

# How the Kabaka birthday run continues to impact lives

## OUR REPORTER

The build-up to this year's Airtel Kabaka birthday run, slated for April 12 is continuing to gain momentum. As the thirteenth edition of this noble run continues to attract heightened anticipation, it is proving to be such a significant social event in the lives of Ugandans, hence its growing traction.

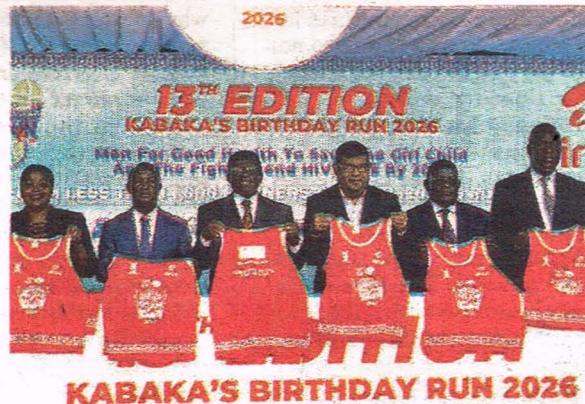
From 1000 runners, when it started, the Airtel Kabaka birthday run boasted a big climb in numbers. A total of 120,000 people took part in the 2025 race, with each donning a running kit that cost Shs 25,000. In summary, at least Shs 3 billion was raised from the run last year, which is a significant amount for the cause.

During the launch of this year's run, Soumendra Sahu, the Managing Director of Airtel said: "For over a decade, Airtel has supported key Buganda Kingdom initiatives, most notably the Kabaka birthday run. This run, which is a precursor to celebrating the

Kabaka's birthday, and his life, it is tailored to address the pressing diseases within our communities."

With the Buganda Kingdom's goal of ending the HIV prevalence in Uganda by 2030, the Kabaka birthday run has presented positive results in this regard. By 2010, HIV prevalence was 7.3%. Yet, because of the level of public awareness generated through the Kabaka birthday run, the figures in 2024 showed that the prevalence had dropped to 4.9%.

In fact, new HIV infections, that were at 96,000 in 2010, dropped to 37,000 by 2024, a 61% reduction. While the impact of the Kabaka birthday run on fighting HIV is undeniably huge, as the Katikkiro Charles Peter Mayiga noted, he also reiterated its growing purpose on how it is an embodiment of good lifestyle change. Running is good exercise to keep the body fit and healthy, hence overcoming diseases that are lifestyle related.



Buganda premier Charles Peter Mayiga (3rd L) with Soumendra Sahu (3rd R) the managing director of Airtel Uganda and other officials during the launch of the 13th edition of Kabaka's run