

## Helping hand

Locals help police to fight fire that gutted a truck carrying fuel in Lugazi Town in Bulikwe District recently. On many occasions, police fire fighters are accused of delaying to arrive at places where fire has occurred.

PHOTO BY HERBERT MUGAGGA



# Dilapidated health facility worries Kalangala residents

**Challenges.** Kyamuswa Health Centre IV is poorly facilitated with no medicines, lacks enough workforce and cannot handle emergencies.

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**KALANGALA.** Kyamuswa Health Centre IV, a facility that serves 61 islands that make up Kyamuswa health sub-district, is in a sorry state, threatening lives of hundreds that seek services from the facility.

The only major facility serves as a main referral point for major and minor illnesses among the communities living on Ssesse Islands and the health centre staff is overwhelmed by the congestion given the staff to patient ratio.

The facility has a workforce of 24 health officers, according to Mr Martin Mukasa, the officer in charge of the health centre, against the required 72

health workers at the facility.

It also offers minor surgeries, medication and treatment for various illnesses and consultancy before patients are referred to major facilities such as Entebbe hospital and to Kalangala's main island, Bugala.

Entebbe government hospital is about 60 nautical miles away from the island on a boat and fewer patients, especially those in critical condition make it after that journey.

The health centre too, is not prepared to handle emergencies and the sanitation of the health facility is worrying, with wanting services.

The facility was designed to accommodate up to 30,000 people every month but it is poorly facilitated with no medicines, including crucial basic supplies.

The constant lack of drugs is compounded by understaffing and poor remuneration of staff, according to Mr Mukasa.

"Then what happens when you

## ISSUES

**Carrying candles.** According to Mr Mukasa, expectant mothers are asked to carry candles and lanterns during night deliveries.

**Workers.** The facility has a workforce of 24 health officers against the required 72 health workers at the facility.

**No medicine.** The facility was designed to accommodate up to 30,000 people every month but is poorly facilitated with no medicine.

have no medicines? Such challenges force us to send patients for referral since some of the facilities are not functional and have limited staff that would work on them," he said.

Kyamuswa Health Centre IV is located on Bukasa Island.

Health officials also administer treatment to HIV/Aids patients enrolled on life treatment therapies. They also provide support to lower health centre III and IIs in the health sub-district.

But it is faced with several challenges that have stood in the way of better service delivery.

There is wide infrastructural challenges as the health centre is dilapidated and needs urgent upgrade to align it to the level of a health centre IV since it serves hundreds.

Also there is constant power shortage, lack of water and poor lavatory services.

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## briefly

### Police hold man

**BUKOMANSIMBI.** Police in Bukomansimbi District are holding a 23-year-old man suspected to be part of a group that has been attacking residents at night. The suspect is said to be a resident of Meru Village in Butenga Sub-county in Bukomansimbi District. He was arrested with a sackful of machetes during a night operation by police. Mr Ben Osiede, the officer in charge of criminal investigations at Butenga Police Station, says the suspect was trailed by officers that were on foot patrol. [Malik Fahad Jjingo]

### Bishop blames parents

**GOMBA.** Central Buganda Diocese Bishop Michael Lubowa, has criticised parents for failing to feed their children at school, saying it is one reason pupils perform poorly. He made remarks while launching a campaign to promote feeding of children at school during a weekend. Bishop Lubowa said that parents who cannot provide food for their children should not bother sending them to school. Education authorities in the district revealed that about 10 per cent of the pupils do not get food. [Moses Muwulya]

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## Voices

"We urge government to increase the development fees for the facilities so as for us to not only maintain, but also increase the number of facilities we do have."

HILLARY BITAKARAMIRE, KALANGALA DISTRICT HEALTH OFFICER



"We find ourselves in line waiting for a patient to utilise the latrine services which seems weird and we feel so offended when patients have to complain when we use the same latrine,"

MARTIN MUKASA, OFFICER IN CHARGE OF KYAMUSWA HEALTH CENTRE IV

"We use at least a 15 horse power engine to move on water to Entebbe. That would take one eight hours to reach. If I am taking a pregnant mother, wouldn't she deliver in the boat?"

RICHARD LWANGA, NAKIBANGA LC1 CHAIRPERSON

According to Mr Mukasa, expectant mothers who seek their services are made to fetch water from the nearby Namirembe landing site about a mile away to use during and after delivery.

Also, the health workers and the patients always have to queue on a daily basis to utilise the only double stance pit latrine at the facility so as to ease themselves. Accessing clean water remains a night mare.

"We also have to use plywood to divide the few staff houses we have so as to cater for the health officers' accommodation," said Mr Richard Turyagyenda, the health centre management committee chairperson.

In a meeting with a team of health rights activists under the Advocacy for Better Health in June this year, several residents who use the health facility for immediate health attention lamented that often times, people are referred to Entebbe.

"We use at least a 15 horse power engine to move on water to Entebbe. That would take one eight hours to reach. If I am taking a pregnant mother, wouldn't she deliver in the boat?" asked Mr Richard Lwanga, the Nakibanga LC 1 chairperson.

The facility receives Shs2.9m every quarter for running its centre activities. However, this, according to Mr Mukasa, is not enough to handle medical outreaches in the outlying islands where the health workers need to deliver antiretroviral treatment on a daily basis.

Kalangala District health officer, Hillary Bitakaramire in an interview with *Daily Monitor* at the district headquarters, said Kalangala receives limited funds for primary healthcare from central government to run and maintain the facility thus limited development. He, however, added that a combination of measures have been put in place to improve services at the facility in the health facilities so as to meet the required standards and among these are sourcing for funding from civil organisations such as the Centre for Disease control.