

# SANA POISED TO DELIVER UGANDA'S FIRST AYCC GOLD

PHOTO BY JULIUS KAFULUMA

By Julius Kafuluma in Harare, Zimbabwe

Uganda's brightest medal prospect, Sana Omprakash, heads into the final round of the Africa Youth Chess Championship (AYCC) carrying the nation's hopes of securing its first-ever gold medal at the continental showpiece. Victory or even a draw would not only deliver history for Uganda but also make Sana the first female chess player in East Africa to earn the prestigious Woman International Master (WIM) title.

Standing between her and history is South Africa's Boshoma Chisomo, a formidable opponent ranked fourth on the continent. Yet Sana remains

unfazed, sitting comfortably at the top of the U18 Girls category with 6.5 points, a full 1.5 points ahead of her nearest challenger.

"I know what is at stake, and I am ready," Sana said. "Winning gold for Uganda and earning the WIM title would mean everything—not just for me, but for every young girl who believes she can play chess at the highest level."

A draw will be enough to seal her place in the history books, but Sana insists she is aiming for nothing less than a strong finish to cap her dominant run.

Uganda will also be watching closely as Edwin Pido battles 2288-rated Egyptian Kandil Ahmed in the open category. Pido

sits on 5 points, and a win would push him back into medal contention with one round remaining.

In the U12 Boys, Elvis Tumusiime faces a tough test against Africa's top-ranked junior, Nathaniel Matayeki, who leads with 6.5 points. Tumusiime, on 6 points, can leap into the gold position with a victory as three other players sit within striking distance at 5.5 points.

Other Ugandan medal hopefuls include Suhana Anil Yadav in the U12 Girls section and Soubith Omprakash, currently in second and fifth place respectively.

The championship concludes on Sunday with the medal-awarding ceremony.



Sana Omprakash (right) in action at the Africa Youth Chess Championship in Zimbabwe