



Kabaka Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II (2nd R) turned up to the Mengo palace (Lubiri) with his queen, Nnaabagereka Sylvia Nagginda (R) and Katikkiro Charles Peter Mayiga (C)

# Kabaka Run marks another successful touchdown

palace (Lubiri) with his queen, Nnaabagereka Sylvia Nagginda, and children Crispin Jjunju, Richard Ssemakookiro and Victoria Nkinzi, not forgetting his brother and avid runner, Prince David Wassajja.

As he departed the Lubiri, Mutebi stopped his convoy and got out to walk for a few metres and chat with his subjects, sending some of them into euphoria.

“The Kabaka has *masanyalaze* (aura)! He stepped out of his car and I felt the energy around us change immediately,” one runner enthused later.

It helped that he (the king) looked better than he has in recent years, when his health has been subject of sometimes toxic debate. The Nnaabagereka, also abandoning her usual *gomesi* and formal kaftans for a comfortable athleisure outfit complete with a cap, struck a relaxed version of royalty.

No one knows exactly why MTN (which used to paint Kampala yellow) abandoned its once-highly-successful annual Kampala marathon in 2022, but seeing the mileage Airtel (the reason the kits are red) is getting with this annual Kabaka run, should be causing some rethinks in major boardrooms – both corporate and political.

## OBSERVER TEAM

**A** glowing and healthy Kabaka Ronald Muwenda Mutebi. Great weather. An estimated 130,000 runners turning up before sunrise.

Sold out kits at Shs 25,000 each. What more could organisers of the thirteenth edition of the Kabaka Birthday Run ask for?

Marking the Kabaka’s 71st birthday, this annual marathon has become many things over the years.

A proud statement of the Ganda heritage for most; a strong underlining of Buganda Kingdom’s unique inclusive nature – not everyone who ran was a Muganda, but they sure were from Buganda; for others, a stealthy way to wear red and not draw the state wrath; and for many more, a big party to catch up with buddies and make new connections.

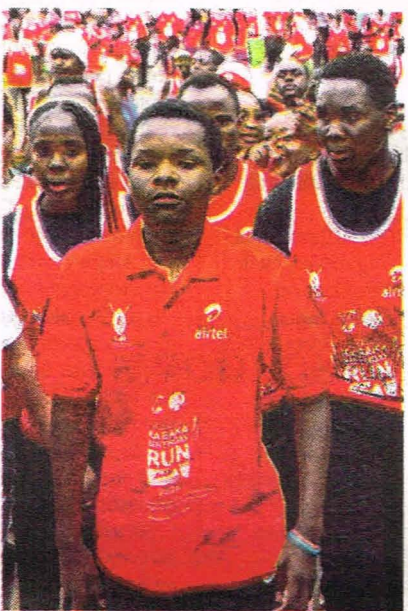
While at it, if the kingdom collected

an estimated Shs 3.2bn in kit sales towards the fight against HIV/Aids, then that is real star power that Katikkiro Charles Peter Mayiga and his team have cemented over the years when it comes to fundraising, starting with his *Tyofoali* days.

Kabaka Anjagala road was a sea of red as soon as Kabaka Mutebi flagged off the runners, and thereafter, it was to each their own.

Some came for a serious marathon and they were seen huffing and puffing over several hills of the kingdom, causing traffic inconveniences in a few places, but no serious chaos. Others came for branding for their corporations, and as soon as they had run a few steps, they concentrated on content creation. Others were seen throwing parties in the middle of the road as soon as they were done with a short run, while others came to catch a glimpse of Buganda royalty.

The king turned up to the Mengo



Prince Richard Ssemakookiro



Thousands participated in the run



The run will benefit the fight against HIV/Aids