

Museveni, Magufuli to lay oil pipeline foundation

By Davis Buyondo

Tanzanian President John Pombe Magufuli arrives in Uganda on Thursday for a three-day state visit during which he and his host, President Yoweri Museveni, are scheduled to launch joint development projects.

The two leaders will lay a foundation stone for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project in Kyotera district on Thursday. The 1,445km pipeline will transport crude oil from Hoima district via Kiboga, Mubende, Sembabule, Masaka, Kyotera and Rakai districts up to Tanga port in Tanzania.

The \$3.5b project will transport about 216,000 barrels of oil every day at the peak of oil production. Construction of the pipeline is expected to start in 2018 and be completed in 36 months.

The two leaders will make a stop-over at a one-stop border post at Mutukula shared by the two countries and later address Kyotera residents at Kasaali sub-county headquarters, according to Pamela Watuwa, the Kyotera resident district commissioner (RDC).

Margaret Kafeero, the head of public diplomacy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told *New Vision* yesterday that Ugandan and Tanzanian officials were expected to sign new bilateral agreements, including two regarding Police co-operation and the exchange of prisoners.

BETWEEN THE LINES:

■ Construction of the pipeline is expected to start in 2018 and be completed in 36 months.

Bilateral ties

It will be President Magufuli's second visit to Uganda after he attended the swearing-in of his host in February 2016.

In August, Museveni paid a state visit to Tanzania and laid the first foundation stone for the crude oil pipeline.

A joint permanent commission was later held April in Arusha and officials from the two countries signed several agreements on bilateral projects and co-operation. It was followed by a cross-border meeting later in July.

The district security committee has tightened security ahead of the event. The sub-county is being rehabilitated ahead of the historic visit.

Kyotera and Rakai local leaders believe the pipeline will be a blessing to the district. Robert Benon Mugabi, a resident, said he expects the project to create thousands of jobs for locals.

One-stop border post

Construction of the one-stop customs clearing centre has been completed. The project started in 2013, three years after other East African (EAC) member states had completed the process.

Uganda secured a \$3b loan from World Bank for the project intended to ease the movement of goods and services.

More than 85 households were relocated and commercial buildings demolished to pave way for the project.