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Uganda SGR network to carry up to 30 million tonnes of cargo annually

MUSEVENI, RUTO TO LAUNCH KENYA, UGANDA SGR CONSTRUCTION

PPU PHOTO



President Museveni and officials including transport state minister Fred Byamukama (second-right), during the launch of the construction of the 272km Standard Gauge Railway in Tororo on November 21, 2024

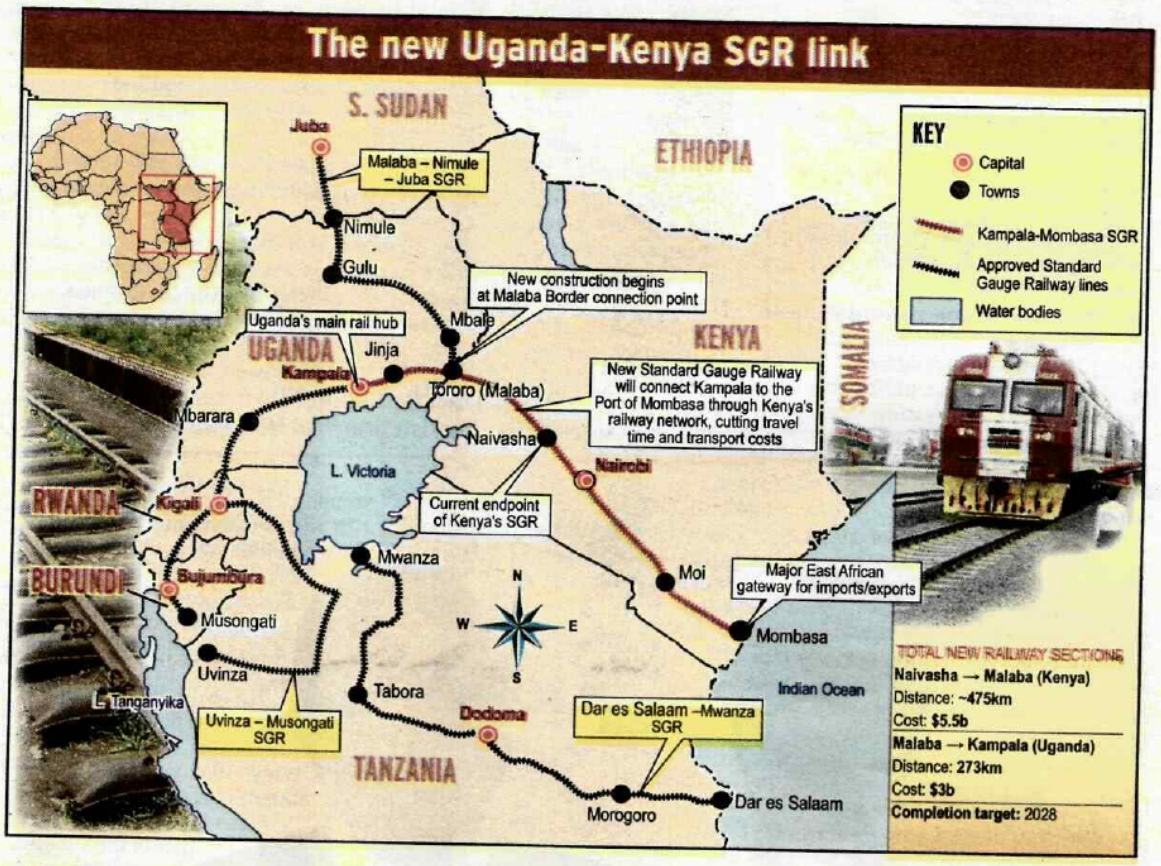
REGIONAL TRADE

Infrastructure limitations that have long denied Uganda swift access to the Port of Mombasa are set to end, as Kenya and Uganda prepare to jointly launch the construction of a Standard Gauge Railway extension that promises to transform regional trade, cut transport costs, and connect East Africa's landlocked interior to the Indian Ocean, writes John Ricks Kayizzi.

Infrastructure limitations that have for many years frustrated Uganda, preventing it from gaining quick access to the Port of Mombasa, will soon become a thing of the past, *New Vision* has learnt.

This hurdle will be overcome when presidents Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and William Ruto of Kenya meet on March 20, 2026, in Kisumu to officially launch the construction of the SGR extension from Naivasha towards the Ugandan border.

Kenya's Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) currently starts from the Port of Mombasa and ends at Naivasha township, which made it difficult for Uganda to build the SGR on its side and left it with huge costs of transporting goods to and from the sea.



Officials from the Ministry of Works and Transport say the high-profile ceremony will mark the start of the multi-billion-dollar infrastructure project designed to connect Kenya's existing Nairobi-Naivasha SGR line to Malaba on the Uganda border and eventually extend to Kampala.

The Kenya SGR section is expected to cost over $5.5b, while the Ugandan side would cost $3b. Uganda has since commenced the project for the construction of the SGR from Malaba to Kampala city, after securing funding and contracting Yapi Merkezi, a Turkish firm, which has already embarked on geotechnical surveys and infrastructure mapping on the proposed 273km line.

In January this year, officials from the Islamic Development Bank held discussions with the Ugandan authorities to contribute euro 405m (sh1.7 trillion) to the SGR project.

The SGR is expected to significantly improve transport efficiency between the two countries and strengthen regional trade across East Africa.

A statement from the Kenyan government noted that once completed, the modern railway will reduce travel time between Kampala and Nairobi from about 14 hours to approximately four hours, while lowering freight transport costs by nearly 35%.

"The Nairobi-Kampala rail link is projected to be completed by 2028, forming a crucial part of the East

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