

# Namutumba hospital gets neonatal ICU after 95 years

BY RONALD SEEBE

**NAMUTUMBA.** Nsinze Health Centre IV in Namutumba District has launched its first neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), ending a 95-year wait.

The unit, constructed by Bulamu Health Care in 2023 and officially commissioned for use on Tuesday, addresses a critical gap in healthcare services for a catchment population of 356,700 people.

Previously, the health centre referred premature infants and newborns with health complications to Iganga Regional Referral Hospital, about 31km away.

The facility was established by colonialists as a first aid post in 1930 and later upgraded to a health centre IV in 1999.

During the commissioning ceremony, Namutumba District Health Officer Dr James Kirya said the NICU will significantly improve healthcare in the district, saving the lives of more than 100,000 newborn babies annually, including those referred from the hospital's maternity wing and lower-level facilities within and beyond the district.

Dr Allan Lubiite, the facility's officer-in-charge, however, said having a functional NICU without expanding the postnatal ward, which has 12 beds, is a challenge because mothers are forced to sleep on the floor due to lack of space. He added that the facility has a medic patient ratio of 1:168,200, exceeding the recommended ratio of 1:100,000 for a health centre IV.