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## Tertiary students forge common front

... as Minister Maele announces allowance increase from P1,900 to P2,200 and Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure suspends the implementation of the new road transport fares pending consultations



Tertiary students gathered at the Ministry of Higher Education during a mass demonstration in Gaborone yesterday. The students petitioned Minister Prince Maele on challenges they faced, such as financial constraints, noting that the current allowance was not at par with today's cost of living. Photo: Washa Bofelwang

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# DailyNews

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# Permanent Secretary to the President retires from public service

## GABORONE

Government announces the retirement of the Permanent Secretary to the President, Ms Emmah Peloetletse, from the Public Service with effect from 31 March 2026, bringing to a close an exemplary career spanning over thirty-six (36) years.

Ms Peloetletse served as Permanent Secretary to the President, Secretary to Cabinet, and Head of the Public Service from September 2021.

Her tenure coincided with a critical period in the country's governance, during which she played a central role in facilitating a smooth and orderly transition to the UDC-led government, ensuring continuity, stability and adherence to constitutional processes.

A seasoned Public Finance Management professional, Ms Peloetletse previously served as Accountant General for more than 10 years, where she was instrumental in strengthening public financial systems and accountability frameworks within government.

Her leadership and expertise

extended beyond the public service into key national institutions.

She served on several boards, including the Botswana Accountancy College, Lentswe la Bomme, and the Botswana Public Officers Pension Scheme.

At the time of her retirement, she was the Chairperson of Debswana Diamond Mining Company, one of the country's most strategic economic entities.

Ms Peloetletse made a significant contribution to the coordination and implementation of government policies and programmes, particularly in advancing the national development agenda under Vision 2036.

She holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of Botswana and is a professional member of the Botswana Institute of Chartered Accountants (BICA) as well as the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.

Government expresses its profound appreciation to Ms Peloetletse for her distinguished service, dedication and leadership and wishes her well in her future endeavours.

# Model supports nature-based economies

## Esther Mmolai PHUDUHUDU

Residents of Phuduhudu in North West District have been implored to embrace the newly launched herding for health programme and realise its full benefits.

Supported by Conservation International and the Green Climate Fund to the tune of P600 000, the programme directly supports household

incomes through herding for health.

It develops enterprise plans for the beef value chain, new market opportunities and a wildlife-friendly grass fed beef brand.

Speaking at the programme launch in Phuduhudu recently, Conservation International (CI) senior vice president-Africa Field Division, Mr Jimmiel Mandima said communities in Botswana were facing the direct effects of climate change such as drought,

bush encroachment, water scarcity and veld fires, threatening livestock and the livelihoods that depend on them.

As such, he said the programme offered a solution as it restored rangelands, improved livestock management and strengthened communities to cope with climate stress.

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Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Mokganedi Mokopasetso (left), Kgosi Johane Ngwengare of Phuduhudu (centre) and other officials during the launch and handing over of the first Grazing Support Packages for Herding for Health model to the community at Jojo Ranch on Monday. The initiative promotes climate-resilient agriculture and rehabilitates communal rangelands. Photo: Esther Mmolai

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REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

**MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

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REF: MTI 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026

**RE: SUSPENSION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
NEW ROAD TRANSPORT FARE**

The Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure wishes to inform members of the public, transport operators and passengers that the new road transport fares which were introduced today (1<sup>st</sup> April 2026) have been suspended pending further consultations with relevant stakeholders.

In the meantime, the proposed December 2025 adjustment road transport fares will take effect until further update has been provided by the Ministry.

The fares are as follows;

a. Shared Taxi (Pula per Passenger per trip)	- P10.00
b. Special Taxi(Pula per trip)	- P36.00
c. Mini Bus Local transport (Pula per trip)	- P 9.00
d. Long Distance (Bitumen road)	- P 0.38 /km
e. Long Distance (Gravel & sandy road)	- P 0.41/km

The ministry apologises for the inconvenience caused by the announcement of the introduction of the new fare.

Yours Faithfully  
  
Noah Salakae  
**MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

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Vision: Provide access to world-class infrastructure and transport services for dignified lives

# Blue diamond sign of Botswana uniqueness



The 36.92 carat blue diamond discovered at Karowe Mine in Letlhakane by Lucara Botswana was presented to President Advocate Duma Boko at the Office of the President yesterday. Lucara Botswana Proprietary Limited managing director, Ms Naseem Lahri said the diamond was the second largest blue diamond to be discovered in Botswana, after the 41.11 carat Okavango Blue was found in 2018 at the Orapa Mine. Photos: Pheny Moalosi

Pako Lebanna  
GABORONE

The discovery of the second largest blue diamond to ever be recovered in Botswana is a sign that the country continues to offer quality natural diamonds which synthetic diamonds cannot compete with.

Ms Naseem Lahri, the managing director of Lucara Botswana Proprietary Limited echoed those sentiments while speaking to the media after presenting the blue diamond to President Advocate Duma Boko at the Office of the President on Wednesday.

The rare 36.92 carat blue Type IIB diamond was extracted from the Karowe Mine in Letlhakane, a premier open pit operation that has become well renowned for producing large, high quality Type IIA diamonds.

While acknowledging that certain diamond markets, particularly the United States of America (USA), had gradually shifted towards synthetic diamonds, Ms Lahri said Botswana should focus on a niche market of selling quality natural



Ms Naseem Lahri  
managing director of Lucara Botswana

gemstones to consumers who prefer natural products.

"We are known for the large diamonds, and large recoveries in the world. At 36.92 carats, this is the largest blue diamond recovered by Lucara Botswana and the second largest blue diamond ever mined in the country. This could be valued at between 10 to 30 million US dollars, (approximately P136 million to P407 million)," Ms Lahri said.

She said the synthetic diamond industry was incapable of creating the type of large diamonds that have frequently been extracted in

Botswana.

"They cannot compete with us on the large diamond market because they are incapable of creating them. These are rare finds and are very valuable. We (Lucara) are unique in that we do not participate in the American market, we focus on a market that is willing to buy natural diamonds and is willing to pay the price for them," she said.

"For us it is about legacy, about heritage, experience and uniqueness, and a having a high network that is willing to invest in the natural gems," Ms Lahri added.

The discovery of the country's second biggest blue diamond after the Okavango Blue, the 20.46-carat, oval-shaped diamond discovered by Debswana at the Orapa Mine in 2018 further strengthens Botswana's global standing as a leading source of some of the world's most remarkable natural gemstones.

The engagement with the President provided an opportunity for Lucara to highlight the significance of the discovery and the diamond sector's continuing contribution to national economic growth and international prestige. **BOPA**

## Tertiary education allowance rises to P2 200

Pako Lebanna  
GABORONE

Government has taken a decision to increase tertiary education students' allowance to P2 200, set to take effect at the end of April, Minister of Higher Education, Mr Prince Maele has revealed.

Addressing tertiary education students who had marched to the Office of the President yesterday, Mr Maele said government had made the determination having assessed the country's economic situation.

While the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) leadership was keen to make good on its electoral pledge of P2 500 tertiary students' allowance, Mr Maele said government could only offer the students what was feasible within the current financial year.

He said the decision had already been made by cabinet but the delay in making the public announcement was owing to government assessing if funds could be sourced to increase the P2 200 sum.

Mr Maele reiterated government's compassion towards students' economic challenges and their commitment towards addressing the needs of tertiary education students.

Before being addressed by Mr Maele, student leaders, Messrs Terrance Sonny of the UDC Moono wa Baithuti, Neville Sechele of the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) GS26 and Asalepele Kalodi of the Botswana Congress Party (BCP) Student Congress

presented student concerns to the minister, after leading a march across Gaborone Central to the Government Enclave.

Mr Sonny said they had been engaging the minister regularly through written communication and were now seeking a solution to their economic challenges, insisting that they now wanted an increment.

Mr Sechele added that they were faced with monthly costs, including purchasing food, transportation, mobile telephony data costs, which the current P1 900 off-campus and P1 500 on-campus allowances were inadequate to address.

He said they had taken a corporate decision to gather across party political lines and focus collectively on the challenges facing the student body.

They said having previously communicated with the minister their wish for the P2 500 student allowance UDC electoral promise to be implemented, they were now requesting an answer to their plea.

Mr Kalodi said rental costs were high and the overall cost of living was leading to social ills such as prostitution and depression among students.

Mr Maele said government cared about the welfare of students but was currently constrained by the country's economic circumstances from reaching the P2 500 ideal.

Nonetheless, he said the UDC government was fully committed to fulfilling its electoral promise and would effect it when state revenue permitted in future. **BOPA**



Minister of Higher Education, Mr Prince Maele (third right) accompanied by other legislators addressed tertiary students following a mass demonstration in Gaborone yesterday. He informed them that government had taken a decision to increase students allowance to P2 200, effective April. Photo: Pheny Moalosi

## Model supports nature-based economies

...from page 2

"It is not just a conservation programme; it is a livelihood and resilience programme and Phuduhudu will become a learning centre where other communities can see how restoration and improved livestock management can work in practice. Its success depends on your leadership, your knowledge and your commitment to restoring the land that sustains you," he added.

He also emphasised that strengthening local institutions as a key feature of the programme was a sign of strong governance.

Furthermore, he noted that CI in partnership with the Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (BUAN) were developing a national curriculum for eco rangers, restoration

workers and graduate monitors creating lifelong opportunities for young people and farmers alike.

"Conservation International role is to strengthen these institutions with training and tools to support climate resilient grazing and rangeland rehabilitation to ensure the programme continues long after project funding ends," he said.

Vice president, Conservation International-Green Climate Fund Agency (GCF), Mr Steve Panfill said the programme brought resources from the Green Climate Fund to compliment the government's efforts in building climate resilience of its people.

He said the fund was mandated to support countries to raise ambitions and realise their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) toward low-emissions and climate-

resilient development pathways.

"All GCF projects must set mitigation or adaptation targets, measured as tons of reduced greenhouse gas emissions or by the number of people whose resilience to climate change has increased.

The project that we launched is a special one, in that it is cross-cutting, seeking to both reduce emissions and to directly build the resilience of farmers whose livelihoods depend on healthy, drought resistant herds," he said.

Mr Panfill said the model that was being applied builds on the idea that if ecosystems were well cared for, they will in turn care for those who depend on them.

Phuduhudu village chief, Kgosi Johane Ngwengare expressed gratitude that the programme has the potential to curb stock theft and predation, improve livestock

and rangeland management, and control animal movement in the event of disease outbreaks.

He said the programme was also ideal since it encourages conservation efforts something which he said resonates well with his community as traditionally, they were conservationists as they managed the wilderness through sustainable hunting and gatherer lifestyle.

However, he called on implementers to secure more funding to support the initiatives implemented through the model to ensure sustainability.

"This model has the potential to improve livelihoods and address challenges faced by local farmers and I plead with you to secure more funding to ensure continuity and roll it out across the country," said Kgosi Ngwengare. **BOPA**

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## PARLIAMENT 2026

# MPs advocate food sovereignty

Thato Mosinyi  
GABORONE

Legislators have called for a shift in the nation's agricultural strategy to transition from simple food security to total food sovereignty.

Contributing to the debate on the National Agricultural Policy recently, they argued that true economic independence relied on local control of food systems, climate-smart technology and the urgent reduction of the country's high food import bill.

Kgatlang East MP, Mr Mabuse Pule, argued that transitioning from a status of food security to food sovereignty would promote the right of local people to control their own food systems, including markets, ecological resources, food cultures and production modes. Mr Pule said he was pleased to see that the previous government had done the groundwork in laying a solid foundation toward food sovereignty.

These were destined to improve food security by championing crop diversification and the use of climate-smart technologies to ensure resilience against climate uncertainties," he said.

He explained that the programme was a productivity-output-based agro-ecological reward system designed to improve food security in Botswana.

Consequently, he argued, the onus was now on the current government to ensure that policies were in place to safeguard the country's agricultural products.

He also urged government to remain steadfast in promoting sustainable food sovereignty to reduce the high food import bill.

Many of these commodities are 'low-hanging fruit' whose production can be increased within a short period," he added. Supporting the policy, Shoshong MP, Mr Moneedi Bagaisamang highlighted that agricultural productivity was envisaged to diversify Botswana's economy. He noted that the sector had the potential to contribute to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) through creation of quality employment, building a middle-class economy, wealth creation and value chain development as well as building resilient rural economies.

He added that the grain production subsector required a transformation strategy involving technology adoption, improved production systems, enhanced infrastructure and creation of commercial industries along the value chain. Maun West MP, Mr Caterpillar Hikuama decried the rising cases of human-wildlife conflict in the Ngamiland area, which he attributed to the poor maintenance of the veterinary cordon fence.

To address this, Mr Hikuama suggested that the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture should consult with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism to include problematic wild animals in community trust hunting quotas.

Furthermore, he pleaded with government to empower the youth in his constituency by creating opportunities in agribusiness enterprises and fostering linkages with the private sector and development agencies.

Specially Elected MP, Major General Pius Mokgware emphasised the importance of including the establishment of water banks along the country's major rivers. He noted that such banks would help manage scarcity by storing surplus water and act as a savings account to ensure a reliable supply during dry years. **BOPA**



In his presentation of the National Agriculture Draft Policy 2025 in Parliament recently, Acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti said the ministry aimed to grow the national cattle herd from 1.6 million in 2024 to 4.6 million by 2029/2030.

# Kazungula Weighbridge to resume operations May

GABORONE

The Kazungula weighbridge is expected to be fully operational by May 2026 as the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure moves to repair the facility following its closure in October 2025.

Responding to a question in Parliament on Tuesday, assistant minister, Mr Keoagile Atamelang said the ministry was currently in the process of procuring specialised maintenance services from the manufacturer to address the breakdown of the scale and its subsequent inability to be calibrated and verified.

He indicated that although the facility began experiencing

# Draft policy charts agric. future

GABORONE

The National Agriculture Draft Policy 2025 is set to charter a new era for Botswana's agriculture, one defined by innovation, resilience and value creation.

The policy positions the sector as a primary driver of economic diversification, food security and export growth.

Presenting the draft policy in Parliament on Monday, acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti, highlighted that the new framework aimed to transform the country's agricultural industry into a diversified, resilient and export-oriented sector that drove national economic growth.

Dr Dikoloti stated that the policy affirmed a paradigm shift from food security to food sovereignty and further reinforced Botswana's commitment to a market-oriented and export-led agricultural sector by aligning with national priorities as well as regional and international standards.

"Rooted in the principles of environmental stewardship, the right to food and nutrition, stakeholder engagement, social inclusivity and evidence-based decision-making, the policy embraces innovation, promotes agri-entrepreneurship and reinforces the central role of farmers and agribusinesses in the economic transformation," Dr. Dikoloti said.

The minister indicated that the policy provided a clear roadmap for transformation through coordinated

efforts between government, private sector, farmers, communities and development partners.

Furthermore, he noted that the policy placed strong emphasis on technology adoption, research and development and capacity building, particularly targeting youth, women and marginalised groups.

He added that the policy also aimed to promote commercialisation and diversification of agriculture, anchored on the development of key agricultural value chains.

"The sector is prioritising dairy, livestock and crop production, as well as horticulture, apiculture, aquaculture and fodder production," he said.

Dr Dikoloti further said the sector would also promote high-value niche commodities such as cannabis, cotton, safflower and moringa, alongside other products with high export potential.

Such initiatives, he said, were designed to position agriculture as a competitive and sustainable contributor to Botswana's GDP and a catalyst for employment creation.

Again, he said in line with government's commitment to industrialisation, the sector would continue to promote value addition and agro-processing through private-sector-led investments.

"This approach seeks to transform agricultural outputs into high-value products, thereby creating employment, supporting rural industries and increasing export competitiveness," he said. Regarding agricultural digitisation,

Dr Dikoloti stated that the sector was advancing digital transformation through investment in enabling technologies, automation of land delivery and agricultural processes, ICT infrastructure upgrades and capacity-building in digital literacy.

"This shift is expected to enhance service delivery and digitise data, improving transparency, traceability and efficiency across the sector.

To boost productivity, strategic investments are also being made in infrastructure, including access routes to production areas, storage facilities, laboratories, testing centers and transport networks," he said.

In response to climate change, Dr Dikoloti stated that the strategy promoted sustainable, climate-smart practices such as conservation agriculture, agro-ecological production, integrated crop-livestock systems and agroforestry.

"The sector supports the use of drought-tolerant crops, resilient livestock breeds, organic fertilisers, rangeland management and modern technologies like precision farming, soil moisture sensors and drone monitoring," he said.

Conversely, he said the agricultural transformation agenda focused on significantly increasing the national cattle population.

Dr Dikoloti cited that the baseline herd in 2024 stood at 1.6 million cattle, with a target to grow it to 4.6 million by 2029/2030 to mark substantial recovery and expansion of the national herd. **BOPA**

technical failures as early as 2022, it remained in use until late last year.

He assured Parliament that despite the current downtime at the Kazungula site, the impact on regulation and revenue had been mitigated through a strategic redundancy network.

"Trucks that would normally be inspected at the border are being monitored at the Francistown and Serule weighbridges.

This system ensures that the 56 500 trucks that have passed through the Kazungula border since January 2025 are still subject to oversight, keeping revenue loss to a minimum," he said.

Mr Atamelang emphasised that weighbridges were fundamental to

the nation's infrastructure and were used to regulate vehicle loading and ensure compliance with standard axle and gross mass limits.

He noted that while the weighing process itself was a free service provided to all transporters, those found to be in violation of weight limits were charged for overloading in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulations.

"The process remains a priority for the ministry because of the severe risks associated with non-compliance.

Overloaded vehicles cause significant and costly damage to road surfaces, compromise vehicle performance and increase the risk of road accidents.

Maintaining these facilities is therefore essential for protecting public infrastructure and ensuring a fair and safe transport system for all users," he said.

Member of Parliament for Chobe, Mr Simasiku Mapulanga, had asked the minister to state why the Kazungula weighbridge was not being used, when it was last used and when it was expected to be fully operational.

Mr Mapulanga also wanted to know the number of trucks which had been recorded to have used the Kazungula border from January 2025 to date and the charge per truck weighed as well as the amount lost in terms of revenue collection.

**BOPA**

# Minister addresses staffing gaps at Sekgoma hospital

## GABORONE

There are currently 34 doctors at Sekgoma Memorial Hospital, comprising 21 general doctors and 13 medical specialists.

This was said by Minister of Health, Dr Stephen Modise, when responding to a parliamentary question on Tuesday.

Minister Modise also told Parliament that there were six doctors at Local Government, making a total of 40 doctors in Serowe.

The minister added that Sekgoma Memorial Hospital offered health services to a population of about 60 000 people, thus the doctor to patient ratio at the hospital was 1:3000 while the nurse-to-patient ratio was 1:2000.

He also indicated that Sekgoma Memorial Hospital offered specialist services which included ophthalmology, obstetrics and gynaecology, general paediatrics, medical oncology, dermatology, general surgery, anaesthesia and psychiatry.

“The ministry is currently undertaking external recruitment of specialists, with an anticipated eight more specialists planned for deployment to Sekgoma Memorial Hospital, increasing the total number of specialists 21,” Dr Modise said.

He also told Parliament that compared to other district hospitals in terms of doctor to patient ratio, Sekgoma Memorial Hospital served a catchment population of 60 000 with 21 doctors, resulting in a ratio of 1:3000 while Mahalapye Hospital had 14 doctors for a population of 131 977 (1:9000) and Selebi Phikwe Hospital utilised 13 doctors for 50 000 people (1:4000) while Letsholathebe Hospital maintained 14 doctors for a population of 121 300, matching Mahalapye’s ratio of 1:9000.

In terms of nursing staff, he said Sekgoma hospital employed 280 nurses for its 60 000 residents, providing a ratio of 1:200 while Mahalapye Hospital operated with 221 nurses for 131 977 people (1:600) and Letsholathebe Hospital had 189 nurses for a population of 121 300 (1:600).

He added that Selebi Phikwe Hospital served 50 000 people with 153 nurses, resulting in a ratio of 1:300.

“To address overcrowding in the hospital, diabetes, hypertension and general outpatient clinics were opened at the old Sekgoma Hospital.

Only referred patients and emergency cases are seen at the hospital while the rest are encouraged to seek help at local clinics to reduce overcrowding,” the minister said. In addition to the recruitment of specialists, he said the ministry had also engaged with Directorate of Public Service Management (DPSM) to create positions for employment of additional staff to reduce shortages and ease the burden on overwhelmed staff at Sekgoma Memorial Hospital.

Dr Modise further indicated

that ophthalmology services were already offered at Sekgoma Memorial Hospital.

“The availability of specialist services is subject to the availability of the required specialised personnel in the country.

There is shortage of specialists in the country and the ministry is currently engaged in recruitment efforts of medical specialists both locally and externally,” he added.

Furthermore, he said in addition, there were several government-sponsored doctors who were undergoing specialist training, adding that once specialists were available, they would be deployed to the public facilities where their services were required.

In the meantime, he said, patients requiring cardiac, nephrology or orthopaedic services were referred to the nearest facility where those services were available.

Serowe South MP, Mr Leapetswe Lesedi had asked the minister for the total number of doctors in all Serowe public facilities, the patient-to-doctor ratios and a list of available specialist services.

The legislator also inquired whether services such as cardiac care, nephrology, including dialysis and orthopaedics, would be introduced to accommodate the hospital’s large catchment population. **BOPA**



Minister of Health, Dr Stephen Modise told Parliament on Tuesday that Serowe Rehabilitation Centre was expected to be fully operational by July.

## Serowe Rehabilitation centre to open July

### GABORONE

Serowe Rehabilitation Centre at the repurposed Old Sekgoma Memorial Hospital is now 94 per cent complete and is expected to be fully operational by July 2026.

Answering a question in Parliament on Tuesday, Minister of Health, Dr Stephen Modise said the centre would provide both outpatient and inpatient rehabilitation services, significantly strengthening access to treatment.

The minister added that while the facility would play a critical role in treatment and rehabilitation, the ministry continued to work closely with stakeholders on

prevention and recovery, including creating supportive environments and strengthening community structures to sustain long-term prevention, treatment and recovery efforts.

However, Dr Modise, acknowledged the delays experienced in the completion of the project, adding that the site’s rugged topography necessitated longer time for ground preparation and excavation.

Additionally, he said the project encountered delayed claim payments, particularly in the third and fourth quarters of 2024-2025 and the first quarter of 2025-2026.

That, he said had an impact on

the contractor’s cash flow, which resulted in fewer resources and slower site progress.

“I would like to assure this House that the project remains a priority and every effort is being made to bring it to completion as efficiently as possible while maintaining the required standard and within the amended timelines,” he said.

Member of Parliament for Serowe West, Mr Onalepelo Kedikilwe, had asked the minister when the Serowe Rehabilitation Centre would be opened to the public and the forecasted project handover date and the reasons for the delay in the project delivery.

**BOPA**

## Plans to modernise agriculture at advanced stage

### Thato Mosinyi GABORONE

Government is committed to transforming Botswana’s agricultural sector to raise the sector’s contribution to Gross Domestic Product from under two per cent to more than six per cent by 2036.

This was confirmed by acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti when responding to a question in Parliament on Tuesday from Letlhakeng MP, Brigadier Domcaza Mokgwathi. Dr Dikoloti told Parliament that efforts were underway to transform agriculture into a high-income, sustainable and technology-driven sector. Key initiatives, the minister said included strengthening value chains, improving food systems to reduce reliance on imports and boosting livestock production, with a target of increasing the national cattle herd to five million.

He said the reforms were anchored on inclusive development and would ensure that no communities were left behind, including those in Letlhakeng. One of the flagship initiatives, Dr Dikoloti said was the Botswana Livestock Commercialisation Project (BoLCoP), for which Parliament recently approved a US\$31.5 million (P384 million)

loan. The project, he said would cover Letlhakeng and 19 other districts grouped into four clusters and was expected to improve productivity in the small livestock sub-sector, whilst enhancing incomes and resilience among rural households through more sustainable and technology-driven value chains.

Though he said it was not possible to give precise figures on human resource deployment to Letlhakeng, over the next five years due to fiscal constraints, Minister Dikoloti indicated that government was overhauling agricultural extension services to address shortages in underserved areas.

He explained that the new model would combine public and private sector participation and integrate traditional extension approaches with modern information and communication technologies.

Additionally, he said Letlhakeng was expected to benefit from multiple programmes, including BoLCoP, which targeted 50 000 households and 200 000 beneficiaries nationwide, as well as ongoing extension reforms.

“Among these is the A Di Tsale programme, a private sector-led initiative designed to support clustered farmers with modern livestock management and reproductive technologies to

improve productivity,” he said.

Furthermore, Dr Dikoloti said the area would benefit from a fodder strategy supported by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), which aimed to stabilise feed supply, reduce dependence on imports and promote sustainable agricultural practices.

He also noted that Letlhakeng’s underground water resources positioned it well to take advantage of the initiative, which was also expected to create jobs and strengthen food security.

However, the minister acknowledged persistent logistical challenges in the district, revealing that Letlhakeng currently had only six operational vehicles, one quad bike and two ageing tractors, which continued to hamper extension service delivery.

The district, he said required at least 15 additional vehicles at an estimated cost of P12 million, excluding other essential equipment. Minister Dikoloti also reiterated that government planned to improve service delivery through a blended financing model that combined public funding with private sector and non-governmental organisation partnerships to leverage additional financial, technical and managerial capacity.

The ministry, he said was guided

by clear performance targets aimed at building a diversified, resilient and export-oriented agricultural sector that enhanced food security, reduced imports and drove economic growth.

“These targets form part of the National Development Plan 12 framework, which tracks indicators such as cereal production growth, cattle population increases, reduced food imports and job creation, in line with Botswana’s broader national development vision,” he added. Brigadier Mokgwathi had asked the minister to apprise Parliament on the state of agriculture in Letlhakeng constituency over the coming five years, with particular focus on human resource placement and welfare considerations, bemoaning that the area lacked basic social amenities.

Letlhakeng MP also sought clarity on the envisaged agricultural development for the constituency, including the specific or estimated number of support servicing equipment such as vehicles, the projected costs of such requirements, whether the ministry had practical Key Performance Areas (KPA) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), as well as whether the considerations formed part of government’s broader food security strategy and long-term Vision 2036. **BOPA**



# Daily Business

## BOCRA expands ICT connectivity

Esther Mmolai  
MAUN

Botswana Communication Regulatory Authority (BOCRA) is currently constructing fully-furnished digital centres in Makakung and Sankoyo Primary Schools to bridge the digital divide in rural areas.

The digital centres are essential for fostering improved learning opportunities for both learners and community at large. BOCRA is undertaking the projects through its Universal Access and Service Fund (UASF) targeting rural, unserved and underserved areas.

BOCRA head of broadcasting and corporate communication, Ms Masego Jeremiah revealed this during the North West District full council meeting, noting that the two projects were at an advanced stage and anticipated to be completed and handed over to the council before the end of April this year.

She highlighted that they had provided fully-fledged portacabins equipped with the necessary equipment such as computers and airconditioners among others.

Ms Jeremiah appreciated support from the local council officials, saying they had been cooperative and providing guidance where necessary for the smooth implementation of the projects.

“These projects focus on extending high speed, reliable internet to underserved areas to facilitate e-learning and our efforts are part of a broader commitment to ensure even underserved villages have digital access,” she added.

Ms Jeremiah also noted that BOCRA in partnership with Botswana Telecommunication Corporation had completed several projects such as provision of voice and mobile broadband network in 45 villages still in the North West and Okavango districts.

The duo ensured high-speed connectivity in 67 schools, health centres and dikgotla to increase national usage and adoption of digital technologies.

BOCRA also ensured provision of broadband internet and information, communication and technology (ICT) devices, 50 MBPS dedicated internet as well as equipment to Tsodilo Hills World Heritage Centre in Tsodilo completed in December 2021.

In addition, the authority completed FM expansion in North West and Okavango districts, transmitter locations at villages of Sehithwa, Sankoyo, Shakawe as well as Gumare and also donated ICT equipment at Etsha 6 kgotla.

“At Etsha, we handed over a fully-fledged ICT laboratory last year to provide students with access to modern technology and computers to foster digital literacy,” he said.

Furthermore, Ms Jeremiah pointed out that BOCRA is mandated to promote and ensure universal access with respect to provision of communication services. The authority, she said was responsible for the regulation of the communications sector in the country comprising telecommunication, radio communications, internet and ICTs, broadcasting, postal services

and related matters.

She informed the council about the key instruments that guided the authority, citing the Communications Regulatory Authority Act, which provided for the regulation of the above-mentioned services and related matters.

They were informed that the authority was also responsible for protecting and promoting the

interest of consumers, purchasers and other users of the services in the regulated sectors, particularly in respect of the prices charged for and the availability, quality and variety of services and products offered throughout the country.

However, Ms Jeremiah commended two organisations from the district for acquiring licenses to operate community radio stations.

These are Okavango Human Wildlife Foundation and Apostolic Faith Mission of Botswana, which were among the five entities selected to receive licenses following a December 2024 call for applications.

Okavango Human Wildlife Foundation, which will operate Okavango FM community radio station, will broadcast in the Maun, Kasane and Shakawe areas. **BOPA**

*China General Nuclear Africa Energy chief development officer, Mr Yin Guang Bai (left) and Sowa Town mayor, Mr Ford Moiteela during the signing of the five year Memorandum of Understanding in Francistown recently. Mr Moiteela said the agreement would facilitate the commencement of talks between the two parties to pave way for the establishment of a hybrid technical solution involving a Solar PV Plant, potentially one of the largest in Botswana, to support the town's transition to green energy. Photo: Ogopoleng Kgomoethata*



## SADC feels ripple effects of Middle East conflict

Calviniah Kgautlhe  
LOBATSE

The complex interplay of military actions in the Middle East conflict has not only spurred political tensions but has significantly disrupted global trade through increased oil prices, obstructed shipping routes and strained supply chains.

Chairperson of Southern African Development Community (SADC) Business Council, Mr Khulekani Mathe said global trade was currently fragile, undergoing significant disruption due to the recent geopolitical developments, particularly key global shipping routes such as the Strait of Hormuz, the Red Sea and the Suez Canal corridor.

He was addressing a webinar recently, which had attracted captains of industry in supply chain, retail and the financial sector across SADC member states.

The conflict, he highlighted had negatively impacted trade flows including the Suez Canal corridor in Egypt where approximately 12-15 percent of global trade passes through.

“The disruptions have led to vessels rerouting and thus increasing transit times where goods can take 20 days to reach their destination. This has led to an increase in trade rates increasing by estimated two to three times on key routes in the recent months, alongside that, insurance premiums and operational costs have significantly increased,” he said. He highlighted that SADC regional block that was heavily reliant on import and export of commodities and manufactured

**“This tells us that the current global shocks are not just a crisis, but a wakeup call for the SADC region, which is also exposed to the global trade flows.”**

products was directly affected, rising the cost of business in the region.

The situation was not aiding trade growth in the region, he noted, adding that trade within the SADC remained relatively low and estimated to be around 20 percent compared to regions like the European Union (EU) where intra-regional trade was currently sitting at around 60 percent.

Meanwhile, Mr Mathe highlighted that logistics costs in Africa were amongst the highest globally, often accounting for up to 40 per cent of the final cost of goods in some markets.

“This tells us that the current global shocks are not just a crisis, but a wakeup call for the SADC region, which is also exposed to the global trade flows,” he said.

He thus highlighted the urgent need for the SADC region to strengthen efficiencies on building resilient trade corridors and for member states to invest in logistics infrastructure and improving border efficiencies.

“We need to have enhanced coordination between the public and private sectors and most importantly, we need to leverage the opportunities presented by the

African Continental Free Trade Area,” he said.

Bravura Group Head of public sector and external affairs, Ms Shuvai Mugadza of Zimbabwe said in February when the United States of America (USA) attacked Iran under Operation Epic Fury jointly with Israel, the impact was reflected on global oil consumption as the price of oil kept rising.

“The shipping lines have also been disrupted and we are likely to have inflationary pressure. So we need to work together as private and public sectors to mitigate these problems,” she said.

With regards to regional value chains, Ms Mugadza said they needed to build resilient, create trade linkages and if possible, reduce dependence on these distant supply lines. The partial closure of the Strait of Hormuz is affecting businesses across the SADC region, with key exports like crude oil, fertiliser, and agricultural products impacted, according to Mr Juan Lombaard, Head of Ocean Freight, DHL South Africa.

Mr Lombaard stressed the need for developing Southern African trade corridors to boost intraregional trade and reduce external shocks.

He highlighted the North South Corridor and the Trans Kalahari Corridor, which passes through Botswana, as crucial routes needing modernisation.

“Development of multiple corridors enhances our competitiveness and encourages equitable economic growth,” Lombaard said. The webinar aimed to identify solutions and highlight operational challenges affecting business in the region. **BOPA**

### BUSINESS BRIEFS

**Conference aims to attract global investors**

JOHANNESBURG

The sixth edition of the South African Investment Conference opened on Tuesday at the in Johannesburg, bringing together more than 1 000 delegates from over 50 countries and regions to explore investment opportunities. Addressing the event, South Africa President Cyril Ramaphosa said the conference provided a platform to showcase the country's investment potential and connect investors with concrete opportunities. President Ramaphosa noted that the global economic uncertainty persisted due to Middle East tensions, he said South Africa presented ‘a favourable proposition as a resilient, credible and reform-oriented investment destination. The conference is held under the ‘three Ds’ framework : decarbonization, digitisation and diversification with improving the ease of doing business as a cross-cutting priority. **Xinhua**

**Responsible AI development crucial for regional collaboration**

KIGALI

Delegates at the fourth East African Community (EAC) Regional Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) Conference have called for the responsible development of artificial intelligence (AI) and stronger regional collaboration to drive inclusive growth and innovation. The meeting, which opened on Monday in Kigali, Rwanda, brought together people from all walks of life, including government officials, legislators, academics, development partners, and private sector representatives, to explore AI opportunities while addressing risks related to governance, infrastructure, and skills across the region. **Xinhua**

**AfDB releases report on Africa economic performance**

ABIDJAN

The African Development Bank (AfDB) on Monday released in Abidjan its 2026 report on Africa's macroeconomic performance and outlook, indicating that the continent's GDP growth is estimated at 4.2 percent in 2025, up from 3.5 percent in 2024. Presenting the main findings of the report, AfDB President Sidi Ould Tah said that the improvement in growth was broadly shared across the continent. “Africa today accounts for 12 of the world's 20 fastest-growing economies in 2025, which is a source of pride for us,” he noted. According to the projections, the continent's economic growth is expected to reach 4.3 percent in 2026 and 4.5 percent in 2027, supported notably by private consumption, easing monetary conditions, and stronger external demand. However, these forecasts were made prior to the recent crisis in the Middle East, which could affect Africa's growth trajectory, Tah added. **Xinhua**

# Dikgang

PAMPIRI YA THUTO LE DIKITSISO

## IPAPATSE FA



LELE TSA

659 6315 | 625 0353 | 533 0379 | 297 8237  
261 0480 | 241 3402 | 365 3500



Dikereke, sepodisi le ba-na-le-seabe ba le kwa merapelong e e neng e rulagantswe ke komiti ya ipabalelo tseleng ya kgaolwana ya Gumare ka Labobedi, go rapela kgatllhanong le dikotsi tsa tsela ka malatsi a boikhutso a paseka. Kgosi Moitshepi Molelwa o gwethhile badirisi ba tsela go obamela melawana ya tsela le go kgweetsa ka keletlhoko go hema dikotsi. Senepe: Kedirebofe Pelontle

## Barutabana ba Borwa ba ipelela phenyo

Mmoniemang Motsamai

**BOKAA**

Barutabana ba sekole se segolwane sa Borwa Junior Secondary mo Kgatleng, ba akgoletswe go bereka ka natla, go bo sekole sa bone se dikile se dirile sentle thata mo ma duong a Junior Secondary ka ngwaga wa 2025.

Mo moletlong wa go lemoga tiro ya barutabana wa dietsele, dijo le dino, mogokgo wa sekole Mme Thatayothle Motswagothata o boletse fa go feta seelo sa kgaolo sa 40 per cent se ba neng ba se beetswe, ele maduo a go dira ka natla le go ithora boroko ga barutabana.

Mme Motswagothata a re moletlo wa go lemoga barutabana o bothokwa thata mo dinakong tsa gompiano tse go tsholediwa

maemo ma ditirong go seng bonolo.

A re ele barutabana ba Borwa ba bone gore ba iteboge gore ba tswelile ba tokafatsa maduo a tswelitseng ka go wela tlase lefatshe ka bophara. "Ke tsaya nako e go le leboga ka jaana ga go na se ke ka le se direlang, mme gore re bo re kgobokane fa go itumela, ke yone tebogo e kgolo e ke ka e kgonang, A re tsweleng go bopa bana mmogo," ga buwa jalo mme Mootswagothata.

Moeteledipele wa dikole tsa Dawn Bell Academy, Mme Ndiko Muzila ene o rotloeditse barutabana gore ba seka ba tsenwa ke boithobogo, ka fa tlase ga diemo tse di bokete tsa itsholelo, le gore ba eteletse Modimo mo go tsothle.

Mme Muzila o boletse fa go

ruta bana ba ba tswang kwa malwapeng a farologaneng go se bonolo, mme a lebegela popagano ya barutabana le go dira ka natla.

O ne a abela sekole mpho ya P10 000 gore ba ithuse mo go tse di tlhokwang, a ba a solofetsa fa atla nna a ba tela go iponela le go lemoga dikgwetho tse ba di ralalang.

Kgosi ya Bokaa, Kgosi Sue ene o boletse fa ele sekao sa dialogane sa sekole sa Borwa, mme a bolela fa sekole se se tswelitse ka go iteka go dira bontle.

Le ene o ne a opela barutabana legosi a re ba tswelile ba dira ka natla. Sekole sa Borwa se dikile se fetile seelo sa 40 per cent (pass rate) mo matshwaong a A, B, le C a baithuti ele selo se se neng se beetswe kgaolo ya thuto ya Kgatleng. **BOPA**

## 'Ipabaleleng tseleng'

Kedirebofe Pelontle

**GUMARE**

Kgosi Moitshepi Molelwa wa motse wa Gumare o gwethhile badirisi ba tsela go obamela melawana ya tsela le go kgweetsa ka keletlhoko go hema dikotsi.

A re bakgweetsi ba netefatse gore dikoloi di itekanetse le gore ba pege palo ya bapagami e e letlelesegang, a supa fa go ikaega ka thapelo go le gosi go sa lekana.

Kgosi Molelwa o buile se kwa merapelong e neng o rulagantswe ke komiti ya ipabalelo tseleng ya kgao ya Gumare ka Labobedi go rape kgatllhanong le dikotsi tsa tsela ka malatsi a boikhutso a paseka. Mookamela-sepodisi sa Gumare Superintendent Chenamo Orateng o gwethhile bakgweetsi go nna kelotlhoko ka go bo ditsela tsa kgaolo ya Okavango di sa teratelelwa ka jalo leruo le ka baka dikotsi mo tseleng, a tlatsa ka gore ba-tsamaya-ka-dinao le bone ba tsamaye ka fa lebogong le le tshwanetseng gore

ba bone dikoloi sentle.

Supt Orateng o supile fa mo ngwageng o o fetileng ba sepodisi ba gatisitse dintsho tse tharo tse di bakilweng ke dikotsi tsa tsela tse di masisi di le nne le dikgobalo tse di masisi di le nne mo kgaolwaneng ya Gumare.

Ka jalo o ne a re go bothokwa go rapela kgatllhanong le dikotsi tsa tsela ka di gapa matshelo a batlhokomedi ba malwapa ebile di tlogela bangwe ba nale bogole jo bogolo jaaka go latlhelgelwa ke dikarolo tsa mmele jaaka maoto le matsogo.

Modulasetilo wakomiti eo ya ipabalelo tseleng Rre David Moeng a re ba bonye go tshwanela go rulaganya thapelo eo e e akaretsang ba-nale-seabe botlhe.

A re dipalo tsa badirisi ba tsela di oketsega fela thata ka malatsi a boikhutso mme a re go bothokwa gore badirisi ba tsela ba rulaganye mesepele go sa le gale le go tsamaya ba ikhutsa fa ba nale letsapa go tla dikotsi tsa tsela. **BOPA**

## Sekole se tlaa bulwa

Esther Mmolai

**DITSHIPING**

Banni ba Ditshiping mo makgobokgobong a Okavango ba dumalane gore sekole sa bananyana se bulwe morago ga go tswalwa dikgwedi tse tharo ka ntlha ya dipharologanyo tsa bone.

Bangwe ba ne ba supa fa ba sa tlhale ba itumelela tirisanyo ya bone le mogwebi yo o ntseng a tsamaisa sekole seo mo dingwageng tse tlhano fa bangwe ba re o ka se tsamaisa gape ka jaana tseletso ya gagwe e shafaditswe.

Dipharologanyo tseo di ne tsa felela dibaka gore bangwe ba ikuele kwa ofising ya ga molaodi fa bangwe ba ne ba isa seelo sa bone kwa ofising ya Mosireletsi.

Ba ne ba ngongoregela gore bana ba runtshiwa tshwanelo ya bone ya go akola thuto, ka bangwe ba eteletsa dikgatllhego tsa bone kwa pele go na le tsa bana.

Tumelo ya bone e ne e le gore bana ba ka nama ba tswelitse ka go tsena sekole fa banni ba leka go rarabolola kgang ya gore sekole se tla tsamaisiwa ke mang ka bone ba sa tlhale ba batla tirisanyo le yo ntseng a se tsamaisa.

Ka jalo tshwetso ya go bula sekole e ne ya tsewa mo kgotleng morago ga gore lekoko le le akaretsang ofisi ya ga molaodi, ba bogosi le ba khansela ba rerisanyo le banni ka jaana le bone ba ne ba tshwenyega ka gore bana runtshiwa tshwanelo ya go akola thuto ka ntlha ya dipharologanyo tsa banni.

Le fa go ntse jalo, kgaruru e ne ya lara ka lobakanyana banni ba ipobola gore sekole se ka tsamaisiwa ke mang mme kwa bofelong ba dumalana go tsena mo ditlhophong tse di feletseng di neela lekgotla la Honey Guide Adventure Trust boikarabelo jwa go tsamaisa sekole.

Lekgotla leo le gaketse go

dirisanya le komiti ya ditlhabololo tsa motse ya Shorobe go emisa konteraka ya mogwebi yo ntseng a tsamaisa sekole, mme ba dira jalo ba setse tsamaiso morago le gone go dira tse di maleba gore fa paka ya bobedi ya sekole e simolola bana ba akole thuto.

E ne rile gole pele, mothusa molaodi, Mme Omphile Mogorosi a tlhalosa fa puso e rotloeditse gore ngwana mongwe le mongwe go sa kgathelesege gore o ko kae a tshwanela ke go akola thuto ka jalo a supa fa go tswalwa ga sekole e le go rontsha bana tshwanelo ya bone.

"Mo kgannyeng e le tshwanetse laa baya kwa pele dikgatllhego tsa bana ka jaana thuto e le yone konokono mo botsheleng. Le tshwanetse la bereka lo le seoposengwe gore le kgone go rarabolola dikgang tsa lona ka kagiso," a tlatsa jalo Mme Mogorosi a lebegela tshwetso e e tserweng ya go bulwa ga sekole.

Mogolwane wa boipelelo, Mme Iteleng Motsumi one a otlelela mafoko ao a tlhalosa fa go tlhabolola ga motho go raya thuto mme a supa fa go tswalwa ga sekole e le go rontsha bana tshwanelo ya thuto le go itlhabolola.

O tlhalositse fa ba ne ba shwafatsa tseletso ya mogwebi wa pele ka jaana gone go sena sekgoreletsi sepe mo go tse ba di rurifatsang pele ba ka ntsha tseletso. A re le ntsa tseletso ya mogwebi yoo e le mo tirisong, fa morafe o dumalana gore ga ba sa tlhale ba batla go tswelile le ene, ba ka emisa tirisanyo ba setse tsamaiso morago mme ba tsenya yo ba mmatlang.

Fa a garela kgang, Kgosi Oleyo Ledimo o ne a gatelela bothokwa jwa go dira se se maleba a tlatsa ka gore banni ba tshwanetse ba isa dilelo tsa bone kwa go tshwanetseng ba sa fapoge tsamaiso. **BOPA**

# Structural challenges demotivate staff

Goweditswe Kome  
**MASUNGA**

An assessment across government departments in Masunga has revealed that systemic challenges are affecting service delivery, particularly lack of progression, severe shortage of staff accommodation and staff shortages in key departments.

Addressing North East District full council meeting recently, Botswana Public Employees Union (BOPEU) Raphael Sikwane regional chairperson, Mr Tambona Jopi said other challenges were non-operational or inadequate transport.

He said dilapidated infrastructure, poor working conditions and staff overstay were another common challenge affecting service delivery across the entire district.

Mr Jopi stated that shortage of supplies, ICT equipment, shortage of office furniture, poor drainage and poor sanitation systems were challenges that could affect employees' mental health.

"There are also problems like irregular implementation of regulations that includes per diem, acting appointments and overtime

pay," he said adding that these challenges were directly impacting efficiency, morale and public service delivery in the district.

Moreover, Mr Jopi indicated that there were some critical government departments in the district that were highly impacted and specified that the Department of Wildlife and Natural Resources had four vehicles that were currently grounded, resulting in their daily operations being severely affected.

He said the department was in dire shortage of staff as there was no administration officer, revenue officer and support staff.

"There is no air conditioning, furniture is old, no office space, shortage of computers," he said, noting that the situation impacted human/wildlife protection, revenue collection and that field operations were almost paralysed.

Mr Jopi stated that at the Departments of Veterinary Services, and that of Crops and Animal Production, there were 67 employees, and six vacant posts, adding that the fleet had three vehicles which were not operational.

He said there was no revenue collector and that revenue collection



BOPEU Raphael Sikwane regional chairperson, Mr Tambona Jopi said poor working conditions and staff overstay were a common challenge affecting service delivery across North East District. Photo: Goweditswe Kome

work was being performed by veterinary officers.

Further, he said there was also severe office congestion as officers were sharing offices.

The impact has resulted in compromised agricultural support services to farmers affecting food security and rural livelihood development in the district, he said.

"At Masunga Senior Secondary School, 72 houses are fully occupied while 70 staff members are on the waiting list.

There are 21 vacant posts, and there is severe shortage of infrastructure like classrooms, boarding facilities, offices, office

equipment and 1 of 2 vehicles is defective," said Mr Jopi.

He noted that the challenges were undermining staff welfare and compromised the quality of education and pupil welfare.

On other issues, Mr Jopi said there were no fire services at the district council and no Emergency Medical Services at Masunga Primary Hospital.

He said this exposed the district to serious risks in cases of fire outbreaks, and increased risks to human life in the event of medical emergencies.

Mr Jopi also said delayed response to fires, accidents and medical

emergencies left communities vulnerable and unprotected.

For their part, councillors wanted to know whether the union had measures in place to protect its members from becoming financially embarrassed, especially since it also disbursed money to members through loans.

They also asked if BOPEU would consider selling shares to its members so that they could benefit from their membership through dividends. Kgosi Maruje III cautioned trade unions against what he termed animosity amongst them, calling for them to build and promote a sense of trust. **BOPA**

## Men face multifaceted violence from female partners

Marvin Motlhabane  
**MOSHUPA**

Men's Conference Botswana patron Mr Kgosietsile Ngakaagae has acknowledged that men in Botswana

experience various forms of violence from their female counterparts.

Responding to comments and questions from participants at the Pitso ya Borre held at Moshupa kgotla

on Saturday, Mr Ngakaagae who is also Director of Public Prosecution explained that violence against men was multifaceted.

"This included financial exploitation, where some women take full control of their partners' monthly income, as well as damaging social media posts intended to humiliate men."

He further disclosed that some men endure physical abuse, while others were denied access to their children.

In certain cases, he said former partners unilaterally change a child's surname to that of a new partner without the biological father's consent.

Mr Ngakaagae also pointed out that community leadership sometimes contributed to the perpetuation of gender-based violence (GBV).

He noted that nearly 95 per cent of such cases were withdrawn before reaching trial, as victims and

offenders often claimed they had reconciled.

In addition, Mr Ngakaagae warned young boys against engaging in criminal activities, emphasising that criminal convictions remained

on record unless one successfully applied for a presidential pardon.

Responding to a question on efforts by Botswana Prison Service (BPS) to discourage

young boys from crime, Assistant Superintendent Onkemetse Sabata of Moshupa Boys Prison said the service conducted public education campaigns to highlight the dangers of criminal conduct that could lead to imprisonment.

He added that BPS had a Psycho-Social Support Unit, which provided mental health, emotional and social assistance to inmates.

The unit aimed to support their rehabilitation, character development and successful reintegration into society.

Meanwhile, Moshupa District AIDS Coordinator, Mr Kebonyemodisa Watota raised

concern over teenage pregnancy in the district, revealing that 96 cases had been recorded from April 2025 to date.

Of these, 28 occurred in Moshupa, with the youngest girl being only 15 years old.

Mr Watota described the figures as alarming, especially alongside 1 362 cases of sexually transmitted infections recorded in the district, the majority among women.

He added that 4 219 people are currently on antiretroviral treatment, with 78 new enrolment between April and November 2025.

However, he expressed worry

that 674 people had defaulted on their treatment and urged the public to encourage them to resume.

In her remarks, Moshupa Senior Secondary School headteacher Ms Banabotlhe Chimbombi praised Kgosi Oscar Mosielele of Moshupa for partnering with Men's Conference Botswana to empower the boy child.

She noted that since the Men's Conference boot camp held earlier this year at the school, incidents of learner indiscipline had dropped sharply, with fewer than 10 cases recorded, all involving learners who did not participate in the boot camp. **BOPA**

Some men endure physical abuse, while others are denied access to their children

## Council approves recurrent budget to align strategies

Chendzimu Manyepedza  
**SELEBI PHIKWE**

Selebi Phikwe Town Council has unanimously approved recurrent budget for the 2026/27 financial year, which is P230,633,970.00, comprising P217,257,00.00 Revenue Support Grant and Own-Source Revenue of P13,376,970.00

The approval was made during a special full council meeting led by the Chairman of the Finance and Investment Committee, Councillor Stephen Nyoni recently.

Mr Nyoni stated that this reflected an increase compared

to the approved recurrent budget of the 2025/26 financial year that amounted to P183,191,390.00, comprising a Revenue Support Grant of P169,637,828.00 and Own-Source Revenue of P13,553,562.00.

Furthermore, he said the 2026/27 budget was set to align with the council's strategies, which identified priority areas, including the maintenance of infrastructure, the provision of essential public services, and social and community welfare support services, among others.

Mr Nyoni noted that due to budget constraints, the council was compelled to scale down

planned activities and strike a balance between limited financial resources and increasing demand for services.

"The council's liquidity position has been constrained due to a shortfall in both the revenue support grant and its own-source revenue, resulting in a persistent cash deficit in its recurrent account," said Mr Nyoni.

Mr Nyoni assured Batswana that despite these financial challenges, the council was committed to providing satisfactory services.

He also mentioned that to enhance its revenue base, several initiatives were being implemented, including revised

tariffs and the expansion of revenue collection points.

During the presentation, Mr Aron Sefho, the councillor for Kopano Ward, emphasised the need for council to evaluate its current expenditure practices.

He expressed concerns and suggested a comprehensive restructuring of the budget to improve overall efficiency and effectiveness.

Additionally, Mr Sefho proposed the consolidation of some budget votes, which could streamline operations and allow for more effective resource allocation in addressing community needs. **BOPA**

# Arts & Culture

## Christian community prepares for Easter

Moshe Galeragwe  
MOLEPOLOLE

With Easter weekend already here, churches will gather at designated locations to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ, marking the most significant, highly attended hopeful event of the Christian calendar.

As it is norm, different church denominations will be engaged in pilgrimages, travelling to various destinations to celebrating the life of Jesus Christ, symbolising victory over sin and death and offering hope for eternal life.

Hoping to reflect on Jesus' sacrifice, offer forgiveness and continue with the rest of the year on a clean slate with a renewed relationship with God and hope, Spiritual Healing Church worshipers, led by Bishop Joseph Motswasele will gather at Matsiloje for the profound religious commemoration of devotion in Christ.

The church's Secretary General, Reverend Baamogeleng Moteti has indicated that

between 3000 and 4000 congregants were expected gather in Matsiloje for the religious holiday.

Rev. Moteti said as it was always the case, the church was working closely with other concerned stakeholders in preparing for a memorable, safe, healthy and fulfilling Easter holiday.

Even though the primary focus was on the resurrection of Jesus Christ and following the Christian principles to the core, Rev Moteti said the church was equally concerned by the welfare, safety and health of the congregation, therefore the gathering was equally used as a platform to share impactful messages on among others livelihoods, social ills and health.

He said the church had been working closely with the Department of Roads and Transport Services (DRTS), preaching safe travel and Arrive Alive message.

Rev. Moteti appealed to the members of the congregation to remain calm, accordingly plan their travel, exercise care and caution while driving, more so that the road between Francistown and Matsiloje and other roads were not in a good state as they were covered with potholes while



Bishop Joseph Motswasele of Spiritual Healing Church

others were under construction.

Despite challenges of among others, shortage of water at Matsiloje, Mr Moteti was without doubt that the congregation would come prepared and the Easter gathering would be successful and memorable.

"As we gather at Matsiloje we are aware of other societal challenges such as crime and health issues as they always strike unannounced. We have a team of volunteers from the church who will be offering health services to the congregation, while other volunteers will be

offering security services. We are well prepared for any eventuality and we are working closely with the village leadership and the police," he said.

Rev. Moteti said each year, Bishop Motswasele prepares a special message to share with the congregation.

He said in the past, the church had been spreading messages on fighting gender based violence, health for all and other societal challenges.

Meanwhile, Bishop Keitumetse Moilwa

of Evangelical Religious Protestant (ERP) Unity Church said they would gather at Seherelela to celebrate Easter. Bishop Moilwa said the venue for Easter was rotational as the essence was to take the gospel to all corners of the country.

Bishop Moilwa said it was important to equally use such momentous gatherings to support and revive all branches of the church, and in the same way lure new members into Christianity.

She said the church was expecting branches from other countries such as Namibia and South Africa to gather at Seherelela.

"We expect a gathering of not less than 800 Unity Church members," she said.

Bishop Moilwa indicated that a few days prior to Easter, the church leader, Archbishop Tshenolo Mautle and some church elders would take an advance trip to the designated location of gathering to engage in prayer that would ensure safety and safe travel for the pilgrimage.

The Ambassadors Glorious Gospel Church, commonly known as Hand of God will gather at Mocha Lodge in Tshabong.

Senior Apostle Gideon Mose said it was the promise of Lord that he would bring salvation to the people, therefore the church would gather for Easter holidays as promise that the congregation members would continue serving him and doing as he had instructed. Apostle Mose said the church activities would start today after the arrival of their leader, Bishop Mbiganyi Philime and members from other branches of the church, followed by choir competitions tomorrow.

He said the first two days would be spent at the church following which the members would dismiss to continue Easter celebrations with friends and families.

**BOPA**

Kabelo Tiro, popularly known as 'Savenger', paying tribute to the late Gabriel "Phunya" Modise during a memorial service held at Mass Media Complex in Gaborone yesterday. Various speakers described Modise as a custodian of the arts, a versatile creative who executed his work diligently and a loving father. Tsoga Africa Theatre, where he was a director, also paid homage, vowing to continue his legacy. Modise, a celebrated content creator, television presenter, performing artiste, artistic director, script writer, poet and narrator died on March 28 after a short illness. He will be laid to rest in Gaborone on Saturday.  
Photo: Thompson Keobaletswe





**Ticket Prices**

**GENERAL STAND**

Day 1 – \$25  
(approximately BWP 331)

Day 2 onwards – \$35  
(approximately BWP 463)

# BNOC targets seven medals

Anastacia Sibanda  
GABORONE

Botswana National Olympic Committee (BNOC) is targeting seven medals at the coming Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games.

The games will be held from July 23 to August 2 and Team Botswana will compete Athletics, Boxing, Judo, Lawn Bowling, Weightlifting, and Swimming. The targeted seven medals comprises two Gold, two Silver and three Bronze.

Botswana has also assembled a youth team that will represent the country at the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games slated for October 31 to November 13. The team will compete in Athletics, Boxing, Judo, and Swimming.

Addressing a press conference, BNOC president, Tshepo Sitale said the Commonwealth Games bound team would be led by Tebogo Ntesang, while Master Luza would lead the Youth Olympics as Chef De Mission

Sitale said the two were chosen on merit, following a rigorous interview process.

BNOC chief executive officer, Dorothy Tlagae-Gaseitsiwe said the BNOC had submitted a proposed budget of over P16.5 million to Ministry of Sport and Arts toward preparations and participation in the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games.

She said the committee had so far received over P2.6 million.

“Follow-ups have been made, and the BNOC is currently awaiting feedback from the Ministry. The commonwealth sports also contributed supported preparations with a grant of P751, 000 which was used in the preparations,” she said.

Tlagae-Gaseitsiwe said part of the grant would go toward funding the Weightlifting team for their qualification events in Samoa on April 25 and Egypt on May 10 to 17.

She added that the plan was to organise training camp during the school holidays. Tlagae-Gaseitsiwe said the grant would also cater for athletes who would be participating at the Sepeng Invitational Challenge on April 5 to 8, and local training camp from June 22 to July 03.

Tlagae-Gaseitsiwe said the Debswana World Athletics Relays Gaborone 26 would also act as an important preparation event for the games.

Additionally, she said boxing was also assisted in preparing to participate at the U19 World Fixtures Cup in Bangkok, Thailand.

She added that Judo team recently participated in the Dakar African Open Judo Championships, while Bowling would have local training camps as well as being part of the Nest Training Clinic Indoor green in Pretoria, South Africa. **BOPA**



Botswana National Olympic Committee CEO, Dorothy Tlagae-Gaseitsiwe (left) and president, Tshepo Sitale during a media briefing in Gaborone on Tuesday. Tlagae-Gaseitsiwe said team Botswana would target seven medals at the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games scheduled for July 23 to August 2. Photo: Pheny Ramatu



Malak Macheng



Camilla Seetso



Tinashe Phatshwane



Angela Chakanyuka

## U-14 national tennis team in Egypt

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Botswana U-14 national tennis team is in Egypt for the ITF/CAT African Junior Championships on Clay Court (AJCCC) scheduled for April 6 to 11.

The continental event is one of the important competitions on the junior tennis calendar. It brings

together top young players from across Africa to battle for ranking points and continental honours.

Ahead of the main event, the team is participating in a warm up tournament, which kicked off yesterday and will run until Saturday.

Botswana Tennis Association (BTA) vice president, Nonofu Othusitse said the preparatory competition was expected to offer players practice on clay courts.

He said BTA was confident that the early exposure would enhance the players' readiness and sharpen their competitive edge. Othusitse further said BTA had sent a solid team, confident enough to fully compete with their peers.

The national squad consist of Tinashe Phatshwane, Malak Macheng, Camilla Seetso and Angel Chakanyuka.

Othusitse said the players had been training intensively in recent weeks, focusing on physical conditioning, technical drills, and tactical play suited for clay court tennis.

“The players have been part of the core national team for some time now and this makes us believe that the group has the potential to deliver strong performances and represent the country with pride,” he said.

Following the Egypt championships, Tinashe will head straight to the African Regional Training Centre (ARTC) in Tunisia, where he will be based following awarding of a scholarship by the ITF to study and play tennis.

He joins Malak at the same centre, who left early this year. The African Regional Training Centre is well known for producing top tennis players. **BOPA**