

CHARMAR MAGAZINE

it simply matters



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Halima Namakula

Fifty years of great music,
theatre, film & a life well
lived

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Musician Desire Luzinda glows in a white gown at bridal shower ahead of her wedding to fellow musician Levixone on 15th August 2025 in Kampala.



EDITOR'S NOTE

From CHAN to AFCON 2027: Uganda's Moment to Build a Legacy

The vibrant atmosphere currently sweeping across Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania as they co-host the CHAN 2024 is more than just a football tournament is a critical dress rehearsal for the monumental task of hosting the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) in 2027. For Uganda, in particular, this period presents an unparalleled opportunity – not just to fine-tune its readiness for AFCON, but to lay down a robust foundation for the broader growth of sport across the nation.

The CHAN tournament, exclusively featuring players from their respective domestic leagues, serves as an invaluable dry run for AFCON 2027. It allows Uganda a unique chance to test its logistical capabilities, from stadium readiness and security frameworks to transportation networks and hospitality services. Every match played, every fan served, every logistical challenge overcome, provides vital lessons. Are the access roads to the stadia adequate? How seamlessly do security personnel manage crowds? Is the communication infrastructure robust enough for international media? The answers to these questions, garnered in real-time during CHAN, are the building blocks upon which a successful AFCON 2027 will be constructed.

Beyond the immediate logistical testing, CHAN offers a crucial platform for Uganda to showcase its local football talent and coaching prowess. While the Cranes team at CHAN might not be the exact one for AFCON, the tournament highlights the depth of domestic leagues and the potential for player development. It's a chance to identify homegrown stars who can be nurtured for future national team duties, fostering a stronger pipeline from grassroots to elite levels.

However, the vision must extend far beyond the pitch and the 90 minutes of football. The current co-hosting venture, culminating in the grander spectacle of AFCON 2027, should be viewed as a catalyst for sport beyond football. The spotlight on Uganda can inspire a new generation of athletes across various disciplines. Investment in football infrastructure – new stadiums, training grounds, accessible playing fields – can and should be designed to be multi-sport complexes, benefiting athletics, rugby, netball, and other sports.

This is a moment to invest in robust talent identification programs at the grassroots level, linking schools with sports academies. It's an opportunity to educate communities about the health, social, and economic benefits of sports participation. By leveraging the excitement generated by these high-profile tournaments, Uganda can champion physical activity, promote healthy lifestyles, and build a more active citizenry.

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Kunda & Friends Shines at Ashanti & Nelly's Birthday Bash



Uganda's vibrant 3D animated series, "Kunda & Friends", took center stage at the first birthday celebration of KK, the son of Grammy Award-winning superstars Ashanti and Nelly, in New York. This high-profile appearance marks an unprecedented milestone, signalling global recognition for Ugandan animation.

"Kunda & Friends", a music-led 3D animated series, is deeply rooted in African culture and storytelling, bringing rich narratives to young audiences worldwide. The show is the brainchild of Kunda Kids, a Ugandan-led media company founded by the visionary Louisa Olafuyi. Its production is a collaborative effort with Creatures Animation, a Kampala-based studio spearheaded by Raymond Malinga, a former director at Disney. Louisa Olafuyi expressed immense pride at this global breakthrough, stating, "It's incredible to see a show we built in Uganda being celebrated around the world," Grammy Award-winning artist Ashanti shared her heartfelt enthusiasm for the series and its impact. "As a mom, I'm really intentional about what KK is exposed to. Kunda & Friends is not just beautiful and educational; it's rooted in culture and storytelling that matters."

Sheebah excited to return on stage

Sheebah Karungi, aka Queen Karma, officially announced The Return of the Queen concert, scheduled for Friday, August 22, at the Kampala Serena Victoria Hall. "Thank you all for turning up in big numbers, I don't take this for granted. I'm equally as excited as you are, and I can't wait to vibe with you all at the concert," Sheebah told a press conference in Kampala, adding, "My team and I are putting in the work to ensure you have a great time." Known for her bold, empowering persona and her genre-blending style that fuses dancehall, afrobeat, and Ugandan pop music, Sheebah is expected to deliver a memorable show.



Rwenzori Marathon gets Stanchart backing

Standard Chartered Bank Uganda has once again affirmed its steadfast commitment to promoting athletics, health, and environmental sustainability by returning as a major sponsor for the highly anticipated Tusker Lite Rwenzori Marathon. This significant partnership, now in its fourth consecutive year, sees the bank injecting UGX 150 million into the event, scheduled to take place on August 23rd in the scenic Kasese district. The substantial contribution underscores Standard Chartered's dedication to nurturing sporting talent and fostering community development. A significant portion of the UGX 150 million will be directly allocated to prize money, rewarding not only elite runners but also athletes with disabilities and promising local talent from the host region of Kasese.

Winners of the challenging 42km full marathon (both male and female categories) will each receive a handsome UGX 10 million. Champions of the 21km half marathon will take home UGX 7 million each, with cash rewards also extended to runners finishing in the top six across various categories and special recognition for participants hailing from Kasese. Sanjay Rughani, CEO of Standard Chartered Uganda, highlighted the profound impact of the marathon beyond just race day. "This is my third time launching the Rwenzori Marathon, and it's truly inspiring to witness its ripple effect," Rughani stated.



Kampala City festival returns with purpose



Kampala City Council Authority (KCCA) announced the return of the Kampala City Festival. Buzaki Sharifah, the KCCA Executive Director, revealed that the festival will not only be an event but a platform used to honour innovation, culture, creativity, and community spirit that defines Kampala City. "It is not just about fun. It's about coming together as a city, recognizing how far we've come, and renewing our collective commitment to building a cleaner and more liveable Kampala," she added. The 8th edition of the Kampala City Festival is set to take place on October 5th just days before Uganda marks its 63rd Independence Day. KCCA said this year's festival is designed to bring different people together promoting cohesion between diverse groups, boost the economy and bring attention to the importance of sustainability in the urban space.

Uganda, Kenya to meet at Coast Tourism Conference

The Private Sector Foundation Uganda recently hosted officials from the Consulate General of Uganda in Mombasa, together with representatives from Uganda Tourism Board, Uganda Tourism Association, Uganda Wildlife Authority, and Uganda Hotel Owners Association, among others, for the 2nd preparation meeting of the 4th Uganda-Kenya Coast Tourism Conference and Exhibition. The event is set to take place from Monday, October 27th to Tuesday, October 28th, 2025, at the Ocean Beach Resort & Spa in Malindi, Kenya.

Linda Nabirye quits TotalEnergies



Linda Nabirye, a prominent figure in Uganda's energy sector communications, has announced her departure from TotalEnergies EP Uganda after a distinguished tenure spanning nearly 12 years. Nabirye is set to embark on a new chapter, remaining dedicated to her passion in strategic communications and public affairs.

Nabirye, who commenced her journey with TotalEnergies EP Uganda has been instrumental in shaping the public narrative and stakeholder engagement for the critical Uganda oil project. Her nearly twelve years with the company saw her navigate various phases of the project, from early development to the advanced stages leading up to the anticipated first oil in 2026.

In a heartfelt message shared with colleagues and partners, Nabirye described her experience as "both challenging and deeply rewarding." She expressed immense pride in the "milestones we've achieved together and the legacy we've built" over her tenure, contributing to one of Uganda's most significant national projects.

Confirming her continued commitment to the field, Nabirye added, "Though I'm moving on from TotalEnergies, I remain very much within the communications & public affairs space and I am available for continued collaboration." She encouraged continued engagement, stating, "Let's keep the conversations going and the stories flowing."

Love not lost for Weasel and Teta



Musician Weasel, real name Douglas Mayanja, was admitted at Nsambya Hospital after sustaining injuries in an incident involving his partner and baby mama, Sandra Teta. According to videos seen on social media, Sandra Teta allegedly knocked Weasel at Shan's Bar and Restaurant located in Munyonyo during an outing. Weasel is seen kicking the door of a car nearby before being run down by Teta. Sandra Teta was subsequently arrested and detained at Kabalagala Police Station to help with investigations. However, she was released on police bond and was later seen at her husband's hospital bedside soothing him. Reports from people next to the couple indicated that the singer was unwilling to press charges against his woman preferring to let love lead the way.

Rihanna takes Fenty Beauty to India

Rihanna is taking Fenty Beauty global, launching in India this August. Pop sensation Rihanna has become the latest international celebrity to bring her beauty brand to India. Both lines of her brand, Fenty Beauty and Fenty Skin. Fenty Beauty made headlines in 2017 with its launch of foundation in more than 50 shades, pushing inclusivity to the forefront of the beauty industry. Fenty Skin followed in 2020, offering vegan, cruelty-free skincare products designed to suit a wide range of skin types and tones. She's also teasing fans with a possible 2026 world tour to mark 10 years since her iconic 'Anti' album. But that's not all — rumor has it she's pregnant again, with baby #3 on the way! She's been glowing in public appearances, and insiders say her love with A\$AP Rocky is stronger than ever. They've been spotted enjoying cozy late-night dinners and secret family getaways.

Halima Namakula

**Fifty years of great
music, theatre, film
& a life well lived**

Fifty years. Half a century. For a Ugandan singer to not just survive but thrive in the vibrant, ever-evolving world of art for five decades is nothing short of legendary; yet *Halima Namakula* has achieved just that. *Charmar Magazine* was honored to sit down with *Namakula*, the iconic voice who has shaped landscapes and inspired generations. As she recently celebrated her golden jubilee in music, we delve into the stories, wisdom, and passion behind her incredible journey.

This 50-year celebration is monumental. Beyond the joy, what key emotions or reflections does this milestone evoke in you?

I feel fulfilled, knowing my journey has been worth it. As a child, I hoped one day I would escape the slums of Kalerwe. I hoped when I became a mother I would provide my children a better life than I had. I dreamt of becoming a star in the creative arts; I wanted to leave a lasting legacy. I got it all. I thank the Lord for it.

Looking at the concert itself, what was the most memorable moment or feeling for you on stage, given the magnitude of the event?

I was blown away by the numbers; seeing the smiles in front of me and multitudes dancing to my music and singing my name was humbling. It is the kind of experience that will live with me forever.



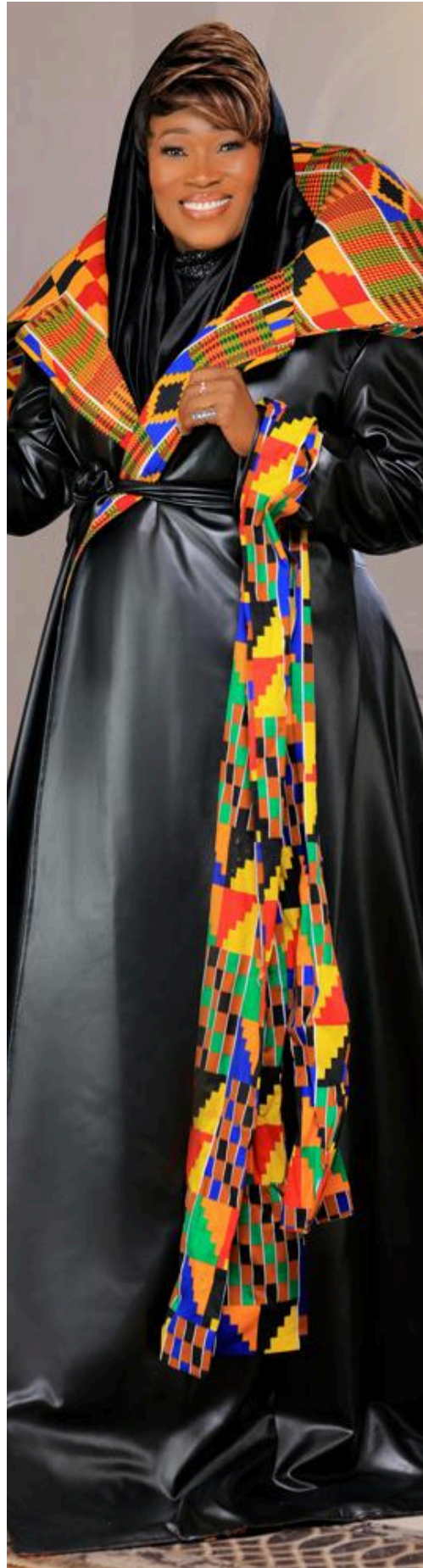
Let's take it back to the very beginning. What sparked your initial interest in music and art? Was there a specific moment or influence that set you on this path?

I was connected to music and art as a child. I loved acting, and as early as 15 years old, I was performing. I met Omugave Ndugwa as a young girl, and he believed in me. He made me better as an actress, and we created so much together, including Black Pearls, the drama group that nurtured legends, including Abbey Mukiibi and Mariam Ndagire.

What was the music scene like in Uganda when you were first starting out? How did a young Halima Namakula navigate those early days?

The music scene in Uganda was not flooded with a lot of talent when I returned to Uganda from the USA. There were a handful of local songs that could make it to the popular FM stations. And when my son pushed me to do *Ekimbewo* after his session in Kasiwukira studios, I had no idea we were about to create a generational hit song. The song exploded, and with it came fame for me. With my son, Hemdee's help, I followed up *Ekimbewo* with multiple hits, including *Tonkutula Kutula*, *Cheza*, and *Sambagala*, which cemented my position as a star. And when I had to do my first show, I thought of no better venue than Nile Hotel, then only known for hosting international artists, a statement that had great impact as it propelled me to great heights in the hearts of many Ugandans.

Who were your earliest mentors or inspirations in the industry, both locally and internationally?



Omugave Ndugwa is the closest thing to a mentor that I had. For inspiration, though, the belief my son, Hemdee, had in me and in my ability was special. He thought I was good enough when no one else did.

What were some of the initial challenges you faced as an aspiring artist, and how did you overcome them?

Back when I started recording music, artists were not paid their worth. I fought to change that the hard way, pricing myself out of multiple gigs. Thankfully it paid off, not just for me but for my fellow musicians, as we earned the respect we deserved eventually. It's a sacrifice I am extremely proud of.

What were some of the major changes you witnessed in the Ugandan music industry over the years—technologically, culturally, and professionally? How did you adapt to these changes?

The technological advancement has seen our sound become better and more acceptable, not just here, but the world over. We have also seen greater respect for the profession, and today the industry stands as one of the country's greatest employers. Today the industry is better organised, we have leadership that's intent on moving the industry further forward, and I have shared in that advancement. I have always known there will come such a time as this, when the trends change, and I have tried, rather successfully, to play along.

What specific hurdles did you face as a female artist in Uganda, particularly in earlier decades?

Well, since it's creative, it's kind of hard to answer that directly; every art has a unique challenge. The singer has a different challenge; the actor has a different challenge. So, everyone has a different challenge. If you put it together and you say, 'What challenges do you have?' I don't know which one to talk about. But because I had everything – I was a producer myself; I owned the studio; I owned my own radio station – nothing could happen to me. But in this industry, you have to be relevant.

If you could go back in time and give your younger self one piece of advice, what would it be?

I would say that you don't always depend on art. I'm going to say don't depend entirely on art. You have to have something. You have to have a job. You have to have something that you do that can bring money. You don't depend on only singing or acting or producing, you know, those kinds of things. Because, like, when Covid hit, a lot of artists were hungry. I wasn't because I have other jobs that I do. So, I always recommend that as an artist, you have something else going on. That way, when something happens, if you go down, you have something to fall back on.

You've been known to mentor many aspiring artists. What is your approach to mentorship, and what do you believe upcoming artists need most today?

It varies, and it depends on who I'm talking to.

If I'm talking about a person who they are writing about all the time and that artist is always dressed skimpy, or that artist sings obscenely, then I approach it that way. It basically depends on who – which artist I'm talking to or which actor I'm talking to. That's how I go about it, depending on the problem someone has.

That is my job (mentorship). I have an organisation called Women at Work International. I teach young girls and boys how to relate with society. So, that's something (mentorship) that I can do until I leave this world. I have to keep on doing it, you know? So, right now,

if you ask me, are you going to still mentor? Yes, I'm going to mentor because there's a lot. Every time there's a new actor, there's a new singer, there's a new producer, there's a new, new, new someone. So, I'm still going to be doing that because it's not just my job but it's my calling. It's something that I do willingly. That's why you see that most actors or singers, or most Ugandans, call me the mother of Ugandan artists.

A career spanning 50 years requires immense personal sacrifice. How did you balance your demanding professional life with your family life?

I was taught by my mother, and my mother was not an educated woman





but I was educated by her. But no one says that you can't do it all at one time. They wrote an article about a woman with ten hands. So that's what I am. I can deal with everything. And then motherhood helped me a lot. When you're a mother, you have to be somebody. A mother is a type of woman, a type of person that deals with a lot. If you have so many children, you need to know how to juggle around everything at one time, at a goal. It is a skill you learn over time.

Because you have to juggle around everything. You have to juggle about this, juggle about that. You get to do it.

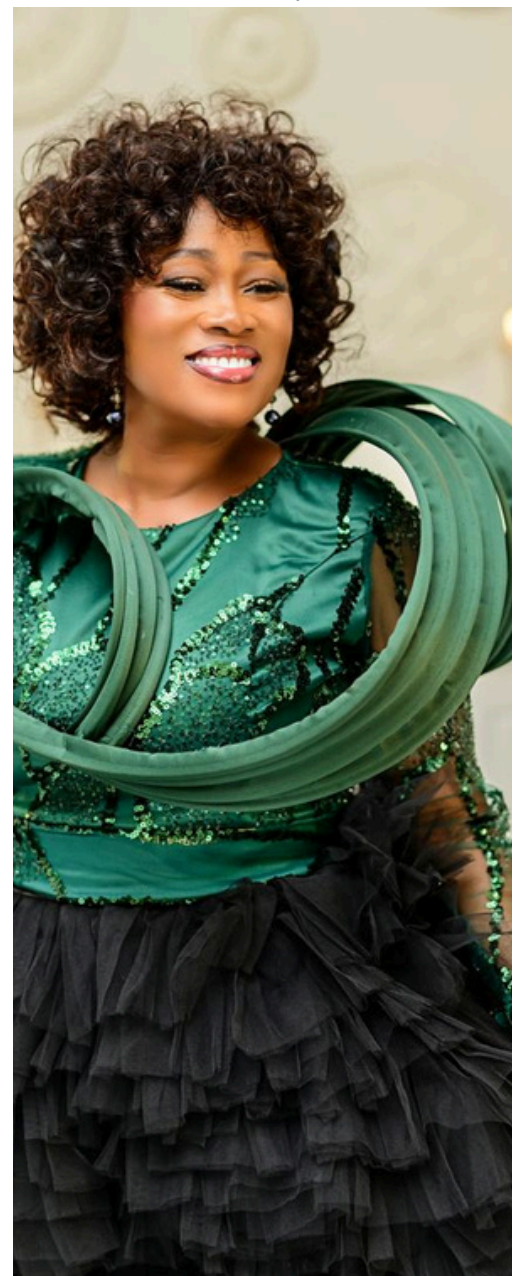
As a mother, what was your parenting philosophy while growing a successful career?

It's being a friend to my children. You have to be friends with your children to know what they're up to. You know, that's. That's a quick one that I can give you. Another thing is to just understand them, and then

they have to understand you. You have to teach them how to understand that you are a mother regardless. And the mother never goes wrong.

After 50 years, what do you hope your lasting legacy will be in the Ugandan music and art industry?

As an artist, I want people to remember me as a woman who wished good for everyone. It doesn't matter who it is. I wish good. Wishing good is hard in our art industry.



Sound Revolution

Meet the Music Stars Dominating 2025

Uganda's vibrant music landscape is buzzing as 2025 marks a pivotal moment for a new generation of artists. From multi-instrumentalists carving out unique sounds to vibrant pop sensations and genre-bending rappers, a diverse array of talent is not just emerging but actively reshaping the country's sonic identity. These artists are breaking new ground, topping charts, and captivating audiences both locally and abroad, signalling an exciting year for Ugandan music.

The Breakthrough & Rising Stars

Leading the charge among the established breakthrough acts are several artists who have truly come into their own.

Elijah Kitaka, the multi-instrumentalist singer-songwriter signed to Swangz Avenue, has firmly established himself with his soulful Afro soul/R&B sound. His breakthrough EP, *Bedroom Essentials*, featuring hits like "Ndi Wuwo," "Kontrol," and "Dawa," became a staple on 2025 playlists, including Songboost's Top 100, solidifying his dominance.



Elijah Kitaka



Dax Vibe

Fast-rising act Dax Vibe is earning accolades for his creativity and consistent output. His highly successful duet with Elijah Kitaka, "Good Idea," soared to #1 on local charts, dominating viewership and streams and cementing his status.

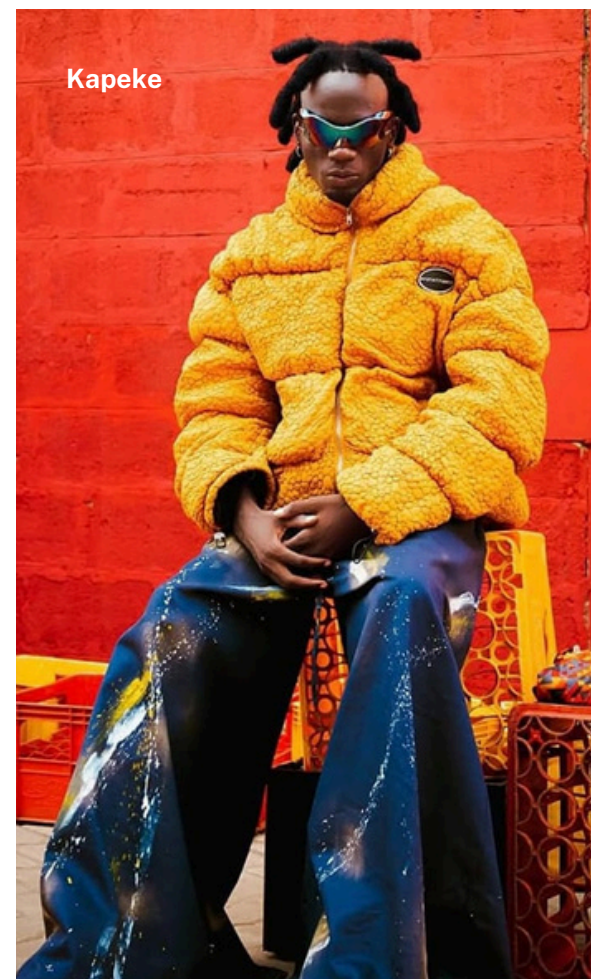
Ava Peace, a vibrant female solo artist, has built on significant buzz from 2024 to become a mainstream force in 2025. Her powerful tracks like "Wanula Rmx" (feat. Temperature Touch) and "Tabbu" (with Dax Vibe) have resonated widely, confirming her as a major player.



Ava Peace

Energetic urban star Kapeke has injected fresh dynamism into the scene, with his tracks "Shuu," "Polokoto," and "Swiriri" becoming undeniable crowd anthems. He is widely acknowledged as one of the key movers in Kampala's new music wave, standing alongside Elijah Kitaka and Ava Peace.

Cross-genre Afrobeat/R&B singer-songwriter and producer Joshua Baraka, who exploded onto the scene with "Nana," continues his international ascent. A Spotify RADAR Africa artist, Baraka is set to extend his global reach with major performances, including Afronation 2025 in Portugal. Fans eagerly anticipate his full-length album, slated for release this year.

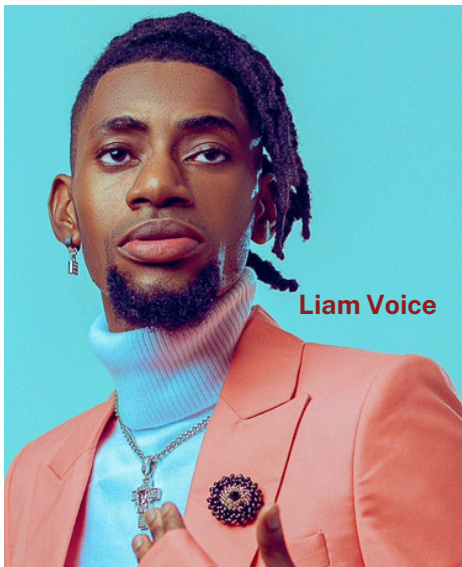


Kapeke

New Names to Watch: On the Cusp of Stardom

Beyond the established breakthroughs, a fresh wave of talent is poised for wider recognition, promising even more diversity and innovation in the year ahead. Liam Voice is capturing hearts with his heartfelt R&B and soaring vocal delivery, particularly on his hit "Love Olinonya." His emotionally rich sound has quickly caught attention in Kampala and is poised for broader recognition in 2025.

Signed to Tunez Records, Aaronx offers a personality-driven blend of soulful and contemporary sounds. He gained significant notice through collaborations with established artists like Winnie Nwagi and Sheebah, while consistent growth from his debut EP *My Love* marks him as a significant emerging talent.



Liam Voice

Zafaran, a true vocal powerhouse and vocalist at Swangz Avenue, is stepping firmly into the spotlight following the resounding success of her debut single "Sweetheart." Known for her previous work as a background singer for major Ugandan acts, Zafaran is now forging her own impactful path as a solo artist.

Pop sensation Nandor Love solidified her rising stardom in 2024 with breakout singles like "Empologoma" and "Kinawolovu." Her consistency, highlighted by an all-star female collaboration with Ava Peace and Zafaran in 2024, positions her as a key figure to watch in 2025.



Zafaran



Nandor Love



Aaronx

Finally, Kalibwani is a genre-bending rapper and producer who is drawing comparisons to West African innovators with his unique blend of hip-hop, dancehall, and trap. Tracks like "Not Safe In The West" powerfully demonstrate his artistic boldness and distinct perspective, placing him firmly on the verge of a major breakthrough. As 2025 unfolds, these artists represent the dynamic future of Ugandan music. Their diverse sounds, innovative approaches, and undeniable talent are not only enriching the local scene but also increasingly drawing international attention. Uganda's musical heartbeat is stronger than ever, promising an exciting year ahead for fans and the industry alike.

Eco-Friendly Living

Easy sustainable ways to go green at home for a healthier planet



Adopting an eco-friendly lifestyle doesn't require drastic overhauls, but rather a series of small, mindful habits that can significantly benefit both your home and the planet. Recent insights emphasize that sustainable living is more accessible than ever, with simple practices easily integrated into daily routines, whether you live in an apartment, a condo, or a suburban house.

Environmental advocates point out that the cumulative effect of individual actions is powerful. Here's a look at practical ways to "go green" right from your doorstep:

The Power of Three - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

The cornerstone of eco-conscious living begins with managing waste.

Prioritize reducing consumption by choosing products with minimal packaging. Embrace reusing items like glass jars, fabric bags, and containers to extend their life cycle. Finally, diligently recycle paper, plastic, metal, and glass according to local guidelines, making the process seamless with clearly labeled bins at home.

Smart Energy Savings

Cutting down on energy consumption is a direct path to a lighter carbon footprint and lower utility bills. Transitioning to energy-efficient LED bulbs is a quick win. Additionally, using smart power strips or simply unplugging devices when not in use can prevent "phantom load" power drain.

When purchasing new appliances, opt for those with high energy star ratings. For laundry, washing clothes in cold water and air-drying them whenever possible dramatically reduces electricity use.

Water Conservation - Every Drop Counts

Water is a precious resource. Immediately fixing leaky taps and toilets can prevent thousands of gallons of waste annually. Installing low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators are simple upgrades that yield significant savings. Even small habits, like collecting water in a bucket while waiting for the shower to warm up and reusing it for cleaning or watering plants, make a difference.

For gardeners, watering plants early in the morning or late in the evening minimizes evaporation.

Embrace Natural Cleaning Solutions

Many conventional cleaning products contain harsh chemicals that pollute water systems and can be detrimental to health. Shift towards homemade cleaners using common pantry staples like vinegar, baking soda, and lemon juice. For store-bought options, choose eco-certified brands to ensure they meet environmental standards.

A spray bottle of diluted vinegar on hand serves as an excellent all-purpose cleaner.

Shop with Purpose

Conscious consumerism plays a vital role. Buying in bulk helps reduce packaging waste, while supporting local markets and eco-friendly brands strengthens sustainable economies. Opt for durable, reusable, and recyclable items over single-use options. Always remember to carry your own tote bags, produce bags, and containers when shopping.

Minimize Food Waste

Food waste is a significant environmental issue. Combat it by planning meals, storing leftovers properly, and freezing excess food. Composting fruit peels, vegetable scraps, and coffee grounds diverts organic matter from landfills, enriching soil instead. Get creative with leftovers to craft new meals and save money.

A "use first" bin in the fridge can help ensure older items are consumed before they spoil.

Greenery for Health and Home

Bringing nature indoors can enhance air quality and well-being. Indoor

plants like aloe vera, spider plants, or peace lilies act as natural air purifiers. Consider starting a small kitchen herb garden on a windowsill or balcony. For those with outdoor space, planting native shrubs and trees contributes to local biodiversity and environmental health, while boosting mood and productivity.

Rethink Your Ride

Sustainable Transport While not strictly within the home, daily commute choices have a major environmental impact. For short trips, prioritize walking or biking. Utilize public transport or carpool whenever feasible.

If driving is necessary, maintaining proper tire inflation and regular vehicle maintenance can improve fuel efficiency. Combining errands into a single trip also helps reduce overall fuel consumption.

Declutter with Consciousness

Donate and Repurpose Embrace a minimalist approach by keeping your home simple and organized. When decluttering, make a habit of donating or repurposing items instead of discarding them. Actively choosing to buy secondhand extends the life of products and reduces demand for new manufacturing.



Adopting an eco-friendly lifestyle doesn't require drastic overhauls, but rather a series of small, mindful habits that can significantly benefit both your home and the planet.



Is your toxic relationship quietly making you sick?



Multiple studies have linked prolonged emotional distress to higher risks of certain cancers.

We are told that a balanced diet and regular exercise are the keys to staying healthy. We fill our shopping baskets with greens, lace up our trainers, and pride ourselves on making disciplined choices. Yet for many women, illness still strikes unexpectedly, sometimes in the most devastating ways. The question is why.

The truth is uncomfortable. You can eat clean, avoid sugar, run marathons, and still face serious disease if you are living in a toxic relationship. Science has long shown that chronic emotional stress has profound effects on the body. Psychoneuroimmunology, the study of how the mind interacts with the immune system, reveals that unrelenting stress increases inflammation, elevates cortisol, and suppresses the immune response. Over time, this weakens the body's natural defences against illness.

Multiple studies have linked prolonged emotional distress to higher risks of certain cancers. A large population study in China found that people experiencing multiple stressful life events, such as ongoing family conflict or the strain of caregiving in unsupportive environments, were significantly more likely to develop cancer. Another review of research on breast cancer found that women exposed to long-term psychological stress showed moderately higher incidence rates than those who were not. This connection is not just biological—it is behavioural too. Toxic relationships often erode self-care. Sleep becomes shallow and restless, eating patterns fluctuate, and exercise can shift from being energising to merely an escape. Constant emotional turmoil keeps the body in fight-or-flight mode, which is meant for survival in emergencies, not for years on end.

If you are in a relationship where you feel unseen, undervalued, or constantly on edge, no amount of kale or cardio will fully counteract the toll on your health. The partner you choose matters to your wellbeing as much as your food choices or fitness habits. A relationship should be a safe harbour, not another battlefield. The call to action is clear. Start valuing emotional safety as highly as physical health. Choose partners who genuinely choose you—who respect your boundaries, encourage your growth, and bring peace instead of chaos. Seek environments, friendships, and love that support your emotional stability. If you are in a toxic situation, reach out for help and make a plan to reclaim your wellbeing. Your body listens to the life you are living. Protect your heart and your peace, and you protect your health. In the long run, the love that nurtures you could be the very thing that saves your life.

Levixone And Desire

Proof that love's second chances know no age

In the ever-watchful world of celebrity culture, where whispers spread faster than facts, the union of Levixone and Desire Luzinda has emerged as a breathtaking reminder that love does not check the calendar before it knocks on the heart's door. Their story is neither rushed nor born of fleeting infatuation; it is a tale carefully written over years of friendship, faith, and mutual admiration.

Desire's journey has been one of public reinvention. Once celebrated and scrutinized in equal measure as a secular music star, she weathered storms that might have silenced another spirit. Instead, she stepped boldly into a new chapter as a gospel singer and philanthropist, leaving the noise behind to focus on purpose and inner peace. On a parallel path, Levixone, who rose from the grit and scarcity of Kosovo slums, turned his pain into praise, becoming one of East Africa's most recognisable gospel voices and a tireless advocate for the vulnerable. For years their connection was an open secret, visible in the way they stood side by side at worship events and charity missions. Desire publicly laughed off the idea of romance earlier this year, declaring herself happily single, her focus entirely on raising her daughter. Yet the quiet understanding between them spoke volumes, a language only the two of them seemed fluent in.

Then came the night that transformed speculation into reality. On a warm July evening, Levixone knelt before her, his voice steady with conviction as he spoke of answered prayers and purpose found in her presence. Desire's yes was more than an acceptance of a proposal – it was an embrace of a love that had grown patiently in the shadows until it was strong enough to stand in the light. Critics were quick to fixate on their eight-year age gap, but the couple has met such chatter with grace. Levixone has dismissed the notion that love has a birth certificate to inspect before it blossoms. Now, as they count down to their August wedding, their story is being celebrated far beyond the gospel music community. It is a reminder that second chances in life and in love are worth taking, that the heart is timeless when it finds a home. This is not just a celebrity engagement. It is a love letter to resilience, to courage, and to the beautiful truth that love, when given the grace of time and the faith to flourish, will rise above every boundary, even the ones the world swears should matter.



For Levixone and Desire Luzinda, connection has always been about shared values, mutual respect, and a commitment to walking a faith-led journey together. All this culminated into a beautiful wedding.

Unlocking Growth

Essential strategies for Ugandan SMEs to thrive in a dynamic market



Understanding the market is not just about knowing who your customers are, but truly knowing them.

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are undeniably the backbone of Uganda's economy, driving innovation, employment, and local development. However, navigating the dynamic local market to achieve sustained growth and competitiveness presents unique challenges. Industry experts and business strategists emphasize that for these vital businesses to not just survive but truly thrive, a blend of meticulous strategic planning, adaptability, and a deep understanding of local market dynamics is paramount.

Here are key strategies empowering Ugandan SMEs to bolster their competitiveness and secure long-term success:

Mastering Financial Management and Sustainability

At the core of any successful enterprise lies robust financial health. For Ugandan SMEs, this begins with rigorous financial planning – separating business and personal finances, meticulous budgeting, and aggressive cash flow management to monitor receivables and manage payables effectively. Building an emergency fund is also crucial for unforeseen challenges.

Beyond internal discipline, accessing appropriate financing is key. SMEs are encouraged to explore diverse funding sources beyond traditional banks, which often come with high interest rates and collateral demands.

Options include Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations (SACCOs), Microfinance Institutions (MFIs), potential angel investors, venture capital for high-growth ventures, government grants (from bodies like UDC, UIA), and emerging crowdfunding platforms. Crucially, building a strong credit history through timely repayment can unlock more opportunities.

Finally, cost optimization is non-negotiable. Regular expense analysis, negotiating better terms with suppliers, investing in energy-efficient solutions, and adopting lean operations to minimize waste are vital for profitability.

Deepening Market and Customer Focus

Understanding the market is not just about knowing who your customers are, but truly knowing them. Ugandan SMEs must know their customer intimately, understanding their needs, preferences, purchasing power, and unique pain points. This insight facilitates niche specialization, allowing businesses to focus on specific segments where they can offer unique value, rather than trying to serve everyone. Staying updated on local trends, consumer behavior, and economic shifts (e.g., growth in specific sectors or infrastructure changes) is also critical.

Strong customer relationships and service are powerful differentiators. In a market where personal connections and trust are highly valued, prioritizing excellent service builds loyalty and generates invaluable word-of-mouth referrals. Actively seeking and responding to customer feedback is essential for continuous improvement.

For marketing, effective (and affordable) strategies leverage Uganda's high mobile penetration. Utilizing social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp for Business), local directories, and simple, mobile-friendly websites can yield significant reach. Embracing word-of-mouth marketing, community engagement, and targeted promotions that resonate locally are also highly effective.

Cultivating Operational Excellence and Innovation

Consistency builds trust. Maintaining high standards of quality in products and services is crucial for brand reputation. Even for small operations, standardizing processes ensures efficiency and consistent delivery.

Embracing appropriate technology can revolutionize operations. Integrating mobile money and digital payments simplifies transactions. Simple inventory and sales management software, or even cloud-based tools, can vastly improve tracking.

Efficient supply chain management involves building reliable supplier relationships, prioritizing local sourcing where feasible to reduce costs and support the local economy, and having backup plans for disruptions.

Investing in Human Capital and Strategic Networking

A business is only as strong as its team. Investing in employees through skill development (formal or informal mentorship), fair compensation, incentives, and fostering a positive work environment are crucial for attracting and retaining talent and boosting productivity. Strategic networking and partnerships open doors. Joining business associations like the Uganda National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (UNCCI) or Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU) offers networking, advocacy, and training. Collaborating with other SMEs to share resources, refer clients, or co-create products can unlock new opportunities. Seeking mentorship from experienced entrepreneurs is also an invaluable source of guidance.

Ensuring Legal, Regulatory, and Ethical Compliance

Formalization and compliance lay the groundwork for legitimate and sustainable growth. SMEs must register their business with URSB, secure all necessary permits and licenses from UIA and local authorities, and diligently understand and comply with tax laws (working with a tax advisor for URA regulations). Adhering to labor laws ensures fair employment practices.

Finally, good governance and ethics build a strong foundation of trust. Operating with transparency and accountability not only attracts customers and suppliers but also potential investors.



SMEs can build resilience and enhance their competitive edge

Wellness & Mental Health

Navigating mid-year stress with practical coping strategies

BY: JUDE H. MUSOKE
Photography: COURTESY

As 2025 reaches its midpoint, a familiar wave of pressure and fatigue is sweeping across workplaces, schools, and households. The initial optimism of New Year resolutions often collides with the realities of ongoing demands, creating a unique phenomenon known as "mid-year stress." Health experts are now urgently highlighting the importance of mental wellness and advocating for practical coping strategies to help individuals navigate this period. This time of year, particularly July and August, frequently sees a spike in anxiety and emotional exhaustion, as many begin to assess the gap between their January aspirations and their current progress. Whether it's the weight of unmet goals, persistent financial strain, academic pressures, or workplace fatigue, the feeling of being overwhelmed becomes increasingly common.

"Mid-year stress is real and can manifest in emotional exhaustion, irritability, sleep problems, and even physical illness," explains Dr. Sarah Nambogo, a Kampala-based clinical psychologist. "The good news is that with the right strategies, it can be managed and even turned into a time of renewed focus."



Resetting expectations realistically can alleviate immense pressure and foster a sense of progress.

Common Triggers for Mid-Year Stress Include:

- Intense workplace pressure to meet deadlines and performance targets.
- Academic fatigue among students facing national exams.
- Financial anxiety stemming from rising costs and unachieved savings goals.
- Mounting family responsibilities and relationship challenges.
- Burnout from constant multitasking without adequate rest.

Strategies for Navigating the Mid-Year Slump:

To combat these stressors, mental health practitioners offer a range of effective coping mechanisms:

Pause and Reflect: Take time to review the year so far, not with self-judgment, but with clarity. Acknowledging achievements and identifying areas for improvement can significantly reduce anxiety and restore a sense of control.



Sharing worries and frustrations with trusted friends, family members, or a mental health professional can significantly lighten emotional burdens.

Reframe Your Goals: Instead of feeling defeated by unachieved resolutions, break down larger ambitions into smaller, more manageable tasks. Resetting expectations realistically can alleviate immense pressure and foster a sense of progress.

Stay Physically Active: Engaging in regular physical activity, from jogging and dancing to brisk walking, is a powerful stress reliever. Exercise releases endorphins, which naturally boost mood and reduce stress levels. Even a brief 10–15 minutes of daily movement can yield noticeable benefits.

Unplug and Rest: The constant demands of social media and digital work tools can severely drain mental energy. Experts advise incorporating regular "tech breaks," limiting overall screen time, and prioritizing adequate, quality sleep.

Talk It Out: Sharing worries and

frustrations with trusted friends, family members, or a mental health professional can significantly lighten emotional burdens. Utilizing support groups and peer counseling is also becoming an increasingly recommended avenue for support.

Practice Mindfulness and Gratitude: Simple mindfulness exercises, such as deep breathing, or the daily practice of journaling three things you are grateful for, can help re-center the mind, reduce rumination, and uplift spirits.

A Positive Shift: More People Seeking Help

Encouragingly, there's a growing willingness to address mental health challenges openly. The Uganda Counselling Association reported a significant 20% increase in mid-year inquiries related to stress, anxiety, and emotional burnout in 2025. While this underscores the rising prevalence

of stress, it also reflects a positive societal shift towards greater awareness and a greater readiness to seek professional help, particularly among young adults.

"We need to normalize mental health check-ins just like we do physical health exams," emphasizes Dr. Nambogo. "Mental wellness is not a luxury—it's a foundational cornerstone for personal well-being and national productivity."

Broader Interventions and Support Systems

Recognizing the widespread impact of mental health, some Ugandan employers are proactively incorporating employee wellness programs, including stress management workshops and in-house counselling services. Concurrently, the Ministry of Health has pledged to scale up community mental health outreach campaigns throughout the remainder of 2025, aiming to make support more accessible.

Mid-year doesn't have to be a breaking point defined by stress and exhaustion. Instead, it can be approached as a vital opportunity to recalibrate, re-energize, and restore balance.

Human babies aren't supposed to have three parents - but now they can



A woman is naturally able to be pregnant and give birth to triplets from a single father but now she can have children in a single birth from three fathers.

The only creatures known to conceive offspring from more than two parents are salamanders. Females from the genus *ambystoma* (which are notoriously promiscuous) mate with up to three different males, and that DNA is then incorporated into what is known as a triploid genome in their offspring. Now a version of this has become possible in humans.

It seems limb regeneration isn't the only way medical intervention can put humans on salamanders' level. Being born with three genomes is not a phenomenon that occurs naturally in *homo sapiens*, but in an attempt to prevent certain genetic conditions caused by mutations in the mitochondria, scientists have found a way. Mitochondrial DNA or mtDNA is exclusively passed down from the maternal side. Dysfunction in the

mitochondria can lead to metabolic diseases characterized by symptoms such as seizures, developmental delays, blindness, and loss of muscular function. Some can even be fatal. Mitochondrial diseases occur in about 1 in every 5,000 people. They were previously only preventable by using a donor egg or foregoing the conception of biological children altogether. This is why pediatric neurologist Bobby McFarland, of Newcastle University in the UK, led an experimental study that would reduce and potentially eliminate the risk of mitochondrial disease with a new method of in vitro fertilization. McFarland and his research team wanted to see if removing the nucleus of an egg and placing it in a donor egg with viable mitochondria would result in healthy offspring.

"We found that pronuclear transfer, a form of mitochondrial donation, was effective in reducing the level of pathogenic mtDNA variant to substantially below the threshold for clinical disease in the offspring of women with homoplasmic (or high heteroplasmic) levels," he said in a study recently published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

When mitochondria are homoplasmic, all copies produced by cell division have mutations. Mutation levels vary in heteroplasmic mitochondria. Preimplantation genetic testing (PGT) can screen for these abnormalities, and women with homoplasmy or high levels of heteroplasmy can benefit from what is now known as pronuclear transfer.

This involves eggs from both the mother and donor being fertilized with the father's sperm in vitro. Nuclei are then removed from both eggs after ten hours. Since the nucleus carries most genetic material and has no connection to mitochondrial disease, the mother's nucleus is implanted into the donor egg to take advantage of its mitochondria.

While there is a chance that a few of the mother's mitochondria may end up in the embryo, it is unlikely to cause a debilitating disease. Levels of defective mitochondria in offspring conceived via pronuclear transfer were low enough to escape that fate. Eight pregnancies (including a set of twins) resulted from the experiment, and while there were a few minor health problems in the newborns, these were either treatable or corrected themselves. Not only were levels of heteroplasmy low for the babies, but undetectable in five of them. Developmental progress also turned out to be normal.

Though one baby had a form of infant epilepsy, and another had heart arrhythmia and hyperlipidemia, or high levels of fats and lipids in the blood, both of these conditions were treated and resolved. Whether the hyperlipidemia was even caused by mtDNA is uncertain, especially because the mother also had severe hyperlipidemia during her pregnancy. Though there was a chance that any of the mothers with pathogenic mtDNA had a higher risk of complications during pregnancy, which could possibly cause their children to have health issues, there is no proof for now.

"We are assessing, over the long term, the health and extent of heteroplasmy (if detectable) of the offspring," McFarland and his team said. "Indeed, the role of mitochondrial donation as a choice for women with a heritable pathogenic mtDNA variant will only be established with the availability of additional data."



A female salamander is able to conceive offspring from more than two males



Mitochondrial donation is a pioneering IVF technique that enables women with certain types of mitochondrial disease to have genetically related children without passing on the condition.

Government throws weight behind landmark bill to elevate Uganda's public relations profession

The Public Relations Association of Uganda (PRAU) has received a significant boost in its efforts to professionalize the sector, with the government officially welcoming its proposed Public Relations Bill. This landmark legislation aims to regulate and protect the PR profession in Uganda, setting clear standards and strengthening ethical practice across both public and private agencies nationwide.

The Minister of State for Gender, Labour and Social Development, Esther Anyakun, affirmed the government's commitment to advancing the Public Relations Bill during last month's National Public Relations Symposium. "I am pleased to learn that PRAU is in the process of formalizing its legal status through a proposed Bill. This is a commendable move, and I pledge my support in advancing this agenda," Minister Anyakun stated. She underscored the transformative potential of such legislation, adding, "A well-regulated communications profession will uphold high standards, enforce ethical codes, and ensure accountability in how we communicate as a country. As Government of Uganda, we look forward to working more closely with the PR profession to enhance transparency, civic engagement, and responsible leadership."



Minister Esther Anyakun and PRAU President Irene Nakasiita exchange a gift

Elevating PR to the Boardroom

The government's endorsement came during the National Public Relations Symposium 2025, held at the Imperial Royale Hotel under the theme "From Strategy to the C-Suite: Elevating PR to the Boardroom." The event convened a diverse array of professionals, including PR and corporate communication experts, CEOs, board members, government spokespeople, marketing professionals, public affairs practitioners, and students, all focused on reimagining the evolving influence of PR in Uganda's governance and leadership systems. The central message of the symposium challenged Ugandan PR practitioners to redefine their roles by embracing strategic leadership and communication, moving beyond traditional perceptions to become

integral drivers of organizational and national growth. Odrek Rwabwogo, Senior Special Advisor to the President and Chair of the Presidential Advisory Committee on Exports and Industrial Development (PACEID), delivered a compelling keynote address. He emphasized the critical value of real-world experience and strategic communication in effective leadership, urging PR professionals to lead with conviction, joint efforts, deep analysis, and humility. "Effective communicators lead with conviction, joint efforts, deep analysis & humility," Rwabwogo advised, commending PRAU's significant contributions: "You have stood for ethical conduct, excellence, and purpose-driven communication. You have created jobs, built influence, and contributed to Uganda's GDP, even if our total industry contribution remains to be officially measured."



Minister Esther Anyakun and PRAU President Irene Nakasiita exchange a gift

Rwabwogo further highlighted the remarkable growth of Uganda's PR industry, recalling a time when only one American firm, Burson-Marsteller, dominated the landscape. "Today, 27 years later, this room is filled with Ugandan professionals in a vibrant, growing industry," he observed.

Trust and Reputation: The New Currency

A recurring and powerful theme throughout the symposium was the indispensable role of trust and reputation in today's corporate and national landscape. Patrick Kinoti, Managing Director of Old Mutual Insurance, asserted, "PR today is no longer just a department, it's everyone's responsibility," adding that "It's not always about the product, it's about the trust behind the brand."

Josephine Ossiya, CEO of the Capital Markets Authority (CMA), underscored PR's strategic value within her organization. "At Capital Markets Authority, PR and communications is a strategic function.

We do not see how we could effectively deliver on our mandate without it." She stressed that PR is critical for both outward engagement and internal culture building. "PR is not only outward-facing; it's equally vital internally. We see PR as a culture builder—helping us shape and reinforce our internal identity through communication." Ossiya concluded, "People can only trust you to protect them if they first trust you. PR builds that trust, it's how the CMA brand becomes understood, respected, and believed."

Grace Muliisa, Managing Director of Ecobank, articulated PR's role as the ultimate guardian of reputation. "PR isn't a department, it's the guardian of reputation. And today, reputation is everything." Muliisa emphasized that in a world where trust is fragile, "PR must be more than image. It's about credibility, culture, and consistent truth." She powerfully concluded, "Reputation is now the very currency that determines whether an organization will rise or fall. In that sense, PR is not just a function—it is the heart, the heartbeat of the company."

Pathways to Leadership and Personal Branding

Speakers also offered practical advice for PR professionals aspiring to senior leadership roles and personal brand development. Janet Navuga Bugembe, Founder of Journey to the Boardroom, debunked the myth of luck, stating, "There is no such thing as luck. Luck stands for Labor and the Correct Knowledge. Luck shines on the deserving." She urged attendees to be proactive: "Nobody is going to come and look for you at your home. You need to network deliberately." For boardroom access, she advised, "You get invited to the boardroom; you don't apply. You have to demonstrate relevance."

Dr. Peter Kimbowa, a Corporate and Leadership Coach, provided insights on being "board-ready," humorously noting, "In the corporate world, rebellion goes on the money map. You don't rebel out of the blue. You must put a money map on the table. You must show us exactly why you must do something."

Lyn Tukei, PR Manager at CMA Uganda, encouraged professionals to be more than just competent, urging them to "build with trust, with purpose, and let's be visible."

She highlighted the essence of integrity: “Integrity isn’t just a value; it also means you’re leading with purpose. That intention is what takes you through every season.” Tukei also underscored the importance of personal branding: “Personal Branding is the story people tell about you when you’re not in the room... As PR professionals, your personal story becomes part of the organisational story.”

Irene Nakasiita, the President of PRAU, proudly highlighted the association’s half-century milestone. “PRAU is a fraternity of PR practitioners now 50 years strong. That’s no small milestone. We are a community of over 500 members representing diverse brands, institutions, and causes across the country.” She concluded by affirming the evolving identity of PR professionals: “This room today holds a powerful gathering of PR professionals, men & women who are not just spokespeople, but strategic communicators, stakeholder engagement experts, brand custodians, and thought leaders shaping Uganda’s corporate and national narrative.”

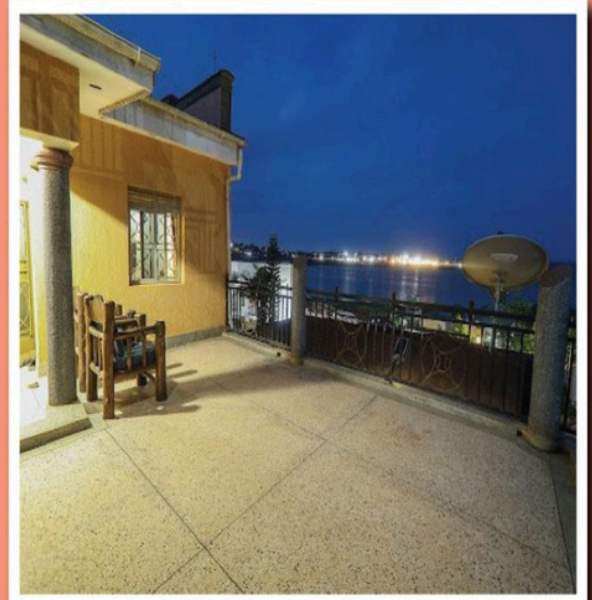
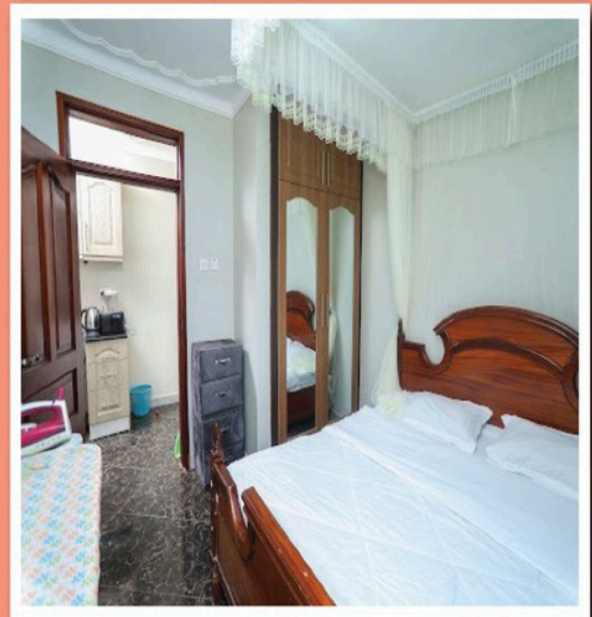
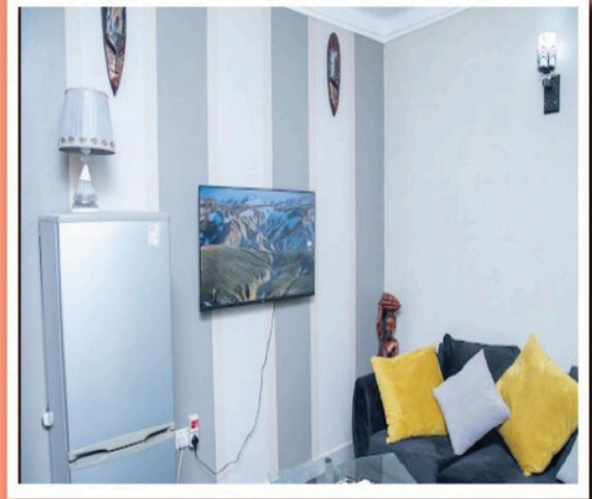


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Businesses are drowning in data today but leaders are struggling to extract value

The Sheraton Kampala Hotel buzzed with intellectual fervor on Thursday, July 31st, as the 6th Business Trendsetters Forum and Awards Gala convened. Under the timely theme, "Innovations with Hyper Business Intelligence & Environmental Social Governance," the event brought together a distinguished cadre of business leaders and entrepreneurs to chart the course for Uganda's innovative and inventive minds, emphasizing exemplary knowledge acquisition, responsible big data utilization, and ethical leadership.

A highlight of the forum was the compelling presentation by Emmanuel Kirunda, a 2023 Pacesetter and Commercial Director at Olsights, a London-based clean tech energy startup. Kirunda provided a critical perspective on transforming raw data into actionable insights through "Hyper Business Intelligence." "Organizations today are drowning in data but starving for insights. There is no shortage of information but decision-makers are



The 6th Business Trendsetters Forum and Awards Gala convened at the Sheraton Hotel

struggling to extract value from data," Kirunda stated. He elaborated on how Olsights addresses this challenge by fusing diverse data – from land use and environmental information to grid capacity and regulations – into a dynamic visual decision engine, empowering "smarter, faster decisions at the intersection of electricity networks in energy infrastructure."

Kirunda also critically addressed the role of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles, advocating for a move beyond mere "box-ticking."

"Merely reporting emissions is no longer enough... the sustainable businesses of the future must demonstrate real-world impact," he asserted, noting that Olsights achieves this by enabling more efficient infrastructure investment. Crucially, he challenged African innovators: "If you are solving real customer pinpoints in Africa through digital innovation, don't limit your ambition. Look for global markets where your solutions may already have demand."

Jonathan Light, a Leadership and Business Strategist, delivered a potent call to action, urging attendees to embrace responsibility beyond innovation.

"The future of business belongs to those who not only innovate but also take responsibility for the environments they create," he stated. Light challenged leaders to move beyond superficial growth, advising, "Let us stop building faster than we can sustain and start governing our businesses with the discipline of purpose, impact, and integrity." He concluded with a powerful metaphor: "Don't just scale your footprint, deepen your dent."

Pacesetter Dr. Abraham Nalwebe, a Court Mediator and Arbitrator at Makindye Magistrate Court, transitioned from technical engineering to paralegal, bringing the focus back to individual leadership and social embracement of ESG. "Leadership begins at Individual level and before you can effectively manage others, you must first learn to manage yourself," Dr. Nalwebe emphasized. He highlighted key social governance strategies such as human rights, community engagement, and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion, stressing that "Embracing the local community is vital; doing so enhances your social capital and can lead to increased support for your business."

Joseph Kitamirike, Co-founder of ALTX Africa and a disrupter in the investment financing sector, shifted the discussion to practical business growth strategies.

"We need to focus on where we can get profits and earn more than spend to grow," Kitamirike advised. He stressed the importance of precise customer profiling and targeted marketing in the digital age. "You need to profile the person you are looking for and target them. With a proper profile, you can target better, especially if you are using digital tools." The forum also heard from Pacesetter Joan Mukasa Menya, the first female Managing Director of Vivo Energy Uganda, who provided insightful perspectives on effective leadership and continuous development. "Leaders must equip themselves with knowledge and strong commitment. Continuous learning and education are vital for effective leadership," Menya asserted, sharing her own experience of learning IT when transitioning to a tech-savvy team.



She emphasized the importance of leaders grasping various organizational functions, engaging in day-to-day activities to identify challenges, and critically, mentoring upcoming leaders. "Sharing knowledge prevents valuable insights from being lost. Leadership involves nurturing the next generation," Menya said, adding, "Many times we are many things we don't know we are until we step into a certain environment. You should know that there is no excuse if you are a leader and you don't know. The team you lead expects you to know and have answers." She concluded with a powerful message on the value of shared knowledge: "People die with knowledge... If information you have doesn't help you generate insights for growth then you don't need it."

Yvonne Mpanga, the Executive Director and Founder of The Business Trendsetters Forum, beautifully articulated the forum's overarching vision. She emphasized innovation as "the very lifeblood of progress," and defined Hyper Business Intelligence as the "compass" for navigating a data-rich world, enabling smarter, faster, and more informed decisions. Mpanga reiterated that ESG is no longer a "peripheral concern" but "the fundamental framework for responsible, sustainable, and ethical growth."

Yvonne Mpanga

Business Trendsetters discuss leadership and innovations



The 6th Business Trendsetters Forum and Awards Gala convened on Thursday 31st July at the Sheraton Kampala, hotel bringing together business leaders and entrepreneurs to explore the future of Uganda's innovative and inventive minds. Under the timely theme, "Innovations with Hyper Business Intelligence & Environmental Social Governance," the event stressed the imperative for exemplary knowledge acquisition, responsible big data utilization, and ethical leadership.

At the same event the 2024-2025 Business Trendsetters as identified by the public and selected by Business Trends Galore were recognized. These included UCC boss Nyombi Thembo- the 2024-2025 Business Trendsetter Public Sector, Dr. Lilly Ajarova for 2023-2024-2025 Trends Hero, Martin Oscar Kintu, a celebrated playwright that was recognized for impactful educative radio plays, Marvin Musoke, Edrean Paul and team for professionalizing productions under their FRAME the beat invention.



Kampala set to ignite with a flurry of cultural events

Kampala is poised for an exhilarating period of cultural immersion and entertainment as the city gears up for a diverse array of festivals, concerts, and community celebrations throughout August and September 2025. From world-class film to vibrant dance, soulful music, and rich heritage showcases, the two-month stretch promises a packed calendar for both residents and visitors.

The anticipated events underscore Kampala's growing reputation as a dynamic hub for arts and culture in East Africa, offering something truly unique for every taste.

Cinematic Spotlight and Performing Arts

The Uganda International Film Festival is expected to be a major highlight, typically unfolding in late August and early September at the Uganda National Cultural Centre (UNCC). Film enthusiasts can look forward to a compelling showcase of local and African cinema, coupled with insightful panel discussions and educational workshops designed to foster industry growth and talent.



The Uganda International Film Festival and the Koroga Festival are some of the events to look out for in August and September.

Complementing the film scene, pre-festival launch events for the renowned Bayimba Cultural Festival are slated to begin as early as August. While the main festival traditionally kicks off in October, these early workshops and film screenings provide a valuable prelude, building anticipation and engagement.

Dance enthusiasts will also have their moment with the Uganda Contemporary Dance Festival. Venues like UNCC or Spot On Studios are expected to host captivating contemporary dance showcases and crucial industry networking events throughout August, setting the stage for the festival's main programming.



A Symphony of Sounds

Music lovers will be spoilt for choice with a blend of lead-up events to larger festivals and intimate local performances. The Koroga Festival Pre-Events and Artist Showcases will bring a vibrant energy, with soft-launch gigs featuring top Afrobeat, reggae, and R&B artists in August and September, ahead of the main Koroga event later in the year.

Beyond the major festivals, Kampala's thriving live music scene will be on full display. Venues such as Details Jazz Club, Nommo Arts, and The Lawns are expected to maintain their regular schedule of Local Jazz & Poetry Nights, inviting audiences to open-mic sessions, jazz evenings, poetry readings, and intimate singer-songwriter showcases throughout both months. Adding to the musical tapestry, Rooftop & Café Concert Series will offer smaller-scale acoustic, Afro-fusion, and Afro-soul concerts.

These intimate "summer events" are anticipated at popular lounges and rooftop venues in areas like Bukoto and Ntinda, providing perfect settings for relaxed evenings under the stars.

Community and Heritage Celebrations

Beyond the formalized festival circuit, the spirit of community and heritage will be palpable. Local parishes and neighborhoods are expected to host various Community Heritage & Church Festivals around Uganda's Independence Day (August 9) and throughout Heritage Month celebrations. These events typically feature lively music, traditional dance, tantalizing food fairs, and family-friendly activities, offering a glimpse into Uganda's rich cultural fabric.

Furthermore, the influence of regional arts will be felt through Regional Cultural Exchange Pop-ups.

From dance festivals to Bayimba Music Festival partiers will have something to enjoy in the coming months





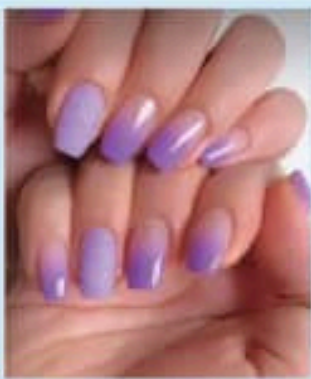
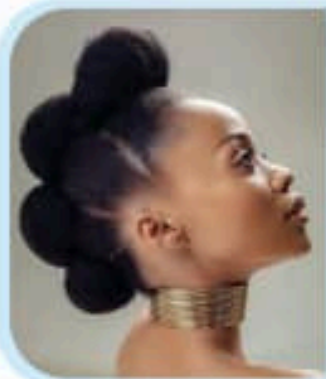
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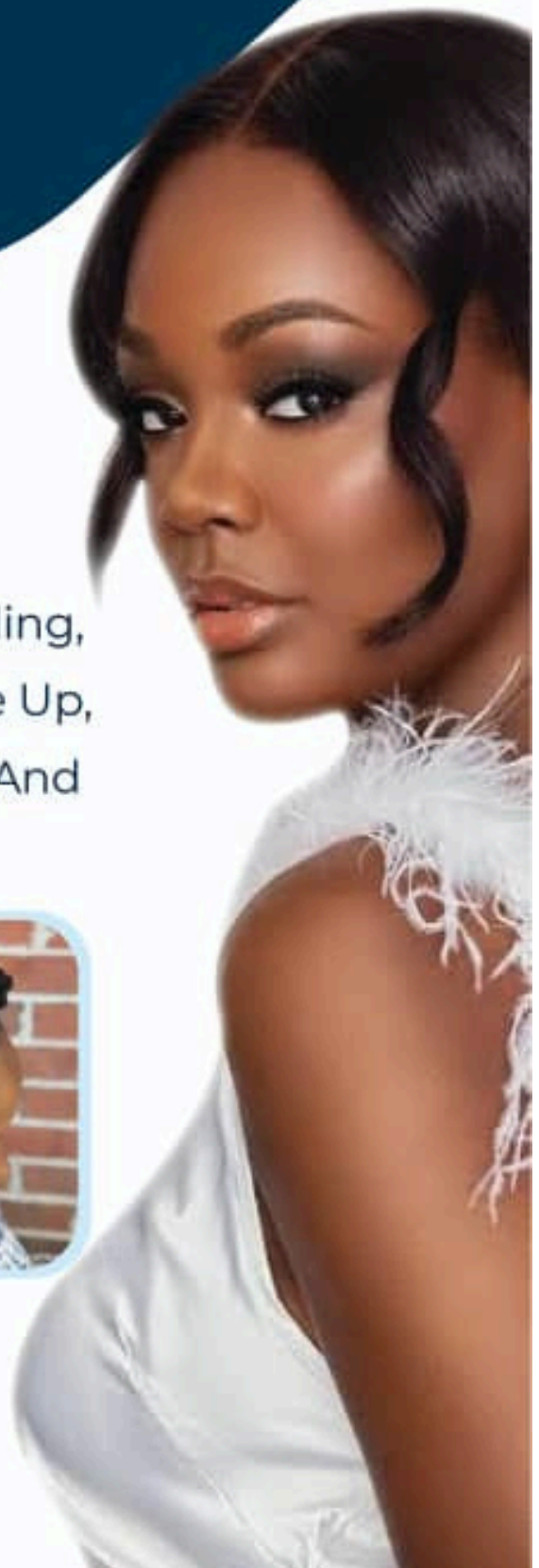
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Tusker Lite Rwenzori Marathon

A fusion of elite athletics, breathtaking scenery, and sustainable impact

The majestic foothills of the Rwenzori Mountains are once again gearing up to host one of East Africa's most unique sporting spectacles: the Tusker Lite Rwenzori Marathon. Slated for Saturday, August 23, 2025, this fourth edition promises an unparalleled blend of endurance, breathtaking natural beauty, and a profound commitment to environmental conservation and community development.

Participants from across the globe have been invited to challenge themselves across four distinct distances: the grueling 42km full marathon, the demanding 21km half marathon, a spirited 10km race, and the accessible 5km "vibes run." The carefully curated routes offer runners a rare opportunity to wind through the picturesque landscapes, tracing paths along the edges of Queen Elizabeth National Park and offering panoramic views of the "Mountains of the Moon" and areas like Buyindi.

Adding to its prestige, both the 42km and 21km routes are World Athletics-certified, ensuring a globally recognized standard that attracts not only elite athletes seeking personal bests but also recreational runners and adventure tourists eager for a truly unique experience.

More Than Just a Race

Beyond the finish line, the Tusker



The marathon is poised to elevate Uganda's reputation in both the athletics world and the burgeoning eco-tourism sector

Lite Rwenzori Marathon is driven by a powerful vision of climate-conscious sports tourism and community empowerment. "As a marathon, we care about what happens long after the crowds go home – from nurturing the next Abel Chelangat to restoring Uganda's natural beauty," stated Amos Wekesa, Team Lead for the Rwenzori Marathon. "With partners like Standard Chartered, that vision becomes real."

This initiative actively supports reforestation efforts, aligning the thrill of the race with a tangible impact on Uganda's lush environment. Furthermore, the marathon is dedicated to fostering local talent, with specific programs designed to nurture standout athletes from Kasese. Prize money structures include special recognition for local talent and PWD (Persons With Disabilities) categories, ensuring inclusivity and opportunity. For the 2025 edition, the stakes are high, with significant cash prizes for top performers. Winners of the 42km

full marathon (men and women) will each walk away with a handsome UGX 10 million, while the champions of the 21km races will receive UGX 7 million each. Additional cash prizes will be awarded to runners placing in the top six across various categories.

A Regional Magnet

A testament to the marathon's growing stature and cross-border appeal is the registration of over 500 Kenyan athletes for the 2025 event. This significant influx marks a pivotal milestone, solidifying the Tusker Lite Rwenzori Marathon's position as a major regional attraction for both seasoned competitors and leisure runners.

Amos Wekesa highlighted the broader implications of this participation: "Athletes are not only coming to compete but to explore Uganda's natural beauty. Uganda has historically invested a lot in Kenya, and now through this

marathon, we're seeing Kenyans coming here and boosting our local economy."

The marathon is poised to elevate Uganda's reputation in both the athletics world and the burgeoning eco-tourism sector, fostering stronger ties within the East African region through shared passion for sport and conservation.

A Collaborative Effort

The success and expansive vision of the 2025 Tusker Lite Rwenzori Marathon are proudly supported by a consortium of key partners: Tusker Lite, Standard Chartered Bank, Britam, Coca Cola Beverages, Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, Uganda Tourism Board, Uganda Wildlife Authority, Uganda Airlines, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and KIA Motors. Their collective commitment underscores the event's multifaceted impact, from promoting health and fitness to driving sustainable tourism and regional cooperation.

As the countdown to August 23, 2025 begins, the Tusker Lite Rwenzori Marathon stands ready to offer an unforgettable experience – a test of endurance set against a backdrop of unparalleled natural splendor, all while contributing to a greener, more vibrant future for Uganda and the region.



The Tusker Lite Rwenzori Marathon stands ready to offer an unforgettable experience – a test of endurance set against a backdrop of unparalleled natural splendor



Beyond The Pitch

The ultimate visitor's guide to exploring Kampala during CHAN 2024

As the excitement of the CHAN 2024 football tournament electrifies Kampala, visitors to Uganda's vibrant capital city have a unique opportunity to explore far beyond the football pitch. From ancient royal grounds and bustling markets to contemporary art scenes and delicious street food, Kampala offers a rich tapestry of experiences awaiting discovery.

Here's a guide to making the most of your time in the Pearl of Africa's capital:

Dive into History and Culture

Uganda National Mosque (Gaddafi Mosque): Crown your visit with a trip to this iconic landmark. Its minaret offers unparalleled 360° panoramic views of Kampala's sprawling landscape. Guided tours provide fascinating insights into the history of Islam in Uganda and the legacy of the Buganda Kingdom.

Kasubi Tombs (UNESCO World Heritage Site): A must-visit for history enthusiasts, these royal burial grounds of the Buganda kings offer a profound glimpse into traditional Buganda architecture, customs, and the enduring monarchy.

Kabaka's Palace (Lubiri) & Kabaka's Lake: Explore the official residence of the Buganda King. Adjacent to the palace, visitors can find Idi Amin's chilling torture



You can get all local crafts jewelry at Buganda Road crafts market

chambers – a sobering reminder of Uganda's past – and Africa's largest man-made lake, offering a tranquil escape.

Uganda Museum: Delve into the nation's heritage through diverse exhibits covering traditional musical instruments, archaeology, ethnography, and colonial artifacts.

Independence Monument & Constitution Square: Perfect for a quick photo stop, these central landmarks are steeped in Uganda's post-colonial history.

Bahai Temple: Discover one of only nine Bahai Mother Temples worldwide, set amidst serene gardens with unique architecture – a peaceful sanctuary in the heart of the city.

Ndere Cultural Centre: For a captivating evening, the Ndere Cultural Centre offers a "one-stop shop" for Uganda's rich cultural diversity.

Cultural Centre offers a "one-stop shop" for Uganda's rich cultural diversity. Enjoy vibrant performances featuring traditional music, dance, storytelling, and a taste of local cuisine.

A Culinary Journey for Every Appetite:

Kampala Street Food Tour: No visit is complete without sampling the city's famous street food. Indulge in a "Rolex" (rolled eggs in chapati), "Muchomo" (grilled meat), G-Nuts, roasted maize, or a variety of fresh local fruits. Popular areas for street food adventures include Wandegeya, Nakawa, and Kisementi.

Local Cuisine Restaurants: For a sit-down experience, try 2K Restaurant downtown for an extensive buffet of authentic Ugandan dishes. Yujo Izakaya offers an intriguing Japanese-Ugandan fusion, while

The Lawns and Endiro Coffee provide excellent continental and local options.

Craft Beer & Coffee Scene: Unwind at local craft beer spots like Banana Bar, Big Five, or Crafts by Good Glass. For coffee lovers, a robust Ugandan brew awaits at 1000 Cups, Endiro, or Café Javas.

Shopping and Local Finds:

Buganda Road Craft Market: Hunt for authentic handmade crafts, vibrant fabrics, unique jewelry, and souvenirs to take a piece of Uganda home with you.

Nakasero Market: Immerse yourself in the bustling atmosphere of this colorful open-air market, a feast for the senses with an array of spices, fruits, and vegetables – also a fantastic opportunity for candid photography.

Modern Malls: For contemporary shopping, fashion, banking, dining, and cinema, visit Acacia Mall, Arena Mall, or Lugogo Mall.

Unique Adventures & Entertainment:

Uganda Wildlife Education Centre (Entebbe): A short drive outside Kampala, this centre is home to rescued animals and offers a chance to learn about Uganda's wildlife. Combine it with a leisurely stroll along the shores of Lake Victoria.

Boda Boda City Tour: For the adventurous, a guided motorcycle tour (offered by companies like Uganda Boda Tours) provides a thrilling and unique perspective, navigating Kampala's major landmarks safely and efficiently.

Art & Music Scene: Explore Kampala's burgeoning artistic landscape by visiting galleries such as Afriart Gallery and Motiv Uganda. Catch a live band performance at venues like The Village Mall or Design Hub Kampala for a lively evening.

Whether you're a football fanatic or a curious traveler, Kampala promises a dynamic and unforgettable experience beyond the chants of CHAN 2024. Embrace the spirit of discovery and let Uganda's capital charm you.



From street snacks, a tour of country's history at the Uganda Museum, and a boda boda tour of the city, you can enjoy it all during the CHAN 2024 tournament.



A visit to Uganda Museum and a boda boda city tour is ideal for someone visiting Uganda



Record prize money, and a brand-new trophy awaits CHAN winner



Victor Wanyama, Denis Onyango and Mrisho Ngasa unveil the new TotalEnergies CAF CHAN trophy

The TotalEnergies CAF African Nations Championship (CHAN) PAMOJA 2024 is poised to redefine African football, kicking off a new era of enhanced prestige, historic firsts, and unparalleled excitement. With a stunning new trophy, a monumental 75% increase in prize money for the champions, and an unprecedented tri-nation hosting arrangement, this edition promises to be the most significant in the tournament's history.

A New Financial Dawn and a Coveted Prize

At the heart of this elevated status is a significant financial injection that underscores CAF's commitment to developing domestic football across the continent. The winners of CHAN

PAMOJA 2024 will now receive a staggering USD 3.5-million, a remarkable 75% surge from the previous edition.

This substantial reward is encapsulated by the Swahili word "PAMOJA" meaning togetherness, complemented by an overall prize pool that has expanded by a formidable 32% to an impressive USD 10.4-million, benefiting all participating nations. Adding to the allure, a brand-new, exquisitely designed trophy awaits the champions, symbolizing this new era of excellence and the growing stature of the tournament.

Matches will be staged across four dynamic cities: Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar in Tanzania, Kampala in Uganda, and Nairobi in Kenya. The action kicks off on Saturday, August 2, 2025, in Dar es Salaam, with the opening match seeing host nation Tanzania take on Burkina Faso at 20h00 (17h00 GMT).

A Celebration of Togetherness

Beyond the financial incentives, CHAN PAMOJA 2024 marks a historic first: it is the first time in

The tournament will culminate in the grand finale at the Moi International Sports Centre in Nairobi on Saturday, August 30, 2025, following the third-place playoff in Kampala on Friday, August 29, 2025.

A Showcase of Domestic Talent

The TotalEnergies CAF CHAN is exclusively reserved for players plying their trade in domestic leagues across Africa, providing a unique platform for homegrown talent to shine on a continental stage. This year's edition promises fiercely competitive football across all four groups, featuring a strong lineup of established powerhouses and ambitious newcomers.

Defending champions Senegal, two-time winners Morocco and DR Congo, and continental giants Nigeria, Algeria, and Zambia are all in the mix, guaranteeing high-octane encounters.

This year's edition also features debutants Central African Republic, who will test themselves in a balanced Group B alongside Tanzania, Madagascar, Mauritania, and Burkina Faso.

Meanwhile, Group C promises some of the tournament's most intriguing matchups, including Uganda, Algeria, Guinea, South Africa and Niger. Group D, though the smallest with four teams, features some of the most successful sides, with Senegal and Nigeria joined by Congo and Sudan—two nations with strong TotalEnergies CAF CHAN pedigree.

A Festival of African Football

For fans across Africa and beyond, CHAN PAMOJA 2024 promises



Senegal's Daouda Ba and Nigeria's Sikiru Adewale Alimi battle for the ball during their encounter.



Uganda's goalkeeper Mutakubwa dives for the ball against Algeria.

a month-long celebration of African football, set to spotlight the next generation of stars rising through domestic leagues. With ticket sales already underway and vibrant fan engagement campaigns live across all three host nations, CAF and its partners are poised to deliver not just a football tournament, but a true festival that seamlessly blends culture, community, and sporting excellence, setting a new benchmark for CHAN.

The winners of CHAN PAMOJA 2024 will now receive a staggering USD 3.5-million, a remarkable 75% surge from the previous edition.

Uganda Cranes eye deep run in seventh CHAN appearance on home soil



Uganda Cranes lost its opening match against Algeria but remains focused on using home advantage to progress to the next round.

As co-hosts of the TotalEnergies CAF African Nations Championship (CHAN) 2024, Uganda stands at a pivotal moment. One of the competition's most consistent participants, the Uganda Cranes are eager to finally make a deep run in a tournament that has, historically, proved challenging despite their regular presence. Set to feature for a record seventh time, Uganda has become synonymous with the CHAN stage, yet progression beyond the group stage remains an elusive dream. This year, however, offers a unique confluence of factors. With home advantage and the unwavering support of a passionate fanbase, the East African giants are determined to

rewrite history on their own soil. Beyond the immediate quest for a maiden knockout stage appearance, the tournament holds immense significance as a crucial benchmark in their preparations to co-host the prestigious TotalEnergies CAF Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) in 2027, alongside regional neighbours Kenya and Tanzania.

The Road to CHAN 2024

As tournament co-hosts, Uganda secured automatic qualification for CHAN 2024, a privilege shared with Kenya and Tanzania. However, the Uganda Cranes did not rest on their laurels. As part of their preparation for the continental

showpiece, they actively participated in the qualifiers, demonstrating their readiness by edging Burundi 2-0 over two legs, providing valuable competitive match experience.

Player to Watch: Allan Okello

At the heart of Uganda's attacking ambitions will be creative midfielder Allan Okello. The Vipers FC playmaker is renowned for his flair, vision, and attacking impetus, making him a central figure in the Cranes' CHAN squad. With strong domestic and international experience, Okello's exceptional ball control, sharp eye for goal, and uncanny ability to unlock the tightest of defences make him a potent threat.

Having returned to top form in the Uganda Premier League, Okello is poised to be the orchestrator of Uganda's campaign.

Know the Coaches: A Balanced Partnership

Uganda will be guided by the experienced coaching duo of Morley Byekwaso and Fred Muhumuza. Head coach Byekwaso, a former Uganda Cranes international, enjoyed a decorated playing career before transitioning into management. He has earned significant acclaim for his youth development credentials and astute tactical intelligence, having successfully guided top Ugandan clubs and famously led the national U20 team to the AFCON final in 2021.

Assistant coach Fred Muhumuza complements Byekwaso's dynamic style with his strong knowledge of local football and tactical depth. A respected figure in Uganda's domestic scene, Muhumuza is known for his ability to nurture talent and extract the best from underdog sides. His calm, structured approach is expected to create a formidable and balanced technical bench, crucial for navigating the pressures of a home tournament.

Past CHAN Performances: A History to Overcome

Uganda's CHAN journey thus far has been marked by a consistent pattern: participation without progression. In all six of their previous appearances, the Uganda Cranes have unfortunately failed to advance beyond the group stages of the competition.

Coach Morley Byekwaso

This recurring hurdle fuels the current determination within the squad and among the fanbase. With the fervent backing of the home supporters, "The Cranes" are absolutely looking at rewriting this particular piece of history and significantly improving their record on their seventh attempt.

What to Expect: Soaring Hopes on Home Soil

Despite the historical inability to advance beyond the group stages, excitement in Uganda is at an all-time high. The prospect of hosting two CAF competitions – CHAN 2024 and the larger TotalEnergies CAF AFCON 2027 – has ignited a sense of national pride and anticipation.

The support of the passionate Ugandan fans will undeniably play a significant role. Expected to fill stadiums and create an electrifying atmosphere, their unwavering backing will be crucial in rallying the co-hosts to an impressive finish. This CHAN tournament is more than just a competition; it's a test, a statement, and a stepping stone for Uganda as they prepare to welcome Africa's brightest football talents in the years to come. The stage is set for the Cranes to not just participate, but to truly compete and leave a lasting mark on home soil.



Allan Okello is the star player while Morley Byekwaso is the coach





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