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About one-tenth of the world's forests are in Canada.

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Nearly one in every three nations will suffer a freshwater shortage in 50 years.

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More Rice With Less Water 2mins. 34secs. 7

Rapid decline of global water supply puts rice cultivation in jeopardy. Scientist are searching for methods that use less water.

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Suspected pesticides pollution has caused importers to shun freshwater fish from the great lakes region of East Africa.

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Two wildlife sanctuaries become national parks.

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Satellite data can help protect livestock from deadly disease.

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Nature unveils a wonder in Indonesia's wild.

Children's Section

The Lion and the Rat 2mins. 3secs. 9

One good turn deserves another.

Why do Bats Fly at Night? 1min. 5secs. 9

Bats can see very well at night.

The Dreadful Crime of Kadima the Hare 4mins. 10secs. 10

Find out why the leopardess hunts alone and the startled hare flees without looking back.

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News

Africa Faces Starvation

1min. 37secs.

More than 10 million people in 16 African countries require food aid urgently to avert imminent starvation. This is according to information released recently by the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) based in Rome.

“Civil war, drought and pests have crippled food production in sub-Saharan Africa, where hundreds of thousands of people risk starvation,” the FAO said on the 16th August.

Angola is said to be the worst hit by food scarcity. FAO senior economist, Mwita Rukandema, said that the recent flare-up of the civil war has made aid delivery virtually impossible in Angola. People are being systematically driven out of their homes by forces of UNITA - Union for the Total Independence of Angola, who reportedly cut off roads, ambush vehicles and shell the cities, said Rukandema. “If this continues for another two months we’ll hear horrible stories of mass starvation,” she added.

Rukandema said that the only way disaster can be averted is by putting pressure on both the government and rebel forces to open air corridors. Aid flight can land only at a limited number of airports now and not nearly enough food and medicine is being delivered.

Dozens of Angolans and foreign aid workers trying to deliver food have been killed in ambushes reportedly staged by rebels.

Africa News On Line

Nigeria Declares New National Parks

51secs.

On August 3, the government of Nigeria declared Okomu Wildlife Sanctuary in southern Nigeria and Kamuku Game Reserve in northern Nigeria the newest national parks in the country.

The Okomu Wildlife Sanctuary was established about 15 years ago in Okomu Forest Reserve as the flagship project of the Nigerian Conservation Foundation(NCF), an affiliate of the international conservation organisation - World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The 112 sq.km. park is the wintering ground for migratory birds, and is home to a variety of wildlife including the forest elephant and the white-throated monkey.

“This is a very positive development for our country,” said Alhaji Lawan Marguba, Director of the National Parks Service.

Paddy Ezeala/ WWF

Zanzibar Bans Lake Fish

1min. 50secs.

Zanzibar has banned the importation of fish from Lake Victoria, two months after the European Union also banned fish imports from the region, following widespread reports of fish poisoning in the lake.

A statement by the minister for Agriculture, Livestock Development and Natural Resources, said the move was aimed at protecting consumers, including tourists, as well as the island’s economy.

Brigadier General Adam Nwakanjuki said although it had not ascertained that Lake Victoria fish was contami-

nated with pesticides, Zanzibar could not risk becoming a dumping ground for unwanted foodstuffs from elsewhere.

The ban, which also covers fish from the Nile River, follows a recent increase in shipments of Nile perch and tilapia. The government has stationed inspection officers at the island ports, airports, hotels and supermarkets, to bar entry of freshwater fish from both Lake Victoria and River Nile.

A senior official of the Zanzibar Commission for Tourism said that hotels found serving banned foodstuff risk losing their business licenses.

The Isles government last week told hotels that have stocks of tilapia to destroy them.

The move to bar the entry of freshwater fish from Tanzania's mainland, Kenya and Uganda comes only three weeks after Zanzibar banned the sale of a brand of mineral water called 'Masafi' produced in Dar es Salaam. The Isles government claimed that tests carried out by the office of Zanzibar Chief Chemist had "proved that 'Masafi' water was not suitable for human consumption.

Africa News On Line

Plan Unveiled to Protect Europe's Rivers

1min. 11secs.

A bold initiative to protect Europe's natural rivers will start this month, September 1999. The initiative called 'Living Rivers' is a continent-wide campaign by WWF - World Wide Fund for Nature - the international conservation organisation. The campaign is designed to raise awareness of the values and functions of natural river systems, highlight threats due to abuse and poor management, and demonstrate the roles of individuals and corporate bodies in freshwater conservation.

According to WWF, the campaign will "set a blueprint for European river management and for changes in policy."

The campaign will be launched in Brussels on September 21. Meanwhile, a 20-page brochure will be introduced at the end of August with the title *Europe's Living Rivers - An Agenda for Action*.

"The agenda for action will challenge the European Union, national and local governments, business and industry, water suppliers, and other interest groups to make commitments and take relevant actions," WWF said.

WWF

Large Number of Women in Sudanese Jails

1min. 53secs.

More than 30,000 women are serving jail terms in muslim northern Sudan, mostly for minor offences. This is more than one per cent of the country's entire population.

Ninety-five per cent of the women are in jail for brewing and selling liquor and nearly all of them are from southern Sudan where it is not a crime to brew and sell alcoholic drinks.

According to recent reports more than half of the women are re-arrested and returned to jail after they are released.

“The distillation or brewing equipment is sold by public auction generally bought by a known individual.” The report stated. “The ladies leave prison, go back to purchase the distilling and brewing equipment and resume the only trade they know.”

A woman can be arrested tried and jailed within 48 hours, and her brewing equipment confiscated and sold. They are often tried without a defence lawyer and their punishment includes flogging, fines and sentencing to a jail term of more than six months.

Several of the women are pregnant or nursing mothers. Over 100 babies are born annually in one of the prisons. Another one has as many as 200 children jailed with their mothers at any one time.

Although the prison department in Sudan is said to be among the best managed in Africa, there are already calls for prison reforms to redress the humiliating treatment suffered by southern women in the north because of their traditional trade in liquor.

Newslink Africa.

New Drug Protects Babies of AIDS Mothers

1min. 32secs.

A new drug may provide safe, effective and affordable protection for infants born to mothers carrying the HIV virus, which leads to AIDS (Acquired immune deficiency syndrome), according to the findings of a joint Ugandan-US study released recently in Kampala and Washington.

Early results from the two-year drug trial showed HIV transmission prevention when a dose of the drug nevirapine (NVP) was administered to an HIV infected woman in labour and another dose was given to her infant within three days of birth.

Disease transmission was reduced by half compared to similar treatment with AZT - a drug that could cost 70 times more, according to the US Department of Health and Human Services.

“This study represents the most promising advance to date toward the goal of finding strategies that can be used world-wide to prevent the spread of HIV from infected mothers to their infants,” said Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, that sponsored the study.

The results were also hailed in a Kampala announcement. “This research provides real hope that we may be able to protect many of Africa’s next generation from the ravages of AIDS,” said Crispus Kiyonga, Uganda’s Health Minister.

Newslink Africa

Features

Southern Africa Faces AIDS Time Bomb

1min. 45secs.

The AIDS disease is ballooning out of hand in southern Africa, despite efforts by governments, non governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) to raise awareness of the pandemic problem.

Recent statistics show that Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland and Zimbabwe are the hardest hit by the disease in southern Africa. Nearly a quarter of the population in these countries is said to be living with the HIV virus or the full-blown AIDS disease. Nearly one-quarter of the people aged between 15 - 49 years are infected.

According to the US newsmagazine, TIME, South Africa's Department of Health estimates that the virus will infect at least 20 percent of the workforce by next year. Over the next three years, the annual death toll will be 250,000 leaving behind almost 600,000 orphans. The disease is projected to cut average life expectancy by 20 years, and to shrink economic growth by two percent.

"The epidemic will have significant (economic) impacts, unless effective policies and programmes are put in place to plan for and address effects on the labour supply and productivity," warned the 1998 UNDP Human Development Report.

According to the South African Health Minister, Nkosazana Zuma, the country has the fastest growing number of HIV patients with close to 50,000 people acquiring the virus every month. These are very dangerous statistics. They send a warning signal that all is not well with the country's fight against the AIDS pandemic.

Newslink Africa.

Africa Markets Its Investment Potential

2mins. 48secs.

As democracy takes hold in Africa, the business world is beginning to take interest in the investment potential of the continent. And for two days in October, in Dakar, Senegal, Africa will have the opportunity to host the rest of the world in a major business forum that promises to attract development co-operation ministers from Europe, major foreign corporate executives, African Heads of State, industry and finance ministers.

According to a recent report by Newslink Africa, guests from European countries include Ms. Clare Short, Britain's Secretary of State for International Development and Mr. Poul Nielson, Denmark's Minister for Development and Co-operation. Others are Mr. Kenzo Oshima, Director General for Economic Co-operation Bureau in Japan and Ms. Hilde F. Johnson, Minister for International Development and Human Rights in Norway.

Ms. Evelyn Herfkens, Minister for Development Co-operation in Netherlands, will also attend, along with senior officials from France, Germany, Finland and Italy.

The conference is jointly organised by the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), Alliance for Africa's Industrialisation (AAI), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Development Bank (ADB) and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).

The issues to be discussed include the effect of globalisation on industrial development in Africa, the continent's investment climate, regional economic integration, EU-African co-operation and private sector capacity building. Methods for financing small-scale enterprises will also be discussed.

This October meeting is the result of an OAU declaration in Harare in June 1997. It mandated the Secretary General of the OAU to work with the Director General of UNIDO and the Executive Secretary of the ECA to organise a meeting of donor nations and institutions with Africa to explore measures for financing Africa's action plan for development.

The organisers of the meeting hope that it will accelerate the industrialisation process in Africa by enabling African countries to forge new partnerships both within the continent and with the outside world.

"Technical co-operation remains essential for improving the enabling environment for private investment in many countries. It also increasingly helps to nurture the emergence of a stronger, indigenous class of industrial entrepreneurs who can forge stronger partnerships with investors from across their borders," the report from Newslink Africa said.

Newslink Africa

More Rice With Less Water

2mins. 34secs.

An urgent search for new methods of growing rice using less water may be yielding results. New rice growing techniques have been developed. Described as wet seeding, intermittent rice irrigation, land levelling, improved weed management, and management of cracked soils, these techniques were developed by CGIAR - a Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research to reduce the acute effects on water supply of growing demands for rice.

These new methods emphasise reduced use of water for increased rice yield per hectare of land. Details of how they work were not mentioned in CGIAR's press report. However, Ismail Serageldin, Chairman of CGIAR and World Bank Vice President for Special Programmes said that it takes twice as much water to produce rice than any other cereal crop, and more than 2,000 tons of water is used to grow one ton of rice. This situation will become increasingly unattainable as the world's freshwater supply declines rapidly and global demand for rice increases.

More than half the world's population will depend on rice as their principal food source in 30 years. Traditional rice growing areas in northern and southern Nigeria are severely threatened by dam construction, salinization and urbanisation. The new techniques may eventually revive the rice farms.

"With the accelerating loss of land available for rice cultivation due to urbanisation, soil degradation and salinization, the problem becomes one of increasing yields under increasingly severe circumstances," said Ronald Cantrell, Director General of the International Rice Research Institute, a CGIAR centre in the Philippines.

The new techniques may help keep afloat the economies of the developing countries of the world. Many of the major rice-producing countries are developing nations categorised by the World Bank as "low income economies." Asia alone has 17 of the world's 25 major rice-producing nations. They cultivated about 90 per cent of all land cultivated with rice world wide, and account for 90 per cent of global rice production. In fact, one-third

of the cultivated land in most rice-growing Asian nations is planted with rice.

CGIAR

Satellites Can Predict Outbreak of Deadly Fever

2mins. 7secs.

The deadly outbreak of the Rift Valley fever virus that wipes out herds of cattle in East Africa, with fatal consequences for people can be prevented. New studies have shown that the fever outbreak has a definite cycle. This cycle can be predicted six months ahead, using weather satellites, and steps taken to destroy its vectors.

This is according to new research at the NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center and the Department of Defense Global Disease Infections System at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research in Washington D.C., U.S.A.

Researchers found that outbreak of the disease always coincided with seasons of heavy rainfall over large areas of East Africa. They studied fifty years of weather data and confirmed that there were two outbreaks of the disease in the last 17 years, coinciding with periods of heavy rainfall. The virus disappeared between the outbreaks.

According to research findings, the Aedes mosquito which transmits the disease passes on the virus into its eggs which incubates in the moist soil after the floodwaters recede. The young mosquitoes feed on livestock. This process continues without an incident until Culex mosquitoes enter the picture. The Culex cause major outbreaks after feeding on infected livestock. And Culex mosquitoes thrive only in periods of heavy rains.

Researchers say that satellite data can help predict Rift Valley fever outbreaks up to six months in advance.

"What's interesting here is that satellite data can provide advance warning of conditions suitable for Rift Valley fever outbreaks and then identify the actual area affected," said Compton Tucker, a Goddard biologist who has used satellite data to study vegetation in Africa for more than 20 years.

Environmental News Network

Child Abuse is Rampant in Uganda

1min. 41secs.

Ugandan children are beaten, raped and tortured by parents and strangers with impunity and nothing seems to be done about it. This is according to a July 13 edition of *The Monitor*, Uganda's daily newspaper.

The newspaper reported that children are beaten to coma at home and school. Some are killed by brutal parents or maimed for offences such as petty thefts or failing to find a wrist watch for a father in a hurry to get to work.

"A favourite form of punishment is tying the child's hands with a rope, then wrapping banana fibers or papers over them and setting them on fire," the newspaper reported.

The Monitor also denounced the rampant incidence of rape of juveniles, and of girl-children as young as 3 years old.

Recently, the government of Uganda raised the age of consent for girls from 14 to 18 years to protect the

female-child. Concerned Ugandans are calling for stronger commitment by government to check female-child abuse.

“One problem with child abuse is that it has not been tackled as a major national issue,” The Monitor said in its commentary. “Apart from NGOs, the government has not invested any money in researching the matter, or a national symposium to get a sense of what is going on and encourage a national solution to the problem.”

Africanews

Children’s Section

The Lion and the Rat

2mins. 3secs.

The lion is generally regarded as the king of all the animals because he is very strong and could “discipline” any animal by virtue of his sheer strength. So, all the animals fear and respect the lion and do everything possible not to fall prey to his anger. Every animal tried their best to be in the good books of the lion, to curry his favour and friendship.

One day, the lion was asleep when the rat unknowingly ran over his nose. Awoken and angered, the lion caught the rat and wanted to kill him when the rat pleaded: “Please do not kill me. Maybe, one day, I may save the life of the king of animals.” Amused, the lion laughed at the thought of a “small” rat saving his life, he, lion, the king and strongest of all animals.

However, the lion released the rat with a warning not to disturb his sleep again. The rat thanked the lion and went home.

Not long after this incident, the lion was wandering in the forest when he got caught in a trap laid by hunters. When he cried for help, all the other animals ignored him since they feared he would eat them when freed. Eventually, the rat heard the cry of the lion and remembering that the lion once spared his life, decided to reciprocate the good gesture by freeing the lion.

Approaching the lion, the rat saw that the trap was made of nylon strings woven together. Setting to work, the rat bit the nylon strings to pieces, creating a hole big enough for the lion to come out.

Having freed the lion, the rat said: “when you spared my life, you laughed when I pleaded that I can save the life of the king of animals.”

One good turn deserves another.

Character Moulding Stories for Better Citizenship

Why do Bats Fly at Night?

1min. 5secs.

Bats are nocturnal mammals with no way of defending themselves. Darkness is their defence. Their biggest enemy is a bird called the bat hawk, which hunts at dusk when bats leave their roosting places in caves or trees. Some species eat nocturnal insects such as moths. Others, like the fruit bat, eat ripe fruit at night when they cannot be seen. So bats fly at night because they are safe and their food is easy to find.

Of all the world's mammals, bats are the only ones that can really fly. Their wings are made of skin that stretches between the fingers of their very long hand bones, the sides of the body and the back legs. By the way, some people think that bats are blind. This isn't true. All bats have eyes and can see very well at night.

Chongololo

The Dreadful Crime of Kadima the Hare

4mins. 10secs.

Once upon a time, say the people of the Hambakush tribe of southern Africa, Kadima the hare had an agreement with Nthoo, the leopardess. In exchange for guarding the leopardess' three cubs while she was away hunting, Kadima was given a share of the kill for his supper.

This convenient arrangement worked very well until a hard drought came to the land. The wild animals that Nthoo hunted all moved to find water in other regions, and times became very hard for the leopardess, her cubs and Kadima. Day after day, Nthoo came home with nothing for them to eat, and soon they were starving.

Then, one day, Nthoo came home to find that Kadima was eating, and when questioned as to how he had come by the food when she, the finest hunter in the land, had failed to find anything, Kadima replied that a little duiker had wandered past the cave. He had managed to catch and kill it. But the truth was that the meat that Kadima was eating was really one of leopardess' cubs!

The next day, Nthoo hunted again, and the wicked Kadima killed another of her cubs and ate it. When the leopardess returned empty-handed again that evening, she lay down wearily and asked Kadima to bring her cubs, so that they could be nursed. The crafty Kadima carried the one remaining cub to Nthoo three times and so tricked her into believing that all her cubs were alive and well.

The next morning, after Nthoo had departed, Kadima was so tempted by his hunger that he killed and ate the last leopard cub. To cover his crime he laid false trails to and from the cave, scratching up the ground and breaking branches to make it look as though there had been a great fight.

Then he went down to the dried-up waterhole and painted himself bright red with ochre. When Nthoo returned home, he staggered towards her, weeping, and told her that her cubs had been killed and carried them off to be eaten by men. He had tried to defend them, he said, but the hunters had beaten him off and he had almost bled to death from his wounds. And he pointed to the red stains on his fur.

Poor Nthoo! Her roar of grief and rage pierced through the quiet night. In a terrible fury she set out towards the nearest village, determined to take her revenge upon the people who had killed her children.

However, just as the leopardess was about to spring upon a group of young boys in the field, a loud voice cried from the tree-top, "Nthoo!" It was the spy of the forest called the 'go-away bird.' "Nthoo!" he screamed again. "Kadima was the wicked one who killed your children, not the good people of the village!"

Nthoo turned back in a rage to seek out Kadima but Kadima had heard the bird, and fled in terror. Nthoo the leopardess never caught Kadima the hare, but the Hambakush people say that she searches still. That is why the leopardess is wary and now always hunts alone; and that is why the hare runs for its life without looking back, if you should come upon it unawares.

When Hippo was Hairly

Useful Quickfacts

Gender Gaps in School Enrolment in Africa

46secs.

More boys than girls are enrolled in both primary and secondary schools in most African countries. The ratio of enrolment is about two boys to one girl in 11 countries, including Nigeria, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Republic of Benin and the Democratic Republic of Congo. This is according to recent data released by the United Nations.

More than 18 countries show a very moderate gender gap, including Egypt, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Ethiopia, Cameroon and Algeria. Seven countries show no gender gap, while South Africa and Lesotho show a reverse gender gap, with slightly more girls than boys enrolled in primary and secondary schools.

United Nations

Fresh Water Crisis

14secs.

There are currently 31 countries world wide that are facing water shortages. By the year 2025 the number is expected to increase to 48, peaking at 55 by the year 2050.

CGIAR

Italy Gets Tough on Environmental Crime

44secs.

After recording scores of arsons daily in its national parks, Italy has placed a bounty of almost USD60,000 on arsonists. The reward will be given when the criminal has been brought to justice.

Reports from Italy allege that fires set by arsonists annually cause enormous damage in Italy's woods and forests.

"Almost 28 fires were reported everyday at the height of summer during the last five years, and the total surface burnt came to almost 540,000 hectares," said a report by WWF - the World Wide Fund for Nature, adding that "most cases were arson.

WWF

Rapid Urbanization Continues in Africa

21secs.

More people in Africa are leaving the rural areas and settling in urban centres than in other parts of the world. Between 1995 and 2025, the population of urban centres are expected to double worldwide. But in Africa, urban populations would triple in the same period.

Boiling Point

The Clock-watching Bird

59secs.

Have you heard of the bird that tells you what time of the day it is? In Indonesia, researchers studying the habits of a bird species called *Pitta erythrogaster* have discovered something interesting. They found that the red-bellied pitta has a unique way of keeping the time daily. At dawn, the bird is on the ground, singing its morning

song. As the sun rises it will climb up a tree until it reaches the top at noon. Then, as the sun begins its descent, the bird will climb down the tree, branch by branch, returning to the ground and its nest as the sun sets at 6.00p.m. That's not all. You can tell that it's going to rain that day if the bird remains on the ground all day.

WWF

Conservation Quotation: Loss of Biological Diversity **34secs.**

“The worst thing that can happen...is not energy depletion, economic collapse, limited nuclear war, or conquest...As terrible as these catastrophes would be for us, they can be repaired within a few generations. The one process ongoing in the 1980s that will take millions of years to correct is the loss of genetic and species diversity by the destruction of natural habitats. This is the folly our descendants are least likely to forgive us.”

Edward O. Wilson, Harvard University Professor.

Canada is Significant to Global Biodiversity **26secs.**

Canada encompasses 10 per cent of the world's forests, a vast area of 418 million hectares, covering almost half of the country. These forests help maintain 20 percent of the world's freshwater and provide a habitat for an estimated 140,000 wildlife species. The nation is also the world's largest exporter of forest products - mostly timber.

WWF

Acronyms

AAI	-	Alliance for Africa's Industrialization
ADB	-	African Development Bank
AIDS	-	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CGIAR	-	Consultative Group for Agricultural Research
ECA	-	Economic Commission for Africa
FAO	-	Food and Agricultural Organisation
HIV	-	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
NCF	-	Nigerian Conservation Foundation
NGO	-	Non Governmental Organisation
OAU	-	Organisation of African Unity
UN	-	United Nations
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNIDO	-	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UNITA	-	Union for the Total Independence of Angola
WWF	-	World Wide Fund for Nature

