

Editorial

The
NewTimes
RWANDA'S LEADING DAILY

FERWAFa should go back to the drawing board

ONE OF our regular columnists broached another chapter in our very painful sporting journey: football.

When one closely looks at the country's football history, it is not difficult to be convinced that a lot of money has gone down the drain due to a wrong approach and hunger for a quick fix.

For many years the country depended on foreign players to boost its ranks, but that practice was done away with a couple of years ago with a focus on nurturing local talent.

The government's goodwill has accompanied Rwanda Football Federation (FERWAFa) all along the way, making sure it lacked nothing. The same can be said for other sports associations.

Unlike in many countries where teams are always battling financial demons, bickering over unpaid bonuses, the government has always been there for the teams.

So, what is the missing link? For, unlike other football Meccas, it is rare to find kids playing on any available patch of ground or low-traffic neighbourhood streets.

There are no interschool sports events that could help identify talent at the grass roots, where will the rare gems be unveiled?

It is not the handful of privately-run football academies that will unlock the potentials of future talent. It needs a focused FERWAFa.

A few years ago, it launched an academy with a lot of fanfare. Junior members of the national team were grouped together in one team and catapulted into the top league, to compete with their elders and gain experience.

What happened next? The young boys were gobbled by the big teams and FERWAFa left holding thin air. In the meantime, there was no news of the academy.

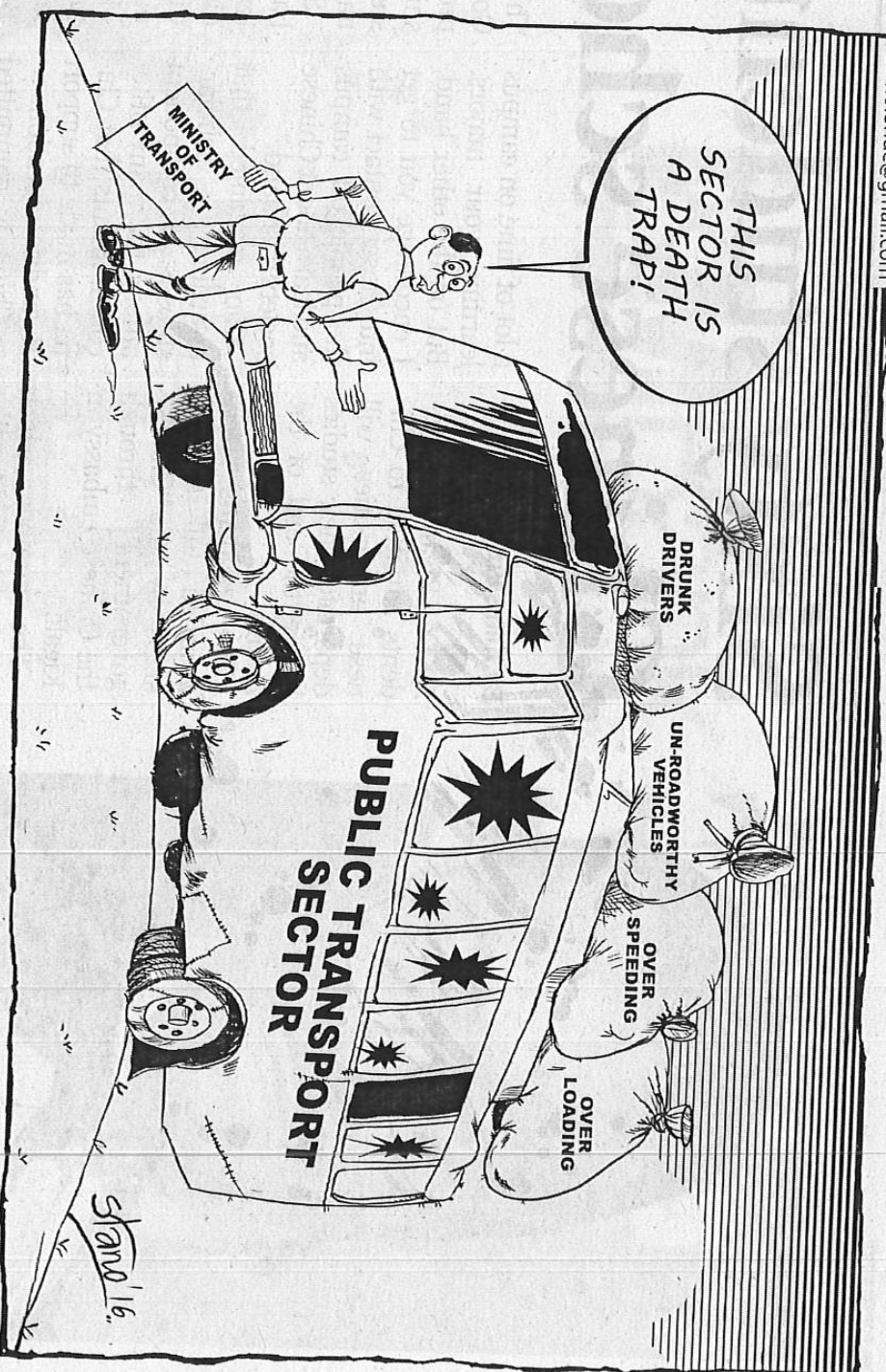
If one were to talk about the shortcomings of our sports administrators, words would not be enough. But FERWAFa really needs to go back on the drawing board. Otherwise, in the next decade the situation will remain unchanged.

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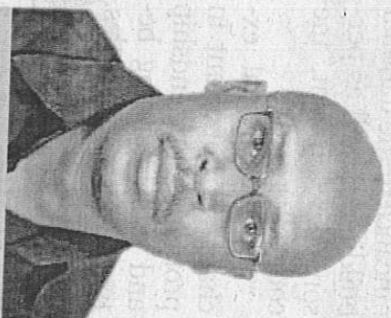
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At least 245 accidents involving public transport vehicles occurred in the past 14 months, killing 91 people while 408 others sustained injuries, a Police report states.



INTEGRATION Gitura Mwaura

EAC single currency: What the EU saga is teaching us

parties across Europe that is threatening to tear apart the EU project.

Britain may have done well with the Pound Sterling. But the socio-economic and political costs of Brexit to the EU and Britain may prove to be too huge, so that it now appears increasingly likely Brexit will be postponed longer than may have been anticipated, or never happen at all.

We will keep a keen eye, mindful that the EAC is nascent and still grappling with some teething issues yet to be ironed out, not to mention concerns that have occasionally arisen of expatriate labour in some of the member states. Free movement by EAC citizens across borders remains a far cry from the seamless Schengen arrangement in Europe.

But there is also the Greek lesson. While seeking bailout, austerity measures forced on the country by its debtors – the European Union, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund – sent Greece's debt hurtling to 180 per cent of GDP, seeing the economy shrink by a quarter. (see "Grexit: What lessons for the EAC?" The New Times, July 18, 2015).

As it appeared then, the problem lay with the euro for the country. Suppose, as pundits wondered, Greece had never adopted the euro, that it had merely fixed the value of the drachma (its former currency) in terms of euros?

Basic economics would have demanded that it could let the drachma's value drop, both to encourage exports and to break out of the cycle of deflation that

had brought the country to its knees. The country hobbles towards recovery, but it would survive after its lenders relented.

Skeptics may wonder about the necessity of the EAC single currency given the dramatic goings on in the eurozone to save the EU project.

And, it may be that the reported lack of resources has necessitated the postponement to establish the East African Monetary Institute, which may also be indicative of deeper regional issues between the partner states that need to be addressed. But nothing should be allowed to derail EAC project.

I am only speculating, with the appreciation that those of us who have been privileged to live and work away from our home countries know that the EAC project has been kind to us, though it has been harsh at times.

An EAC spokesperson is reported to have explained that the EAMfI will now be established through an Act of the East African Legislation Assembly. He acknowledged this will delay other institutions – the East African Statistics Bureau, the East African Surveillance, Compliance and Enforcement Commission, and the East African Financial Services Commission – to activate the East African Monetary Unit. Nobody knows how long this will take.

For all we can tell, the political will remains resolute the EAC dream will succeed, emulating the good in the eurozone.

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