

Mafia's airstrip rehab scheduled for next February

By Mgeta Mganga

THE government is set to rehabilitate Mafia airstrip early next year, in an effort to attract more investors and tourists to the precious island.

Speaking to this paper in an interview recently, Mafia District Commissioner Manzie O. Mangochie, said the rehabilitation exercise would start in February next year after funds had been obtained from the US government.

In fulfilling President Jakaya Kikwete's promise, the government through Tanzania Civil Aviation Authority had completed the runway for the first phase, he said.

He said the second phase would start next year under the funding of Millennium Challenge Compact, a development programme between the governments of Tanzania and the US.

According to him the rehabilitation exercise would involve tarmacking the runway to enable big planes to land, construction of passengers' building and a fence around the airstrip.

On top of that, he said, the rehabilitation of the airstrip would not only stimulate the growth of the town and district, but would also be a round player to support the growth of tourism and fish industries.

This would in turn provide employment to many youths in the district and improve their social well being through increased income.

Speaking due to improved infrastructure and this would stimulate internal business.

"This is one of the areas which Mafia residents will benefit through employment, while the government will also benefit in terms of revenue," he said.

He said at the moment, the district had five investors in tourism, mainly in hotels and Marine Park and reserve services.

Speaking on investment plans, he said the district, in collaboration with research companies, had started to search for fuel and natural gas.

He said the search for oil and gas was being done by Laurel and Prom from France in Ndagoni area.

After initial search to 4000 metres, he said, the company stopped because of the nature of the soil and lack of port.

He said, gas once found, would probably end the problem of power blues on the Island.

Random power cuts are an order of the day affecting the economy and social welfare in general.

He urged the management of Tanesco to fulfill its promise to take new diesel-powered generators to the island from Iringa.

Tuesday, August 4, 2009

Daily News