

EDITORIAL

UPDF must deliver the many Afcon projects

Today, the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) is at the center of Uganda's preparations for the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations (Afcon). This past week, the army signed an agreement with the Ministry of Education and Sports to undertake the development of Mandela National Stadium, Namboole at a cost of Shs248b.

The job to be supervised by the Ministry of Works is expected to be finished in 12 months. In addition to Namboole, the UPDF is also constructing training facilities for the teams that will come here.

These include Pece in Gulu, Lira University, Sir Tito Winyi in Masindi, Masindi Municipal Council grounds, Hoima, Kyambogo among others. The total is nine.

We have not even thoroughly dealt with hotels to be constructed in Hoima and Masindi to meet the Confederation of African Football (Caf) standards. Lira and Hoima hospitals are also due an upgrade.

The issue:

Afcon 2027.

Our view:

There is a positive movement across the region to ensure that we are ready for the Afcon. Almost everything you hear and see happening in Uganda is mirrored in the other two countries too.

The benefits of these go beyond the tournament which will be co-hosted by Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania for the first time since inception in the 1950s.

The 2027 Africa Cup of Nations (Afcon) will take place in June and July next year. The precise dates of the 2027 Afcon will be announced in due course.

Doubts have been raised over whether the necessary infrastructure in the three East African countries will be ready in time to stage the finals.

There is a positive movement across the region to ensure that we are ready for the Afcon. Almost everything you hear and see happening in Uganda is mirrored in the other two countries too.

However, it's clear that the UPDF and other stakeholders have never had to deliver projects of this magnitude in a short spell of time. UPDF must deliver on time and on budget.

The auditor general's report for the past year shows that UPDF is stuck with Shs7.9 trillion worth of contracts that they have not been able to execute. This almost implies that the army leadership must resolve to outsource some of the work they must undertake or opt to work day and night.

There is no second way around it. The failure of one entity to do its work wholly affects the delivery of the Afcon. The Afcon preparation machine must function in tandem.

In Uganda's case, the biggest projects that are left include Namboole Stadium and building the passenger terminal at the Kabalega International Airport in Hoima.

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