UGANDAN DRIVERS GEAR UP

By Gerald Kikulwe

PHOTO BY GERALD KIKULWE



Driver Yasin Nasser powers through the rally stage in style

The Kenya Safari Rally enters its second day today following an intense start to the competition yesterday, when drivers tackled the opening stages of Camp Moran 1 and Mzabibu 1 in Naivasha, Nakuru County.

The event widely regarded as one of the toughest and most iconic rallies on the global motorsport calendar.

A total of 45 drivers are taking part in this year's event, navigating 20 competitive stages covering a combined distance of 338 kilometres before the rally concludes on Sunday.

The rally doubles as the third round of the 2026 FIA World Rally Championship season, following the traditional opener, the Monte Carlo Rally in January, and last month's Rally Sweden.

On the continental front, the event also serves as the opening round of the African Rally Championship, offering African drivers an opportunity to launch their campaigns on a strong note.

Today's schedule is among the most demanding of the rally, with crews facing eight competitive stages across the expansive Naivasha rally zone. The day's action features Camp Moran 2 (24.50km), Loldia 1 (25.60km), Kengen Geothermal 1 (13.12km), Kedong 1 (13.17km), Kedong 2 (13.17km) and Kengen Geothermal 2 (13.12km).

The competition will conclude with Loldia 2 (25.60km) before the shorter but technical Mzabibu 2 stage measuring 8.27 kilometres.

One of the unique aspects of the Safari Rally is its "three-in-one" structure, allowing drivers to compete simultaneously for points in the WRC, ARC and the Kenya National Rally Championship.

Uganda is represented by a contingent of four drivers that blends experience and emerging talent. Leading the team is defending ARC champion Yasin Nasser, driving a Ford Fiesta R5 alongside co-driver Ali Katumba.

Also in action is Duncan Mubiru, popularly known as "Kikankane," who is competing in a Subaru Impreza WRX STI with veteran navigator Joseph Kamya.

The Ugandan lineup is completed by rising driver Oscar Ntambi in a Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution X with co-driver Uthumaan Muhamadi, and Timothy Gawaya in a Seat Ibiza alongside Francis Wamala.