

As Museveni swears in, it is all about his legacy now

Few months after the January 2026 General Election, a few unusual things are beginning to happen that point to a radical shift for the 2026-2031 presidential term. Indeed, there are indications that President Museveni is set to consolidate his legacy as President for what will be 45 years by the time this new mandate ends.

One of those pointers is what happened a few weeks ago. Government took a decision that there must be trade order across the country.

This meant that all businesses that weren't in gazetted areas were to be demolished, and traders that were trading on the roadsides were to be chased.

As a result, we are seeing all illegal businesses being demolished across the country. What ever cries the business owners are making are being ignored, unlike before.

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All indications point to the fact that we are going to have ruthless pragmatism in the next five years. Consolidating a legacy, whether in politics, business, or history, often requires ruthless pragmatism, defined as a cold, calculating focus on results. This approach demands the ability to make difficult, often harsh decisions to secure long-term goals and ensure stability.

President Museveni, like the revolutionary former prime minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, is demonstrating true pragmatism, which means abandoning failing policies regardless of their ideological origin and adopting "best practices" to build a lasting legacy.

Maintaining a legacy often involves sacrificing personal feelings, relationships, or comfort to protect the broader interests of the enterprise or dynasty. While often associated with authoritarianism or controversial leaders, this approach is nec-

essary for ensuring that a legacy endures rather than disintegrates.

As President Museveni rolls into his seventh term of office, the country's transformation in security, economic growth, and infrastructure development stands out as a defining legacy of his presidency.

Uganda's economy has experienced remarkable expansion over the past 40 years. From a modest GDP of \$3.8b in 1986, the economy has grown to approximately \$69.3b today—reflecting sustained growth driven by macroeconomic stability, liberalisation policies, and strategic investments.

Recent data from the Ministry of Finance highlights continued progress. Merchandise exports rose to \$1.45b (Shs5.43 trillion) in January 2026, up from \$1.395b (Shs5.22 trillion) in December 2025.

Infrastructure revolution and development have been central to Uganda's transformation story. However, a major milestone in regional infrastructure was recently achieved with the ground breaking of the Kisumu-Malaba-Kampala Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) Extension (Phase II). This was jointly presided over by President Museveni and his Kenyan counterpart William Ruto in Kisumu.

The SGR project is expected to transform regional trade by enhancing connectivity to the Port of Mombasa, East Africa's primary trade gateway.

Oil and gas is a new economic frontier. Uganda is on the cusp of a historic milestone in its oil and gas sector, with critical infrastructure in place and the pipeline project underway, the country is on track to achieve first oil in 2026.

This is a critical resource which President Museveni has cautiously navigated for more than 30 years. This is because he did not want to be ripped off by the oil giants that are usually involved in the upstream grade of the oil business. Oil revenues are expected to play a transformative role in Uganda's economy. President Museveni has indicated that proceeds from the sector will be strategically invested in defence, infrastructure, education, and healthcare as key pillars for sustainable development.

President Museveni's 40-year legacy is deeply rooted in the consolidation of peace, steady economic expansion, and forward-looking infrastructure investments.

While challenges remain, the progress achieved over the past four decades underscores a consistent vision of stability, self-reliance, and socio-economic transformation.