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Mining firms back out of new licence issuance scrutiny

Photo/ FILE



FINDINGS: Mining Cabinet secretary Najib Balala after receiving a report on issuance of mining licences from task force chairman Mohammed Nyaoga at his office on January 29 last year.

BY LOLA OKULO

HALF of the 43 mining firms whose licences were revoked following a probe into their validity have failed to recover their permits.

A report released on Saturday by the Ministry of Mining, after a year of reviewing new submissions by the firms states that 22 firms did not reapply. They were instructed to put in fresh applications after the initial ones were found to be invalid and were given extra time to meet the set requirements.

"In order to ensure that the process was fair and transparent, all the 43 licence holders/applicants were given an opportunity to demonstrate that the mineral titles issued met the legal and technical requirements, through re-submission of documentation that accompanied their applications," said Cabinet secretary Najib Balala

in the mining implementation status report.

Only four companies were found to have met all criteria and their suspensions were promptly lifted.

Three companies were found to have grossly violated the mining laws in acquisition of their licences leading to outright revocation of the permits.

Out of the 43, that of Cortec Mining Kenya Limited is in abeyance pending a court ruling after it sued the government following the suspension in January 2014. The company is eyeing mining operations in Kwale's Mrima Hills.

The re-applications of seven other companies failed to meet the full licence requirements. The companies were however removed from the suspension list on condition that they work towards meeting all requirements. So far, only one has managed to meet requirements over

the last one year and has been cleared while the rest had their re-applications rejected.

According to the Mining Ministry, after preliminary reviews of the suspensions, a total of 32 firms were given a chance to make fresh applications after their previous licences were found to be invalid.

Out of the 32, two withdrew their applications completely, six re-applied and their applications were subsequently approved, two firms asked for more time to meet the requirements and their requests have been granted while 22 did not respond at all.

The various mining licences were reviewed after Balala ordered a probe in September 2013 on all licences issued between January to May 2013 - which was a government transition period - out of concern that most applications were rushed through at a time when a new regime was being ushered in.

Online payments firm to expand beyond EAC

BY MERCY GAKII

ONLINE payments solutions provider 3G Direct Pay plans to expand into four new markets by December.

It has identified Mozambique, Seychelles, Ghana and South Africa as the new frontiers bringing its presence in Africa to 10 countries.

It currently operates in Kenya, Tanzania, Zanzibar,

Uganda, Zambia and Malawi.

"We are now in the process of opening local offices in Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania, Stone Town in Zanzibar, Lusaka in Zambia, Kampala in Uganda and Mombasa at the Kenyan coast," said the firm's managing director Eran Feinstein in an email interview.

The Nairobi-headquartered 3G Direct Pay is an online payments processor for e-

commerce, providing payment solution services to hundreds of travel related businesses.

Feinstein said they are optimistic that the tourism industry which is the back bone of their business will rebound.

"We believe in the tourism industry as a leading sector which will lead the region's growth. We must support the industry at this difficult time," he said.

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ALY KHAN'S
STAR
PORTFOLIO



MINDSPEAK CARAVAN GOES TO DAR

Mindspeak is a monthly event that I organise and whose inspiration was an inscription written as you enter the Mevlana's Mausoleum in faraway Konya in Turkey, which said:

"Come, come, whoever you are. Wanderer, worshiper, lover of leaving. It doesn't matter. Ours is not a caravan of despair. Come, even if you have broken your vows a thousand times. Come, yet again, come, come." Rumi

The Mindspeak caravan of hope and 21st century cooperation and conversation achieved lift-off in 2011 when Uganda President Museveni graciously accepted to be my guest. That very same weekend, Dr Kiza Besigye had been airlifted to hospital in Nairobi and we had lift-off.

Mindspeak has hosted Christine Lagarde, President Kagame, Bob Collymore, Joshua Oigara and I like to think its indigenous and a 'Go To Destination'. Its a monster on social media and in many respects I am prouder of Mindspeak than I am of predicting euro-dollar parity; the parabolic dollar surge and the collapse in the price of crude oil [which is all set to drop now below \$40.00 and crush rebound hopes from Venezuela to Nigeria to Angola].

This weekend we took our Mindspeak caravan to Dar-Es-Salaam and this was particularly cool not only because Tanzania is where my ancestors landed more than 100 years ago, when they hopped on a dhow from India and did not take advantage of the reversible escalator component of monsoon winds and stayed in Africa, but also because Mindspeak was hosting the very 21st century 41 year-old (older than 87 per cent of Tanzanians) presidential candidate January Makamba who is the deputy minister of Communications Science and Technology.

I had met @JMakamba over Twitter, and when we met for the first time, I was received so graciously and I found the experience other-worldly and to

be savoured. Etiquette is a little old-style now but fine etiquette is a wonderful thing. Later when I read January's biography, I learnt that he got his etiquette from his grandmother.

"Life in the village happened at my grandma's place. She used to have a little village pub selling local brew (Iubisi)"

With the background noise about Tanzania's commitment to the EAC, it was particularly sweet that it was the very Pan-African East African Makamba who had taken Mindspeak on the road and regional again.

It was a wonderful session and carried worldwide on a live-stream and trended first in Tanzania and in Kenya [we are not talking about the arrival of the new digital Aage in East Africa - Its already here]. Makamba was a Tour de Force. There is so much meat on the policy bone you could feed the 5,000.

I asked Makamba: "Are you a policy wonk?" It was a rhetorical question.

At one point, he told me you can measure your political capital by how long it takes you through to walk through a room of CCM Party members.

As we walked up the backstairs of the Hyatt Kilimanjaro and he was regaled by all the ordinary folks who work in the engine-room of a hotel, I understood what he meant.

East Africa is real young now and the hopes of our people in Dar, in Nairobi, in Kigali, in Kampala have converged.

I realised that Makamba is the lightning-rod for the hopes for a better future that people carry with them.

"Tanzanians are not looking for an elder statesman politician to lead them, they are looking for a vibrant and honest leader of the new age."

I sincerely hope we pushed Makamba closer to the tipping point.

"The tipping point is that magic moment when an idea, trend, or social behaviour crosses a threshold, tips, and spreads like wildfire."

Shares go up and down and readers are advised that this column represents Mr Satchu's personal opinions.