transport services will also be honoured.

The ministry of Transport's Assistant Director for Railway Transport Services, Mr Benjamini Mbimbi, said Sustainable Transport Week aims to strengthen collaboration, attract investment and spur innovation, while offering opportunities for capacity-building, knowledge exchange and partnerships.

"This initiative is a milestone for Tanzania as we align with global commitments to promote safe, efficient and environmentally friendly transport systems for both present and future generations," he said.

He noted that the celebration complements Tanzania's tradition of marking World Maritime Day on 26 September, coordinated by the Tanzania Shipping Agencies Corporation (Tasac), and International Civil Aviation Day on December 7, organised by the Tanzania Civil Aviation Authority (TCAA).

Mr Mbimbi urged citizens, institutions, students, researchers and industry players to participate actively through sponsorships, exhibitions and knowledge-sharing platforms.

TRANSPORT Kihamia admits that the launch had been postponed again, citing unfinished works

BRT Phase Two launch pushed back yet again

The 20.3-kilometre corridor from the Central Business District (CBD) to Mbagala via Kilwa Road was due to open yesterday, but officials confirmed yet another delay

By The Citizen Reporter
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Dar es Salaam. Despite repeated assurances, Phase Two of Dar es Salaam's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system has not commenced operations as scheduled on September 1, 2025, leaving commuters in Mbagala and neighboring areas frustrated once again.

The 20.3-kilometre corridor from the Central Business District (CBD) to Mbagala via Kilwa Road was set to open, but officials have confirmed yet another delay due to incomplete infrastructure and technical setbacks.

Broken promises

On August 20, the Dar es Salaam Rapid Transit Agency (DART) reaffirmed the official launch date. Dr Athumani Kihamia, the agency's chief executive officer, insisted that services would begin "come what may." He stated that tax clearance for imported buses was in the final stages and that the Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) filling station, being constructed by Lake Energies, would be ready for inspection before the launch.

Dr Kihamia also mentioned that one million smart cards had been ordered and that electronic ticketing gates from the United Kingdom and China were expected to arrive by the end of August. He emphasized, "Even if some equipment arrives late, services will commence as planned," during a visit by the DART board of directors, led by its chairman, Dr Florence

Turuka, to inspect the Kivukoni Terminal, Mbagala Depot, and the port.

Fresh setback

However, on September 1, 2025, Dr. Kihamia admitted that the launch had been postponed again, citing unfinished work at the CNG station and the delayed installation of smart gates. "The bus operator, Mofat Company Limited, was ready to commence services on September 1, but we agreed to resolve all pending issues first. We cannot begin operations without the smart gates and the gas station still under construction," he explained. He stated that DART would provide a progress update within a week.

This delay has further prolonged the wait for thousands of commuters who have faced transportation challenges, despite the completion of the corridor's construction in 2023.

New buses arrive

The government has sought to reassure residents by highlighting recent deliveries of additional buses. On August 26, DART received 52 new units at the Dar es Salaam Port, increasing the city's BRT fleet to 151. During the transfer of the buses to the Mbagala Rangi Tatu Depot, Dr. Kihamia described this development as "a crucial milestone in easing congestion and improving public transport."

Phase Two will be operated by the local firm Mofat under a 12-year con-

cession, with the company expected to supply a total of 255 buses, of which 151 are already in the country. Designed to accommodate up to 755 vehicles, this phase represents the most extensive stage yet in the planned six-phase BRT system.

Operator optimistic

Mofat's managing director, Mr Muhammad Abdallah Kassim, commended the government's support in expediting customs clearance. "Without close cooperation, clearance would have taken much longer given the scale of this consignment," he said. He assured that the company was ready to provide a modern commuter experience, noting that the buses are equipped with free onboard Wi-Fi, USB charging ports, and CCTV cameras. "We have partnered with Yas to provide internet on all our buses, ensuring passengers can stay connected. Charging stations and safety cameras have also been installed," he explained. He promised efficient service, with buses scheduled to arrive every three to five minutes once operations begin.

Commuters anxious

Residents in Mbagala expressed disappointment at the latest delay but remain hopeful that operations will start soon. Many view the corridor as a long-awaited lifeline that could significantly reduce commuting times and enhance daily life.

Each of the 18-meter-long articulated buses can carry up to 160 passengers, with projections indicating that between 325,000 and 400,000 commuters could be transported daily once all 255 buses are in operation. For now, commuters are left waiting as the promise of relief from traffic congestion along Kilwa Road remains unfulfilled.

We cannot begin operations without smart gates and the gas station still under construction

KIHAMIA | DART CHIEF

New Dart buses for Mbagala-Kariakoo route parked at Kilwa Road in Dar es salaam. PHOTO | NASRA
ABDALLAH



SGR Uvinza-Msongati: A New Economic Link between Tanzania and Burundi

The 240-kilometer railway segment estimated to cost around \$2.15 billion (over Sh5.59 trillion) will open up the Central Corridor and significantly ease trade between the countries.

By The Citizen Reporter
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Dar es Salaam. The launch of the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) construction project linking Uvinza in Tanzania's Kigoma region with Msongati in Burundi is being hailed as a new economic gateway between the two nations.

According to economic experts, the 240-kilometer railway segment estimated to cost around \$2.15 billion (over Sh5.59 trillion) will open up the Central Corridor and significantly ease trade between the countries.

This perspective follows shortly after the foundation stone for the project was laid by both countries. The railway is expected to be completed within five years.

This development marks the first time that Burundi will be directly connected to Tanzania's SGR network, which currently stretches from the Port of Dar es Salaam to the capital city, Dodoma.

Tanzania has already begun SGR operations for passenger and freight transport between Dar es Salaam and Dodoma. According to the Tanzania Railways Corporation (TRC), over 2.3 million passengers used the SGR from its launch on June 14, 2024, through April 2025. In addition to improved transportation, the SGR has significantly boosted government revenue, generating approximately Sh66.8 billion during that period alone.

The Tanzania-Burundi railway is seen as a continuation of the vision to transform the Central Corridor into a key commercial route linking landlocked countries particularly Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)—to the ocean.

Why the Tanzania-Burundi SGR Matters For decades, Burundi has depended on the Port of Dar es Salaam as its primary trade gateway. According to TradeMark Africa, more than 80 percent of Burundi's cargo goes through this port.

However, road transport has brought several challenges, including high costs, cargo delays, and reduced product competitiveness. Dr Timothy Lyanga, an economist at the Open University of Tanzania (OUT), explains: "The Uvinza-Msongati SGR is a

crucial piece that completes the Central Corridor. It will allow goods to move faster and more affordably, easing cross-border trade and strengthening both nations' positions in the regional and global trade landscape."

How Tanzania Stands to Benefit In 2023, Tanzania exported goods worth \$172.3 million (over Sh448 billion) to Burundi, according to COMTRADE and Trading Economics. Meanwhile, Burundi exported just \$3 million (over Sh7.8 billion) worth of goods to Tanzania.

Dr Lyanga points out that this trade imbalance shows Burundi's strong demand for Tanzanian products, such as fertilizers, cement, industrial goods, and cooking oil.

"The railway will facilitate smoother movement

This project isn't just about moving passengers and goods. It will open doors for new investment and business opportunities between Tanzania and Burundi

MAJALIWA | PRIME MINISTER

of these goods, enhance competitiveness, and increase earnings for Tanzanian producers and exporters," he adds.

Regional studies suggest rail transport can reduce shipping costs by up to 40 percent compared to road transport. For Tanzania, this cost reduction is expected to result in more affordable prices for consumers, greater profits for farmers and manufacturers, and increased employment due to rising demand.

Tanzania began cargo operations via the SGR between Dar es Salaam and Dodoma in June 2025. Completion of the Uvinza-Msongati seg-

ment will extend this connection to the Burundi border, opening a new trade corridor.

According to former University of Dar es Salaam Economics Lecturer Prof Benedict Mongula: "Transit cargo from Burundi will reach Dar es Salaam more reliably, enhancing Tanzania's role as a regional trade hub."

Data from the Central Corridor Transit Transport Facilitation Agency (CCTTFA) shows that Tanzania handled over 9.2 million tons of domestic cargo in 2022. Professor Mongula predicts that increased transit traffic particularly nickel exports from Burundi will boost revenues across the logistics chain, including ports, customs, transport companies, and insurance providers.

Burundi's Gains Msongati is home to one of the world's largest nickel deposits. Expert estimates suggest it holds 122 million tons of laterite ore with 14 percent nickel content, along with cobalt and iron.

The 1,000-kilometer stretch from Dar to Makutupala, whose construction was completed and the SGR for passengers and freight is currently in use.



Mongula says the Uvinza-Msongati SGR will significantly reduce the cost of transporting these minerals to Dar es Salaam, which will attract further investment in mining and value-added processing.

As a landlocked country, Burundi has long faced high inland transportation costs. The railway is expected to reduce delays, losses, and shipping expenses. In 2023, Burundi's total exports were valued at just \$139 million (over Sh361.4 billion).

"With affordable and reliable rail transport, exports of coffee, tea, and other products will grow, increasing foreign exchange earnings and improving the trade balance," he says.

The railway's construction and operations will also create both direct and indirect jobs from contractors and equipment suppliers to technicians and small businesses stimulating local economies.

Statements from Prime Minister Majaliwa and President Ndayishimiye Speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony, Tanzanian Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa highlighted the railway's role in connecting markets and boosting trade: "Once completed, this railway will allow our citizens to travel from here to Dar es Salaam in a single day. Currently, it takes 96 hours for a truck to travel from Dar to Bujumbura. With the SGR, freight will take just 20 hours."

"This project isn't just about moving passengers and goods. It will open doors for new investment and business opportunities between Tanzania and Burundi." Burundi's President, Major General Evariste Ndayishimiye, said the start of railway construction marks the realization of a long-held dream: "Today is a joyful day for us. We finally have an answer to a decades-old challenge. This project was first envisioned by the Belgians in 1921, then by the Germans but they failed. Today, Tanzania and Burundi have made it happen."

He noted that Burundi is rich in minerals, and during a recent investor summit, many potential partners expressed interest only to ask "If we start mining nickel, how will we transport it?"

"That question forced us to think critically and find a solution. We are deeply grateful to the Government of Tanzania for agreeing to partner with us on this vital project. From here, we aim to extend the railway to Kindu in eastern DRC, and eventually to West Africa and the Atlantic coast to fast-track development," he added.

President Ndayishimiye also praised President Samia Suluhu Hassan for Tanzania's progress: "I've lived in Tanzania for a long time. I know Magomeni, Tabata, Vingunguti, Mwenge, and Kinondoni. But due to the rapid development, I could easily get lost today."

UJENZI WA MIUNDOMBINU BORA YA USAFIRI NA USAFIRISHAJI

SRG Uvinza- Msongati, kiungo kipyaa uchumi Tanzania, Burundi

Mwandishi Wetu

Dar es Salaam. Hatua ya Tanzania na Burundi kuanza ujenzi wa Reli ya Kisasa (SGR) itakayounganisha Uvinza mkoani Kigoma na Msongati nchini Burundi, inatazamiwa kuwa mlango mpya wa kiuchumi baina ya pande hizo mbili.

Kwa mtazamo wa wanazuoni wa uchumi, ujenzi wa kipande hicho kitakachokuwa na urefu wa kilomita 240 na kugharimu takribani dola za Marekani bilioni 2.15 (zaidi ya Sh5.59 trilion), utafungua ushoroba wa kati na kurahisisha biashara kwa pande zote.

Mitazamo hiyo inakujia, muda mchache baada ya Tanzania na Burundi kuweka jiwe la msingi la ujenzi wa SGR, utakaotekelezwa kwa kipindi cha miaka mitano.

Kutokana na ujenzi huo, wadau wanasema kwa mara ya kwanza, Burundi itapata fursa ya kuunganishwa moja kwa moja na mtandao wa SGR ya Tanzania, unaoanzia Bandari ya Dar es Salaam hadi makao makuu ya nchi, Dodoma.

Wakati hayo yakiendelea, tayari Tanzania imeanza kufanya shughuli za usafiri na usafirishaji kwa njia ya reli hiyo, baada ya kukamilisha kipande cha Dar es Salaam hadi Dodoma.

Kwa mujibu wa Shirika la Reli Tanzania (TRC), zaidi ya abiria milioni 2.3 walisafirishwa tangu kuanzishwa kwa uendeshaaji wa treni ya SGR Juni 14, 2024 hadi Aprili, 2025. Mbali na kurahisishwa kwa usafiri na usafirishaji kupitia SGR, hata mapato ya Serikali yameongezeka ambapo, katika kipindi hicho pekee SGR imeingiza takribani Sh66.8 bilioni. Hatua ya ujenzi wa SGR kutoka Tanzania hadi Burundi, inachukuliwa kama mwendelezo wa ndoto ya kuufanya ushoroba wa kati kuwa njia kuu ya kibiashara inayounganisha bahari na nchi zisizo na bandari, hususan Burundi na DR Congo (DRC).

Kwanini SGR Tanzania, Burundi

Kwa miongo mingi sasa Burundi imekuwa ikitegemea Bandari ya Dar es Salaam kama lango kuu la biashara. Kwa mujibu wa *Trade-Mark Africa*, zaidi ya asilimia 80 ya mizigo ya Burundi hupitia katika Bandari ya Dar es Salaam.

Hata hivyo, changamoto kadhaa zimekuwa zikijitokeza, ikiwezo kuongezeka kwa gharama za usafirishaji kwa njia ya barabara, ucheleweshaji wa mizigo na kuathiri ushindani wa bidhaa sokoni, kama inavyoelezwa na Dk Timothy Lyanga mwanazuoni wa uchumi wa Chuo Kikuu Huria cha Tanzania (OUT).

"SGR ya Uvinza-Msongati inachukuliwa kama kiungo kitakachokamilisha ushoroba wa kati. Kupitia reli hiyo, bidhaa zitafika haraka na kwa gharama nafuu, huku ikirahisisha biashara ya mpakani na kukuza nafasi ya Tanzania na Burundi katika ramani ya kibiashara ya kikanda na kimataifa," anasema.

fa," anasema.

Tanzania Itakavyonufika

Mwaka 2023, mauzo ya Tanzania kwenda Burundi yalifikia dola milioni 172.3 (zaidi ya Sh448 bilioni) kwa mujibu wa COMTRADE na Trading Economics.

Burundi kwa upande wake ilisafirisha bidhaa zenye thamani ya dola milioni 3 (zaidi ya Sh7.8 bilioni) pekee kwenda Tanzania.

Dk Lyanga anasema pengo hilo la kibiashara linaonyesha ukubwa wa soko la Burundi kwa bidhaa za Tanzania, kuanzia mbolea, saruji, bidhaa za viwandani na mafuta ya kupikia.

"Reli itarahisisha mtiririko wa bidhaa hizi, kuongeza ushindani na kupanua mapato kwa wazalishaji na wasafirishaji kutoka Tanzania," alisema.

Mtaalamu huyo aliyebobea katika uchumi, anafafanua tafiti za kikanda zinaonyesha usafiri kwa reli unaweza kupunguza gharama za usafirishaji kwa takribani asilimia 40 ikilinganishwa na barabara. Kwa Tanzania, anasema faida hiyo itatafsirika moja kwa moja kwenye bei nafuu sokoni, faida kubwa kwa wakulima na wazalishaji, kadhalika kuimarika kwa ajira kupitia ongezeko la mahitaji ya bidhaa.

Tanzania tayari imeanza usafirishaji wa mizigo kupitia SGR kati ya Dar es Salaam na Dodoma kuanzia Juni 2025. Kukamilika kwa kipande cha Uvinza-Msongati kutaipoleka reli hiyo hadi mpakani, hivyo kufungua lango jipya la biashara na Burundi, kwa mujibu wa Mhadhiri wa zamani wa Uchumi Chuo Kikuu cha Dar es Salaam (UDSM), Profesa Benedict Mongula.

"Hii ina maana mizigo ya transit kutoka Burundi itafika Dar es Salaam kwa uhakika zaidi na kuongeza nafasi ya Tanzania kuwa kitovu cha biashara ya kikanda," anaeleza.

“Reli ikikamilika itafungua fursa kwa wananchi wetu ambao wataweza kutoka hapa hadi Dar es Salaam ndani ya siku moja. Hata kwenye usafirishaji wa mizigo, hivi sasa, lori linatumia saa 96 kutoka Dar hadi Bujumbura lakini baada ya kukamilisha ujenzi, usafirishaji wa mizigo kwa kutumia treni utatumia saa 20 tu.” Kassim Majaliwa

Kwa mujibu wa Central Corridor Transit Transport Facilitation Agency (CCTFA), mizigo ya ndani ya Tanzania ilipanda hadi zaidi ya milioni 9.2 mwaka 2022.

Kuongezeka kwa mizigo ya transit kutoka Burundi hasa ya madini ya nikeli, Profesa Mongula anasema kutazidisha mapato ya bandari, ICDs, forodha, kampuni za usafirishaji na bima, sambamba na huduma za kijamii zinazotegemea sekta ya usafirishaji.

Vipi kwa upande wa Burundi

Eneo la Msongati linatajwa kuwa na moja ya hazina kubwa zaidi zenye madini ya nikeli duniani. Makadirio ya kitaaluma yanaonyesha lina tani milioni 122 za laterite ore zenye kiwango cha asilimia 1.4 cha nikeli, sambamba na kobalti na chuma.

Profesa Mongula anasema SGR ya Uvinza-Msongati itapunguza gharama za usafirishaji wa madini hayo kwenda Dar es Salaam, jambo ambalo litakulufungua zaidi uwekezaji kati-

ka uchimbaji na viwanda vya kuongeza thamani. Kwa kuwa Burundi haina bandari, anasema gharama za inland transport zimekuwa kikwazo. Reli hiyo itapunguza ucheleweshaji, gharama na upotevu wa bidhaa. Mwaka 2023, Burundi ilisafirisha bidhaa zenye thamani ya dola milioni 139 (zaidi ya Sh361.4 bilioni) pekee. Anasema ujenzi na uendeshaaji wa reli utatoa ajira nyingi za moja kwa moja na zisizo za moja kwa moja. Kuanzia wakandarasi, wasambazaji wa vifaa, huduma za ufundi na sekta ndogo ndogo za biashara, mradi huu utachoea uchumi wa ndani.

Kauli za Majaliwa, Ndayishimiye

Akizungumza katika uzinduzi huo, Waziri Mkuu, Kassim Majaliwa amesema kukamilika kwa ujenzi wa reli hiyo kutasaidia kuunganisha masoko na kuendeleza biashara baina ya Tanzania na Burundi.

"Reli ikikamilika itafungua fursa kwa wananchi wetu ambao wataweza kutoka hapa hadi Dar es Salaam ndani ya siku moja. Hata kwenye usafirishaji wa

mizigo, hivi sasa, lori linatumia saa 96 kutoka Dar hadi Bujumbura lakini baada ya kukamilisha ujenzi, usafirishaji wa mizigo kwa kutumia treni utatumia saa 20 tu.

"Mradi wa reli ya kisasa siyo tu kwamba utarahisisha usafirishaji wa abiria na mizigo, bali pia utafungua mlango wa fursa mpya za uwekezaji na biashara kati ya Tanzania na Burundi," amesema.

Kwa upande wake, Rais wa Burundi, Meja Jenerali Evarist Ndayishimiye amesema kuanza kwa ujenzi wa reli hiyo kutatibu shauku ya muda mrefu ya nchi hiyo kuwa na usafiri wa reli.

"Leo ni siku ya furaha kwetu. Tumepata jawabu la tangu enzi na enzi. Mwaka 1921, mradi huu ulianzishwa na Wabalgiji kisha wakaja Wajerumani lakini wakashindwa. Leo hii Tanzania na Burundi tumeweza," amesema.

Alisema nchi yake imebarikwa kuwa na madini mengi na kuna wakati aliitisha kikao cha wawekezaji kutoka nchi kadhaa.

"Wengi walivutiwa na waka-taka kuwekeza mara moja, lakini wakaniuliza, tukianza kuchimba madini ya Nickel, tutayasafirishaje? Hiyo changamoto ilitufanya tubungue bongo zetu na kutafuta suluhisho. Tunaishukuru sana Serikali ya Tanzania kwa kukubali kuungana nasi ili tuanze mradi huu muhimu. Tukitoka hapa, tunataka reli iunganishe hadi Kin-du, Mashariki mwa Jamhuri ya Kidemokrasia ya Congo (DRC). Na baada ya hapo, tunataka reli yetu ifike Afrika Magharibi kwenye ufukwe wa bahari ya Atlantiki, tunaamini njia hiyo itaharakisha kuleta maendeleo," amesema.

Rais Ndayishimiye alimpongeza Rais Samia Suluhu Hassan kwa kufikia hatua kubwa za maendeleo na kwamba, Tanzania imejengeka kwa haraka ikiwa na miundombinu bora hasa ya barabara.



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A traffic police officer has a word with a tuk-tuk rider at a Fire section of a Dar es Salaam road yesterday, apparently in connection with road traffic regulations. Photo: Correspondent Imani Nathaniel

On the Right Track: Tanzania's New Rail Link to Burundi



By a Special Correspondent

Agriculture, quarrying, food all you grew up in Tanzania, you have probably seen the endless line of trucks on our highways, trucks that carry goods to and from Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, and even as far as the Democratic Republic of Congo. For years, those heavy vehicles have defined how trade moves in our region. But they have also brought challenges: long traffic jams, high road maintenance costs, pollution, and frequent accidents that claim lives.

Now, a new chapter is opening. The Tanzania Railways Corporation (TRC), with strong backing from government and partners, has launched the Uvinza-Musongati Standard Gauge Railway project, popularly known as the Musongati Project. This is not just another railway line. It is an effort to strengthen Tanzania's role as a transport hub in East Africa.

At its heart, this project links Uvinza in Kigoma, western Tanzania, to Musongati in Burundi. Musongati is no ordinary town; beneath its soil lie vast reserves of nickel, copper, cobalt, platinum and gold. By building this railway, Tanzania is positioning itself as the gateway for those minerals to reach global markets.

Why the Musongati Project Matters

For ordinary Tanzanians, it may be easy to think of this railway as a far-off project meant only for miners and exporters. But the reality is wider, touching many corners of daily life.

First, consider time. A truck leaving Musongati today can take up to a week to reach the Port of Dar es Salaam. With the new line, the journey is projected to take less than 24 hours. That time saved means cheaper goods, quicker supply chains, fresher produce on shop shelves, and reduced stress on our roads.

Second, consider volume. Experts estimate that more than 3 million tonnes of minerals every year will move through this railway once it begins operations. That means increased activity at Tanzanian ports, more business for local service providers, new opportunities for young entrepreneurs, and higher government revenues.

Third, consider safety and the environment. Reducing heavy truck traffic on highways will lower accident rates, cut emissions, and reduce the cost of road maintenance. In the long run, these savings free up resources for schools, hospitals, and other essential public services that benefit citizens across the nation.

TRC Steering the Dream Forward

The Tanzania Railways Corporation (TRC), established under the Railways Act of 2017, has become the heartbeat of this ambitious cross-border project. From coordinating contractors and engineers to representing Tanzania in financing discussions and joint planning with Burundi, TRC has been central to turning plans into reality.



More than 3 million tonnes of minerals every year are expected to pass through the Uvinza-Musongati railway once it is complete, transforming trade between Tanzania and Burundi.

To carry the vision forward, TRC signed a contract with two experienced Chinese firms—China Railway Engineering Group (CRECG) and China Railway Design and Consulting Group



(CREDC). Together, they are tasked with building the 282-kilometre line at a cost of US \$2.15 billion, with construction expected to take about six years.

The line will include a one-kilometre border bridge across the Malagarasi River, seven stations, and cargo terminals—especially at Musongati—to handle the flow of minerals and goods. Electrified and built to international standards, the railway will run trains at speeds of up to 160 kilometres per hour.

For TRC, this is more than an engineering project. It is part of Tanzania's long-term vision to become the logistics backbone of East Africa.

President Samia's Hand In the Project

No story of the Musongati Project is complete without recognising the leadership of President Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan. Since taking office in 2021, she has made infrastructure a cornerstone of her presidency.

Under her watch, several stalled projects were unblocked, and new momentum was injected into the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) network, linking Dar es Salaam to Morogoro, Dodoma, and Mwanza. She also oversaw the launch of the Kwala Logistics Hub, which now helps ease congestion at the Port of Dar es Salaam by serving as an inland container depot.

Her leadership has been key in attracting international financing. The African Development Bank and other partners have committed funds to the SGR network, partly because of the clear vision and stability her administration has provided. In addition, her government has encouraged transparency in project delivery, engaged communities along railway routes, and emphasised local participation in job opportunities.

With President Samia's push, Tanzania has moved from planning to implementation. The Musongati line is part of that implementation, a clear example of how leadership can turn blueprints into progress on the ground.

Regional Impact—Why Our Neighbours Depend on It

This is the first cross-border SGR project in East Africa, connecting two countries directly by modern rail. The implications are wide-reaching.

For Burundi, Musongati's nickel deposits—among the largest in Africa—will finally have an affordable route to global markets. That will boost Burundi's economy and deepen its ties with Tanzania.

For Tanzania, every shipment from Burundi passes through local stations, workers, and the Port of Dar es Salaam. That means jobs, revenue, and growth.

For the wider region, discussions have already considered future extensions into the Democratic Republic of Congo, opening up even larger markets.

In effect, Tanzania is anchoring the Central Corridor, which runs from Dar es Salaam through Dodoma, Tabora, Kigoma, and into Burundi, Rwanda, and the DRC. This corridor is fast becoming a lifeline for millions of East and

Central Africans.

A Look at the Numbers

The Uvinza-Musongati line stretches 282 kilometres, with 180 kilometres on the Tanzanian side and 102 kilometres in Burundi. The project carries an estimated cost of about US \$2.15 billion and will feature seven stations. Once operational, it is expected to move more than 3 million tonnes of cargo every year, reshaping trade and transport in the region. The completion target is around 2030, with construction being handled by Chinese firms CRECG and CREDC, and financing support coming from the African Development Bank together with the governments of Tanzania and Burundi.

These figures may sound technical, but they translate into real impacts: farmers reaching markets faster, miners exporting resources more easily, and businesses gaining opportunities that were previously limited by distance and poor roads.

The Human Side of the Railway

It is easy to think of steel tracks and locomotives, but the Musongati Project is also about people.

For example, a farmer in Kigoma who now struggles to transport maize to Dar es Salaam

because of high costs could, in future, load produce at a nearby station for sale and quick delivery. A young graduate in Tabora studying logistics may find new opportunities in TRC, freight companies, or warehouses as the network grows, creating a stronger bridge between education and employment.

For the people of Musongati, the impact is even more direct. For decades, their rich soil promised wealth, but poor roads made extraction difficult. The new railway could finally connect them to mining, transport, and support industries, unlocking opportunities for families that have waited generations to benefit from these resources.

Bumps Along the Journey

No project of this scale is without challenges. Financing remains tight, with billions needed to expand the full SGR network across Tanzania and into neighbouring states. Coordination between two countries, Tanzania and Burundi, will also require sustained diplomacy and commitment.

Environmental concerns are real. Railway construction must safeguard forests, rivers, and communities along the route. TRC has pledged to follow environmental protections, but monitoring will be critical.

Finally, the project's long-term success

depends on strong maintenance and management once trains begin running. Tanzania has learned lessons from earlier rail struggles, and TRC says modern practices will be applied to avoid repeat problems.

Rails of Hope, Rails of Growth

Infrastructure often serves as a measure of national ambition. For Tanzania, the Musongati Project is more than transport—it is an investment in future growth and a symbol of determination to move forward.

As Tanzanians, we take pride in our heritage as a peaceful nation that values unity. This railway strengthens that spirit by linking us more closely with neighbours, opening doors to trade, creating jobs, and expanding opportunities for the next generation to dream bigger.

President Samia has emphasised that projects like these are not only about money or contracts—they are about people, about giving Tanzanians and Burundians alike a fair chance at prosperity and shared progress.

The Journey Ahead

Years from now, the Musongati SGR has the potential to be remembered as a turning point—much like the TAZARA railway of the 1970s, which symbolised African independence and



Since 2021, under President Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan's leadership, Tanzania has fast-tracked over 1,200 km of Standard Gauge Railway and launched the Kwala Logistics Hub, showing her commitment to modernising our transport system.



solidarity. This time, the symbolism is one of regional integration, modernisation, and global relevance. Tanzania, through TRC, is once again showing that it can serve as the bridge between inland Africa and the world.

What sets this period apart is the leadership of President Samia Suluhu Hassan. She has reinvigorated financing, and demonstrated that Tanzania is a reliable regional partner. In her public remarks, she often underlines the importance of connectivity—arguing that infrastructure is the backbone of development. The Musongati line is an example of that philosophy in practice.

For ordinary citizens, benefits may not appear overnight. But as cargo shifts from road to rail, accidents decline, jobs increase, and trade volumes rise, the difference will be felt in markets, in household budgets, and in national revenue.



The Uvinza-Musongati SGR, stretching 282 kilometres and costing US \$2.15 billion, is the first cross-border standard gauge railway in East Africa, a milestone that places Tanzania at the centre of regional integration.

Moving Forward, One Rail at a Time

The Musongati Project is not only about rails and bridges—it is about people, opportunities, and vision. It shows that when Tanzania invests in infrastructure, it invests in its people.

With TRC steering the project and with President Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan's leadership, the future looks brighter. Her administration has placed transport and logistics at the heart of economic policy, recognising that efficient movement of goods and people is essential for industrialisation.

Under her leadership, Tanzania has moved from being a nation of plans to one of implementation. Investors, neighbours, and citizens alike can already see bridges rising, tracks being laid, and ports expanding. This credibility turns commitments into visible results.

And as trains of the future begin to roll from Musongati to Uvinza and onwards to Dar es Salaam, Tanzanians will know that this railway belongs to all of us—and that its success will carry our nation forward. It will stand as a chapter in Tanzania's infrastructure story under President Samia's leadership, a chapter built on steady planning, determined leadership, and people-focused priorities.

