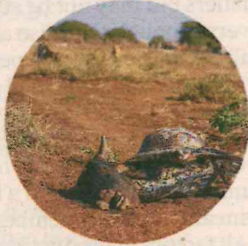


"We all know when he once was fed up with Idd Amin and decided to act because words would not have helped anything."

Our country, says Royan Frank [royanfrank30@gmail.com], needs to have people "who are real and who believe in God" so that they can pray for us. "We experienced a long drought last year and the beginning of this year. This might be God punishing us. Death of animals and humans were also experienced. This could be because there are false prophets preaching false messages. Some of these false prophets have been revealed in the Shakahola saga. If we become a prayerful nation, some of these problems that are affecting us can come to an end since God can answer our prayers," he says.



The rate at which Kenyan religious leaders have turned places of worship into places where believers are scammed is very irritating, according to Seline Atieno [atienoseline25@gmail.com]. "This fraud should be stopped by the government. It should help people to differentiate between true and false messengers of God."

Write to us:
oped@standardmedia.co.ke

to pay salaries because of a severe cash crunch. It doesn't make economic sense to borrow from international lend-

taxes irregularly waived. Paying taxes is an obligation for everyone and it's the only way we shall be independent.

yans, which is very unfortunate. Increasing taxes is only but increasing problems for poor and already

Never in the history of our country have Kenyans been taxed as highly as now.

Text and photos: Erustus Mulwa

AIR TRANSPORT

Aviation should be at the heart of Kenya's economic transformation

According to a report from Aviation Benefits Beyond Borders, air transport is at the heart of global economic growth. Therefore, it is a crucial driver of development. The report adds, "the aviation industry supports USD 3.5 trillion or 4.1 per cent of the world's gross domestic product. If aviation were a country, it would rank 17th in size by GDP."

Countries that are alive to these facts are now going all-out to ensure a robust aviation industry. Take, for instance, Saudi Arabia. An article from *Business Insiders* states, "Saudi has announced a new airline to bring in tourists as it tries to attract 100 million visitors to the kingdom by 2030." Further, the article mentions the new airline will cover 100 destinations and have its hub at Riyadh's King Salman International Airport.

Recent reports from India show that Air India, that was privatised a year ago and is now owned by Tata Group, has ordered the highest order of aircraft. According to media reports, Air India ordered 470 planes worth between \$80-100 billion, the largest bulk order for aircraft, the second highest was by American Airlines for 460 planes in 2011. The deal has the potential to not only uplift Air India to the number one position in the domestic aviation sector but also spur jobs in India, USA and Europe.

Closer home, Rwanda is constructing what may be one of Africa's largest international airports. According to Julius Ngenga, CEO of ATLH, the holding company formed by the Rwandan government to manage aviation-related activi-



Julius Thairu
Chief Commercial and Customer
Officer at Kenya Airways

ties, "The objective is to make the country an African hub connecting businesses, people and countries. The airport is designed in phase one for 8.2 million passengers per year and 14.2 million in phase two." The project is a USD 2 billion project touted as a game changer for aviation on the continent.

What the above 'projects' have in common is the potential for economic transformation and forex consolidation for their home markets.

Kenya Airways (KQ) is a of Africa's leading airlines. We fly to 42 destinations globally, 35 of them within Africa and code share partnerships that allow us to expand our network to over 100 destinations globally. KQ employs close to 4,000 people directly and thousands more indirectly. Anecdotal evidence reveals KQ contributes close to 5 per cent of Kenya's GDP. Last year, it won four

awards at the World Travel Awards. Africa's Leading Airline 2022 and Africa's Leading Airline Brand, Business Class, and Inflight Magazine (Msafiri) 2022. Kenya Airways Cargo won the highly acclaimed African Cargo Airline of the Year at the STAT Trade Times Awards in South Africa. These recognitions and accolades from our customers and industry peers show they have confidence in the business of KQ.

For several years, KQ has not been on a very sound financial footing. This has primarily been informed by some of its legacy issues that mainly include loans and fleet costs, amongst other burdens not in the airline's control. Therefore, whilst any business concern needs to turn a profit with dividends to owners, it is also worth noting that KQ delivers substantive value to its stakeholders.

We have been working on several areas to support the recovery and turnaround of KQ. This process is a journey as aviation is a high-cost, low margin business that can be drastically impacted by changes within the operating environment like pandemics, forex, and fuel volatility.

Some of the actions we are undertaking include debt restructuring that includes the restructuring of the government-guaranteed debt, reducing high costs of operations by 10 per cent by 2024, lease cost reduction that has so far achieved a 22 per cent reduction on leases, operational excellence to improve our reliability and on-time arrivals and departures, diversification and improvement on our customer and employee experiences. All these working together will drive us towards recovery.