

Soda ash plant project thrown for now

THISDAY REPORTER

Dar es Salaam

A TEMPORARY life-line has been thrown to the one million lesser flamingos of Tanzania's Lake Natron, threatened by huge industrial development on their most important breeding site in the world. A plan to build a soda ash plant in the lake has been overthrown for now.

The plan to build a soda

ash plant on the lake in northern Tanzania in the Great Rift Valley, has been thrown out for now and the developers, Lake Natron Resources, have been ordered to produce a new and better environmental statement and consider other sites for soda ash extraction. The firm is jointly owned by the Indian company TATA Chemicals and the Tanzanian Government. Dr Mike Rands, Chief Executive of BirdLife, said: "The proposal to develop

Lake Natron for soda ash extraction is misguided and the decision yesterday is a victory for conservation and for common sense. "The flamingos are not safe yet. The developers should choose another location for extracting soda ash and abandon their plans for Lake Natron". Groups reporting to Tanzania's ministry responsible for environment called on today's meeting to assess the developer's obligatory envi-

ronmental assessment for the soda ash plant. Of the 14 bodies present, including conservation groups, national parks and the EU, representing donors, most said the development should be rejected because of the risk of driving away the flamingos, harming other species and irreversibly damaging Lake Natron, which is protected by international law.

Lota Melamari, Chief Executive of the Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania, who was at yesterday's meeting said: "The survival of the lesser flamingo must not be jeopardised." The National Environment Management Council (NEMC) said in a statement yesterday that it would hold a public hearing for the proposed soda ash project. "The council (NEMC) shall arrange for public hearing or meetings for projects whose anticipated effects are of

national concern, where there is environmental controversy about the proposed actions or when the council receives substantial interest/ or expressed views from members of the public in holding a public hearing," said the environment watchdog in a statement. To this effect, NEMC said the proposed development of a soda ash facility at Lake Natron in Arusha Region would also be subjected to a public hearing process.

Damas (30), a resident of Kimara Bucha, Dar es Salaam, committed suicide by using an electric iron cable and was found dead at his residence. The cause that drove him to commit suicide is still unknown as the deceased did not leave any message behind, said the police chief. He said that the body of the deceased is still being at the

Three die in D'Salaam from accident, suicide

TITO MGANWA

Dar es Salaam

THREE people died in separate incidents last Sunday, one death caused by a car accident and the other two by suicide.

Temeke Regional Police Commander, Emanuel Kandihabi, yesterday said that a commuter bus plying the Kavirato-Mtandao route killed

