

Govt compensates people in Shire Valley

By Eric Msikiti

The government has spent K1.4 billion on compensation to 1,259 households affected by the Shire Valley Transformation Programme (SVTP) being implemented in Chikwawa and Nsanje districts.

Regarded as one of the biggest agricultural projects in the Southern African Development Community region, the K430.6 billion project intends to increase agricultural productivity at household level in the Shire Valley.

It will also promote the sustainable management and utilisation of natural resources for over 223,000 households in the two districts.

Acting coordinator for the project Stanley Chakhumbira Khaile said close to 23,000 parcels of land, which translate to 13,000 hectares, have been adjudicated and demarcated under the programme, which

will cover 43,370 hectares of land.

“Despite delays in mobilising human resources and equipment due to Covid pandemic-related restrictions, we are pleased that we have made significant progress with almost 36 percent of the works completed. We have managed to compensate the people affected by the works, apart demarcating a huge chunk of the land that will benefit from the project,” Khaile said.

He said some of the farmers would start benefiting from the project even before its completion.

Recently, Agriculture Minister Lobin Lowe toured the project site, where he expressed satisfaction with the level of preparedness.

“Not only is it pleasing to note the progress made in the project but it is also encouraging to note that the farmers who are going to benefit from the project are ready as well,” Lowe said.

Lead irrigation and drainage



IN PROGRESS— Work at one of the canals— Picture by Eric Msikiti

specialist at the World Bank, which is one of the key financiers of the project, Joop Stoutjedijk

was optimistic that the project would transform lives in the Shire Valley.

The SVTP targets 223,000 households and will cover 43,370 hectares of land.



TAKEN ON BOARD— Some of the students

By Isaac Salima

Malawi University of Science and Technology (Must) has reaffirmed its commitment to extending education services to those previously not reached, citing its Open Distance Learning (ODL) programme.

The institution introduced an ODL programme last year, courtesy of funds from United States Agency for International Development, which is implementing a Strengthening Higher Education Access in Malawi Activity project.

Must's ODL programme to benefit 300 students

Speaking during the induction of the second cohort of 300 students, Must Ndata School of Climate and Earth Sciences Executive Dean Wilfred Kadewa said they were impressed with progress made so far.

“Beyond having generic students that are selected to study on campus, there are more people willing to study.

As such, this opportunity opens up to those who can study from home using online facilities.

“Since the programme started last year, progress has been good. We had, in the first cohort, 45 students and 30 of them are through with their studies. We are looking forward to imparting knowledge in more students,”

Kadewa said.

The certificate programme, which runs for three months, includes modules such as business management and entrepreneurship, fundamentals of geographic information systems, GIS and remote sensing, geospatial database management and GIS and remote sensing for disaster risk management.

Hyenas wreak havoc in Mzimba

By Sebastian Nyirenda

Mzimba East community members are appealing for help as hyenas have gone on rampage.

Village Head (VH) Brown Mwale, who is under Traditional Authority Kampingo Sibande, said hyenas have been preying on livestock.

“The problem started last year, where my subjects lost scores of livestock. Just recently, hyenas attacked seven goats belonging to one family,” Mwale said.

VH Kamatang’ombe Tegha of Chasenje concurred with Brown Mwale, saying hyenas had reached the extent of snatching goats and cattle from people.

“We are not safe but, unfortunately, we do not have offices for wildlife officials here,” he said.

Mzuzu District Agricultural Development Officer Animal Officer Wailings Munthali said they would investigate the issue.

“It is sad to hear that hyenas are attacking livestock. My office is investigating the matter,” Munthali said.

Mzimba Animal Trouble Officer Goodnews Gumbo said his office could only intervene if the matter were reported to the office of the Mzimba District Commissioner.