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Mkatoba kukamilisha ujenzi SGR watiwa saini

Na Ibrahim Joseph,

DODODMA

WAZIRI wa fedha Balozi Khamis Mussa Omar amesema hatua ya serikali kusaini mkatoba wa ukamilishaji wa reli ya kisasa ya SGR, loti ya tatu na nne itasaidia kuongeza uchumi na kutoa fursa kwa maeneo ya kanda ya Ziwa na Kati.

Balozi Omar alisema hayo juzi Jijini hapa wakati wa hafla ya kusainiwa kwa mkatoba wa ujenzi wa SGR loti tatu na nne,

kwa kipande cha Makutupora Tabora na Tabota Isaka dola za Marekani bilioni 1.3.

Alieleza kuwa fedha hizo zinatokana na ufadhili wa nchi tatu ambazo ni Italia, Poland na Sweeden, ujenzi huo ni mwendelezo wa kuunganisha njia hiyo kutoka Dar es Salaam, Morogoro na Dodoma Makutupora.

Pia alisema lengo la serikali kuhakikisha inakamilisha vipande vilivyobaki ili kuongeza njia ya uchumi.

Aliongeza kuwa baada ya kupata fedha hizo wanaendelea na

mpango wa kukamilisha ujenzi wa kipande cha SGR Tabora Kigoma na Mwanza Isaka ambapo wakandarasi wapo kazini.

Alisema pia kukamilika wa mradi huo itasaidia usafirishaji wa haraka wa abiria na mizigo kwenda katika mikoa ya huko na jirani.

Waziri Omar alisema lengo la serikali ni kuunganisha reli hiyo na nchi jirani za Burundi na Congo DRC.

Pia alisema kukamilika kwa ujenzi wa SGR kwa kanda hiyo itasaidia kukuza utalii na ku-

patikana kwa kuongezeka wa fursa za kiuchumi katika sekta ya madini.

Waziri wa Uchukuzi Prof. Makame Mbarawa alisema zaidi ya abiria milioni tano wametumia usafiri wa SGR Dar es Salaam Dodoma na Dar es Salaam Morogoro.

Prof. Mbarawa alisema uwepo wa SGR umepunguza muda wa usafiri wa abiria kutoka Dodoma Dar es Salaam kwa saa 10 mpaka 12, ambapo kwa usafiri wa reli hiyo ni saa tatu hadi nne.

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Govt extended \$1.28bn loan for SGR fourth lot

Govt allocates 3.5bn/- to overhaul MV Songea for operations in Lake Nyasa

By Correspondent Elizabeth John, Njombe

THE government has earmarked more than 3.5bn/- for the comprehensive rehabilitation and upgrading of the MV Songea, a vital vessel facilitating transport between the Kiwira Port in Mbeya and Mbamba Bay in Ruvuma via Lake Nyasa.

The move is part of a broader strategic initiative to modernize maritime infrastructure and stimulate economic growth along the lake's corridor.

Abdulrahman Salim, Senior Public Relations Officer for the Tanzania Shipping Agencies Corporation (TASAC) made the announcement here yesterday while addressing journalists during the Occupational Health and Safety (OSH) Week exhibitions held at the Mji Mwema grounds in Njombe.

Salim emphasized that the investment is crucial for restoring the vessel to its full operational capacity to serve the growing transport demands of the southern highlands.

The MV Songea is a multipurpose vessel designed to carry 200 passengers and 50 tons of cargo. Salim highlighted that the ship's unique design gives it a distinct operational advantage over larger vessels like the MV Mbeya II.

Specifically, the MV Songea is capable of docking at and departing from 13 different small stations and landing sites scattered along the shoreline from Kiwira to Mbamba Bay. This manoeuvrability allows it to serve remote coastal communities that lack deep-water port infrastructure, providing a lifeline for trade and movement.

Under the new government strat-

egy, the Ministry of Transport aims to optimize Lake Nyasa services by coordinating the schedules of two major vessels. The MV Mbeya II will operate as an "express" service, stopping at only three or four major ports among the 13 available stations to ensure rapid transit between the primary hubs of Mbamba Bay and Kiwira.

Meanwhile, the refurbished MV Songea will act as a "local" service, stopping at all 13 stations to ensure that no community is left isolated.

Salim highlighted the availability of the MV Njombe, a massive cargo ship with the capacity to transport up to 1,000 tonnes of goods, urging regional entrepreneurs and large-scale traders to pivot toward maritime transport, which offers a more cost-effective alternative to road transport for bulk goods.

"Businesspeople in Njombe are encouraged to use this vessel to transport their products both domestically and to neighboring international markets," Salim noted, adding that water transport is currently the most viable solution given the existing challenges with road connectivity in certain lake-bound districts.

However, the ambitious plan faces logistical hurdles. Nathanael Mgaya, the Chairperson of the Ludewa District Business Community, pointed out that while the shipping services are welcome, the poor state of the feeder roads leading to the ports remains a significant bottleneck.

Mgaya urged the government to ensure that road infrastructure improvements keep pace with maritime investments, noting that traders are ready to embrace the blue economy once the entire supply chain is reliable and accessible.

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

THE government has signed a financing agreement for \$1.277bn for construction of the standard gauge railway (SGR) fourth slot from Makutupora to Isaka.

Dr Natu El-Maamry Mwamba, the Finance ministry's permanent secretary, signed the pact with Herman Kasekende, the Standard Chartered Bank chief executive officer, where she said the agreement marks a milestone in the country's infrastructure development agenda.

Finance minister Khamis Mussa Omar said the funds are part of a broader \$2.33bn financing package for the strategic project, with the contract covering the construction of the Makutupora to Isaka (368 km) and Tabora to Isaka (165 km), bringing the total length under this phase to 533 kilometres.

The funding was secured through international cooperation involving export credit agencies in Italy (SACE), Sweden (EKN) and Poland (KUK), coordinated by the issuing bank.

"This project is the backbone of Tanzania's economic transformation, set to connect the port of Dar es Salaam with the Lake Zone and neighbouring countries, positioning Tanzania as a regional trade and transport hub in East and Central Africa," he said.

Transport minister Prof. Makame Mbarawa noted that once completed, the railway section facility will enhance cargo capacity by up to 5m tonnes annually while significantly reducing transport time and costs.

SGR service from Dar es Salaam and Dodoma is recording strong performance, carrying nearly 6m passengers and more than 120,000 tonnes of cargo.

"The project has reduced travel time from 12 hours to just three hours, cut fuel consumption by over 17m litres and reduced carbon emissions by more than 50 percent," he said.

Lena Bertilsson, head of large corporates at the Swedish Export Credit Agency (EKN), said the linked export creditors were satisfied with the progress of the SGR project, with the credit link boosting ties with Tanzania.

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