

MTN says internet access alone is not enough:

MTN Regional Business Manager for Kampala, Augustine Lule, says internet access alone is insufficient without digital skills. Speaking at the graduation of 58 youths under the MTN Internet Bus initiative in Kampala, Lule said empowering young Ugandans with practical ICT knowledge to participate in the digital economy and national development was important.



Uganda's most important entry ports and the trillions they handle

Trade. |

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Import trade in Uganda expanded sharply between June 2022 and June 2025, with customs records showing that a small group of border points, inland logistics hubs, and air cargo centres handled the overwhelming share of the country's imported goods.

The Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) Annual Data Book 2024/25 shows that in four years, the country's imports have surged from Shs32.12 trillion in June 2022 to Shs56.83 trillion in 2025, while total trade has risen from Shs45.27 trillion to Shs97.16 trillion over the period.

URA customs data also shows that Uganda maintained records for at least 34 entry stations and customs points, but the import economy was dominated by a handful of strategic gateways, particularly Malaba Station, which in the period ended June 2025, handled 36.41 percent of import traffic followed by Entebbe Courier Centre (35.82 percent), Mombasa Port (15.52 percent), Entebbe Cargo Centre (7.56 percent) and Busia (2.35 percent).

The top five entry points alone accounted for approximately 97.66 percent of Uganda's total recorded import traffic, underscoring the country's heavy reliance on a few major trade corridors and logistics hubs.

Busiest entry ports

URA data shows that Malaba remains Uganda's largest import gateway despite a slight decline in the value of imports handled from Shs19.43 trillion in June 2024 to Shs16.98 trillion in June 2025.

The station's dominance is tied to its strategic position on the Northern Corridor linking Uganda to Kenya's seaport infrastructure. Malaba handles most of the country's containerized cargo, fuel, industrial machinery, cereals, motor vehicles, and consumer goods arriving from Mombasa Port.

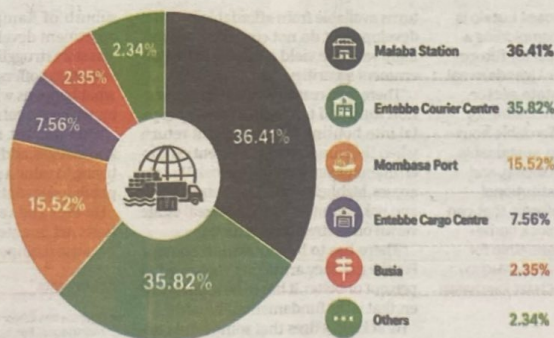
The station also benefits from the Single Customs Territory arrangement under the East African Community, which reduces border clearance delays. URA records show that Malaba consistently remained above Shs13 trillion in import traffic throughout the four years from June 2022 to June 2025.

The most dramatic growth story was recorded at the Entebbe Courier Centre, where import traffic rose from Shs98.21b in June 2022 to Shs16.71 trillion in June 2025.

The growth was driven by the rise of e-commerce and express parcel deliveries, increased imports of high-value and low-volume goods, expansion in electronics and technology shipments, improved air cargo handling and courier logistics, and increased use of inter-



Share of Uganda's imports handled through different border ports



national courier services by businesses and consumers.

The centre effectively became Uganda's second-largest trade gateway by value.

Mombasa Port handled Shs7.24 trillion worth of imports, up from Shs4.95 trillion in June 2022, remaining Uganda's principal maritime gateway for imports from Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.

URA data show that Asia alone accounted for Shs28.97 trillion worth of

imports in June 2025, while Africa accounted for Shs30.68 trillion.

Mombasa's importance is reinforced by Uganda's dependence on imported fuel, machinery, vehicles, construction materials, and industrial inputs.

Entebbe Cargo processed Shs3.52 trillion worth of imports in June 2025. Although lower than the 2023/24 financial year peak of Shs5.53 trillion, the facility remained one of Uganda's most important logistics centres.

The cargo terminal mainly handles

Just a handful of entry ports handled nearly all Uganda's import traffic in the year ended June 2025. PHOTO / FILE

pharmaceuticals, electronics, perishables, precision machinery, and emergency or time-sensitive imports. Its role became even more critical as Uganda expanded trade in high-value goods.

Busia handled Shs1.09 trillion worth of imports in the 2024/25 financial year, up from Shs593.33b in June 2022, benefiting from heavy cross-border trade between Uganda and Kenya, especially in agricultural products, fuel, manufactured goods, and wholesale trade.

Mutukula, located along the Uganda-Tanzania border, processed Shs701.45b, up sharply from Shs315.14b in June 2022, reflecting Uganda's increasing use of Tanzania trade routes, especially through Dar-es-Salaam Port.

URA records also show that Tanzania is now Uganda's largest source of imports, with the value of imports from the country having surged from Shs1.12 trillion in June 2022 to Shs12.46 trillion in June 2025.

Elsewhere, Elegu handled Shs89.92b, nearly doubling from Shs47.47b in the year ended June 2024.

Its importance stems from trade

Key highlights

- The top five entry points alone accounted for approximately 97.66 percent of Uganda's total recorded import traffic, underscoring the country's heavy reliance on a few major trade corridors and logistics hubs.
- URA data shows that Malaba remains Uganda's largest import gateway despite a slight decline in the value of imports handled from Shs19.43 trillion in June 2024 to Shs16.98 trillion in June 2025.
- Bunagana and Kakunyu recorded virtually no import traffic in the year ended June 2025, while Kaiso and Ishasha recorded just Shs0.02b and Shs0.07b largely due to limited infrastructure, low commercial activity, insecurity in some border areas.

flows linked to South Sudan, humanitarian logistics, and regional re-export trade. The Customs Warehouse recorded Shs59.04b, supporting customs-controlled storage, deferred clearance, and consolidation of imported goods before final domestic distribution.

Katuna Customs processed Shs41.54b worth of imports in the year ended June 2024/25, reflecting the gradual normalization of Uganda-Rwanda trade and movement along the southwestern trade corridor, while Entebbe CAPT rounded off the list of Uganda's most important ports, recording Shs41.11b in handled imports, mainly supporting passenger-linked cargo, diplomatic consignments, and smaller commercial imports arriving through Entebbe International Airport.

Low traffic ports

Bunagana and Kakunyu recorded virtually no import traffic in the year ended June 2025, while Kaiso and Ishasha recorded just Shs0.02b and Shs0.07b, largely due to limited infrastructure, low commercial activity, insecurity in some border areas, and the concentration of formal trade through larger and more efficient customs stations.

URA data indicate that broader economic trends have continued to drive growth in Uganda's import traffic, with fuel tax collections rising from Shs2.21 trillion in the 2021/22 financial year to Shs3.82 trillion in the 2024/25 financial year, reflecting growing fuel demand and increased economic activity.

Africa and Asia remained Uganda's leading import regions in the year ended June 2025, accounting for Shs30.68 trillion and Shs28.97 trillion, respectively, highlighting the country's deepening trade ties with regional and global markets.

The structure of imports also continued to evolve, with the leading imported products including precious metals and jewellery valued at Shs16.65 trillion, cereals worth Shs4.72 trillion, machinery at Shs3.99 trillion, and motor vehicles valued at Shs3.07 trillion.

The URA Data Book paints a picture of an economy increasingly dependent on a few highly strategic trade corridors and logistics centres.

The explosive rise of the Entebbe Courier Centre signals the rapid growth of e-commerce and air-based logistics, a largely new opportunity that strengthens international trade.