



KINONDONI ROAD,
1ST FLOOR, TOGO TOWER
P.O. BOX 4441,
DAR ES SALAAM-TANZANIA
TEL: +255 22 266 6031
EMAIL: info@optimacorporate.co.tz
WEBSITE: www.optimacorporate.co.tz

What can rescue Uchumi from death

The survival of Uchumi Supermarket will be determined by two things - how fast the retailer secures the signature of a strategic investor as well as a buyer for its 20 acre Kasarani land. The retailer has had a tough past 12 months, with shop closures, empty shelves as well as disgruntled and unpaid workers being some of the challenges it has endured - Suppliers cut ties, irked by unpaid debts amounting to hundreds of millions of shillings. Its rival Nakumatt, once the regional leader in the retail business, did not fare better either. Uchumi's year has however ended on a high note following the receipt of Sh700 million from the government, allowing the business to restock its branches and pay some of its outstanding debts. Andrew Dixon, the retailer's recently appointed chief operating officer, is optimistic that Uchumi will have cleared its debts by the end of March, normalizing operations. "I am optimistic about our continued return of the brand to its former glory. The restocking we have been conducting recently is not a seasonal affair; we are building towards a sustainable business going forward," he said. Mr Dixon added that the bailout by the Treasury helped it clear its workers' two-month unpaid salaries and restore relations with about 200 of its suppliers who had fled. *"The Citizen, Business Week Pg.11"*

Telcos lose 700,000 customers: report

The third quarter of 2017 was bad for three telecommunications companies. The industry's voice subscription dropped by 1.8 per cent amid changes in the market share structure. Tanzania has seven telecom operators whose voice subscribers dropped from 40.7 million in July 2017 to 40 million at the end of September, according to the latest Communications Statistics Report published by the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA). These operators include Vodacom, Tigo, Airtel, Halotel, Zantel, TTCL and Smart. The three companies which were affected -Tigo, Smart and Halotel - lost a total of 977,936 subscribers while the remaining four added a total of 240,617 new users during the period. Six of the operators were fined by the regulator in July this year Sh10.9 billion for violation of subscriber registration rules. Mic Tanzania which trades as Tigo was the leading loser in the drop of voice subscribers after 390,605 customers unsubscribed followed by Smart and Halotel which lost 365,538 and 221,793 subscribers respectively. On the other hand, Airtel was the biggest winner in the market changes after adding 114,431 new subscribers who also beefed up the third largest company's market share from 26 per cent in June this year to 27 per cent in September. Vodacom Tanzania which remains the market leader at least for now added 50,111 new subscribers and strengthens its subscription market share from 31 per cent in June to 32 per cent in September, according to the TCRA statistics. *"The Citizen, Business Week Pg.14"*

Four crops lined up for commodity exchange debut

The Tanzania Mercantile Exchange Plc (TMX) will conduct its first trading May next year. It will do so in the form of 'spot contract' to solve challenge in markets to serve to farmers. The first trade will involve sesame, maize and pigeon peas. The trading will coincide with the harvest season of the crops. TMX is working closely with the Crops Warehouse Board to help in issuing receipts. The TMX will use some of cashew warehouses to keep the sesame seed as their seasons vary. Before the first trade the company will next month conduct a mock trade with assistance from a consultant to prepare stakeholders to understand the system. "The first trade was supposed to start this year with cashew nuts but later we cancelled it to have more time to also trade in other crops. But everything has been completed and we are waiting for the warehouse board to help us issue receipts of crops for registration in the warehouse system," said TMX CEO Godfrey Malekano.

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