

BOTSWANA

Daily News

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Assistant Minister for State President, Defence and Security, Ms Maipelo Mophuting-Dikoloti (centre) being taken on a tour of Molepolole Prisons farm by senior officials after she unveiled the prison harvest and handed over livestock feed produced by Botswana Prison Service to Ministry of Lands and Agriculture on Tuesday. Botswana Prison Service has recorded a harvest worth more than P2 million during the 2025/2026 cropping season.

Prisons harvest exceeds P2m

Lindi Morwaeng
MOLEPOLOLE

The Botswana Prison Service has recorded an agricultural harvest worth more than P2 million during the 2025/2026 cropping season. The yield includes 3 000 bags of maize, 368 bags of sorghum, and 147 bags of beans, demonstrating how offender rehabilitation contributes to national food production and government cost savings.

Officially opening the Prison Harvest Day at Molepolole Prison on Tuesday, Minister of Justice and Correctional Services Mr Nelson Ramaotwana said the total harvest, valued at P2,044,568, reflected the government's continued investment in productive rehabilitation programmes. These initiatives equip inmates with practical skills while strengthening the country's food security. The minister said the harvest

also included 36 110 kilogrammes of vegetables, 3 542 kilogrammes of citrus fruits, and 20 000 kilogrammes of mixed livestock feed. All of these products have been supplied to prison kitchens or prepared for use, significantly reducing government expenditure on prisoners' upkeep. Mr Ramaotwana stated that agriculture remained one of the Botswana Prison Service's core rehabilitation programmes which

provided inmates with vocational skills that enabled them to earn an honest living after completing their sentences while contributing to the country's economic development. He noted that Botswana could no longer rely solely on mineral exports and imported food, stressing that agriculture was central to achieving economic diversification and long-term food security.

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University of Botswana first-year PhD Chemistry student, Ms Kgatlhogo Lentsokwane (centre) and Master of Science in Organic Chemistry student, Ms Debbie Thoje explaining to Minister of Communications and Innovation, Mr David Tshere a project to identify bioactive compounds in traditional medicinal plants during the launch of the Month of Science in Gaborone on Tuesday. Mr Tshere said the Month of Science reaffirmed government's commitment to making science, technology, innovation and indigenous knowledge systems key drivers of economic transformation and long-term prosperity. Photo: Pheny Moalosi

Science and innovation to drive long term prosperity

Lesedi Thatayamodimo
GABORONE

Government has reaffirmed its commitment to making science, technology, innovation and indigenous knowledge systems key drivers of economic transformation and long-term prosperity.

Speaking at the launch of the 2026 Month of Science in Gaborone on Tuesday, Minister of Communications and Innovation, Mr David Tshere said the event reaffirmed Botswana's commitment to harnessing research, innovation and indigenous knowledge to shape its future.

The 10th commemoration of the Month of Science was held under the theme: Harnessing Science, Technology, Innovation and Indigenous Knowledge for a Prosperous Botswana.

Mr Tshere said Botswana faced a rapidly changing global environment characterised by technological disruption, climate change, economic uncertainty and growing competition for talent and investment.

He said such challenges also presented opportunities to invest in

knowledge, innovation and skills.

Mr Tshere emphasised that science and innovation were essential to building a knowledge-based economy capable of creating high-value jobs, improving public services and strengthening national resilience.

Therefore, he said Botswana's development ambitions under Vision 2036, the Botswana Economic Transformation Programme and National Development Plan 12 required a shift from a mineral-dependent economy to one driven by productivity, innovation, entrepreneurship and exports.

Mr Tshere acknowledged that Botswana's research performance remained below expectations, with research and development expenditure below 0.5 per cent of GDP, compared to the African Union target of one per cent and the national target of two per cent.

He added that Botswana ranked 87th out of 139 countries in the 2025 Global Innovation Index, highlighting the need to commercialise research and create industries and jobs.

Minister Tshere cited the successful launch of Botswana's first satellite, BOTSAT-1, in 2025 as a milestone, saying it was already supporting agriculture, environmental monitoring, natural resource management and disaster response.

He also underscored the value of indigenous knowledge systems in agriculture, biodiversity conservation, healthcare and

climate adaptation, saying they should be integrated with modern scientific research to develop locally relevant solutions.

To strengthen the innovation ecosystem, he said government had established the National Research Fund and the Botswana Innovation Fund, while urging the private sector to invest in technology transfer, venture financing and research commercialisation.

The minister said government would continue prioritising sectors such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology, renewable energy, space science, digital technologies, health innovation and sustainable agriculture.

Meanwhile, he said the National Science Week would be held in Shakawe, where an aquaculture project led by the Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources would showcase how research could stimulate rural development, create jobs and improve food security.

Mr Tshere urged government, academia, industry and communities to work together to transform research into practical solutions that created employment, strengthen the economy and position Botswana as a leader in science and innovation.

He highlighted the National Research Agenda 2025–2030 and encouraged Batswana, particularly young people, researchers and entrepreneurs, to embrace science and innovation as pathways to opportunity and national development. **BOPA**

National Health Insurance reform takes shape

Lesedi Thatayamodimo
GABORONE

Government has taken a significant step toward achieving universal health coverage through the proposed National Health Insurance (NHI) Reform, a comprehensive transformation in health sector to ensure equitable, accessible and sustainable healthcare for all citizens.

Speaking during a media engagement in Gaborone on Wednesday, acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health, Dr Tshepo Machacha described the initiative as one of the country's most ambitious healthcare reforms.

"The National Health Insurance Reform is not merely establishing another health insurance scheme, rather, it is a comprehensive health system reform designed to help Botswana achieve universal health coverage," he said.

Dr Machacha said the reform sought to ensure every person in Botswana had access to quality healthcare services without suffering financial hardship.

He added that despite government remaining the primary healthcare financier, many households still incur substantial out-of-pocket medical expenses.

He said it would modernise healthcare financing, organisation and service delivery while creating an equitable, efficient and sustainable health system.

Although Botswana has made significant progress in improving life expectancy and controlling communicable diseases, Dr Machacha said the sector now faced challenges including unequal access to healthcare, inconsistent service quality, rising healthcare costs, increasing non-communicable diseases, technological advances, demographic changes and growing

public expectations.

Dr Machacha reaffirmed the ministry's commitment to transparency and stakeholder engagement throughout the reform process.

Senior Consultant for NHI, Ms Lydia Andries, reiterated that the reform fulfils government's commitment to universal health coverage by ensuring every Motswana can access quality healthcare regardless of financial status.

Ms Andries said the proposed system would strategically purchase healthcare services and reinvest public funds to improve service delivery and patient outcomes.

"We want to fund health outcomes rather than simply funding people to move through the system," she said.

Ms Andries said the healthcare system faced fragmented financing, weak cost controls, rising costs, healthcare worker shortages, drug stock-outs, delayed diagnostics and long waiting times.

She noted international studies estimate that between 20 and 30 per cent of healthcare expenditure was lost through fraud, waste and abuse.

Ms Andries said both public and private healthcare providers would be accredited against national standards under a phased approach.

She said the reform would strengthen primary healthcare, promote disease prevention, expand the use of digital technologies and make NHI compulsory for all citizens by pooling healthcare funding to ensure equitable access to quality services without financial hardship.

Ms Andries said consultations would continue throughout implementation to ensure the policy reflects stakeholders' needs. **BOPA**

Moswaane cautions youth against Ikageng dependency

Thamani Shabani
FRANCISTOWN

Youth have been cautioned against dependency on the Ipelegeng programme as it is a temporary safety net for those without any means of income.

The Francistown West Member of Parliament, also Assistant Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Mr Ignatius Moswaane cautioned the youth in his constituency during a one-day Youth Development Forum held in Gerald Estate on Monday.

He said the tendency of the youth to treat Ikageng programme as a source of income should end, warning that over-reliance on the programme was unsustainable even if government increased the allowance.

He urged the youth to utilise other government programmes such as CEDA and the Youth Development Fund to start businesses, and warned them against people who mislead them that they would go to prison for failing to repay loans. Mr Moswaane also advised youth to reduce the time they spend on Facebook.

Also addressing the forum, Principal Technical Officer in the Ministry of Agriculture, Mr Ishmael Balolami, said the Artificial

Insemination (AI) training fee had been increased to P4,520 advising that those trained could offer AI services as a business.

Senior Agricultural Engineer, Mr Resego Thebe, encouraged youth to form associations and venture into vegetable production using methods such as tunnel farming for better production and eventually reducing the import bill. Gerald Estate Court President, Kgosi Motlatsi Kediseng said crime was on the rise in the area due to unemployment.

Some participants also shared their views. Ms Lilian Zwitebu, agreed that the Ikageng allowance was only a stop-gap measure, with most of it going towards basic necessities almost immediately.

While Mr Aobakwe Jack said he used Facebook to improve his life and also urged his peers to use it productively. Mr Cowboy Mabiza expressed disappointment that many youths did not attend the forum, adding that as such, they had missed an opportunity that could have added value to their lives.

The purpose of the forum was to equip the youth with information on government programmes and alternative opportunities for self-employment and sustainable livelihoods. **BOPA**

Govt targets road and utility delays with new legislation

Gaolethoo Kgatitswe
MAUN

Persistent delays on major infrastructure projects, from land disputes to poor utility coordination, could soon be a thing of the past as government drafts the Construction Industry Authority Bill to streamline development nationwide.

Assistant Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Mr Keoagile Atamelang, announced the proposed legislation on Tuesday during an inspection of the 25km Maun internal roads project.

Mr Atamelang explained that the bill formed part of broader reforms designed to improve coordination within the construction sector and ensure that projects were completed efficiently and on schedule.

He noted that experiences from

ongoing projects across Botswana had exposed recurring obstacles that required legislative intervention, including land expropriation processes, contractor licensing, inadequate quarry resources and poor coordination among utility service providers.

“The Construction Industry Authority Bill seeks to address these challenges by creating a framework that improves coordination and streamlines processes involved in project implementation,” he said.

He added that the proposed law would specifically strengthen collaboration among utility providers and ensure that their services complemented infrastructure development rather than delaying progress.

The inspection in Maun was part of a broader nationwide tour by the ministry to identify implementation bottlenecks on

the ground and develop practical solutions to accelerate completion.

Despite the challenges encountered, Mr Atamelang commended the contractors, consultants and government officials working on the projects for their continued commitment.

During the visit, local officials highlighted the practical impact of the systemic issues. North West District Council engineer, Mr Juluka Zambezi, appealed to the ministry to incorporate stormwater drainage systems and streetlights directly into future road construction projects.

“If these components are incorporated during road construction, it will significantly improve infrastructure development and service delivery within our communities,” Mr Zambezi said, noting that while integral to road design, such

infrastructure remained difficult for councils to implement later due to limited financial resources.

Giving an update, project engineer, Mr Unoziba Sesenyi said the Maun internal roads project was currently at 64 per cent completion, running approximately 14 per cent behind schedule.

He attributed the delays largely to unresolved land acquisition matters that had blocked access to certain sections.

Mr Sesenyi added that 77 properties affected by the project had been identified, with 27 property owners already compensated and awaiting relocation.

He said valuation reports for 39 properties were complete, five properties were yet to be assessed and three landowners had objected compensation offers and that prompted the ongoing engagement with the landboard to resolve the disputes.

He added that while outstanding works included curbstone

installation, asphalt surfacing, splash drains and paved walkways, construction on roads seven and 11 had been suspended entirely because pending land expropriation processes prevented contractor access.

To recover lost time, Mr Sesenyi said the contractor was preparing a revised catch-up programme, which included deploying additional plant and equipment, mobilising an asphalt plant and strengthening collaboration with the landboard and utility providers, including Botswana Power Corporation, Water Utilities Corporation and BOFINET, to speed up service relocations.

Responding to the concerns, Mr Atamelang acknowledged that land matters were highly sensitive and required careful handling, reiterating that the forthcoming Construction Industry Authority Bill was expected to deliver the structural reforms needed to resolve such hurdles and improve project delivery across the country.

BOPA



Assistant Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Mr Keoagile Atamelang (third left) and other officials during an inspection of the 25km Maun internal roads project on Tuesday. He said government was developing the Construction Industry Authority Bill to address persistent bottlenecks delaying infrastructure projects, including land acquisition, contractor licensing and poor coordination among utility service providers. Photo: Gaolethoo Kgathitswe

Prisons harvest exceeds P2 million

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The minister added that government was committed to increasing agriculture’s contribution to Gross Domestic Product from below two per cent to more than six per cent by 2036 through the Botswana Economic Transformation Programme and National Development Plan 12.

He called on all Batswana to support the country’s drive towards modern, climate-resilient, and commercially competitive agriculture.

Mr Ramaotwana said the Prison Service had embraced climate-smart agriculture through improved seed varieties, mechanisation, efficient water use, drip irrigation, and sound soil management practices.

He noted that these initiatives not only increased productivity but also equipped inmates with marketable agricultural skills to enhance their successful reintegration into society.

He further revealed that the Botswana Prison Service had established 528 community reintegration committees across the country to support former inmates after their release.

As a result, the recidivism rate has declined to nine per cent, with only 45 of the 489 inmates who completed rehabilitation programmes during the 2025/2026 period returning to prison after committing new offences.

Earlier, Botswana Prison Service Commissioner Anthony Mokento said the harvest celebration recognised the important contribution correctional facilities made toward national food production while showcasing the success of offender rehabilitation programmes.

He stated that correctional services were built on three pillars: custodial services, rehabilitation, and reintegration.

Rehabilitation focuses on equipping offenders with practical and vocational skills to enable them to become productive citizens after serving their prison terms.

Commissioner Mokento said communities also had a

responsibility to support former inmates after their release, citing several success stories of ex-offenders who have established businesses and were now employing others.

Among them is an elderly man who, after serving more than 30 years in prison, started a carpentry business and is now undertaking residential housing projects.

Similarly, former offenders in Francistown and Mahalapye have established businesses employing eight and six people respectively.

He said the Prison Service introduced the harvest celebrations after recognising the growing impact of its agricultural rehabilitation programme, noting that Molepolole Prison’s maize production has increased from about 600 bags in 2012 to more than 2 500 bags this year.

Commissioner Mokento stated that the Prison Service was utilising every available piece of land to produce food for inmates while contributing to the national food basket. He expressed confidence that production would exceed 3,500 bags next year.

Seed Co Botswana representative Mr Dialwa applauded the partnership between the company and the Botswana Prison Service, saying it has transformed agricultural production at Molepolole Prison.

He noted that maize production has increased by 400 per cent, from 600 bags in 2012 to 2 500 bags, demonstrating both the fertility of Kweneng soils and Botswana’s potential to produce enough food to feed the nation.

Mr Dialwa said Seed Co had supplied the HCS55 maize variety, which was specifically selected for its ability to withstand drought conditions while maintaining high yields.

Molepolole North Member of Parliament Mr Arafat Khan commended the Botswana Prison Service for its outstanding rehabilitation work and its contribution to agricultural production, saying the skills imparted to inmates would help them rebuild their lives after serving their sentences.

BOPA

UNICEF injects P600,000 to support BOTEPSCO

Mpho Mosojane
GABORONE

Classrooms across Botswana are set to benefit from a new P600,000 funds injection that the United Nations Children’s International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) awarded to the Botswana Teaching Professionals Council (BOTEPSCO) to fast-track the professionalisation of local educators.

The collaboration, a formalised partnership through a Joint Work Plan aims at advancing teacher leadership and continuous education and modernising

classrooms through safe digital spaces.

Speaking at the launch, acting UNICEF representative for Botswana, Dr Kimanzi Muthengi highlighted that BOTEPSCO’s mandate and UNICEF’s vision were mutually aligned through shared goals of inclusive education and quality teaching.

“BOTEPSCO promotes continuous professional development, supporting UNICEF’s mission to ensure every child realises their right to equitable, high-quality schooling. Furthermore, BOTEPSCO regulates professional and ethical standards for educators, aligning with UNICEF’s vision that effective teachers are the core drivers of student success and educational transformation,” he said.

Dr Muthengi further highlighted that the investment in teacher development subscribed to UNICEF’s principle of investing in environments that ensured all children existed in an ecosystem that was safe and protected.

“Schools are part of institutions and legal systems that must maintain high levels of staff suitability, safety and supervision of children. Through this initiative, we have intentionally invested in teacher development to ensure we produce care-takers with high integrity and are fit and proper to be custodians of children,” he added.

One of the objectives of the funding is to improve digital literacy of teachers in an effort to improve student engagement and build career-ready skills through integrating digital technology in the learning space, supporting mental well-being, and preparing students for a modern workforce.

According to BOTEPSCO founding CEO and registrar, Dr Raphael Dingalo, BOTEPSCO would run a series of national outreach workshops for more impactful teacher uptake of the digital learning passport as well as advancing teacher registration.

“We want to create professionals who are skilled to operate in a modern world by equipping them with knowledge, skills and confidence to use technology. Targeting at least 8 000 teachers, we plan to run workshops face-to-face so that we can effectively cast our net for a wider outreach and part of the funds will be used to facilitate logistics and travel,” Dr Dingalo said.

He further emphasised the vital role that teachers played in today’s evolving, fast-paced world, by inspiring learners through change, building critical thinking skills and shaping good citizens, hence the need to strengthen the framework ensuring that all practicing educators met high professional competence and accountability requirements.

BOPA

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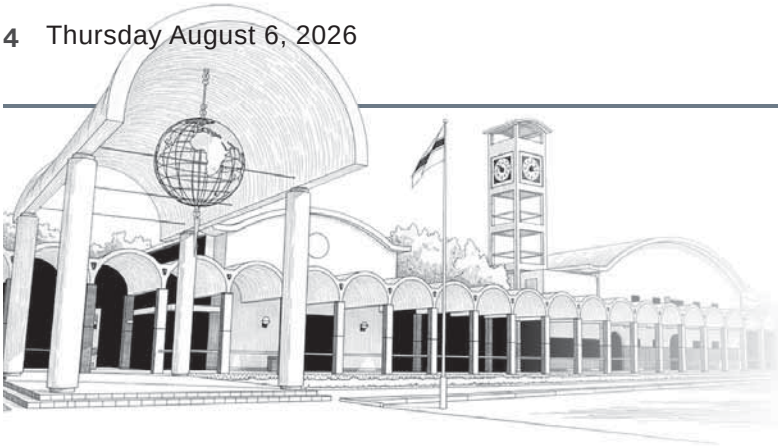
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PARLIAMENT 2026

Mmolotsi proposes establishment of rehabilitation facility

GABORONE

Francistown South MP and Minister of Environment and Tourism, Mr Wynter Mmolotsi, has called for the establishment of a rehabilitation facility to help break cycles of gambling addiction in Botswana.

Speaking in Parliament on Tuesday during debate on the Gambling Amendment Bill, Mr Mmolotsi said many countries already run such facilities to help people stop compulsive betting, recover, and rebuild their lives.

The bill was presented by Minister of Trade and Entrepreneurship, Mr Tiroeane Ntsima, and seeks to amend the Gambling Authority Act to align Botswana with international standards.

Mr Mmolotsi said stronger monitoring systems were also needed to oversee gambling activities. He noted that in some countries, systems track the time spent gambling, every bet placed and how games were played, which helped curb addiction.

“In other countries, such systems detect the time taken, every bet placed, how is the game played and thus help to curb addiction,” he said.

He added that the Gambling Authority should be modernised and that responsible gambling programmes should be expanded.

Mr Mmolotsi said adopting advanced technology would require robust player protection, strict anti-money laundering controls, and transparent digital oversight.

He welcomed the amendment, saying it would align the Gambling Authority with the Financial Intelligence Act and Financial Action Task Force standards. He recalled that Botswana was once grey-listed because existing laws did not do enough to stop illegal cash flows.

Moshupa/Manyana MP, Mr Karabo Gare, said the amendment was relevant because previous gaps had contributed to Botswana being blacklisted over money laundering concerns. He said responsible gambling was a global priority and Botswana must create a safer environment.

Mr Gare supported expanding the scope of the bill to cover new games that created opportunities for money laundering. However, he opposed the proposal to lower the legal gambling age from 21 to 18.

“When a person is still 18, he or she cannot make informed decisions, hence they end up being addicted to the game,” he said.

Kgatleng Central MP, Mr Mpho Morolong, said public education was essential to

promote responsible play and protect vulnerable groups, especially youth.

“Gambling should be taught as entertainment rather than a way to make money,” he said.

Mr Morolong also called for counselling services and early identification systems to help at-risk players regain control.

Tlokweneng MP, Mr Pheny Segokgo, described the bill as important for economic growth. He said gaming facilities can create jobs and stimulate the economy.

“This is the right bill aimed to assist in job creation and revival of our economy, which is shaking at the moment,” Mr Segokgo said.

He added that Botswana should consider adopting aspects of the American system where laws do not conflict with existing ones, and suggested exploring a 24-hour betting economy to liberalise the sector.

The Gambling Amendment Bill seeks to modernise regulation, strengthen oversight, and bring Botswana’s gambling laws in line with global anti-financial crime standards. **BOPA**

Members of Parliament have expressed differing opinions on an urgent motion calling on government to authorise the recruitment of able-bodied casual labourers aged 60 and above during emergencies, including the current Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak.

Debating the motion tabled by Shoshong MP Mr Moneedi Bagaisamang on Tuesday, several MPs argued the proposal was unnecessary, while others backed it and urged for a wider scope.

Okavango West MP Mr Kenny Kapinga said he did not support the motion, calling it lacking in substance.

“The minister should engage casual labourers if the budget allows,” Mr Kapinga said.

He noted that FMD had impoverished communities that depend on livestock and urged government to deploy casual labourers to maintain cordon fences to curb the spread of the disease.

Tswapong South MP Dr



Parliament has adopted an urgent motion tabled by MP for Shoshong, Mr Moneedi Bagaisamang, calling on government to consider recruiting able-bodied casual labourers aged 60 years and above during emergencies such as FMD outbreaks.

Parliament backs use of over-60s as casual labourers in emergencies

Ketshepile More
GABORONE

Parliament has adopted an urgent motion calling on government to authorise the recruitment of able-bodied casual labourers aged 60 years and above during national emergencies.

The motion, tabled by Shoshong MP, Mr Moneedi Bagaisamang on Tuesday, cited the current Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak as an example where older citizens could be engaged to erect fences.

Mr Bagaisamang argued that such recruitment should not be left to the discretion of accounting officers, but be provided for in law to cover future emergencies.

“These citizens are essential in



MP for Shoshong
Mr Moneedi Bagaisamang

emergencies like the current FMD outbreak where they could be engaged to erect fences,” he said.

The motion received wide

support across the House.

Minister of Lands and Agriculture and Goodhope-Mmathethe MP Dr Edwin Dikoloti said employing retired citizens as fence erectors would bring multiple benefits.

“Engaging retired citizens comes with vast experience and knowledge, community ownership, reliable manpower, as well as responsibility and maturity,” Dr Dikoloti said.

He added that the retirees would also provide mentorship to younger workers, having expertise in various fields. The physical work, he noted, could also help the elderly stay active and reduce the risk of non-communicable diseases.

Gaborone Bonnington North MP and Assistant Minister for State President, Defence and Security Ms Maipelo Mophuting-Dikoloti said the proposal aimed to ‘maximise the contributions of older citizens, uphold their dignity and strengthen the national response in times of need.’

“This motion recognises that older individuals remain capable and eager to serve when given the opportunity. Age should not determine an individual’s ability to contribute to national development,” Ms Mophuting-Dikoloti said.

She said many elderly citizens have decades of experience in labour-intensive sectors such as agriculture and construction, and their value lies in their work ethic, resilience and experience. She urged government to match older workers with suitable tasks and to use them to mentor younger workers.

Lentsweletau-Lephephe MP Mr Tshenolo Bogatsu said retired citizens were well placed to coordinate tasks during emergencies.

“They have the interest, passion and the know-how,” he said.

Molepolole South MP Mr Shima Monageng also backed the motion, saying the age group has deep knowledge of cattle movement and local terrain, which would be valuable in responding to the FMD outbreak. He further urged that local traditional authorities be involved in the recruitment process. The motion was adopted by Parliament. **BOPA**

MPs divided over motion to recruit over 60 years as labourers

Esther Mmolai
GABORONE

Kesitegile Gobotswang also questioned the need for the motion, saying a budget had already been allocated for such recruitment.

“Bringing the motion to Parliament is an indication that the ministry is failing to take decisions that are elementary,” Dr Gobotswang said.

He compared it to the Ikageng Programme, which already engages people of all ages in community projects.

In his constituency, Dr Gobotswang added, residents had mobilised volunteer initiatives to de-bush, erect and repair veterinary cordon fences.

Kanye North MP Mr Prince Mosanana supported the motion but said recruitment should extend beyond FMD to other emergencies such as floods and veld fires.

He also called for younger volunteers to be considered, noting that some people under 60 are already helping to open and clear roads.

“Containment measures brought social events to a standstill as parents could not sell their cattle to fend for their families because the government has banned slaughtering of animals,”

Mr Mosanana said.

He commended traditional leaders for mobilising communities, citing Kgosi Malope II’s instruction to the newly launched Maisantwa regiment to assist with fence erection.

Mr Mosanana further appealed to residents to stop vandalising newly erected fences, saying such acts undermine efforts to contain the disease.

Tati West MP and Assistant Minister of Basic Education and Child Welfare Mr Justin Hunyepa also welcomed community involvement. He said residents and some mephato in Tati West were mending veterinary fences using their own resources.

“Giving the volunteers an allowance, as the motion proposed, would indeed motivate them, as they would see that government recognises their efforts,” Mr Hunyepa said.

The motion highlights ongoing community pressure to contain the FMD outbreak, with MPs urging government to fast-track deployment of labour and resources to protect rural livelihoods and commercial farming. **BOPA**

Air Botswana terminates Durban and Windhoek routes

GABORONE

Air Botswana has terminated flights to Durban and Windhoek less than a year after launch, citing low passenger numbers, aircraft groundings and crew shortages.

Answering in Parliament on Monday, Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Mr Noah Salakae said the national carrier launched Gaborone-Durban on December 4, 2024 and Gaborone-Windhoek on November 29, 2024, after securing permits from civil aviation authorities in Botswana, South Africa and Namibia.

Both routes have since been closed. The Durban service ended on October 5, 2025 after carrying 3,432 passengers. The Windhoek service ended on August 15, 2025 with 3,061 passengers carried.

“The flights were operated by 70-seat ATR72-600 aircraft at very low average passenger numbers per flight,” Mr Salakae said. The minister said Air Botswana has been experiencing irregular operations due to a shrinking operational fleet.

Out of a total fleet of 6 aircraft, E170 has been grounded pending engine overhaul and a mandatory 15 000-hour maintenance check, while ERJ145 was grounded in Namibia pending engine and APU repairs. Only two were operational in July 2025 after one went for a C-check.

“Financial constraints were causing long delays to bring



Minister of Transport and Infrastructure
Mr Noah Salakae

aircraft to an operational state,” Mr Salakae said.

The airline is also facing a pilot shortage due to high turnover. Eleven pilots resigned between January and June 2026 for reasons including better offers elsewhere and personal reasons.

Recurrent training was further delayed by the Middle East war, where ATR72-600 pilots were being trained. The minister



Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Mr Noah Salakae has told Parliament that Air Botswana has terminated flights to Durban and Windhoek less than a year after launch.

added there was also a shortage of simulator examiners at the alternate training institution in Bangkok, which left some pilots grounded with expired licenses while waiting for slots.

On finances, Mr Salakae said the latest audited statements were for 2021/22. The airline changed auditors from Ernst and Young, 2019 to 2021, to KPMG, 2022 to 2024. Delays in subsequent audits

were due to procurement of new auditors and the time needed for their first engagement.

Despite the challenges, the minister said Air Botswana had invested about P355.9 million in fleet renewal over the past five years. “While the investment has strengthened the airline’s term operational capacity, the financial benefits have not yet been fully realised due to aircraft groundings

and global supply chain constraints affecting recovery of the aviation industry following the COVID-19 pandemic,” he said.

The update followed questions from Serowe South MP Mr Leepetswe Lesedi, who asked about route authorizations, ticket sales, causes of delays and cancellations, last audited accounts, and spending on new aircraft versus profit margins. **BOPA**

Land and lease challenges delay Bonno rollout

GABORONE

Full implementation of the Bonno National Housing Programme in Serowe District has stalled due to land-related challenges, including undetailed and unsurveyed plots, Parliament heard on Monday.

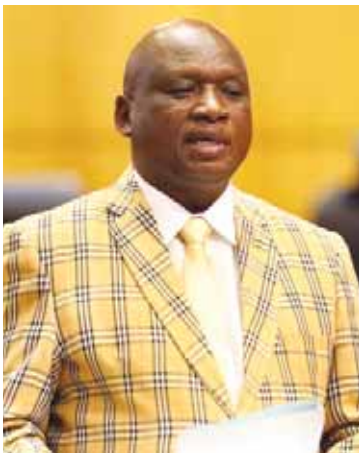
Minister of Water and Human Settlement, Mr Onneetse Ramogapi, told MPs that other factors delaying the programme include slow approval of survey diagrams, a general shortage of residential land, and the omission of the government lease template from the land information system.

He said the delays have directly affected the timely issuance of land leases, which investors need to take possession of allocated land and begin construction.

“The timely issuance of leases is a critical prerequisite, as it enables investors to take possession of the allocated land and commence housing development,” Mr Ramogapi said.

To resolve the bottlenecks, the ministry has established a joint technical team made up of officials from the ministry, the Office of the District Commissioner, relevant land boards, the Department of Surveys and Mapping, and district councils.

The team has been tasked with expediting surveying, allocation and lease processing for 357



Minister of Water and Human Settlement
Mr Onneetse Ramogapi

plots already set aside in Serowe District. It will also work to secure additional land to support the continued rollout of the Bonno Programme. According to the minister, the 357 plots have been allocated to five investors. The breakdown is 90 plots in Serowe North, 137 in Serowe South, and 130 in Serowe West.

At Mmashoro village, the land board offered 98 plots. An investor was allocated 50 based on assessed financial capacity. The remaining plots will be considered for other qualified investors once identified. Construction will begin once leases are issued.

“The allocation has been limited to 357 plots due to shortage of available and serviceable land within the district,” Mr Ramogapi explained.

The ministry, he added, remained committed to expanding the programme and increasing housing delivery as more land becomes available. However, not all listed villages attracted investor interest under the Bonno Programme. Mr Ramogapi attributed this to geographical location and low housing demand, which affected commercial viability for private sector investment.

He noted that the affected areas also face an acute shortage of housing, particularly for public officers. To address this, the ministry is engaging the Serowe District Council to determine the precise housing demand in those villages. The goal is to invite expressions of interest from private investors to develop rental housing for public officers.

Mr Ramogapi was responding to a question from Serowe West MP, Mr Onalepelo Kedikilwe. The MP sought clarity on timelines for the start of house construction under the Bonno Programme in Serowe, the ministry’s housing delivery targets for the district, and when an investor would be appointed for Serowe West to begin operations. **BOPA**

Green Book undergoes review

GABORONE

The Green Book an administrative manual intended to provide consolidated guidance on the extension of privileges and benefits to some selected public office holders is being reviewed.

Answering a question in parliament on Monday, the Assistant Minister for State President and Security, Ms Maipelo Mophuting-Dikoloti said the latest version was revised in August 2014 but printed and circulated for use starting in September 2014.

The Green book, according to the assistant minister covered the President the President, Vice President, Speaker, Ministers, Deputy Speaker, Assistant Ministers and the Leader of Opposition. She said it also covered former presidents, assistant ministers and former leader of the opposition and where relevant their spouses.

The assistant minister said those who were covered in the Green Book were also in a position to refer to its contents for appreciation of how they were to be facilitated.

Ms Mophuting-Dikoloti said that the Green Book existed in countries such as United Kingdom and might have inspired introduction of the same in Botswana, modelled differently to serve different purposes. The assistant minister was responding to a question from the MP of Okavango East, Mr Gabatsholwe Disho who had asked the minister what governed the conditions of service, benefits and privileges of the President and other public office holders.

He wanted to know if it was developed specifically for Botswana’s post-independence governance framework or was substantially based on colonial administration policies inherited at independence.

Mr Disho also wanted to know whether government has undertaken any comprehensive review of the Green Book since independence to ensure that it reflected Botswana’s current economic realities, constitutional values and principles of good governance and if not, whether there were plans to review and modernise the Green Book, if so, when. **BOPA**



BPOPF on track for P130 billion assets target

Lorato Gaofise
GABORONE

Botswana Public Officers Pension Fund (BPOPF) is on course to achieve its strategic target of P130 billion in assets under management by March 2027 after growing its assets from P116.38 billion in 2025 to P128.3 billion in 2026, representing growth of about 10.2 per cent.

Addressing a media briefing in Gaborone on Monday on the Fund's 2025/26 performance, BPOPF chief executive officer, Ms Kwenantle Otukile, said the growth reflected strong investment performance, supported by continued contributions and healthy investment returns.

She said the Fund had maintained a diversified asset allocation strategy, demonstrating disciplined investment management while pursuing sustainable returns for members and making steady progress towards its strategic growth target.

She said the Fund was on track to achieve its strategic target of P130 billion in assets under management by March 2027, and they remained confident that, together with the board, service providers and partners the objective would be attained.

Ms Otukile said the Fund's active and deferred portfolio recorded an interest rate of 11.10 per cent during the 2026 financial year, up from 6.4 per cent in 2025. The pre-retirement switch portfolio improved from 6.12 per cent to 8.27 per cent, while the Tshomarelo Member Choice portfolio increased from 6.53 per cent to 10.75 per cent.

She said the improved returns enabled members to benefit from favourable market performance while maintaining a balanced risk profile.

On service delivery, Ms Otukile said member satisfaction remained one of the Fund's key performance indicators, with the annual customer satisfaction survey recording 86.31 per cent against a target of 80 per cent.

"This result demonstrates the effectiveness of the Fund's service delivery and member engagement initiatives," she said.

Contributions remained a key driver of the Fund's growth as they were invested to generate returns for members. Contributions received during the 2025/26 financial year were almost at the same level as those received in the previous year.

Regarding benefits, Ms Otukile said retirements increased by 42 per cent compared to the previous year, largely due to a significant number of long-serving public officers retiring with high-value benefits.

She said death benefits rose by 45 per cent, while transfer-outs increased by 56 per cent, resulting in an overall 39 per cent increase in benefits paid during the year.

Despite the higher benefit payments, she said the Fund remained financially sound and continued to meet all member obligations as they fell due.

Ms Otukile also said the Fund remained compliant with Pension Prudential Rule No. 2 (PFR2) requirements set by the Non-Bank Financial Institutions Regulatory Authority and continued to repatriate offshore investments through a structured approach while maintaining targeted returns.

"As of March 2026, the Fund had reached 46.21 per cent against a target of 47 per cent and is on course to achieve full compliance by December 2026," she said.

She added that the Fund

maintained a funding level of about 103 per cent, reflecting a strong financial position and prudent management of members' investments.

Although investment activities resulted in costs, Ms Otukile said the Fund continued to keep its asset management cost ratio below one per cent despite a slight increase during the year due to expanded investment management activities.

She further said the Fund had implemented several new investment mandates under its

incubation programme to support the development of local capital markets and service providers.

In addition, BPOPF completed the rollout of new digital service channels and established strategic partnerships to strengthen member education while enhancing service delivery and customer satisfaction.

Ms Otukile said the 2026/27 financial year marked the final year of the Fund's current five-year strategic plan, with preparations already underway to develop the next strategic roadmap. **BOPA**



Botswana Public Officers Pension Fund (BPOPF) board chairperson, Ms Gaone Macholo (left), chief executive officer, Ms Kwenantle Otukile (centre) and director corporate communication, Mr Alan Ranthepeha during the fund's performance briefing in Gaborone on Monday. Ms Otukile said the BPOPF assets growth of 10.2 per cent reflected strong investment performance, supported by continued contributions and healthy investment returns. Photo: Gaseitsiwe Moruakgomo

Kanye records high uptake of Poultry Financial Suite

Marvin Motlhabane
KANYE

The Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA) in Kanye has recorded strong uptake of its new Poultry Financial Suite, with 64 project applications worth P829,367.04 submitted since the product launched. Of those, 44 projects have been approved at a combined value of P456,025.82, according to CEDA Kanye Branch Manager Mr Tuelo Rabaloi.

Mr Rabaloi said the response showed growing interest among local entrepreneurs in poultry production as a viable business.

"We have received a great turnout of applicants who showed interest in the new Poultry Financial Suite," Rabaloi said in an interview.

He said the branch is now at

the stage of disbursing funds and settling payments to suppliers in line with contractual agreements signed with successful clients.

The revamped Poultry Financial Suite was launched in May 2026 to boost citizen participation, food security and local production across the poultry value chain.

The suite provides targeted financing for broiler and layer chicken farming, indigenous chicken production, hatcheries, abattoirs and processing, feed mills, informal and micro businesses, cooperatives and a Project Preparation Fund.

Mr Rabaloi said the suite also aimed to create employment and reduce reliance on poultry imports.

He said financing covered infrastructure and equipment such as drinkers, feeders, housing

and water systems, as well as working capital for day-old chicks, feed, labour, utilities, vaccines, biosecurity materials and other inputs.

"Once funds are released and suppliers paid, the approved beneficiaries are expected to begin operations, contributing to food production and job creation in the area and surrounding communities," he added.

Disbursements, he said were made directly to suppliers and released progressively once each stage of a project has been verified and approved.

He said CEDA continued to process the remaining applications and would monitor implementation of approved projects to ensure the intended economic impact is realised. **BOPA**

BUSINESS SERVICES

Rwanda-EU deal to boost climate-smart agriculture

KIGALI - Rwanda and the European Union recently signed a financing agreement for €40 million (about 67 billion Rwandan francs) to support Rwanda's efforts to transform the agriculture sector into a modern, inclusive, and climate-resilient sector. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning said in a statement that the agreement, titled: **HANGARIBIHE: Transformational Climate-Smart and Inclusive Agriculture in Rwanda**, is a five-year program.

The programme will provide 36 million euros in budget support to strengthen national agriculture and environment sector priorities, alongside four million euros in complementary support for technical assistance, capacity building, and studies, according to the statement. Rwanda Minister of Finance and Economic Planning said in the statement. **Xinhua**

Somalia seeks blue economy investments

MOGADISHU - Somalia's inaugural maritime conference kicked off in the capital, Mogadishu, on Tuesday, with President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud calling on global investors to unlock the untapped potential of the country's maritime sector. The two-day conference aims to spearhead a national shift to unlock Somalia's vast blue economy, boost maritime trade, and secure its territorial waters. Mohamud, who officially opened the forum, highlighted Somalia's vast potential for investment and development in the maritime and blue economy sectors. The president said that the country's extensive maritime domain is a vital strategic asset capable of driving economic growth, creating jobs and enhancing regional connectivity. **Xinhua**

Iraq-Türkiye to offer trade alternative

ANKARA - As Iraq and Türkiye move to advance the Development Road Project, a flagship infrastructure project aimed at strengthening trade links between the Gulf and Europe, analysts view the ambitious corridor as a strategic alternative to vulnerable maritime chokepoints, though financing gaps and persistent security challenges could hamper its progress. The US\$17-billion project, a road, rail and pipeline corridor linking the Al-Faw Grand Port in southern Iraq with Europe via Türkiye, has regained momentum since its launch three years ago, after Baghdad and Ankara signed a formal agreement during Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi's visit to Ankara last week to begin construction by the end of 2026. **Xinhua**

Dikgang

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Lekoko le rola magosi kwa Ghanzi

Malebogo Lekula
Ghanzi

E ne e le semphete ke go fete, Labobedi kwa kgotleng kgolo ya Ghanzi, matshwititshwiti a tshlogetse koo, go itseela ka tsebe, pego ya maina a baemedi ba bogosi jwa motse, morago ga go fetolwa bogosi go tswa kwa go jwa setoropo go ya kwa go jwa ngwao.

Moeteledipele wa lekoko le le neng le tlhomilwe ke tona wa lephata la tsa merero ya selegae le tsa ngwao, Mothusa Kgosi wa Bakwena Kgosi Lawrence Mhaladi, o ne a tlhalosa fa a ne a patilwe ke Kgosi Thabo Mathiba wa Mmathethe, le Kgosi Omphitlhetse Mphaphi, wa Otse, mo tirong e.

A re lephata le ne la amogela boikuelo a morafe wa Ghanzi, gore ba na le toro ya go nna le bogosi jwa Setswana go na le jwa setoropo mme ka lesego kopo e ne ya atlega.

O ne a tlhalosa fa lekoko le ne la simolodisa dipuisano le banni Tlhakole monongwaga mme ka maswabi, tiro ya go ntsha maina a baemedi e ne ya nna mogoga ka ntlha ya tiego go tswa kwa go ba malwapa a monwana o neng o ba supile go etelela bogosi jwa Ghanzi pele.

A re mo tirong eo, ba ne ba tshwaragane le ba lekgotla la Ditshwanelo go ba thusa go aga motheo wa kgang go sa gatakakiwe ditshwanelo tsa setho.

Kgosi Mhaladi a re le fa go ne go na le madiadia, ba kgonne go letlanya ba malwapa oo mabedi, morago ga gore go tshagoge maina a baemedi a le mabedi go tswa kwa malwapeng ao.

O supile fa ba feletse ba nna moriti le ba ba amegang, go sutisa



Moeteledipele wa lekoko le le neng le tlhomilwe go rarabolola bogosi jwa Ghanzi, Kgosi Lawrence Mhaladi (molemeng) jaaka a ne a rola maina a baemedi ba bogosi joo ka Labobedi, morago ga go fetolwa go tswa kwa go jwa setoropo go ya kwa go jwa ngwao. A re Rre Thamae Thamae o tlaa tsaya maemo a bogosi jwa Ghanzi, mme o tlaa longwa serota ke Mme Dianah Setima.

Senepe: Malebogo Lekula

disana tse ba neng ba dumela e le tsone dikgoreletsang gore morafe o neelwe tshwetso.

A re puisane e ne ya ntsha maduo ka jalo, a rola morafe fa maemo a kgosi a tlaa neelwa Rre Thamae Thamae wa letso la Basarwa fa maemo a mothusa kgosi one a tlaa neelwa Mme Dianah Setima wa letso la Bakgalagadi.

Maina a, a tlaa romelwa kwa ofising ya ga tona go rurifiadiwa pele ga go baakanyetswa peo ya kgosi. Kgosi Mhaladi a re maemo a boraro a kgosana, molaodi o tlaa a

dira thulaganyo ya go neela morafe sebaka sa go ithuna dinta gore a ya go tlhophelwa ka tsela efe.

O ne a gwetlha baemedi ka bobedi go nna bori ebile ba itetle go nna baemedi ba tlhotlha ka go kopanya merafe le go tsewedisa ledula mo motseng wa bone.

Kgosi Mathiba e ne o supile letshwenyego la gore bogosi bo tshabelelwa ke dikgotlhang segolo bogolo mo kgannyeng ya mojaboswa. A re e nngwe kgang ke ya go tlhoka kelelelo ka neelano ya go tshwaralela maemo a bogosi a re

bangwe ba felela bogosi bo ba dule ka diphatlha tsa menwana.

Molemo wa go tla ketsaetsego ya mojaboswa le maemo a tshwareletsweng a re ke go netefatsa gore baemedi ba bogosi ba dira dilo mo pontsheng go santse go na le nako.

Kgosana Mphaphi ene o ne a iteela morafe wa Ghanzi legofi gore ba ne ba seka ba ipona tsapa ka go supa bopelokgale mo kgannyeng ya go batla go fetola sebopego sa bogosi jwa motse wa bone.

O ne a gatelela fa bogosi bo

tsamaisiwa ka molao mme a gwetlha baemedi ba bogosi go obamela melao eo, ka nako tsotlhe gore boeteledipele jwa bone, bo nne bobebe le ntswa makgwere one a seke a tlhokafala.

Mo mafokong a gagwe a kamogelo, Kgosi Petrus Ndjoze go tswa kwa Kgaphamadi, o ne a bua a sa kgale mathe ka fa tiego ya go tlhoka kgosi kwa Ghanzi go beile morafe ka fa mosing ka ntata ya go sa fitlhelele ditirelo tsa puso ka nako. O gwehlile neelano go tswa kwa go ba malwapa le ba bangwe ba ba maleba go fefosa tshwetso go rekegela dikeletso tsa morafe.

Moemedi go tswa kwa Goora Setima, Rre Ethomame Setima, o o ne a re basupile Mme Dianah Setima go neelwe marapo a maemo a mothusa kgosi. Mme Bulenda Thamae le ene o ne a iteela kobo moroko ka go supa fa le bone go tswa kwa Goora Thamae, ba dumalane ka bongwefa jwa pelo gore, Rre Thamae Thamae e nne ene motshwarateu wa maemo a bogosi jwa Ghanzi.

Mopalamente wa kgaolo ya Ghanzi, Rre Noah Salakae, o ne a iteela boora Thamae le Setima legofi go beela kwa thoko dipharologanyo tsa bone, mme ba etelelsa dikeletso tsa morafe wa Ghanzi kwa pele ga tsa bone.

O ne a tsibosa morafe gore tiro e, e ne e se bonolo mme gape a leboga lekoko le le neng le tlhomilwe gore ba dirile tiro ka manontlhotlho ka gore pego ya bone e fetile ka tse ditsididi.

O ne gape a iteela legofi tshwetso ya go dirisa lekoko la dikgosi go tswa kwa mafelong a farologanyeng a re, e ne e le tsela nngwe ya go nonotsha dipuisanyo go sa tsewe letlhakore.

Mo go tse dingwe, o gwehlile bakwadi ba ditso go dirisa tshono ya gompiano e mang le mang a iponelang ditiragalo go simolola go kwalwa ditso tseo, gore di seka tsa ba latlhegela. **BOPA**

Mapodisi a tshwere dikoloi tsa bogodu

Goweditswe Kome
Tshesebe

Mookamela mapodisi a Tshesebe, Superintendent Mothusi Phadi a re ofisi ya gagwe e tshwentswe ke koketsego ya dikoloi tse di tshwarang di utswilwe kwa mafatsheng a a mabapi.

Fa a bua mo potsolotsong o rile palo ya dikoloi tsa bogodu tse ba kgonneng go di tshwara kwa kgorong ya molelwane wa Ramokgwebana di oketsegile mono ngwaga fa go tshwantshannwa le ngwaga tse pedi tse di fetileng.

A re ka ngwaga wa 2024 ba nnile le dikgetsi tse pedi tsa bogodu ja dikoloi, ngogola ba kwadisa kgetsi tse tharo, fa monongwaga seemo se tsere phekelo e sele ka ba kwadisitse di le lesome le bothano.

Rre Phadi a re “e re ntswa bontsi ja dikoloi tse di tswa kwa lefatsheng le re bapileng le lone la South Africa, dingwe tsa tsone ditswa kwa Namibia.”

A re dikoloi tse ba di tshwereng, di utsulwe kwa Walvis Bay,

Namibia di tharo ka palo, mme di ne di pegilwe mo koloing ya mogobagoba. O ne a re ba ba lebisitsweng molato wa bogodu jo, ba setse ba itshupile fa pele ga lekgotla la ditsheko la ga mmakaseterata go arabela go fitlhelwa ka dithoto tsa bogodu kana tse di utswilweng kwa ntle ga Botswana.

Supt Phadi a re morago ga go belaela gore dikoloi ke tsa bogodu, ba ne ba ikgolaganya le sepodisi sa Interpol, ba ba thusitseng go latedisa motlhala wa tsone.

A re go dirisana ga mafatshe le gone go thusa go ba tlhofaletsa ditlhotlhomiso. O tlhalositse gore mo dikgetsing tse di lesome le bothano, tse ba di kwadisitseng

monongwaga, basekisiwa ba roba bongwe ba setse ba athotswe ke lekgotla, fa ba le bararo ba santse ba leboditse phokoje morago ga go letelwa go emela tshoko ba le kwa ntle ga kgolegelo, mme tse tharo di santse dile mo diatleng tsa bosekisi.

Supt Phadi a re bontsi jwa badira molato ke borre ba lefatsheng la South Africa, ba latelwa ke ba Zimbabwe go bo go nna le Motswana wa mme a le mongwe.

A re ba ba bonwang molato ba atholwa madi a a seng ka fa tlase ga dikete tse di masome a mabedi (P20,000), mme a sa fete dikete tse di masome a mararo (P30,000) kgotsa kgolegelo ya ngwaga tse pedi go ya go tse tharo. **BOPA**



Mookamela sepodisi sa Tshesebe, Superintendent Mothusi Phadi a re dipalo tsa dikoloi tsa bogodu tse di tshwerweng kwa molelwane wa Ramokgwebana di oketsegile monongwaga. O tlhalositse fa ba boloditse letsholo la go tshwara badiramolato bao.

Senepe: Goweditswe Kome

Tshane Prison and Police revive clinic garden

Thuso Kgakatsi
HUKUNTSI

A rehabilitated vegetable garden at Tshane Clinic is now supplying fresh produce to Community Home-Based Care (CHBC) patients, in a project praised as a simple act with life-changing impact.

The initiative was led by Tshane Prison and Police officers who revived an abandoned garden to support nutrition for vulnerable patients in the community. Speaking at the official handover, Kgalagadi North District Commissioner, Ms Veronica Rabakane, commended the Botswana Prison Service for responding to a genuine community need. “This is a demonstration that, as Batswana, we care for one another. I therefore implore you to continue supporting and caring for one another,” she said.

Ms Rabakane said the project reflected the aspirations of Vision 2036, particularly the goal of building a caring and compassionate nation. She added that it represented the kind of public service government seeks to promote, where officers use their skills to uplift communities they serve. She also addressed perceptions that officers deployed outside their home areas were not valued, saying:

“Unlike that misconception, public officers in Kgalagadi North are not rejects. They have what it takes to deliver quality services. I therefore urge our workers to continue serving with dedication and to earn their salaries with a clear conscience.” Ms Rabakane further urged households to start backyard gardens to fight rising cases of malnutrition in the district, and encouraged parents to provide children with balanced diets. Senior Superintendent Mr Letsweletse Serara of Tshane Prisons said the project was initiated by the prison’s welfare committee after consultations identified the neglected clinic garden as the area where they could contribute most.

“After engaging the community, we identified the revival of the garden as the most outstanding need that we could assist with. We selected Tshane Clinic because preparations for a garden had already begun,” he said.

Mr Serara noted that proper nutrition is key to patient recovery, as fresh vegetables provide essential vitamins and minerals that strengthen the immune system. He commended officers for volunteering their time and pledged continued partnerships across Kgalagadi North.

While the garden may appear small, officials said its impact would be significant. Beyond producing vegetables, it has become a symbol of compassion, community partnership, and the role public institutions can play in development. As the first crops mature for harvest, the garden will do more than nourish CHBC beneficiaries. It stands as proof that acts of service do not have to be grand to make a difference — sometimes a seed planted and a community working together can yield the greatest harvest of hope.

BOPA



Dignitaries touring the Tshane Prison rehabilitated garden after Kgalagadi North District Commissioner, Ms Veronica Rabakane (second left) officially handed it over recently. She commended Botswana Prison Service for identifying a genuine community need and responding with practical action. Photo: Thuso Kgakatsi

Okavango JSS expansion project complete

Kedirebofe Pelontle
GUMARE

The Assistant Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Mr Keoagile Atamelang, has hailed the completion of the Okavango Junior Secondary School expansion

project in Gumare, which was delivered on time and within budget.

The project involved expanding the hostel and ablution facilities, constructing 96-bed dormitories for both boys and girls, and building two ablution blocks.

The project was executed under the Development Manager (DM) model by Bigen SPV and Development Manager (DM5) at a total cost of P64,956,402.77.

Speaking during a tour of the project on Monday, Assistant Minister Atamelang said the

project is a testament to the government’s commitment to education.

Like many schools in the district, Okavango JSS had previously faced challenges due to dilapidated structures in its boarding and ablution facilities.

The school has a total enrollment of 1 347 students, 283 of whom are boarders (156 girls and 127 boys).

For his part, the Bigen SPV, Development Manager, Mr Jubilee Mokgosi, confirmed that the school expansion project was completed on time and within budget.

“The Okavango District Council has acknowledged that the project is complete and awarded us an occupation certificate on Friday. What is left now is the official handing over,” he said.

He noted that the 15-month project, which commenced in March 2025, experienced very few challenges aside from occasional heavy rainfall.

In his remarks, Okavango District Council Chairperson, Mr Gaopalelwe Ronald expressed delight regarding the new hostels and furniture, stating that they would motivate students in their learning. However, Mr Ronald urged the school leadership and stakeholders to caution students against the negative impacts of vandalism, noting that destroying school property ultimately hurts the students themselves.

Gumare Kgosi Moitshepi Molelwa highlighted the historical significance of the school, noting it was originally built through self-reliance by community members from across the Okavango district, who each contributed a head of cattle.

BOPA

Kisa poultry beats odds to become self-sustainable

Letticia Nnokotema
TSABONG

What started with high losses and little experience has grown into a promising income-generating venture for Kisa Village, thanks to perseverance, technical training, and stakeholder support.

The Kisa Village Development Committee (VDC) Poultry Project, established under the Constituency Community Projects (CCP), has overcome a challenging start to become a sustainable source of eggs and protein for the community.

The project began with 400 layer chickens. However, due to a lack of technical knowledge, more than half of the flock died, leaving only 180 birds.

“We had no experience in poultry farming when we started, and we made mistakes that cost us many chickens,” said VDC Chairperson, Mr Sedwin Kgaudi, during the Tsabong District Council project tour recently.

The turning point came when the committee sought help from the Department of Veterinary Services.

Support was further boosted by solar electrification funded in the 2019/20 financial year, and fencing completed through the Ipelegeng programme in 2023/24, which improved operations at the facility.

To build capacity, Tsabong District Council and the Department of Veterinary Services organised a one-day practical training session at White Rock Farms. Three VDC members attended.

Mr Kgaudi said the training revealed that many of the early deaths were caused by overfeeding and dehydration from blocked water pipes clogged by algae. “Applying the knowledge acquired during the training has significantly reduced chicken mortality and improved the overall management of the project. As a result, we have recorded fewer losses and improved profits,” he said.

The project has also started sustaining itself financially. Income from egg sales allowed the committee to purchase 200 new layer chickens after the first laying cycle, without external funding.

Despite the progress, challenges remain as Mr Kgaudi cited the rising cost of layer chickens, water shortages, and a dwindling committee with only four members left.

Currently, the project sells mainly to individual customers. Mr Kgaudi said venturing into institutional markets could boost income and sustainability. Tsabong District Council Chairman, Mr Elias Motlhanke, encouraged the committee to approach Kisa Primary School to supply eggs directly.

“Council promotes initiatives that enable community projects to supply schools directly, instead of relying solely on the tendering system. Such arrangements create a stable market while supporting local economic development,” Mr Motlhanke said.

BOPA



Batho Ba Metsi honours Okavango Delta custodians

Pako Lebanna
GABORONE

The pristine, lush waterways, greenery, flora and fauna of the Okavango, the world’s largest inland delta and the 1000th UNESCO Heritage Site, is a major tourism attraction, but the people living there as custodians of this environment seldom have their voices heard.

This was the rationale behind the, *Batho Ba Metsi: A Journey to Meet the People of the Water*, documentary film directed by Moabi Mogorosi, to feature the lives and resilience of the people who live in one of the world’s most celebrated ecosystems.

Speaking to BOPA during the world premiere of *Batho Ba Metsi* at the Mass Media Complex in Gaborone on Tuesday, Mogorosi said they sought to document the human experience, challenges and

traditions of the people who reside in the delta.

“Being able to showcase the lives, traditions and resilience of people connected to the Okavango Delta is a privilege and an important contribution to preserving Botswana’s heritage,” said Mogorosi.

He said they were working with their partners to get the film to air on National Geographic channel, one of the world’s largest environment focused television channels, as well as to different film festivals, and also for domestic educational purposes to Botswana Television.

The premiere, attended by President Advocate Duma Boko, Minister of Sport and Arts, Jacob Kelebeng, Speaker of the National Assembly, Dithapelo Keorapetse, Leader of the Opposition and Maun North legislator, Mr Dumelang Saleshando as well as conservationists, traditional leaders, creative and other stakeholders, showcased the 92-minute documentary film.

Minister Kelebeng said it was commendable that people who conserved one of the world’s greatest ecosystem would get to have their lives documented. He applauded Mogorosi and the crew that developed the film, and explained that the government was working on legislative framework

to enable their work, including to repel and reenact the 1972 Cinematographic Bill to introduce that which would accommodate modern times.

Kelebeng further said government sought to create a film industry that told the Botswana story and generated jobs for local creatives.

Filmed entirely in the Okavango Delta, by an all Batswana crew led by Mogorosi, with former Miss Botswana, actress Palesa Molefe, as the lead presenter and narrator, the documentary features mokoro polers, basket weavers, elders, and community leaders to communicated lived experiences of the Okavango Delta.

The Nkashi Trust founder, Steve Boyes, a non-profit, Maun based organisation focusing on community-led organisation, cultural heritage and sustainable livelihoods in the Okavango Delta that let support to the film, said they were built around four principles, pride, ownership, community and purpose.

He said through these values, they sought to build protected areas, conservation expanses where local people whose history was intertwined with nature, were able to live and participate actively in the protection of the ecosystem.

BOPA



Osego looks forward to Britain’s Got Talent journey

Keamogetse Setilo
SEROWE

The air was filled with praise, hope, and powerful music on Saturday afternoon as Ontefetse Osego hosted a fundraiser concert in preparation for his historic bid to become the first Motswana to compete on *Britain’s Got Talent*.

The event kicked off with an uplifting praise and worship session before building to an emotional climax a stirring rendition of Whitney Houston’s *I Will Always Love You*. With strong vocals and undeniable stage presence, Osego reminded the audience that he is a man on a mission.

Speaking to attendees, Osego said the concert was aimed at raising funds for his journey to the United Kingdom (UK). He revealed that he needs P150,000 to cover travel, accommodation, rehearsals, and other preparations for the international competition.

Osego expressed gratitude to Batswana for rallying behind him, adding that he would need all the support he could get.

He also gave thanks to Kgosi Khama IV for donating a keyboard and providing other financial assistance in preparation for *Britain’s Got Talent*.

Beyond the fundraising, Osego spoke about what his participation meant for the country. He acknowledged

that income had been tough, a reality he said many local artists faced. But he believes his journey could change that narrative.

“Imagine me belting out notes with millions glued to their screens, watching with keen interest and then going to check out Botswana music. That will unlock so many doors and shatter so many ceilings. My countrymen and women will thrive,” he said.

He encouraged fellow artists and Batswana at large to pursue their talents boldly and without apology. “Push yourselves to greater heights. Be unapologetic and bold in your craft. That is what will lead us to greatness,” he added.

A close friend who considers Osego family, Neo Mothao said she was proud of his achievements and the path he was forging.

She urged him to carry himself as a true ambassador of Botswana, noting that millions would be watching and that his conduct would shape how the world sees the country.

Gabriel Gerald, who travelled all the way from Maun to attend, praised Osego’s consistency and dedication to quality music. “I don’t mind supporting Ontefetse because he respects his craft and always delivers,” he said.

With the support of the nation behind him, Osego is set to make history and put Botswana on the global entertainment map. BOPA



President Advocate Duma Boko (second left) and Minister of Sport and Arts, Jacob Kelebeng (third right) with *Batho Ba Metsi: A journey to Meet the People of the Water* documentary film crew during a world premiere in Gaborone on Tuesday. The documentary shines a spotlight on the people of the Okavango and their relationship with the Delta, buttressing the importance of safeguarding the country’s water resources. Photo: Thompson Keobaletswe



Satau FC join first division



Portia Keetile
KASANE

Satau United FC has cemented its place in the first division north league following successful status acquisition from JJ United FC.

In an interview with *BOPA*, Satau United FC president, Allie Mayinga confirmed that indeed they had acquired first division status from Sefhare based JJ United.

Mayinga said the move was in pursuit of competitive excellence and long term financial prudence.

He said even though his team was relatively new in the second division, having played in the division for the past two seasons, the intention was to establish a resilient team vying for a spot in the elite tier of local football

Mayinga said securing a slot in the first division had placed the team one step closer to acquiring premiership status, a profitable tier with prospects to commercialise.

After analysing its performance and financial status in the previous

season, Mayinga said he sought to acquire an upper status by engaging with teams in the first division, who were willing to relinquish their status.

Following their promotion to first division by trading status with JJ United, Mayinga said the team was vigorously preparing for the coming season, among others, drawing up a budget for operational costs and players' remuneration. He acknowledged that running a football club was an uphill battle hence roping in strategic partners and friends to ensure sustainability.

"We are targeting a top four finish this season and by all means avoid a bottom eight

finish. I believe this is achievable if we do things right and compete optimally," he said.

He stated that currently, Muchenje Safari Lodge were the main sponsors of the team with the hope that more private companies would come on board.

Reached for comment, CHORFA vice chairperson,

Tebogo Mokolwanyane stated that elevating Satau United FC to first division was growth and historical milestone for the region.

He said in the previous two season, the region was represented by a loner, being Mbalakalungu and the number increased to two following promotion of Ferry Wonderers in the just ended season, now Satau United FC has amplified CHORFA's representation in first division north to three teams.

Mokolwanyane said the development stimulated football activities in Chobe and brought the much needed entertainment to the local communities.

He added that the increase in the number of first vision teams in the region would cut costs incurred on travelling and others expenses to honour away fixtures.

However Mokolwanyane alluded that with Chobe being a small region, there would be competition for quality players which might jeopardise the quality of play. **BOPA**



CHORFA vice chairperson Tebogo Mokolwanyane



Satau FC president Allie Mayinga

BAA focuses on squad depth to secure legacy

Anastacia Sibanda
GABORONE

The Botswana Athletics Association (BAA) is looking to aggressively build a deeper pool of talent to end the nation's long-standing reliance on a select group of elite runners.

For years, the exceptional international performances of Letsile Tebogo, Collen Kebinatshipi and Bayapo Ndori have brought home silverware, a success that occasionally masked the need for broader squad depth.

However, the national team's performance at the recent Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games underscored the necessity for a wider talent base, particularly within track and field, which remains the country's premier sporting discipline.

Sports stakeholders note that a steady pipeline of developmental talent is essential to relieve the heavy competitive workloads typically carried by top-tier athletes.

Without a deliberate and sustainable development framework, observers warn that



Prince Selepe



Oratile Nowe



Obakeng Kamberuka



Lee Eppie

the current golden era of local sprinting risks being remembered as an isolated phenomenon rather than an institutional legacy.

Speaking on the association's strategy, BAA sport development manager, Patrick Moesi confirmed that the association was systematically expanding its athlete pool for future international assignments.

Moesi explained that several

athletes within the newly established development bracket were intentionally fielded at the Commonwealth Games to gain crucial elite-level exposure.

"While we would have loved to win a medal, our primary mission was to give upcoming athletes the chance to compete at an international level. The roots of development are bitter, but the fruits are sweet," he noted.

...the national team's performance at the recent Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games underscored the necessity for a wider talent base, particularly within track and field, which remains the country's premier sporting discipline.

Although the team returned from Scotland without a podium finish, Moesi emphasised that BAA remained highly encouraged by the competitive spirit of its emerging talent.

The association views the tournament as a successful baseline, particularly given that several prospects advanced through stiff competition.

Athletes such as Prince Selepe,

Tshepiso Masalela, Bhekimpilo Eppie, Oratile Nowe and Obakeng Kamberuka all qualified for the finals in their respective events, a positive trajectory for the transition plan. Notably, 20-year-old Selepe secured an eighth-place finish in the men's 200m final after clocking a 20.31 second run in the semifinals.

In the women's 400m final, Kamberuka also placed eighth with a time of 52.53 seconds.

With the contingent now back home, attention shifts toward refining these secondary-tier prospects ahead of upcoming regional events.

BAA hopes that exposing junior runners to global pressure now will yield sustainable results by the time Botswana hosts the African Senior Athletics Championships in Gaborone.

Moesi noted that a selection of junior athletes was currently in Oregon competing at the World Athletics U20 Championships.

He added that in the ongoing absence of school sports, BAA was planning to organise regional competitions to cast a wider net in identifying raw talent across the country. **BOPA**