

of the community. He made the remarks while handing over an assortment of basic home use items to more than 300 elderly persons in Bamunanika recently. [Dan Wandera]



ROUGH RIDE

Packed

Passengers aboard a saloon car that is used as a commuter taxi in Kyotera Town recently. Proper public means of transport remain a big challenge in many rural areas in Uganda.

PHOTO BY MALIK FAHAD JUNGU

Mpigi loses Shs350m annually in unremitted building plan fees

No receipts. Mpigi District incurs the loss as a result of unscrupulous tenderers who reportedly connive with sub-county physical planners to collect unreceipted money from residents who construct houses and fail to remit the money to the district coffers.

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MPIGI. Mpigi District is losing at least Shs350m annually in unremitted building plan fees, *Daily Monitor* has established.

The district incurs the loss as a result of unscrupulous tenderers who reportedly connive with sub-county physical planners to collect unreceipted money from residents who construct houses and fail to remit the money to the district coffers.

Some physical planners also reportedly solicit bribes from developers and allow them to construct houses without approved building

plans.

Daily Monitor has independently learnt that the district loses at least Shs50m from each of the seven sub-counties in the district, rising from undeclared building plan fees annually.

A local government employee in Kituntu Sub-county, who preferred anonymity in order to speak freely about this matter, said this unethical practice has been ongoing for many years without being detected by the district leaders.

"They (sub-county physical planners) have for long been pocketing this money yet building plan fees are our major source of revenue. I suspect some officials in the district's finance department to be in the know of what is happening but because they are direct beneficiaries, they pretend as if they don't know," a sub-county staff said.

However, a number of residents in Mpigi District who spoke to this newspaper, blamed the district

LAW

According to Section 33(1) of Physical Planning Act, 2010, a person intending to carry out a development within a planning area has to obtain development permission from the physical planning committee and whoever violates this section commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding 48 currently points (Shs960, 000) or imprisonment not exceeding two years or both.

authorities over what they called "exaggerated building plan fees" collected from them by physical planners.

Mr Ibrahim Buwembo, a resident of Lwajja Village in Kituntu Sub-county, said authorities charge each unit under construction more than what is stipulated in the law.

"We were told that we should pay money not exceeding Shs200, 000 per room depending on its size, but what hurts me is that they ask for more money that is between Shs300,000 to Shs1m depending on one's bargaining power with them (planners)," he said.

Ms Irene Nabbaale, a resident of Buwama 'A' in Buwama Town Council, said: "Why is it that we don't get receipts after paying them? Worse still, the public health officers find us in our homes and start asking for money. I don't think this is planning fee, it should be called their salary."

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briefly

District engineers warned

RAKAI. Buyamba County MP Amos Mandela, who doubles as the chairperson of Rakai District roads committee, has warned district engineers against selling road construction materials to residents. According to Mr Mandela, many of the sold items include fuel, oil and murram. "Always expect shoddy works once such materials are sold, please stop doing your work unprofessionally," he said. He also asked engineers to desist from the practice of removing spare parts from construction equipment and replacing them with old ones. [Ivan Kimbowa]

Woman killed

MASAKA. Police in Masaka District have recovered the body of a woman who is suspected to have been killed by unknown people. According to southern regional police spokesperson, Mr Lameck Kigozi, the deceased's body was found dumped on Bulayi Road, Nyendo-Ssenyange Division in Masaka District. "The deceased was aged between 20 and 25 years. It is suspected that she was raped before being killed," Mr Kigozi said. Mr Kigozi also said no family member has come out to claim the body which is currently being kept at Masaka Regional Referral Hospital mortuary. [Martins Ssekweyama]

Mpigi loses Shs350m annually in unremitted building plan fees

Voices

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"The district has a duty to implement the physical planning standards and the physical planning Act 2010, but it is unfortunate that unscrupulous people bypass this laid down process and do things the way they want,"

PETER MUTULUZA,
MPIGI DISTRICT
CHAIRPERSON

"We were told that we should pay money not exceeding Shs200,000 per room depending on its size, but what hurts me is that they ask for more money that is between Shs300,000 and Shs1m depending on one's bargaining power with them (planners)."

IBRAHIM BUWEMBO,
RESIDENT OF LWAJJA
VILLAGE IN KITUNTU
SUB-COUNTY

"I paid Shs800,000 when I was constructing my two-roomed house at Katende but the planner found me at home and he didn't give me a receipt. He told me to wait and since July 2016, I'm still waiting for my receipt," Mr Peter kalule, another resident said.

When contacted, Mr Charles Nsoby, the district planner, denied knowledge of the collected fees for various building plans.

"I'm not concerned with collecting fees from residents. May be try to inquire from other officials," he replied.

Mr Michael Lutalo, the assistant chief administrative officer in charge of health, said each sub-county has a tenderer authorised to collect the revenue and each sub-county remits 35 per cent of the collected fees to the district per month.

Each local developer, according to Mr Lutalo is expected to pay between Shs100,000 and Shs200,000 before construction starts, but this is done after thorough assessment by the sub-county physical planner (in this case, it is public health officer).

When asked about residents' complaints that the fees are inflated, Mr Lutalo replied: "It could be true because many residents have complained to us but we (district authority) have started to investigate this allegation."

He added: "We also received complaints about the money ranging from Shs150,000 to Shs400,000 collected from our people before constructing a toilet. The tenderers don't report that amount to us and they could be stealing and cheating our people."

Mr Peter Mutuluza, the chairperson of Mpigi District, said the matter will be probed so as to come up with the truth and warned tenderers to stop hiking planning fees that are already in place.

"I am going to talk to my technical people and we probe this matter. We shall not just look on when our people are suffering," he added.

briefly

Bank impounds client car

KYOTERA. Police in Kyotera District are investigating circumstances under which the manager of Centenary Bank, Kyotera branch, confiscated a car belonging to one of their clients over unpaid loan. Police preliminary investigations indicate that the

Resident killed

GOMBA. Shock and grief residents of Lubaale Villa Kabulasoke Sub-county, District after unknown as broke into