

Construction of Parliament chamber to start soon

BY SOLOMON ARINAITWE
sarinaite@ug.nationmdia.com

PARLIAMENT. The construction of a new modern chamber at the North Wing of Parliament's parking yard is set to kick-off after the contract was sealed on Tuesday.

Parliament last week awarded Roko Construction Company the lucrative Shs179b tender to construct a bigger chamber that can host more than 400.

The current chambers were constructed by the colonial government to accommodate 200 MPs but the 10th Parliament now has 449 MPs.

The number of MPs is expected to increase as six new districts which came into effect in July this year will elect six women MPs. Sixteen other districts are also projected to be created before the 2021 elections, adding more 16 MPs.

Roko will construct a modern chamber, modify the existing one and build a hall of honour.

Speaker Rebecca Kadaga informed MPs that the parking yard of the North Wing will be out-of-access as Roko takes over.

"No one will be allowed to park that side so that we can have a chamber constructed at the earliest opportunity," Ms Kadaga said.

The process to construct a new chamber of Parliament has for long been in controversy with rival bidders petitioning the government watchdog agencies such as Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA) and Inspector General of Government (IGG) alleging collusion between technocrats at Parliament and individual firms.

The deal was, however, summarily awarded to Roko last week after Parliament's Contracts and Evaluation Committee concluded that Roko's bid was foolproof and ignored some PPDA regulations that would have further delayed the process.