

with
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Kampala is giving New York

When we said New Year, New Me – the team at KCCA took it personal because unusual happenings began happening in Kampala. The city started... bathing. Not the usual rain-meets-potholes situation, but actual organised scrubbing. The KCCA rolled out an ambitious facelift campaign, for the girls you know the moment: you spot prey and gotta reapply that lip gloss. Pavements were cleared, roads were washed at night, grass was re-planted, and faded taxi markings suddenly rediscovered colour. For a city long famous for dust, traffic, and the occasional sister boyfriend jeans in DT, this felt like Kampala had woken up one morning and de-cided to pursue a skincare routine.

But first came the difficult part; the eviction of street vendors after a two-week ultimatum issued by City minister Minsa Kabanda. The pavements that had slowly transformed into open-air supermarkets were cleared, with vendors redirected to more than 4,500 stalls in des-ignated markets. The goal, according to KCCA, was simple; restore or-der, decongest the CBD, and give pedestrians back their long-lost right to actually walk. For the first time in years, you could see the full width of a sidewalk without navigating through phone covers, roasted maize, and three people selling the same charger cable. Then came the clean-ing itself.

Teams armed with water jets, brushes, and determination descend-ed on roads like Namirembe and the non-motorised transport corri-dors in what KCCA branded the Weyonje drive. Streets were scrubbed at night like Kampala was preparing for a royal visit.

Deputy executive director Benon Kigenyi framed it as part of a larg-er push for sanitation, urban dignity, and climate resilience. Business owners even joined in, sweeping storefronts like proud parents tidying the house before guests arrive.

By March, waste evacuation campaigns were reaching areas like Kas-ubi, and suddenly the city looked... dare we say, presentable. One vi-ral clip showed KCCA enforcers punishing someone who stepped on newly planted grass by making them dig it up themselves, a kind of civic discipline Kampala had never seen before. While vendors were banned, street beggars and pastors seemed to retain diplomatic immu-nity. Still, beneath the jokes and sarcasm, something real is happening.

Kampala may not yet be Dubai or even Nairobi on its best day, but for once the city seems determined to try. The roads are cleaner, the pave-ments are visible, and the conversation has shifted from complaining about the mess to debating how to maintain the progress. And if Kam-pala truly is getting a glow-up, Ugandans will of course do their part; admire it, critique it, meme it, and then proudly say, Uganda esinga bu-laaya. At this pace, the only thing Dubai has over us, is a functional gov-ernment and more jobs!

