

## Sahel ministers visit Moscow

The foreign ministers of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger are visiting Moscow to deepen their strategic relations with Russia. By strengthening relations with Russia, the Sahel states want to increase their security efforts and achieve greater autonomy from Western influence. 03.04.2025

## Uganda: Microplastics and agriculture

In the Mbale district of Uganda, which is known for growing Arabica coffee, plastic waste, particularly plastic bags (locally buveera), is increasingly invading farmland. Originally a perennial problem in urban areas these bags have begun to encroach on farmland, causing concern among local farmers about their detrimental impact on soil quality. Plastics leach into agricultural land, spreading through fertilisers in fields, encasing seeds or serving as moisture-retaining covers. Research shows that tiny microplastics alter ecosystems and enter the human body. According to a 2021 report by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations on plastics in agriculture, soils are one of the main recipients of agricultural plastics. According to some studies, soils are more polluted by microplastics than the oceans. 02.04.2025

## Hope in the fight against malaria

When mosquitoes bite someone taking the drug *nitisinone*, they die within 24 hours as they cannot digest the blood. The drug does not prevent the transmission of malaria, but it could significantly reduce mosquito populations. It can also be vaporised and used like a conventional insecticide. Field trials are being planned and offer new hope in the fight against malaria, which killed almost 600,000 people in 2023. Mosquitoes are considered the deadliest animals in the world. 02.04.2025

## South Africa: Ancient dinosaur tracks

Dinosaur tracks dating back 140 million years have been discovered for the first time in South Africa's Western Cape, providing a rare insight into the behaviour of dinosaurs at the beginning of the Cretaceous period. The tracks discovered by the Cape South Coast Ichthyology Project - which belong to sauropods and possibly ornithomimids - were uncovered in remote coastal cliffs where dinosaurs once travelled through estuaries. The track marks, which were initially mistaken for seismic deformations, were confirmed using modern iconological methods. 02.04.2025

## Deep-sea harbour at the Congo estuary

DP World, one of the world's largest port operators, has commissioned the Portuguese construction company *Mota-Engil* to manage the development of Banana Port, the first deep-sea harbour in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The port is located near the mouth of the Congo River in the Congo Central province and will replace the port of Matadi, which is located 150 kilometres upstream of the Congo River. The deep-sea harbour is intended to strengthen regional trade networks and reduce the DRC's dependence on foreign ports for global trade.

## Africa's first satellite telephone call

MTN South Africa and the American satellite operator Lynk Global have successfully completed the first African mobile phone call via satellite, taking an important step towards expanding telecommunications coverage in underserved and rural areas. The milestone call took

place in Vryburg in the North West Province. A standard smartphone was connected to a LEO (Low Earth Orbit) satellite. Satellite phones enable voice telephony even in regions without mobile phone reception. The drive for satellite-based mobile phone coverage is gaining momentum throughout Africa. Rival telecoms operator Cell C is also exploring satellite partnerships, while Vodacom has announced a collaboration with Amazon's Project Kuiper LEO satellite network in 2023. In addition, SpaceX's Starlink recently finalised its direct-to-mobile satellite constellation, which will provide internet connectivity for unmodified mobile devices in remote regions. 31.03.2025

## Nigeria: Kurse in KI - "AI for 10M Africans"

AltSchool Africa (a digital-based learning platform founded in 2021) has launched the 'AI for 10M Africans' initiative. This is a large-scale programme that aims to provide 10 million people across the continent with free access to artificial intelligence (AI). The initiative aims to simplify AI concepts, dispel misconceptions and equip people with the knowledge they need to integrate AI into their careers and daily lives. The programme is structured to appeal to learners of all levels. It starts with introductory courses before moving on to advanced topics such as machine learning, data science, AI engineering and real-world AI applications. To improve accessibility, courses are offered in multiple languages, including English, French, Swahili and Arabic. 31.03.2025

## Oil refinery contract with the UAE

Uganda has signed an agreement with United Arab Emirates-based Alpha MBM Investments for a 60% stake in a crude oil refinery in Kabaale, Hoima district. The state-owned Uganda National Oil Company will retain the remaining 40% stake in the refinery, which has a capacity of 60,000 barrels per day. A further five agreements were signed in various sectors. 31.03.2025

## Tax on imported goods

Neighbouring West African countries Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger have announced a new 0.5% levy on imported goods to fund a new tri-state union following their exit from the wider regional economic bloc. It will affect all goods imported from outside the three countries but will not include humanitarian aid. The levy will come into force immediately. Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger are among the poorest countries in the world and have been dominated by an armed Islamist insurgency for the past ten years. 31.03.2025

## Somalia: Who controls harbours and air bases?

Somalia is prepared to offer the United States sole operational control of the Balidogle and Berbera air bases, as well as the port of Berbera and Bosaso. These strategically located facilities offer the opportunity to increase US involvement in the region and ensure uninterrupted military and logistical access in this critical corridor. The Somali region of Somaliland has rejected this attempt by the central government to give the US sole control of the harbours and airbases. 31.03.2025

## More Info: <https://netzwerkafrika.de/>

Zimbabweans stay at home

Kenya: Eid al-Fitr prayers and solidarity