Kenya’s Karan Patel staged a stunning comeback to win the 2026 Pearl of Africa Uganda Rally in Mbarara on Sunday, writing his name deeper into the event’s history books with a third straight victory.

Navigated by Tauseef Khan, Patel became only the second driver to achieve the feat after fellow Kenyan Manvir Baryan, who dominated the event between 2017 and 2019.

For most of the weekend though, the rally looked firmly headed in another direction.

Samman Vohra was untouchable across the opening stages. The African Rally Championship Junior champion came out flying on Friday morning, beating Patel by 1:58.3 in SS1 before stretching the advantage to 2:31.1 after SS2. By the end of Leg One, Vohra had opened a commanding lead of 5:49 and looked well on course for a maiden victory in Uganda.

But rallying can be brutally unforgiving.



Drew-sturrock ANDsamman-vohra finished Second in ARC 2 in Uganda

Disaster struck for Vohra in SS10 Kaguta 3 when mechanical trouble brought his charge to a halt, costing him more than 10 minutes and handing Patel the breakthrough he had been chasing all weekend.

Patel’s own rally had hardly been straightforward. Power steering problems on Friday had threatened to derail his campaign early, but the Kenyan kept himself within touching distance with a measured and consistent drive through Saturday’s stages.

Once the opportunity came, he grabbed it with both hands.

The victory sealed Patel’s third consecutive Pearl Rally triumph following earlier wins in Jinja in 2024 and Mbarara in 2025, further cementing his growing dominance on the African rally scene.

Despite the heartbreak, Vohra still showed his pace in the closing stages, bouncing

back to win the Shell V-Power Stage and secure maximum bonus points ahead of Patel.

The result keeps Patel at the top of the African Rally Championship standings after another demanding weekend that tested both speed and reliability.

Reigning African champion Yasin Nasser gave Ugandan fans something to celebrate with a third-place overall finish, ahead of Aakif Virani and Jasmeet Chana.

Ugandan rally legend Charlie Lubega, meanwhile, remains the country's most successful driver at the Pearl of Africa Uganda Rally with three victories to his name, although none came back-to-back.

In the national category, Godfrey Kaguta Aine alias "Sodo" delivered an impressive performance to finish seventh overall and emerge as the top local driver.

Rwanda's Queen Kalimpinya also impressed on her Pearl Rally debut, finishing behind Sodo in the ARC2 category after a composed and resilient drive across the weekend.



Kalimpinya

Pearl of Africa Uganda Rally 2026 – ARC Classifications

ARC Overall

1. Karan Patel / Tauseef Khan
2. Samman Vohra / Drew Sturrock
3. Yasin Nasser / Ali Katumba
4. Aakif Virani / Zahir Shah
5. Jasmeet Chana / Ravi Chana

ARC2

1. Oscar Ntambi / Asuman Muhammed
2. Queen Kalimpinya / Olivier Ngabo
3. Joseph Gacheche / Sofia Rantasalo

ARC3

1. Nikhil Sachania / Deep Patel
2. Naveen Puligilla / Musa Sherif