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Kenyan President Withdraws Controversial Tax Bill Amid Deadly Protests

AfricaNews reports that Kenyan President William Ruto announced he would not sign a finance bill proposing new taxes following protests that resulted in several deaths and significant unrest. The bill aimed to raise funds to pay off debt, but many Kenyans saw it as exacerbating economic hardship. Ruto described the protests as an "existential threat" and initially responded with a strong stance, calling the actions "treasonous." However, he later acknowledged the widespread dissatisfaction and emphasized the need for national dialogue. Despite a temporary suspension of military deployment by the High Court, fears persist amid reports of abductions and further protests.

WTO and Afreximbank Sign an Agreement to Boost Cooperation on Food, Trade and Fisheries

The World Trade Organization (WTO) and the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 28 June to enhance cooperation and collaboration on a range of issues, including food and

agricultural trade, trade finance, and fisheries subsidies. The MoU also establishes a broad framework for collaboration in other potential areas of mutual interest. Under the MoU, the WTO and Afreximbank will strengthen collaboration in three main areas of common interest. In the first targeted area — food and agricultural trade — the focus will be to deepen existing cooperation to support the WTO's work on cotton development, engage Afreximbank in the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) to enable more African countries to benefit from safe and inclusive trade, and strengthen technical assistance and capacity-building activities related to ongoing WTO negotiations and food security issues.

Niger's Oil Pipeline Ambitions Stalled by Security Crisis and Diplomatic Dispute

According to *AfricaNews*, a China-backed pipeline intended to transform Niger into an oil-exporting nation faces threats from an internal security crisis and a diplomatic dispute with Benin following last year's coup. The 1,930-kilometer pipeline, designed to significantly boost Niger's oil production, is now stalled due to attacks by a rebel group and a diplomatic rift that led to its closure. The Niger junta is considering rerouting oil through Chad and Cameroon, but this option presents significant challenges and uncertainty about further investment from China. The pipeline's disruption threatens Niger's projected economic growth, which was expected to be the fastest in Africa this year, and also impacts Benin economically.

Niger Revokes French Uranium Mine License Amid Rising Tensions

AfricaNews reports that Niger's military government has revoked the operating license of French nuclear fuel producer Orano at the Imouraren uranium mine, one of the world's largest. This move highlights tensions between the junta, which took power in a coup, and France, the former colonial ruler. The junta, aiming to cut ties with the West and review mining concessions, had warned that Orano's license would lapse unless work resumed. Despite Orano's efforts to restart activities, the mine was reclaimed by the government, and Orano is considering legal action.

Government Moves to Regulate Cement Prices Amid Manufacturer Resistance in Ghana

Julius Yao Petetsi, writing for AllAfrica, reports that Trade and Industry Minister K.T. Hammond emphasized the government's need to intervene in response to what he termed as arbitrary increases in cement prices by manufacturers. Despite attempts to introduce legislation controlling these prices, his efforts were stalled by the Minority in Parliament due to lack of prior consultation. Hammond expressed frustration at manufacturers' resistance to discussions on pricing and quality concerns, asserting his commitment to ensuring fair economic practices through legal means if necessary, citing the constitutional mandate to protect consumers and uphold economic principles in Ghana.

Egypt and Equatorial Guinea Forge Closer Ties in Infrastructure and Healthcare

The *Egypt State Information Service*, out of Cairo, stated that Ambassador Hadad Abdel Tawab al-Gohary met with Equatorial Guinea's Vice-President Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue to discuss the implementation of agreements from the vice-president's visit to Cairo. The vice-president expressed interest in leveraging Egypt's expertise in construction and infrastructure, particularly after visiting the New Administrative Capital and New Alamain projects. The discussions also covered plans for joint projects in healthcare, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and construction sectors. President Abdel Fatah El-Sisi received an invitation from Equatorial Guinea's president, delivered by the vice-president, to visit the country, focusing on enhancing economic cooperation, trade, and sharing Egypt's experience in healthcare.

Shifts in Global Battery Production: From Mozambique to the US and UK Amidst Rising Tariffs on China

AllAfrica reports that in February, Vidalia, Louisiana began producing lithium battery anodes using graphite from Mozambique, with support from the U.S. government, including significant grants and tax benefits. Similar production will occur in Teesside, England, also subsidized by the host government. Historically, graphite processing was exclusive to China, but the U.S. and EU have imposed tariffs on Chinese batteries to counterbalance its technological lead. Despite the potential for processing in Mozambique, good industrial jobs remain in the U.S. and UK, with Mozambique limited to mining jobs. This shift highlights changing economic policies in the West, moving from neoliberalism

to subsidized industrial growth to compete with China.

South Africa’s Critical Minerals: Balancing Economic Growth and Equitable Resource Governance

Xichavo Alecia Ndlovu, writing for AllAfrica, states that South Africa possesses significant reserves of minerals essential for the global energy transition, including cobalt, nickel, copper, lithium, and rare earth elements. While the mining industry remains economically important, employing over 400,000 people and contributing significantly to GDP, it faces challenges in ensuring equitable benefits for citizens. Surveys show that many South Africans favor tighter regulation of natural resource extraction, although views on community benefits and environmental impacts are mixed. The governance of the mining sector remains a contested issue in political debates, reflecting differing party approaches to state intervention and private sector involvement.

Enhancing Mauritius-South Korea Ties: Infrastructure, Technology, & Security

Ambassador Park Ji-Hyun of South Korea met with Mauritius' Minister of Foreign Affairs, Maneesh Gobin, to discuss strengthening bilateral ties. They highlighted recent developments, including infrastructure collaboration with the Korean Expressway Corporation and technology transfer in AI and other sectors. Mauritius expressed interest in enhancing security in the Indian Ocean through South Korean expertise. Additionally, Mauritius supports diplomatic efforts for peace on the Korean Peninsula, reflecting a commitment to regional stability.

Empowering Communities: Emilia Onyema's Call for Inclusive Arbitration

Robert Li, writing for *African Law & Business*, reports that Emilia Onyema, a prominent academic and arbitrator from SOAS University of London, delivered the 2024 Roebuck Lecture, urging arbitrators to prioritize citizens' rights in cases involving corruption, such as the Nigeria v P&ID dispute. She emphasized the need for local communities, often impacted by corruption but excluded from arbitration processes, to have a voice. Highlighting the importance of transparency and access to justice, Onyema called for arbitration to address these concerns to uphold the rule of law. She concluded by encouraging

arbitrators to rethink their roles to ensure justice for all affected parties.

Antitrust in South Africa's Fresh Produce Industry

African Law & Business' Dippy Singh writes that the Competition Commission of South Africa conducted an inquiry into the fresh produce industry, revealing significant antitrust issues and barriers to entry that inflate prices. The inquiry focused on practices hindering competition, such as high mark-ups by supermarkets and unfair practices by market agents in national fresh produce markets (NFPMs). It recommended measures including increased sales quotas for small and disadvantaged farmers, divestment of market agent holdings by private equity firms, and reforms to address financial barriers for farmers, notably regarding water rights. The Commission proposed 29 provisional actions to rectify market distortions and invited further stakeholder engagement to finalize its recommendations.

Call for Fair WTO Rules: African Group Advocates for Green Industrialization

Julius Bizimungu, writing for *The New Times*, reports that last week, the African Group at the WTO reiterated their call for fairer WTO rules to support developing countries, particularly in promoting green industries like solar and wind power and attracting investments in clean technologies. They argue that current WTO rules disadvantage African nations in their pursuit of environmentally friendly economic growth. At a recent WTO Committee on Trade and Environment meeting in Geneva, the group emphasized the need to revise rules in areas such as subsidies, trade-related investment measures, and intellectual property rights to provide developing countries more policy flexibility for green industrialization.

Trinity Metals Secures US DFC Grant to Advance Sustainable Mining Projects in Rwanda

The New Times reports that Trinity Metals has secured $US 3.865 million in Technical Assistance grant funding from the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) to support ESG-focused projects across its mining operations in Rwanda. The funding will finance environmental and social impact assessments, employee skills development, SHEC management system

implementation, integrated development planning, and rehabilitation of legacy tailings and rivers. This initiative is part of Trinity Metals' strategy to become a leader in the critical metals sector, leveraging strong government and community support alongside significant shareholder investment in Rwanda's mining industry.

Ethiopia Gears Up for AfCFTA: National Strategy Forum to Shape Trade Integration

The Economic Comission for Africa reports that the Ethiopian Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration, in partnership with the Policy Studies Institute and support from the Economic Commission for Africa, is organizing a National Consultation Forum on 29 June 2024 in Addis Ababa to develop Ethiopia's National African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Implementation Strategy. This strategy aims to align Ethiopia's economic sectors with AfCFTA principles, promoting free movement of goods, services, and investment across Africa's unified market. The forum will gather stakeholders to discuss roles, raise awareness, and ensure inclusivity, gender sensitivity, and environmental sustainability in Ethiopia's integration efforts under the AfCFTA, enhancing its economic readiness and competitiveness regionally and globally.

Events - 28/6/2024

High-Level Political Forum 2024 - United Nations. *New York, United States.* 8-17 July 2024.

"**6th Mid-Year Coordination Meeting of the African Union**" African Union. *Accra, Ghana.* 18-21 July 2024.

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