

Shamika gets big embrace, no rest

BY STEPHEN OTAGE

KAMPALA. The Uganda Badminton Association (UBA) has asked government to find them suitable premises where to establish an international badminton training center to build on its successes.

Speaking to journalists at Entebbe airport after receiving Fadilah Shamika and Tracy Naluwoza upon their return from Botswana where they won medals the 28th All Africa Badminton Championships, the body set new demands. Shamika won gold while Naluwoza brought home bronze.

"The more gold medals the game brings to Uganda that means it is raising the Ugandan flag higher. We have top level motivating players who need an international training center so that we can get more medals," Venkata Krishan, the head of marketing at UBA, said.

He explained that it is not an accident that 42 countries have this sent over 200 players to participate in the ongoing 22nd Uganda International Badminton Challenge at the Lugogo Indoor Stadium.

UBA chief executive officer Simon Mugabi added that in terms of sports tourism, the competition has been selling Uganda since 2004.

Back, then, the sport was still the Uganda Future Series with a cash prize of US\$5,000 and 1,700 ranking points.

The tournament has since upgraded to an international series where winners can go home with cash prizes between \$5,000 and \$60,000 plus take significant steps towards qualification for the Olympics.

"This year's challenge has attracted very players. Uganda had registered 59 players but because of the big number of international players that it has attracted, we had to reduce the number of Ugandans to 40 to allow the international player to participate," Mugabi explained.

This week, members of the association, family friends and relatives, descended on Entebbe to welcome Shamika and Naluwoza. The two are competing in Lugogo too in an event that ends today.

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