

Heavy rains bring road works to standstill

KIBAALE

By Samuel Balagadde

Though the Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) has registered progress in compensation of persons affected by the 10km road works in Mubende, Kakumiro, Kibaale and Kagadi, the recent heavy downpour and unexpected rocks on the carriageway have halted the construction works.

Michael Akankwasa, the project manager, during the tour of the road on Friday, said there are several underground rocks that were not foreseen. He said the contractor has not done any work on the road for several days.

Akankwasa, however, said as the contractor is in possession of a substantial proportion of right of way with many of the project-affected people already compensated, they will be in position to cover up for the lost time.

William Matovu, UNRA's head of land acquisition, said 5,520 people have been affected by the road, 3,150 of whom have so far been compensated. The compensations, so far, are to the tune of sh24.5b of the total required sum of sh50b.

Like other ongoing road projects, Matovu said the project also faces the challenge of absentee landlords and land wrangles among family members and the absence of supporting documents when it comes to land ownership.

When asked about the road-affected persons who are complaining that the compensations are peanuts, Matovu said such people have not been transparent as UNRA does not force anybody to sign for money.

The road project, which is a link to the Albertine region, is being developed to facilitate the ongoing oil industry in Bunyoro. It has already started boosting trade in the region.

The three-year sh484.8b road project being constructed by China Communication Construction Company (CCCC) is funded by the Government of Uganda. It was commissioned by President Yoweri Museveni last year and is expected to be completed in 2019.