

Improvised. The incomplete one-stop border post building in Katuna Town Council, Kabale District. PHOTO BY ROBERT MUHEREZA

Leaders demand answers over stalled Shs8b border project

Background. Construction on the project co-funded by the World Bank started in 2014.

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KABALE. Katuna Town Council leaders in Kabale District have raised concern over the stalled construction of the one-stop border post.

Construction of the Shs8 billion project, which is jointly funded by government and the World Bank, started in 2014 but local leaders say there is no sign of progress.

The town clerk, Mr Eric Sunday, said last Friday that construction was supposed to take one year but now three years have elapsed and the project is not yet complete.

Daily Monitor last Friday found the construction site, which is in the heart of Katuna Town, abandoned. The road leading to and from Rwanda besides the site was enclosed in blue painted iron sheets.

"The incomplete structures have not only left the town shabby but also unhygienic," said Mr Sunday.

"Most of the drainage channels that existed were destroyed during the construction process and water flows directly in the road heading to Rwanda, leaving it flooded," he added.

Effects

The town clerk added that as a result, the section of the road has developed potholes, making it difficult for trucks loaded with merchandise to drive through.

"We appeal to government to make completion of the project a priority for the good of cross border business," said Mr Sunday.

THE PLAN

In order to avoid unnecessary delays at border points, East Africa member states are now implementing the one stop border concept. The region plans to have at least 15 one-stop border posts to reduce the time taken to clear goods and services and speed up the region's integration.

After observing slow progress of the project, the town council authorities in 2015 recommended the termination of the contract to Amugoli General Enterprises Ltd, who they argued had only done 10 per cent of the work at the time he was supposed to hand it over.

The mayor, Mr Neresensio Nshangabasheija, said Amugoli General Enterprises Ltd later abandoned the site in December 2016 and that as stakeholders, they were not informed why the contractor left the site prematurely.

When contacted, the managing director for Amugoli General Enterprises Ltd, Mr Joseph Eyatu, said they abandoned the project due to non-payment.

"I am out of the country; I suggest

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Parents warned on schools

BUNYANGABU: The acting Bunyangabu District Education Officer, Ms Gorret Kwezi, has cautioned parents against sending children to unregistered private schools next year. Speaking to parents of Rwimi Parents School in Rwimi Town Council on Tuesday, Ms Kwezi said government is set to close all private schools that lack minimum operational requirements. She said they must ascertain if the schools are licensed by the Ministry of Education and Sports before paying any dues to them. **[Alex Ashaba, Monitor]**

Maternal deaths shoot up

KABAROLE: Kabarole and Bunyangabu districts have the highest maternal mortality rates in the country, according to a survey conducted by Goal Uganda in partnership with Kabarole Research and Resource Centre. Ms Elizabeth Allen, the director Goal Uganda, said the survey, which was done between 2015 and 2016, established that of the 100,000 mothers, 1,220 died during pregnancy, labour or after birth, which she said is alarming. Ms Allen made the revelation during a stakeholders' meeting in Fort Portal Town on Tuesday. Ms Catherine Kemigabo, the Kabarole District health educator, said the findings will help the officials to prepare the right intervention. **[Moris Mumbere]**

Concern over pledges

BUNDIBUGYO: The Bundibugyo speaker, Mr Moses Bagambe, has said delay by President Museveni to fulfill his 2016 campaign pledges is a threat to service delivery and development in the district. Mr Bagambe told this newspaper on Tuesday that the President pledged to elevate Bughendera County to district status and also promised to support the Bwamba cultural institution, but all in vain. He said some people may take advantage of the delay of such services to start conflicts in the area. **[Longino Muhindo]**

Councillors task Museveni

MASINDI: Masindi District councillors have requested a meeting with President Museveni over the unfulfilled pledges he made during the 2016 campaigns. Speaking during a council sitting on Monday, the councillors said the President promised to construct Bunyoro University, appoint Banyoro in key government positions and settle land disputes in Bunyoro Sub-region, but that none of these has been fulfilled. The district chairperson, Mr Cosmas Byaruhanga, backed the councillors, saying this would open communication lines between the President and the district. **[Ismail Bategeka]**

CamScanner

Leaders demand answers over stalled border project

Voices

"While our MP has promised that the works on the construction of the one-stop border post shall begin early next year, we need support from the central government to fix the section of no man's land on the road that crosses to Rwanda, because it is full of potholes and now almost impassable,"
NERESENSIO NSHANGABASHEIJA, KATUNA MAYOR

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"Most of the drainage channels that existed were destroyed during the construction process and water flows directly in the road heading to Rwanda, leaving it flooded,"
ERIC SUNDAY, KATUNA TOWN CLERK

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you talk to the ministry of Works. Amugoli's contract expired and demobilised due to non-payment. Amugoli is ready to go back to the site when the contract for (swamp) reclamation is approved. I am out of the country at the moment," said Mr Eyatu in an SMS text on Monday.

However, he did not state the amount of money he is demanding from the project funders.

Uganda National Roads Authority Kabale station manager Augustine Kabanda said local leaders have been demanding for answers over the delay of the project but said he had not got any explanation from the ministry of Works.

However, a Works ministry official, who asked not to be named, said the World Bank pulled out of the project over breach of contract.

"The funder pulled out after breach of contractual obligations. There was no money for swamp reclamation in the contract. When the money was put on land reclamation, it affected the building and for them, you must live by the scope of works. So government has to pick it up," said the official.

Mr Nshangabasheija said area Member of Parliament and State minister for planning David Bahati recently told them that the construction will resume early next year.

How one-stop border works

Under the one-stop border, officials of the two neighbouring countries in departments of immigration, revenue collection, standards and police operate under one roof. The system is already in place at Mirama-Kagitumba, Mutukula and Malaba border points.

This is unlike the current system at Katuna where where cargo and passengers going to Rwanda are cleared from the Uganda side and the process is repeated by officials on the Rwanda side.

Mr Sylvester Kiwanuka, the URA manager for customs in south western region, says the new system has reduced on time spent on clearing travellers and cargo trucks move fast and make return trips.

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