

Week News

MGAZINE Vol 4



MBALE CITY

9TH OCT 2026



UGANDA'S POLITICAL SUCCESS



TOURISM

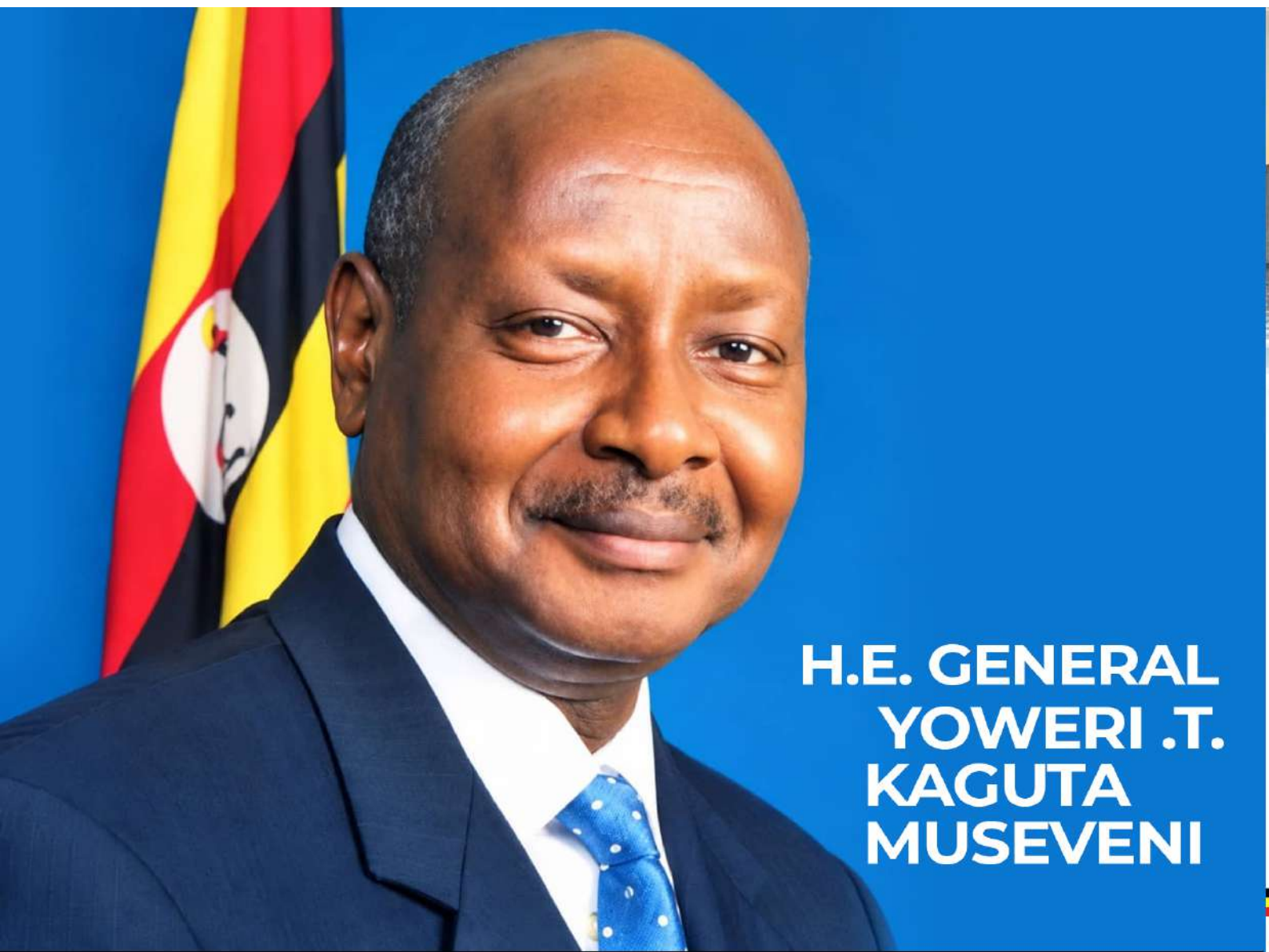


INDUSTRY

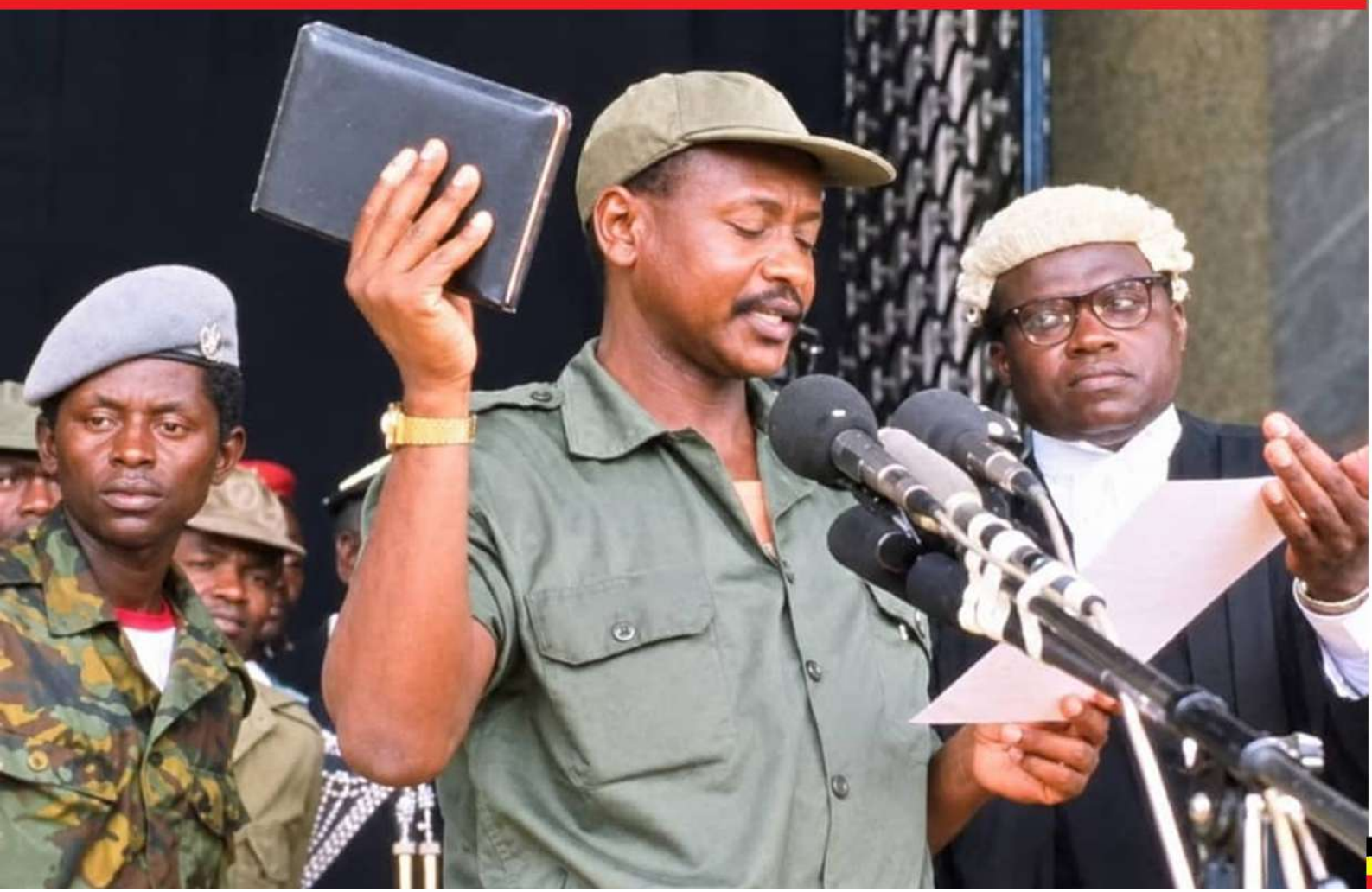


CULTURE





**H.E. GENERAL
YOWERI .T.
KAGUTA
MUSEVENI**





INDEPENDENCE DAY

As Uganda celebrates 64 years of Independence, I join the people of Bulambuli Constituency, Bugisu Sub-region and all Ugandans in honouring the sacrifices of our freedom fighters.

Independence must translate into better roads, quality education and healthcare, job opportunities, modern agriculture and equal development for all. For Bulambuli and Bugisu, this anniversary renews our commitment to overcoming poverty, unemployment and disaster challenges while promoting agriculture, tourism and cultural heritage. Let us protect our peace, strengthen unity and build a Uganda founded on integrity, accountable leadership and shared prosperity, leaving no community behind.

On behalf of my family and the people of Bulambuli, I wish

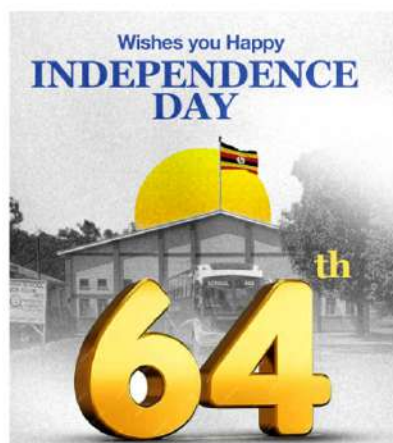
H.E. the President and all Ugandans a peaceful and meaningful 64th Independence Anniversary.

Happy 64th Independence Day, Uganda! 🇺🇬

Hon. Emmanuel Wepukhulu Biara

Member of Parliament, Bulambuli Constituency

Regional Whip, Elgon Zone



INDEPENDENCE DAY

As Uganda celebrates 64 years of Independence, I join the people of Bulambuli Constituency, Bugisu Sub-region and all Ugandans in honouring the courage, sacrifice and vision of those who fought for our freedom.

Independence must mean more than the lowering of one flag and the raising of another. It must translate into better roads, quality education and healthcare, modern agriculture, decent jobs for our young people, security for our communities and equal development opportunities for every part of Uganda.

For us in Bulambuli and the wider Bugisu Sub-region, this anniversary renews our determination to overcome the challenges of disasters, poverty and unemployment while unlocking our enormous potential in agriculture, tourism, culture, trade and human capital.

Our generation has a responsibility to protect the peace and stability we have inherited while building a Uganda founded on unity, integrity, hard work, accountable leadership and shared prosperity. Our diversity must remain our strength, and no community should ever feel left behind in our national journey.

On behalf of my family, the people of Bulambuli Constituency, and on my own behalf, I wish H.E. the President, the people of Bugisu and all Ugandans a peaceful and meaningful 64th Independence Anniversary.

May our freedom inspire service. May our unity drive development. May Uganda continue marching forward.

Happy 64th Independence Day! 🇺🇬

Hon. Emmanuel Wepukhulu Biara

Member of Parliament,

Bulambuli Constituency

Regional Whip, Elgon Zone



UGANDA: FROM INDEPENDENCE TO A MODERN GROWING ECONOMY



**MATHIAS NABUTELE CHIEF
EXECUTIVE OFFICER, UBUNTU
COFFEE HOUSE
WORLD – MBALE**

A brief political history, presidents and the economic journey from 1962 to 2026 Uganda attained independence from Britain on 9 October 1962. In the more than six decades since, the country has passed through constitutional change, coups, military rule, civil conflict, political reconstruction and a long period of economic recovery and expansion. Its story is therefore not a straight line: periods of impressive promise have alternated with severe disruption, followed by rebuilding.

Independence and the First Republic

At independence, Uganda inherited an economy with productive agriculture, established transport links and export earnings led by coffee, cotton and tea. The new constitutional order initially combined a central government with traditional kingdoms and other local political arrangements. Sir Edward Mutesa II became the first President in 1963, while Apollo Milton Obote, who had led the country into independence as Prime Minister, was the dominant executive political figure.

Political tensions between the central government and Buganda culminated in the 1966 crisis. Obote suspended the 1962 Constitution, assumed executive presidential powers and a republican Constitution followed in 1967. The political centralisation of this period changed Uganda's post-independence constitutional settlement and deepened tensions that would shape the next two decades.

Uganda's Heads of State and Political Transitions

Uganda's post-independence leadership can be summarised through the following major periods:

- Sir Edward Mutesa II (President, 1963–1966): Uganda's first President under the early post-independence constitutional arrangement.
- Apollo Milton Obote (1966–1971; again 1980–1985): oversaw the move to a republic and later returned after the fall of Idi Amin.
- Idi Amin Dada (1971–1979): seized power in a military coup; his rule became associated with repression, international isolation and major economic decline.
- Yusuf Kironde Lule (1979) and Godfrey Lukongwa Binaisa (1979–1980): led short transitional governments after Amin's overthrow.
- The Presidential Commission (1980): chaired the brief transition preceding the December 1980 elections.
- Gen. Tito Okello Lutwa (1985–1986): headed the military government that followed Obote's second removal.
- Yoweri Kaguta Museveni (1986–present): came to power after the National Resistance Army captured Kampala in January 1986 and has presided over the longest period of government since independence. These changes left a profound mark on state institutions. Uganda's modern political system is rooted in the 1995 Constitution, which restored a broad constitutional framework after years of conflict and recognised traditional or cultural leaders while separating cultural leadership from partisan political authority.

THE ECONOMIC JOURNEY

From early promise, through collapse, to recovery and diversification

1962–1970: A Strong Starting Position

Uganda entered independence with considerable economic advantages.

Agriculture generated foreign exchange, domestic food production was strong, manufacturing was emerging, and transport infrastructure linked Uganda to regional markets. World Bank historical analysis records average real GDP growth of about 4.8% a year between 1965 and 1970. Real per-capita output also rose in the early post-independence period.

Coffee, cotton and tea were central to exports, while copper mining and a small but growing manufacturing sector broadened production. This foundation demonstrated that Uganda possessed strong agricultural resources, an entrepreneurial population and a strategic position in East Africa.

1971–1986: Economic Breakdown and Conflict

The Amin period marked a sharp reversal. Political insecurity, expulsion of many Asian business owners in 1972, weakened institutions, international isolation, fiscal disorder and the collapse of productive capacity damaged commerce and industry. World Bank historical analysis estimates that real GDP fell by about 25% during the Amin years. The breakup of the original East African Community and global oil shocks added pressure.

The overthrow of Amin in 1979 did not immediately restore stability. Uganda experienced transitional governments, the disputed 1980 elections, renewed armed conflict and another change of government in 1985. By 1986, the country faced damaged infrastructure, weak public finances, low investor confidence and widespread poverty.

1986 Onward: Stabilisation, Reconstruction and Growth

After 1986, the Government embarked on economic stabilisation and reconstruction. Reforms over subsequent years included reducing price controls, liberalising foreign exchange and trade, restructuring or privatising many state enterprises, strengthening revenue mobilisation and encouraging private investment. These policies were accompanied by rehabilitation of roads, electricity, telecommunications, education and health systems.

The recovery was substantial. Uganda became known for relatively strong growth during much of the 1990s and 2000s, although population growth meant that gains in household income were more gradual than headline GDP growth. The economy also diversified beyond traditional agriculture into construction, telecommunications, financial services, tourism, manufacturing, transport and a rapidly expanding services sector.

Selected Nominal GDP Milestones

Period / Year	Approx. nominal GDP	Economic context
1960s	Small agrarian economy; historical dollar comparisons vary	Coffee, cotton, tea; early manufacturing; strong initial growth
1990	US\$4.3 billion	Early recovery and macroeconomic reform
2000	US\$6.2 billion	Reconstruction, liberalisation and private-sector expansion
2010s	Rapid expansion	Telecoms, services, construction, finance and regional trade deepen
2016	US\$29.2 billion	More diversified economy and infrastructure investment
2020	US\$37.6 billion	Economy remains resilient amid the COVID-19 shock
2023	US\$48.8 billion	Post-pandemic recovery and continued investment
2024	US\$53.9 billion	Growth strengthens
2025	US\$62.0 billion	World Bank current-US-dollar estimate
FY2025/26	US\$69.35 billion / UGX 250.4 trillion	Uganda Finance Ministry estimate; real growth about 6.4%

Note: Nominal GDP measures the value of production at current prices and exchange rates. It should not be read as a direct measure of changes in living standards. Long-run comparisons are better interpreted together with real GDP growth, GDP per person, inflation, population growth and structural change.



MBALE COURTS VIEW HOTEL



HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY

Courts View Hotel Mbaale warmly wishes all our valued customers, the Government of Uganda, partners, and the entire Ugandan community a happy Independence Day.



THE MUSEVENI ERA AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

Achievements, structural change and the foundations of today's economy

President Museveni's Contribution to Uganda's Present Economic Position

President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni's most important economic contribution has been the long period of relative political continuity and macroeconomic reconstruction that followed the instability of the 1970s and early 1980s. Under his government, Uganda rebuilt public institutions, reopened the economy to investment, restored monetary and fiscal discipline over time, and supported a private-sector-led growth model. The liberalisation of markets and foreign exchange, export diversification, privatisation and rationalisation of state enterprises became major features of the reform programme. These measures helped restore confidence and connected Uganda more strongly to regional and international markets. The country also benefited from debt relief and substantial development-partner support, while domestic revenue collection and financial-sector capacity expanded. Infrastructure and productive capacity

Major investments in roads, electricity generation and transmission, ICT connectivity, airports and industrial infrastructure have expanded the economy's productive base. Electricity generation has increased greatly compared with the shortages of earlier decades, while new roads and regional corridors have improved movement of people and goods. Industrial parks and manufacturing initiatives have sought to shift Uganda from exporting mainly raw commodities toward value addition. Agriculture, services and new growth sectors

Agriculture remains fundamental to employment and household livelihoods, with coffee continuing to be a major export. Government programmes have increasingly emphasised commercial

agriculture, agro-processing, household income and value addition. At the same time, tourism, telecommunications, banking, construction, education, transport and digital services have become important engines of growth.

Uganda is also positioning oil and gas, minerals, science and technology, tourism and agro-industrialisation as future growth drivers. The Government's current Tenfold Growth Strategy aims to expand the economy dramatically by 2040, with commercial agriculture, industrialisation, services, digital transformation and market access at its centre.

Measured economic expansion

The scale of change is visible in national output. World Bank figures show nominal GDP rising from about US\$4.3 billion in 1990 to US\$62.0 billion in 2025. The Ministry of Finance estimates the economy at UGX 250.4 trillion, or about US\$69.35 billion, in FY2025/26, with real GDP growth of approximately 6.4%. Tax collections also rose from about UGX 16 trillion in FY2019/20 to UGX 36 trillion in FY2025/26, reflecting the widening scale of economic activity and state revenue capacity.

A Balanced Assessment

Uganda's economic progress under Museveni is significant, but a complete assessment must also recognise unresolved challenges. Rapid population growth places continuous pressure on jobs, schools, health services and land. Youth unemployment and underemployment, inequality, the large informal sector, public debt pressures, corruption concerns, climate risks and uneven household incomes remain important policy issues.

CROWN SUITES HOTEL



HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY

Crown Suites Hotel Mbale warmly wishes our valued guests, customers, partners, and the Government of Uganda a happy Independence Day. As we celebrate Uganda's independence, we honour our unity, resilience, and progress. Thank you for being part of our journey.
Happy Independence Day, Uganda!



Economic growth is strongest when it translates into productive jobs, higher farm incomes, better public services and wider opportunity.

Political debate also continues over democratic competition, presidential longevity, governance, human rights and the strength of institutions. These questions form part of Uganda's contemporary political history and should be considered alongside the record of stability, reconstruction and economic expansion.

UGANDA AT 64 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

A nation transformed, with the next chapter centred on productivity, jobs and shared prosperity

From a Commodity Economy to a Broader Economic Base

Uganda in 2026 is economically far larger, more urbanised, more connected and more diversified than the country that became independent in 1962. The early economy depended heavily on a small group of agricultural commodities. Today agriculture remains essential, but services account for a much larger share of activity, while industry, construction, telecommunications, finance, tourism, manufacturing and digital enterprise have become prominent.

The historical lesson is that political stability and sound economic management matter enormously. Uganda's promising start in the 1960s was undermined when political conflict and institutional breakdown damaged investment and production. The recovery after the mid-1980s similarly shows that rebuilding institutions, restoring confidence, maintaining macroeconomic stability and investing in infrastructure can generate decades of cumulative growth.

GDP Since Independence — The Big Picture

There is no single meaningful current-dollar number that captures the entire change from 1962 because prices, exchange rates, national-accounting methods and the structure of the economy have changed greatly. The best summary is therefore an economic timeline: solid real growth in the 1960s; severe contraction and dislocation in the 1970s; instability into the mid-1980s; sustained recovery from 1987; strong expansion through much of the 1990s and 2000s; resilience through recent global shocks; and renewed growth above 6% in the mid-2020s.

For a simple modern benchmark, nominal GDP expanded from about US\$4.3 billion in 1990 to US\$62.0 billion in 2025 — more than fourteen times in current-dollar terms. The Finance Ministry's FY2025/26 estimate of US\$69.35 billion indicates further expansion, although current-dollar growth includes inflation and exchange-rate effects and is not the same as a fourteen-fold rise in real living standards. Looking Ahead Uganda's next economic test is not only to make GDP larger, but to make growth more productive and inclusive. Commercial agriculture and coffee value addition can raise rural incomes; tourism can monetise Uganda's natural and cultural heritage; manufacturing can create jobs and reduce dependence on imported finished goods; oil and minerals can finance development if managed transparently; and science, technology and digital services can connect young Ugandans to higher-productivity work. The country also has an opportunity to deepen East African trade. Uganda's land-linked position gives it a strong interest in efficient regional transport, stable neighbouring markets and economic integration. Greater value addition to coffee,



**NATIONAL WATER AND
SEWERAGE CORPORATION**



INDEPENDENCE DAY MESSAGE

The National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC), under the Ministry, warmly wishes all Ugandans, our valued customers, partners, and stakeholders a happy Independence Day.

As we celebrate our nation's independence, we remain committed to serving Uganda by providing safe, reliable, and sustainable water and sanitation services for all.

Happy Independence Day, Uganda!

National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC)





UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

MBALE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

DISCOVER YOUR POTENTIAL AT UCU, MBALE

ADMISSIONS OPEN

2026

>>> Apply now for Trinity (May Intake)



[f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [@](#) ucumbaleunivcol

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

Faculty of Engineering, Design and Technology
Bachelor of Science in Information Technology
Diploma in Information Technology

School of Business

Bachelor of Business Administration
Bachelor of Human Resource Management
Bachelor of Procurement and Logistics Management
Diploma in Business Administration

School of Education

Bachelor of Arts with Education
Bachelor of Science with Education
Bachelor of Education (Upgrading teachers)
Higher Education Access Programme - General
Higher Education Access Programme - Modular/Recess

School of Social Sciences

Bachelor in Social Work
Bachelor of Public Administration and Management
Diploma in Social Work
Certificate of Child Dev't and Children's Ministry

School of Theology

Diploma in Theology
Certificate in Theology

POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

Faculty of Engineering, Design and Technology

Master of Construction and Project Planning Management
Master of Information Technology
Master of Science in Computer Science
Master of Science in Cyber Security and Digital Forensics
Master of Science in Data Science and Analytics
Master of Science in Environmental Science and Management
Master of Science in Water and Sanitation
PhD in Computer Science and Engineering
Postgraduate Diploma in Cyber Security and Digital Forensics

School of Business

Master of Human Resource Management
Master of Science in Procurement and Supply Chain Management
Master in Business Administration
Master of Organizational Leadership and Management
PhD in Business and Management

School of Education

Master of Arts in Literature
Master of Education Administration and Management
Master of Education in Curriculum Studies
Master of Educational Psychology
Master of Higher Education Pedagogy and Leadership
Master of Educational Psychology
Master of Library and Information Studies
Master of Education in Curriculum Studies
Doctor of Philosophy in Literature
PhD in Education Administration and Management
Postgraduate Diploma in Education
Postgraduate Diploma in Internationalisation of Education

School of Social Sciences

Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology
Master of Development Monitoring and Evaluation
Master of Governance and International Relations
Master of Public Administration
Master of Research and Public Policy
Master of Social Work
PhD in Development Studies
Postgraduate Diploma in Public Administration
PhD in Development Monitoring and Evaluation
Postgraduate Diploma in development and Monitoring

School of Law

Master of International Business Law
Master of Laws in Oil and Gas
Master of Laws in International Energy Law and Policy

Bishop Tucker School of Theology

Master of Divinity (Regular)
Master of Divinity (Modular)
Master of Arts in Theology (Modular)
Master of Arts in Theology (Regular)
Master of Theological Studies (Modular)
Doctor of Ministry
PhD of Theology
Postgraduate Diploma in Christian Ministry

SHORT COURSES

Computer Graphics
Website Development
Hardware repair and Maintenance
Computer Applications
Computer Networks
Linux systems administration
Advanced Microsoft Excel
Digital Marketing and E-Commerce
Public Relations and Customer Care
Monitoring and Evaluation
Human Resource and Management
Project Planning and Management
Administrative Law
Child Protection
Counselling and Guidance
Mental Health
Palliative Care
Public Administration and Management
Financial Management for Administration
Chinese
Kiswahili
French

JOIN US FOR...

SEMESTERS

EASTER (JANUARY)
TRINITY (MAY)
ADVENT (SEPTEMBER)

TEACHING SESSIONS

DAY
WEEKEND
EVENING
MODULAR/RECESS

APPLY FOR THE COURSE OF YOUR CHOICE

Undergraduate Earn official recognition for your work.
Postgraduate each course is like an interactive textbook.
Join US Connect with thousands of other learners

HOW TO APPLY

ONLINE AT: application.ucu.ac.ug

SELECT UCU, MBALE

Apply Online application.ucu.ac.ug



P.O. BOX 189,
Mbale – Uganda



academicregistrar@ucu.ac.ug



0782477593
0700477593
0764009960



www.mbafe.ac.ug

agricultural produce and minerals would allow Uganda to retain more income from resources that have historically been exported in raw or lightly processed form.

Conclusion

Uganda's 64-year journey since independence is a story of promise, upheaval, recovery and transformation. The country moved from the hopeful constitutional settlement of 1962, through coups and conflict, to a long era of reconstruction and economic expansion. Every administration forms part of that national history, but the Museveni period stands out for its duration and for overseeing the transition from a war-damaged economy in 1986 to a much larger and more diversified economy today.

The strongest measure of Uganda's future success will be whether this economic power is converted into broad household prosperity: productive employment for a young population, competitive industries, profitable agriculture, stronger exports, reliable public services and institutions capable of sustaining development beyond any one generation of leaders.

Sources and Data Note

Prepared from World Bank World Development Indicators and historical Uganda economic studies; Uganda Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development economic and budget publications; and standard historical references on Uganda's post-independence political transitions. GDP figures are rounded. The 2025 World Bank figure is approximately US\$61.99 billion; the FY2025/26 Ministry of Finance estimate is UGX 250.4 trillion (US\$69.35 billion). Historical political and economic interpretation should distinguish nominal GDP from real GDP and GDP per capita.

MOUNT ELGON: UGANDA'S NEXT GREAT TOURISM & HOSPITALITY GROWTH DESTINATION

Why hotels, culture, community experiences and nature tourism can turn the Elgon region into a stronger engine of jobs, investment and local prosperity

A Special Feature for Kadodi Media House | October 2026

Uganda's tourism and hotel industry is increasingly becoming one of the clearest indicators of the country's expanding service economy. When visitor numbers rise, hotels fill rooms, restaurants buy more food, transport operators carry more passengers, guides find work, farmers supply hospitality businesses, craftspeople gain customers and communities discover new markets for culture and local experiences. Tourism therefore does more than bring visitors into the country: it connects many sectors of the economy and converts Uganda's natural and cultural assets into jobs, enterprise and foreign-exchange earnings. Official tourism figures show the scale of that recovery and growth. Uganda received about 1.642 million international visitors in 2025, up from about 1.372 million in 2024. Tourism receipts reached approximately UGX 5.83 trillion, or US\$1.62 billion, while the sector supported more than 876,000 direct jobs. Government reported tourism contributing about 5.9 per cent of GDP. During January-June 2026, international visitors reached 739,815 and receipts rose by 25.6 per cent to about UGX 2.3 trillion; the average visitor stay also increased from 7.4 to 8.3 nights. These are important signs that Uganda is earning more value from tourism and that the sector can contribute even more to national economic transformation.

HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY, UGANDA

On this special Independence Day, Nkoma Senior Secondary School, Mbale joins the nation in celebrating Uganda's journey of unity, resilience, and progress.

We celebrate the freedom that inspires us to educate, empower and build a brighter future for generations to come.

To our students, parents, staff, partners, and the entire Ugandan community — thank you for being part of our journey.

Happy Independence Day from the entire Nkoma Senior Secondary School family!

"Educating today, shaping the Uganda of tomorrow."



Hotels are more than accommodation. A growing hotel industry is one of the most visible signs of a destination becoming economically active. Hotels create direct employment in management, housekeeping, food and beverage, security, events, maintenance and guest services. Their wider supply chains create opportunities for farmers, coffee processors, bakeries, laundries, transporters, entertainers, florists, photographers, conference organisers and digital marketers. In regional cities such as Mbale, investment in rooms, conference facilities, restaurants and leisure services also strengthens the city's ability to host meetings, festivals, sporting events and national celebrations.

The strongest tourism economy, however, is not measured by hotel rooms alone. It is measured by how long visitors stay, how much they spend locally, how many local businesses participate in the value chain and whether tourism income reaches communities surrounding the attractions. This is where the Mount Elgon region has a major opportunity.

THE OPPORTUNITY
Uganda's tourism growth now creates a strong case for developing Mount Elgon as a complete destination not simply a stopover combining hotels, mountain adventure, coffee, culture, food, waterfalls, community life and events.

WHY MOUNT ELGON SHOULD BE UGANDA'S NEXT KEY TOURISM DESTINATION

Mount Elgon is one of East Africa's most distinctive landscapes and one of Uganda's strongest opportunities for a diversified tourism product. The mountain rises to Wagagai Peak at 4,321 metres and contains a vast volcanic caldera, forests, caves, waterfalls, cliffs, hot springs and trekking routes. Uganda Wildlife Authority describes its

trails as less crowded than better-known mountain destinations, giving Elgon an advantage for travellers seeking peaceful, immersive adventure.

But Elgon's greatest strength is that the visitor experience does not have to begin and end at the national park gate. The wider region combines nature with living culture and productive communities. Sipi Falls, Wanale landscapes and caves, coffee farms, local markets, traditional food, music and dance, Imbalu heritage, village walks, craft production, birding, hiking, cycling, photography and storytelling can be connected into multi-day itineraries. That diversity is exactly what modern experiential tourism demands.

Seven reasons Elgon can compete strongly

1. A powerful nature-and-adventure anchor. Mount Elgon National Park provides an internationally marketable mountain product with trekking, biodiversity, scenic viewpoints, waterfalls and a globally recognised biosphere landscape.
2. A living cultural destination. Bama-saaba heritage, including Imbalu traditions and the cultural importance of the mountain, gives visitors an opportunity to understand identity, history, music, food, ceremonies and community values rather than merely observe scenery.



**BAM SHOPPING CENTRE MBALE:
CELEBRATING CUSTOMER LOYALTY,
BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS AND
WORLD TOURISM DAY 2026**

HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY, UGANDA!

BAM Supermarket proudly joins all Ugandans in celebrating our nation's Independence Day. We thank our valued customers, partners, and community for their continued trust and support. Together, let us celebrate our unity, resilience, and shared vision for a prosperous Uganda. Happy Independence Day from the entire BAM Supermarket family!

Serving you today, building Uganda together.





**RESIDENT CITY COMMISSIONER
MBALE CITY HON WOPUWA
GEORGE WILLIAM PORTRAIT**

HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY, UGANDA!

On this special occasion, Hon. George William Wopuwa, Resident City Commissioner (RCC), Mbale City, joins the people of Uganda in celebrating our nation's Independence Day.

He extends warm wishes to all Ugandans and appreciates the continued commitment of citizens, leaders, partners, and stakeholders towards building a peaceful, united, and prosperous Uganda.

Happy Independence Day, Uganda!

Hon. George William Wopuwa
Resident City Commissioner, Mbale City



**DFCU BANK MANAGER
JONATHAN WAMUSANKWIRE**

HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY, UGANDA!

On this special occasion, Mr. Jonathan Wamusankeere, Branch Manager, DFCU Bank Mbale Branch, joins fellow Ugandans in celebrating our nation's Independence Day.

He appreciates the valued customers, partners, and the community for their continued trust and support, and reaffirms the commitment to contributing to Uganda's growth and prosperity.

Happy Independence Day to all Ugandans!
Mr. Jonathan Wamusankeere
Branch Manager, DFCU Bank – Mbale Branch

3. Coffee can become a tourism product. Arabica coffee grown on the slopes of Elgon can connect agriculture with tourism through farm walks, harvesting experiences, roasting demonstrations, cupping, storytelling and direct purchase from farmer groups. A cup of coffee can therefore carry the visitor from farm to culture to hospitality.

4. Strong domestic-tourism potential. Mbale is a major urban and commercial centre serving Eastern Uganda. Weekend travel, school tours, family trips, hiking groups, corporate retreats and cultural events can sustain tourism even when international arrivals fluctuate.

5. A gateway for regional tourism. The mountain straddles Uganda and Kenya, creating potential for cross-border itineraries, cultural exchange and longer visitor circuits linking communities on both sides.

6. Hospitality capacity can grow with demand. Mbale and surrounding tourism centres already have hotels, restaurants, conference facilities and tour services. Better destination packaging can increase occupancy, stimulate new investment and encourage quality upgrades.

7. Tourism can distribute wealth. Unlike a single large factory, a well-designed tourism destination can support hundreds of small enterprises: guides, boda and taxi operators, farmers, homestays, craft makers, performers, cafés, photographers and youth-led digital businesses.

The region has already demonstrated its appeal through domestic promotion. Uganda Tourism Board has previously highlighted the Explore Elgon campaign and has described Mbale and the greater Elgon region as having an important role in Uganda's tourism story. The challenge now is to move from

promotion of individual attractions to deliberate destination development.

THE NEXT FRONTIER: CULTURAL, EXPERIENTIAL AND COMMUNITY-LED TOURISM

The future of Elgon tourism should be built around experiences that visitors can participate in, remember and recommend. A tourist who only takes a photograph at a waterfall may spend a few hours in the region. A visitor who hikes, spends a night in a hotel, joins a coffee experience, tastes local cuisine, visits a cultural centre, buys crafts, listens to community history and attends an evening performance can stay for several days. Longer stays mean more expenditure and a wider distribution of tourism income.

Cultural tourism

Cultural tourism should present Bamasaba heritage with dignity, accuracy and community ownership. Mutoto and other recognised cultural sites can be developed with interpretation centres, museums, trained cultural guides, archives, performance spaces and carefully curated visitor programmes. Imbalu is internationally distinctive, but the wider cultural story should also include clan histories, traditional leadership, music, dance, food systems, architecture, indigenous knowledge and the relationship between communities and Mount Elgon.

Experiential tourism

Experiential tourism invites the visitor to do something rather than simply see something. Elgon can offer guided coffee journeys from garden to cup; cooking and food experiences; community farming visits; waterfall and cave walks; cycling routes; birding; photography trails; craft workshops;

storytelling evenings; cultural performances; mountain sunrise and sunset experiences; and responsible visits to conservation projects. These products are particularly suitable for domestic tourists, students, diaspora visitors and international travellers seeking authentic encounters.

Community-led tourism

Community-led products are essential if tourism is to become a genuine wealth-creation programme. Communities closest to attractions should be trained and supported to organise homestays, guiding associations, craft markets, cultural performances, coffee tours, local food services and conservation experiences. Uganda Wildlife Authority's Mount Elgon management planning has itself identified community coffee tours, Imbalu, Wanale caves, waterfalls and other community attractions, while calling for stronger coordination, training and links between communities, tour operators, local governments and the park trail network.

What stakeholders should do now

- Government and local governments should improve access roads, signage, sanitation, visitor information, internet connectivity, safety systems and public spaces around priority attractions.
- Uganda Tourism Board, Uganda Wildlife Authority and district/city authorities should develop a unified "Explore Elgon" destination plan and market multi-day itineraries rather than isolated sites.
- Cultural institutions and communities should document, protect and professionally package heritage products while setting clear standards that prevent exploitation or misrepresentation of culture.
- Hotel owners should work with farmers, guides, cultural groups and tour operators to sell complete visitor packages — room, meals, transport and experiences — instead of accommodation alone.

- Training institutions and the private sector should strengthen hospitality, languages, guiding, customer care, digital marketing, food production, photography and event-management skills.

- Finance and enterprise programmes should deliberately support women and youth to establish tourism-linked micro and small businesses.

- Stakeholders should collect reliable regional data on hotel occupancy, visitor numbers, spending, length of stay and employment so that investment decisions are based on evidence.

FROM A TOURISM REGION TO A TOURISM ECONOMY

For Mount Elgon to become a leading destination, stakeholders must think beyond attractions and build a tourism economy. That means every major attraction should be connected to accommodation, food, transport, interpretation, shopping and bookable experiences. A visitor arriving in Mbale should easily discover what to do tonight, tomorrow and for the next three or four days — and should be able to book those experiences with confidence.

Mbale can serve as the hospitality and conference gateway, while surrounding districts and communities provide the landscape, culture and experiences that extend visitor stays. Sipi can remain a flagship adventure destination; Wanale can be strengthened as a hiking, scenery and cultural-experience zone; coffee-growing communities can host farm-to-cup experiences; Mutoto and other heritage sites can anchor cultural tourism; and new routes can link waterfalls, caves, viewpoints, farms and villages.

This model would also give hotels a

stronger year-round market. Business travel and conferences can fill rooms during working periods, while domestic leisure, festivals, cultural events, school travel and international adventure tourism can generate weekend and seasonal demand. Hotels themselves can become promoters of the destination by displaying local tourism information, selling excursions, serving Elgon coffee and local cuisine, hosting cultural evenings and purchasing more supplies from surrounding communities.

A call for coordinated investment

The Government of Uganda has made diversification of tourism products, cultural heritage and destination development part of its tourism strategy.

Elgon now deserves focused implementation. The region needs a coordinated platform bringing together the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, Uganda Tourism Board, Uganda Wildlife Authority, local governments, cultural institutions, hotel and restaurant operators, tour companies, community organisations, farmers, conservation groups, media and investors. Priority investment should include destination branding, visitor information centres, quality accommodation at different price levels, safe and maintained trails, public conveniences, cultural centres and museums, event infrastructure, digital booking and mapping, improved road access, skills training and strong environmental safeguards. Investment must also protect the mountain ecosystem because the natural resource on which tourism depends cannot be separated from conservation.

Conclusion: Elgon's moment is now. Uganda's tourism indicators show a sector that is once again expanding and contributing significantly to

national income, employment and enterprise. The next stage of growth should deliberately spread opportunity to destinations with the capacity to keep visitors longer and involve more communities in the tourism value chain. Mount Elgon is one of those destinations.

The region already possesses the essential ingredients: a great mountain, waterfalls, caves and dramatic landscapes; a major city with growing hospitality services; internationally recognised Arabica coffee; a rich and living cultural heritage; energetic communities; and access to both domestic and regional markets. What is required is stronger packaging, infrastructure, standards, investment and collaboration.

If cultural tourism, experiential travel and community-led products are developed professionally and responsibly, Mount Elgon can become much more than a place tourists pass through. It can become one of Uganda's defining destinations — a place where nature, culture, coffee, hospitality and community enterprise work together to create memorable journeys and measurable economic growth.

"The future of Elgon tourism lies not only in what visitors can see, but in what they can experience, learn, taste, share and leave behind in community prosperity."

EDITORIAL DATA NOTE

Tourism statistics referenced in this feature are drawn from Uganda's Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities 2025 Statistical Abstract and 2026 sector updates; destination information is supported by Uganda Wildlife Authority and Uganda Tourism Board publications. Figures may be updated as new official statistics are released.



KADODI

MEDIA HOUSE

P.O.Box 1144, Plot 37 Naboa Road, Mbale City

+256 750 784 734 | +256 782 418 828

www.kadodimediahouse.com

