

# BOTSWANA Daily News

THE PAPER THAT INFORMS AND EDUCATES



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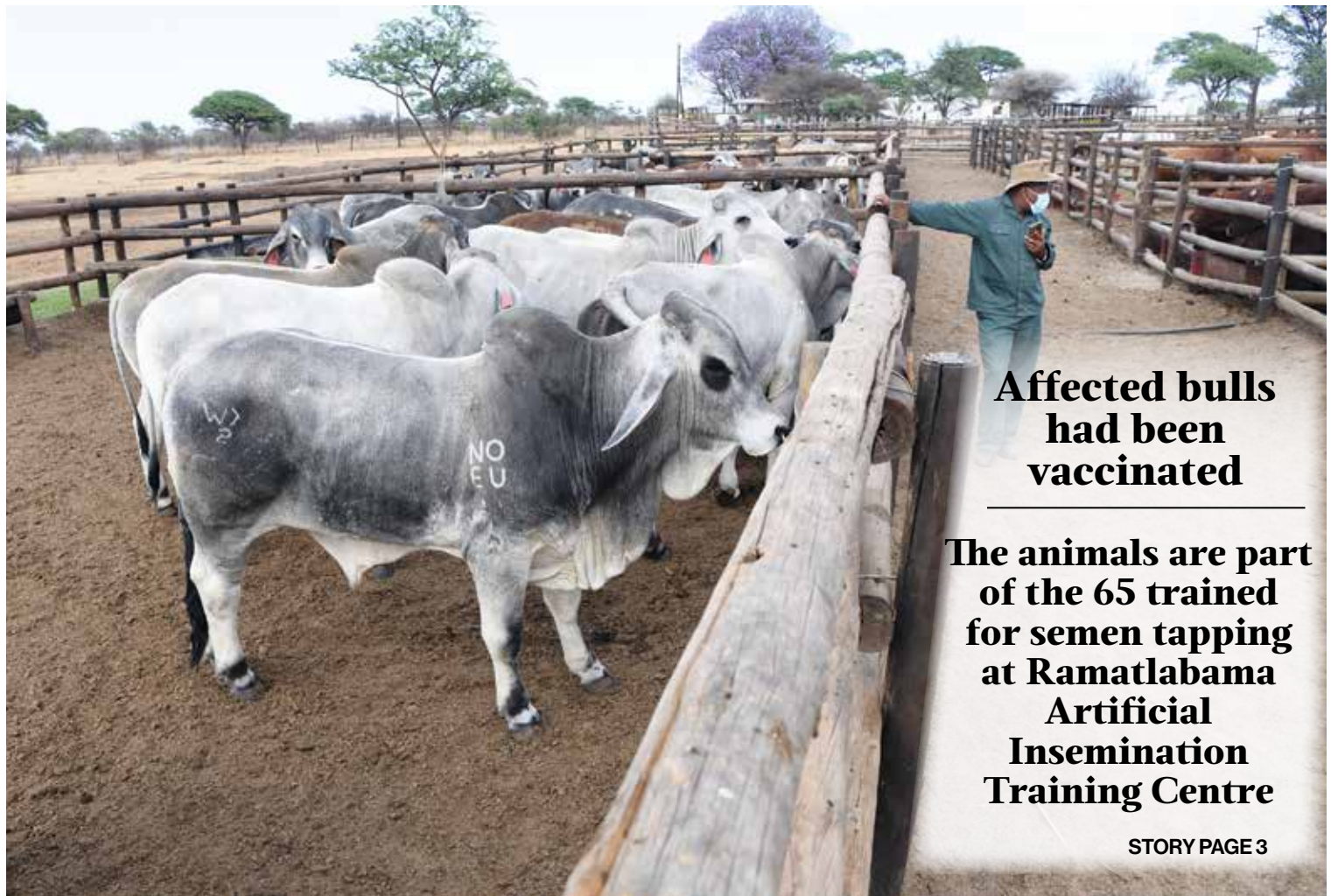
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## Thirty-four bulls test positive for FMD



Affected bulls had been vaccinated

The animals are part of the 65 trained for semen tapping at Ramatlabama Artificial Insemination Training Centre

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# DailyNews

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# New Era College throws Lenao lifeline

Lesedi Thatayamodimo  
GABORONE

In the quiet streets of Block 8 in Gaborone, Ms Ketshepile Lenao is stepping into a future she once thought was out of reach.

Not long ago, Ms Lenao faced one of life's harshest turns. After being retrenched from a diamond company, she found herself navigating uncertainty in the bid to survive, eventually joining the Ipelegeng programme, a government initiative aimed at providing temporary employment.

For Ms Lenao, it was a lifeline, but not the future she had imagined. "I never thought I would get into college, let alone for free," she recalls.

Today, that narrative has changed, Ms Lenao is among ten beneficiaries selected for the inaugural New Era KAGO Scholarship Programme, a six-month initiative valued at over P250,000.

The programme offers full tuition for a Building and Construction course, opening doors to skills development and long-term employment opportunities.

The scholarship, a flagship Corporate Social Responsibility initiative, is a collaborative effort between the Gaborone Bonnington

North constituency office and the Block 8 Chief's Office.

Its goal is to uplift communities by investing in people who are eager for a second chance.

The programme marks a new chapter for Ms Lenao and her fellow participants.

For her, the opportunity is nothing short of life-changing.

"This opportunity came at no cost, and I will forever be grateful to God," she said, her voice filled with emotion and determination.

Being part of the first cohort carries a sense of pride and responsibility and Ms Lenao is determined to make the most of it, vowing to fully commit to her studies and the possibilities they bring.

Beyond personal growth, she sees the training as a pathway to financial independence.

With skills in building and construction, she hopes to secure consistent work, take on projects and perhaps even create opportunities for others in the future.

"The course will help us find jobs and even create our own work," she said, reflecting on the broader impact it could have in addressing unemployment.

Her story is one of resilience, a reminder that setbacks do not define the end of the road but can instead mark the beginning of something new.

As she prepares to step into the classroom, her journey stands as a testament to the power of

opportunity, community support and the courage to keep going, even when the odds seem insurmountable.

Sharing at the KAGO scholarship launch, from the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, Mr Bonnie Jim urges both the scholarship cohort and the broader workforce to strengthen their work ethics and commitment to productivity.

Mr Jim expresses concern over what he describes as a noticeable decline in productivity levels.

He points out issues of punctuality as a key indicator of the problem.

He emphasises the need for a cultural shift toward respecting time and professional commitments.

Mr Jim stresses that improving productivity is essential for national development and calls on individuals to take personal responsibility in their workplaces.

Touching on government's position regarding vocational education, Mr Jim notes that Technical and Vocational Education and Training has become a global priority.

He underscores that governments cannot single-handedly drive progress in this area.

"TVET is a priority across the globe," he says, adding that collective effort is required to make it effective. He encourages investment in practical skills development, highlighting the importance of hands-on experience over purely theoretical knowledge.

According to Mr Jim, equipping

individuals with practical competencies is key to improving both employability and productivity.

The first KAGO scholarship cohort initiative aims to support

the Gaborone community while also fostering a culture of discipline, responsibility and skills development aligned with national and global demands. **BOPA**



Ms Ketshepile Lenao is among 10 beneficiaries selected for the inaugural New Era College's KAGO Scholarship Programme, a six-month initiative valued at over P250,000. Photo: Washa Bofelwang

# Ten benefit from KAGO Scholarship

Lesedi Thatayamodimo  
GABORONE

New Era College has sponsored 10 beneficiaries through the KAGO Scholarship, a new initiative aimed at equipping young people with practical, industry-relevant training.

Speaking at the launch event in Gaborone recently, the college's public relations and partnerships manager, Mr Kgosi Moremong said the beneficiaries were selected through a transparent and merit-

based process.

He said the KAGO Scholarship targeted members of the Gaborone community and aimed to bridge the skills gap by providing hands-on training in construction-related fields.

The programme offered training in key areas including bricklaying, plastering, painting, ceiling installation and design.

Also, he pointed out that beyond technical instruction, the programme also incorporated industry attachment and job

placement support to enhance employability.

"This initiative is very close to our hearts, it allows us to give back to the community we serve, not only by offering education but by ensuring that participants gain meaningful opportunities in the workforce," Mr Moremong said.

In addition to community beneficiaries, he noted that the college had extended the scholarship opportunity to two members of its own grounds and maintenance staff, enabling them to upgrade

their skills while continuing their employment.

The course instructor in the Construction Department, Mr Edmore Dupwa expressed optimism that the KAGO Scholarship would contribute to building a more skilled workforce while strengthening ties between the institution and the community.

He said they would strengthen practical skills within the construction sector and introduced a hands-on short course focused on equipping participants with essential building techniques and safety knowledge.

Mr Dupwa said the six months course was designed to ensure that learners acquired critical competencies that directly impacted the quality and safety of construction projects, adding that learners must first understand tools, their uses and maintenance before engaging in fieldwork.

"We do not just take you into the field immediately. You must first understand the tools, their uses and their maintenance. Safety in the construction industry is very important," Mr Dupwa noted.

He said the course followed a structured progression from classroom-based theory to real-world practice, ensuring that students not only learned concepts, but also applied them effectively.

"From tool handling to setting out and executing construction tasks, every aspect is reinforced through hands-on experience," he said.

By combining theory with fieldwork, Mr Dupwa said the training initiative aimed to produce skilled, safety-conscious builders capable of meeting modern construction standards.

He said as Botswana continued to develop its infrastructure, such programmes were expected to play a vital role in shaping a competent and reliable workforce in the building industry.

Also speaking at the event, Kgosi Kenneth Thari of Block 8 location expressed gratitude to the selected cohort and encouraged them to remain disciplined and committed to their studies.

He reminded beneficiaries that the opportunity came at no cost and urged them to adhere to school rules and avoid absenteeism.

Kgosi Thari said as Botswana continued to expand its infrastructure, initiatives such as the KAGO Scholarship were expected to play a critical role in addressing youth unemployment and developing a competent, safety-conscious workforce within the construction sector.

The KAGO Scholarship Programme, valued at over P250 000, provided full tuition for the Building and Construction Programme.

It is a flagship Corporate Social Responsibility initiative developed in partnership with the Office of the Member of Parliament for Gaborone Bonnington North and the Block 8 Kgosi's Office. **BOPA**



Kgosi Kenneth Thari of Gaborone Block 8 (centre), Mr Otsile Pule from the office of the Member of Parliament for Gaborone Bonnington North (second left) and other dignitaries with beneficiaries of the New Era KAGO Scholarship Programme in Gaborone recently. Photo: Washa Bofelwang



Residents of Chobe District are on high alert as Chobe River water levels continue to rise beyond the river bank. Photo: Portia Ikgopoleng

## Residents on high alert as Chobe River levels rise

Portia Keetile  
KASANE

Residents in flood prone areas are on high alert as Chobe River water levels continue to rise triggering widespread floods.

Department of Water and Sanitation's chief water and sanitation officer at Kasane station, Mr Otaathusa Tshekiso said water levels in the Chobe River recorded the highest readings in five years resulting in over spilling from the main river channel into floodplains.

He explained that this year's hydrological patterns mirrored the high rainfall years of 2009/10, 2017/18 and 2019/20 raising alarms for flood prone communities.

Mr Tshekiso said in the aforesaid rain seasons the water levels at Mowana station, which was used for reporting weekly national hydrological situation, exceeded the 5.35 metres threshold.

He said the increasing water levels in the Chobe River were driven by a regional surplus in rainfall and strong inflows from the upstream Zambezi catchment.

Mr Tshekiso indicated that lodges near Shoprite and Chobe Big Five Lodge in Kasane were sitting in a flood prone area hence flooding during a surge in water levels.

Moreover, he said the Kachikau-Satau road as well as Satau village were highly vulnerable to isolation and inundation during Chobe River peak flows.

Mr Tshekiso said the District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC) was conducting a community sensitisation through public announcement and schools

outreach to alert students on the threats that were posed by rising water levels and possible floods.

He said the DDMC was equally engaged in mobilising resources and putting in place mitigation measures to manage envisaged closure of flood-prone roads inside Chobe National Park.

Furthermore, he said the DDMC would continue to conduct risk assessments in flood prone areas and educate residents to be on high alert, adding that currently no one had been displaced by the inflows.

BOPA

Aobakwe Molefhi  
GOOD HOPE

At least 34 bulls have tested positive for the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) at the Ramatlabama Artificial Insemination Training Centre in Zone 11. The affected animals are part of the 65 bulls, which have been trained for semen tapping.

According to Foot and Mouth Disease coordinator at the Ramatlabama Artificial Insemination Training Centre, Dr Odireleng Thololwane bulls were currently quarantined in their own paddock, so as to ensure that they did not come into contact with other animals, which had not been infected.

Also, he said all the affected bulls had been vaccinated, adding that the Department of Veterinary Services would continue with surveillance in and out of the ranch.

He pointed out that the results of the surveillance would guide the way forward on what needed to be done.

In addition, he said there were no signs of new infections so far. Ramatlabama Artificial Insemination and Training Centre is home to over 200 animals, which includes goats and cattle.

Recently, the Acting Minister of Agriculture and Food Security Dr Edwin Dikoloti told the Ramatlabama residents in an emergency kgotla meeting that despite efforts to curb spread of the

disease from South Africa, some animals at the centre were infected.

While investigations are underway to determine where the disease came from, the ministry have since issued prevention control measures effective immediately that no cloven-hoofed animals shall be slaughtered or transported across zone 11 for any use or social events.

Movement of cloven-hoofed animals were prohibited in zones 3c, 4a, 4b, 5, 6b, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 while in within disease control zone 2 (Ngamiland and Okavango) and zone 1 (Chobe) is allowed.

Still at the meeting, Dr Dikoloti also said importation and in-transit of all cloven-hoofed animals was suspended and permits were revoked with immediate effect.

Furthermore, the acting minister pleaded for cooperation between the community and other stakeholders in order for the disease to be controlled. "This is a sad day for the beef industry and the economy of our country because even Botswana Meat Commission has now stopped operating," he said. BOPA

## Dept culls pets to prevent rabies transmission

Esther Mmolai  
MAUN

Following three recorded deaths linked to rabies disease, the Department of Veterinary Services has taken a decision to interrupt the rabies transmission chain by culling all pets roaming the streets in the North West district.

The department had been authorised by the North West District Council to carry out humane destruction of dogs and pigs roaming the streets. Authorisation has been granted for a period of a year subject to review as the exercise is intended to be carried out annually to manage

pet population, eliminate human rabies and to promote responsible pet ownership among the general public.

Currently, the department has issued a public seven-day notice as the culling exercise is scheduled to commence on April 14.

Principal veterinary officer, Dr Bruce Mafonko reiterated that three deaths involving children had been recorded last month, adding that the decision to put down roaming dogs to manage public health risks and improve safety was meant to avert a repeat of the incidents.

Dr Mafonko said from January to date, about 16 positive rabies cases in dogs and seven incidents of dog bites had been recorded.

"We have been authorised by the local council to embark on the exercise following the rabies outbreak. The district has a high number of pets estimated at around 20 000 as compared to 15 000 recorded during the 2020 outbreak," he explained, and added that pigs would be kept at Matimela

kraals.

While the collaborative vaccination campaign continues with the support of private organisations, Dr Mafonko said so far, 6 937 dogs had been vaccinated, and he encouraged members of the community to bring their pets for vaccination at veterinary offices from Monday to Friday.

He said rabies was a concern that required all stakeholders to put more resources to control and contain it.

Community health nurse, Ms Cindrella Gaebowe from the North West District Council concurred that they anticipated more positive cases of rabies looking at the number of incidents of dogs biting people in the past months.

She said they had recorded 87 cases and three deaths, all linked to incidents of dog bites that occurred in February and March.

Ms Gaebowe said if a patient was symptomatic and diagnostic testing confirmed rabies, the disease was nearly always fatal, explaining that treatment was typically supportive,

with the only effective treatment being post exposure prophylaxis within 24 hours and immediate wound cleaning with soap and water.

"This disease is spread by contact with infected saliva from a bite, and scratches of infested animals and dogs also carry rabies and are responsible for 97 per cent of human rabies and deaths worldwide," she said.

To mitigate the situation locally, Ms Gaebowe said community mobilisation continued at health facilities citing that members of the community were advised to tether their dogs until veterinary officers come for assessment.

For his part, North West District Council chairperson, Mr Itumeleng Kelebetseng also expressed displeasure with the recorded deaths linked to rabies and attested that they had authorised the relevant authority to carry out humane destruction of dogs and pigs roaming the streets as they posed a danger to community members' lives.

He said the authorisation was in accordance with Bye-Law 5 (3) and 7(2) of the North West District Council. With respect to pigs, he said the operation would be conducted in line with the 2014 byelaw on the control of livestock and other animals, which requires that pigs be detained prior to destruction. Mr Kelebetseng warned members of the public to vaccinate their pets and keep pigs outside the village as reports had indicated that the rabies outbreak was believed to threaten hundreds more due to close human-animal interaction and lack of awareness about rabies. BOPA



Department of Veterinary Services will soon carry out humane destruction of all pets roaming the streets in the North West district to prevent rabies transmission. Photo: Esther Mmolai

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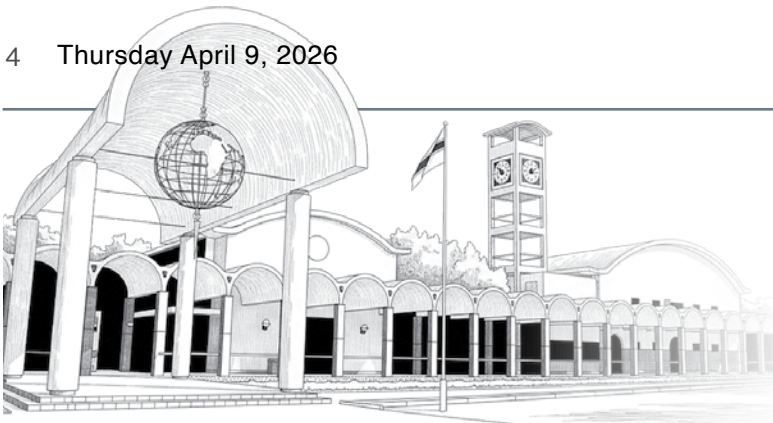
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## PARLIAMENT 2026

# Informal traders to benefit from new tax system

Marvin Motlhabane  
GABORONE

Small businesses and informal traders are set to benefit from a smarter and simpler tax system following the introduction of the Tax Administration Bill of 2025 in Parliament.

Presenting the Bill on Tuesday, acting President and Minister of Finance, Ndaba Gaolathe said by harmonising income tax and VAT provisions into a single framework, the Bill promised to slash red tape, introduce electronic filing and establish an independent Tax Tribunal to resolve disputes, measures that would significantly enhance the ease of doing business in Botswana.

Minister Gaolathe said at its core, the Bill was designed to modernise and consolidate administrative provisions from the Income Tax Act and the Value Added Tax Act.

Among its major provisions, he said were uniform registration requirements across all tax types, mandatory record-keeping in Botswana for eight years and clear rules for self-assessments, estimated assessments and amended assessments.

He added that to ensure fairness and efficiency, the Bill established an independent Tax Tribunal to hear appeals, introduced market-based interest on late tax payments and streamlined refund processes.

Again, he said the Bill also enhanced investigative powers, including joint audits with customs, while providing for tax clearance certificates and standardised public and private rulings.

“To maintain professional standards, tax agents will now be required to register for renewable three-year periods, supported by updated penalties for offenses such as obstructing tax officers or corruption.

These reforms are expected to reduce taxpayer compliance time

and eliminate the duplication of filing and payment,” he said.

Furthermore, he said the Bill looked toward the future by introducing definitions for new concepts like the electronic billing system for VAT-registered persons. Minister Gaolathe described the Bill as the culmination of a decade-long effort to comprehensively review the country’s tax landscape.

“It forms part of a broader package that includes the Customs Bill, Income Tax Bill and Value Added Tax Bill.

The legislative proposals before Parliament are not isolated measures. They form part of a deliberate, coordinated transformation of Botswana’s tax system, firmly anchored in the broader fiscal strategy outlined in the 2025 and 2026 budget speeches,” he added.

He indicated that such transformation was fueled by a national aspiration for a high-income, digitally enabled and economically diversified Botswana. Mr Gaolathe noted that while mineral revenues had historically supported national development, that model had reached its limits, hence the need for the country to now fund its own development in a fair and sustainable manner.

Currently, he said, Botswana’s tax-to-GDP ratio was 13.4 per cent, well below its potential. As such, he said government aimed to raise this to 25 per cent over the next four years and such growth would come through expanded participation and improved efficiency and not by imposing heavier burdens on those who were already compliant.

The minister further emphasised that the reforms were shaped by extensive public consultations, including the recent National Tax Pitso, where citizens expressed the desire for a transparent and responsive system, where their contributions led to visible improvements in their lives. **BOPA**

## GABORONE

Ministry of Environment and Tourism continues to implement initiatives to expand the phane industry through promoting its harvesting as a climate-resilient livelihood for rural communities, especially in eastern and northern Botswana.

Responding to a parliamentary question Tuesday, Minister Wynter Mmolotsi noted that the ministry was also supporting community trusts such as Tshimoyapula, Topisi and Bobirwa to manage and benefit from phane resources through Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) programme.

Communities, he said had been supported with inputs in the past under the Wealth Creation Programme and women and youth had been encouraged to participate in the value chain.

Regarding the import and export of phane, he said the ministry had tightened oversight to ensure that Botswana benefited from its natural resources while maintaining regional trade.

In addition, Mr Mmolotsi highlighted that an export permit was mandatory for anyone transporting phane across borders.

“This is a separate from a harvesting permit and is used to track the volume of resources leaving the country. Exporters of phane are required to pay for an export permit at P2 200 per consignment,” he said.

He also said in coordination with the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture, the ministry

ensured that exported phane met international health standards and exporters required a phytosanitary certificate to confirm the product was free from pests and contaminants.

Furthermore, Parliament learnt that following the approval of the Forestry Act, 2025, the ministry was currently developing the Forest and Range Resources regulations and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to effectively facilitate trade of non-timber forest products, including phane.

On harvesting permits, Mr Mmolotsi told Parliament that the ministry regulated harvesting through a permit system to ensure sustainability, adding that key measures to regulate over-harvesting of phane included issuing seasonal harvesting permits through Forest and Range Resources district offices.

He further said over-harvesting of phane was also regulated through restricting harvesting periods to prevent over-exploitation and allow breeding cycles, setting harvesting quotas in some areas as well as encouraging community managed harvesting through community-based organisations. “The ministry recognises risks faced by harvesters and has taken steps to improve safety.

Through education and public awareness campaigns, the public is sensitised on techniques and handling of phane as well as promotion of protective clothing to prevent injuries and infections, awareness on hygienic processing to prevent contamination and

food-borne illness among others,” he added.

He indicated that to conserve the mophane worm, the Forest and Range Resources Act (2025) strengthened the ministry’s ability to protect the larvae, noting that the Act classified mophane worms as protected forest resource giving the ministry the power to enforce strict penalties for illegal or unsustainable harvesting practices.

Prior to harvesting, Mr Mmolotsi said the department assessed the phane for readiness to be harvested, adding that habitat protection was done through conservation of mophane woodland ecosystem by encouraging and supporting land-use planning.

“The ministry is currently developing initiatives which would transition the phane sector from a purely extractive activity into a structured green value chain. The initiatives include marketing phane as a sustainably harvested organic superfood, marketing phane by supporting communities’ participation in trade fairs and exhibition and encouraging small and medium enterprises in processing and packaging,” said the minister.

Member of Parliament for Bobirwa, Mr Taolo Lucas had asked the minister to apprise Parliament on what the ministry had done or was doing in respect of the mophane worm industry in terms of expansion of the industry, import and export issues, harvesting permits, safety and protection of harvesters as well as conservation of the worm and value addition initiatives. **BOPA**



Minister of Environment and Tourism, Mr Wynter Mmolotsi has informed Parliament that the ministry continues to implement initiatives to expand phane industry by promoting its harvesting as a climate-resilient livelihood for rural communities, particularly in eastern and northern Botswana.

# Salakae acknowledges poor road conditions

## GABORONE

Minister of Transport and Infrastructure has acknowledged the deteriorating condition of national roads, including internal roads within the villages of the Kgatlang East Constituency as well as the fiscal challenges facing the country.

Responding to a parliamentary question on Tuesday, Minister Noah Salakae said while the need for major road rehabilitation was public

knowledge, budgetary constraints had limited government’s ability to act.

Minister Salakae noted that while the ministry awaited such repairs, he was appealing for greater collaboration between taxi operators and government to ensure that citizens continued to receive essential services.

The minister added that major reforms were underway to address challenges faced by taxi operators and the transport sector. He

explained that current transport permit regulations were intended to regulate and guide broader operations, including taxi services, while prioritising the safety and convenience of passengers. He further explained that unlike combis, taxis were not allocated specific routes.

“Under the Road Transport (Permits) Act, taxis operate within the boundaries of a specific area, such as a city, town or village. The ministry remains open to taxi

permit applications for any village, as it is mindful of the fact that the growth and expansion of these areas necessitates better public transport both within and between villages,” he said.

He added that to respond to the demand for local taxi services, the ministry had conducted assessments to determine the extent to which the number of taxis can be increased.

Minister Salakae further encouraged interested members

of the public to apply for local taxi passenger permits.

Member of Parliament for Kgatlang East, Mr Mabuse Pule, had asked for interim measures to assist passengers and drivers given that poor road conditions prevented taxis from reaching certain areas. Mr Pule also wanted to know if permit regulations would be adjusted to reflect such challenges and when service areas would be increased to cater to village expansions. **BOPA**

# Mohwasa explains Btv's France24 partnership

## GABORONE

Minister for State President, Defence and Security has informed Parliament that the Department of Broadcasting Services has partnered with France 24 since 2011 and the agreement has allowed for the free distribution of France24 English on the department's Direct-To-Home (DTH) and Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) platforms, remaining in effect until either party terminates.

Answering a parliamentary question on Tuesday, Minister Moeti Mohwasa said that was a free offer (dead air programme or filler running from 00:00 to 06:00 hours) from France24 hence no procurement method was used.

In addition, the minister stated that Btv did not only enjoy free content distribution but also benefited from trainings offered by the organisation at no cost.

He noted that in 2022 during the build-up of the launch of three channels France24 trained

over 110 staff members including reporters, producers, camera person, technical directors and anchors.

He noted that currently Btv did not purchase foreign content except for sport and arts like the Olympics, beauty pageants, AFCON and FIFA games.

However, Mr Mohwasa said Btv1 and Btv2 did flight foreign content that was donated by development partners such as SADC, African Union of Broadcasting (AUB) and Voice of America (VoA).

The minister also informed legislators that in August 2022, government through DBS, increased local content quota in an effort to increase acquisition of local content on Btv channels.

However, he said the quota had proven to be a challenge for the department to fulfill.

"This was because the television business is very expensive to run in a sustainable manner as it gobbled a lot of capital for production companies particularly for start-ups," he added. Furthermore,



Minister for State President, Defence and Security, Mr Moeti Mohwasa told Parliament that the Department of Broadcasting Services had partnered with France24 television network since 2011, allowing free distribution of its English channel on the national broadcasting platform. Photo: Pheny Moalosi

the minister said through the limited funds allocated to the department, effort was made from time to time to solicit or purchase television content from local

television producers. Regarding the Family Feud, he said the show was produced at a cost of USS1,533, 711 (P20, 932, 731.89) for 26 episodes. He said initially the show was to be

recorded locally.

He explained that during the project review, it became apparent that all other productions of the Botswana Ignite could be done at Mass Media Complex, except Family Feud because the show required a much bigger space than available for the set. However, he said the plan was for season 2 and 3 productions to be produced in Botswana.

Mr Mohwasa stated that all the contestants in the 26 episodes were Batswana, adding that they were no non-citizens participants in the show. The minister also revealed that in total, there were 613 Batswana, including 21 graduates of the Film Development Training Academy, 260 contesting Batswana families and 332 support personnel from polling, security, transport, AV operators and medics in the pre-production and post-production phases of Family Feud Botswana.

Mr Mohwasa further informed Parliament that Btv had assorted cameras as part of its inventory. He said in the 2024/25 financial year, eight Outside Broadcast (OB) cameras from Btv OB van were supplied by Hitachi Kokusal Electric Europe GmbH and another eight Electronic News Gathering (ENG) camcorders were supplied by DEGA Broadcast Systems Limited. He stated that there was no employee at DBS who was a shareholder or had any link with the said companies.

However, he said if there was anyone with information regarding potential corruption, collusion or unlawful links to the two companies, his office was open for such information hence committed to the House to take the necessary action.

Con...page 8

# VAT Bill to modernise digital economy and shield households from inflation

## Thato Mosinyi GABORONE

Government is set to modernise the 24-year-old tax framework with the introduction of the Value Added Tax Bill 2025 in efforts to shield low-income households from inflation while digitising the national economy.

By moving essential goods, including cooking gas, infant formula and farm implements, to a zero-rated status, the Bill seeks to lower the cost of living and boost food security, even as it introduce mandatory electronic invoicing and new taxes on remote digital services. Presenting the Value Added Tax Bill of 2025 on Tuesday, Vice President and Minister of Finance, Mr Ndaba Gaolathe told Parliament that the current VAT Act, enacted in 2001 and implemented in 2002, no longer reflected the modern world.

Minister Gaolathe said the tax landscape had evolved significantly over the last two decades, necessitating a holistic review to ensure that the system remained sustainable.

He said the objective of the new Bill was to repeal and re-enact the Act with amendments that broadened its scope and aligned it with a technology-



Vice President  
Ndaba Gaolathe

driven global economy. He added that a key feature of the Bill was to formalise reforms regarding taxation of remote services and the introduction of mandatory electronic invoicing.

Minister Gaolathe stated that the Bill retained and built on such reforms, further expanding the VAT framework to ensure that it remained responsive to the realities of an increasing digital and technology-driven economy.

"The Bill maintains the standard VAT rate of 14 per cent on taxable supplies, imports and reverse-charged supplies, it introduces

stricter compliance measures, including making it compulsory for any person making taxable supplies above the VAT threshold to apply for registration," he said.

Importantly, he said the legislation refocused the list of zero-rated goods to protect essential items consumed by lower-income households. Also, he said the zero-rated list had been carefully revised to include staple foods such as maize meal, sorghum, bread, fresh vegetables, cooking oil and sugar and the list further covered household needs like cooking gas and basic water supply, as well as critical products like infant formula, sanitary products and prescription medicines which have been moved from exempt to zero-rated status.

He also informed Parliament that, beyond households, the Bill further provided meaningful support to the agricultural sector by zero-rating key inputs and implements such as ploughs and tractors to lower production costs and strengthen food security.

Minister Gaolathe noted that the shift toward zero-rating certain supplies used in production allowed manufacturers to claim input tax, which enhanced the competitiveness of local industry while supporting low-income households through more

affordable local goods.

"This strategy is expected to strengthen local manufacturing and contribute to a more inclusive and resilient economy," he said.

The minister acknowledged that despite such updates, several gaps and inconsistencies had persisted and prompted the need for a comprehensive and holistic act review.

"As part of government's broader tax reforms programme, a comprehensive review of the value added tax was undertaken along with the development of the new Tax Administration Act. This process has now been completed and was informed by extensive engagement with relevant government departments and private sector which culminated in the National Tax Pitso," he said.

He added that the new Bill, informed by extensive engagement during the National Tax Pitso and consultations with the private sector, established clearer rules for pricing, advertising and determination of when a supply occurred. Furthermore, he said, the Bill empowered government to recover VAT from recipients who misrepresented the nature of a supply and allowed the minister to enter into agreements with foreign governments on VAT-related matters. **BOPA**

When you think of  
**home,**  
what comes to  
**mind first?**

#omang



# DailyBusiness

## Rising fuel prices hit Tanzania as Middle East conflict bites

### DARES SALAAM

Every morning before sunrise, Herry Msese steers his commuter minibus through the bustling streets of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, transporting dozens of passengers along the busy route.

In recent weeks, however, fuel has emerged as his biggest concern.

"This is a big challenge," said the driver of a local minibus, also known as "dala dala"

"Every day, I must submit TSh110,000 (about US\$43) to the vehicle owner." Previously, fuel costs averaged around TSh90,000 per day, but have lately reached about TSh150,000.

On a good day, the amount a

bus can earn at best is merely TSh260,000.

"This means almost everything I earn goes into fuel," he said.

The sharp increase in fuel prices follows escalating geopolitical tensions in the Middle East involving the United States, Israel, and Iran. Disrupted global oil supply chains have sent crude oil

prices soaring and affected fuel-importing countries like Tanzania.

"I do not know what should be done," Msese added. "Maybe the government should reduce taxes, or fuel prices should come down. Most importantly, this war should end."

After covering all daily expenses, he was left with just TSh7,000. "If things get worse, I may have to look for another job."

Tanzania is experiencing one of the steepest fuel price increases in recent years, given the latest review by the Energy and Water Utilities Regulatory Authority.

Under the new pricing structure, petrol now sells at TSh3,820 per liter, up from TSh2,864 shillings in March. Diesel has climbed to TSh3,806, while kerosene now costs TSh3,684 per liter.

The fuel price hikes are spreading rapidly across the Tanzanian economy, affecting transportation, food costs, and household budgets. For Zena Omary, a 28-year-old mother of three children and owner of a food stall at Mawasiliano market, commutes daily from Kitunda to Ubungu, relying on public transport and sometimes motorcycle taxis. "Transport fares have not officially been increased, but drivers are charging more," she said. Omary noted that her customers, many of whom were commuters themselves, often share similar struggles.

"They explain their situation, and I understand because I am also affected." As most goods are transported into the city by fuel-dependent vehicles, Omary was forced to raise the price of a plate of food from TSh2,000 to TSh2,500.

"I had no choice. The cost of ingredients and transport has increased." Despite the adjustment, she held an uncertain picture of the future.

"In the next few weeks, I don't know what will happen. I am worried about whether my business will survive."

At Kariakoo Market, a major trading hub in Dar es Salaam, Erick Matemba was struggling to keep his mobile phone business afloat. "Most of the phones we sell are imported from Dubai. But for about three weeks now, we have not received new stock," said the 35-year-old Tanzanian.

Supply disruptions slowed shipments, leading to shortages of phones and accessories.

Higher fuel costs also drove up delivery charges, with a trip that once cost TSh5,000 now running around TSh8,000.

"We are forced to increase prices slightly to cover these costs," Matemba explained. In remote parts of the country such as Ngorongoro in the Arusha region, petrol prices have even exceeded TSh4,000 per liter.

Other cities, including Dodoma and Mwanza, have also recorded significant increases. Economists warn that rising fuel prices could trigger broader inflationary pressures.

As transportation and production costs rise, businesses are likely to pass these costs on to consumers.

There are also concerns about currency pressures. *Xinhua*



Dar es Salaam - Petrol prices displayed at a filling station in Tanzania on Saturday. Tanzania is experiencing one of the steepest fuel price increases in recent years, given the latest review by the Energy and Water Utilities Regulatory Authority. Photo: Xinhua

## Serbia products target China market

### BELGRADE

Bottles of raspberry brandy, rows of local wines and jars of honey lined the exhibition tables as Serbian producers presented their specialty products to Chinese partners at an event in the Belgrade Chinese Cultural Center on Monday.

The event, titled "Serbian Specialty Products to Shandong," brought together officials and business representatives from both countries, intending to promote Serbian food and agricultural products in China, particularly in east China's Shandong Province.

Addressing the gathering,

Serbia Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy Adrijana Mesarovic, said the event showcased the tangible results of ongoing cooperation with China, including prior discussions and early-stage agreements with companies.

She noted that the gathering provides a platform to encourage broader participation from businesses seeking to enter the Chinese market.

"Serbia and China maintain a stable and reliable partnership, providing a solid foundation for trade and market cooperation," Mesarovic said.

"With continued collaboration,

opportunities for supply, market access and investment will expand. The Serbian government will continue to support these initiatives with policy guidance and resources, ensuring projects advance smoothly."

At the event, agreements were signed between Chinese and Serbian firms, covering agricultural and food exports and the development of distribution channels. Producers offered tastings and demonstrations around the signing area, highlighting the quality and uniqueness of Serbian goods, from fruit-based spirits to honey and confectionery. *Xinhua*

### BUSINESS BRIEFS

## China-South Africa trade deepens cooperation

### CAPE TOWN

Companies from China and South Africa engaged in talks on cooperation in sectors, including agriculture, manufacturing, energy and mining, finance, automobiles, and logistics during trade forum held in Cape Town on Friday, The China-South Africa Economic and Trade Cooperation Forum was jointly organised by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) and South Africa's Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, with over 350 participants attending. South African Deputy President Paul Mashatile said that the recently signed Framework Agreement on Economic Partnership for Shared Development between the two countries would effectively lower costs for Chinese companies importing South African goods while opening new avenues for local industries to expand their reach and competitiveness. *Xinhua*

## Brazil launches measures to cushion fuel prices

### RIO DE JANEIRO

Brazil President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on Monday launched a package of measures designed to cushion the impact of international energy price volatility on Brazil's economy. The president signed a series of decrees to provide immediate relief to consumers and businesses, while strengthening the country's energy security and reducing Brazil's exposure to external shocks. A major part of the package was a diesel subsidy, crucial for freight transport in the country. The federal government and the states will jointly finance the subsidy of US\$0.23 per liter for diesel imports, with the federal government shouldering half of the subsidy. For the renewable fuels sector, the government announced the exemption of two federal taxes on biodiesel, which will lead to a price reduction of US\$0.004 per liter. *Xinhua*

## AI-powered breeding industry flourishes

### BEIJING

AI-driven technologies are invigorating China's smart breeding sector, propelling the digital and intelligent transformation of the seed industry. During the ongoing spring farming season, a surge of AI-driven innovative applications has emerged. The Nanfan smart breeding platform, which focuses on breeding data processing, recently unveiled two key technological tools: a gene-environment interaction algorithm tool and a breeding simulation tool. The gene-environment interaction algorithm tool integrates crop genetic information with environmental data, such as meteorology and soil conditions, to analyse crop traits, which can reduce computation time compared to traditional statistical models and quantify the impact of genetics and environment on crop characteristics. *Xinhua*

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# Govt to address BPS stagnation

## GABORONE

Government is committed to provide the Botswana Police Service (BPS) with new supervisory positions to alleviate stagnation, thereby boosting morale and enhancing productivity among police officers. This was said by Minister for State President, Defence and Security, Mr Moeti Mohwasa when responding to a question in Parliament from Tswapong South MP, Dr Kesitgile Gobotswang, recently.

“In addition, government is open to consider improved salary structure that would allow fair progression for the BPS,” Minister Mohwasa said.

He indicated that since making the commitment to address the slow promotion of police officers in 2024, a total of 220 officers former local police officers, each with length of service of 10 years or more of service, had been promoted to various ranks.

The ranks, he said, included one senior assistant commissioner, four assistant commissioners, seven senior superintendents, seven superintendents, 26 assistant superintendents, 32 inspectors, 64 sub-inspectors and 79 sergeants. Also, he said 1 278 former local police officers had been deployed across various policing establishments.

However, he said due to prevailing economic challenges, which had limited government’s ability to create new supervisory positions within the BPS, over the past five years progression within the organisation had been significantly slow.

“Consequently, the Commissioner of Police is

constrained, as promotions are only possible when positions become vacant due to attrition, these being resignation, death and retirement,” he added.

He also noted that 940 officers had remained in the same positions for more than 10 years without receiving promotions, including 258 former local police officers and 682 officers already within the BPS ranks, explaining that promotions within the BPS were based on meritocracy.

“Factors considered include performance, commitment, discipline and the availability of posts. There is no consideration given to gender prejudice,” he explained.

Dr Gobotswang asked the minister to apprise Parliament of the slow promotion rate of police



Minister for State President, Defence and Security, Mr Moeti Mohwasa said government was committed to providing the Botswana Police Service with new supervisory positions to alleviate stagnation.

officers, following the minister’s prior commitment to address the issue.

Tswapong South legislator also sought the total number of former local police officers with 10 or

more years of service who had been promoted since that commitment.

Furthermore, he asked about the number of officers who had remained in the same rank for over a decade and whether gender

favouritism existed within the process.

He also wanted to know what plans were in place to address delayed progression within the BPS. **BOPA**

## New oversight structures under review

### GABORONE

The Ministry of Local Government and Traditional Affairs is working in partnership with the Ministry of Finance to ensure that the new procurement oversight structures are fully compliant with the Public Procurement Act and remain sustainable within budget.

Answering a question in Parliament on Tuesday, Minister Ketlhalefile Motshegwa acknowledged the delays in implementing the Public Procurement Act of 2021 at the Local Authorities (LAs) level.

The minister, however, told

Parliament that transition towards fully operationalising procurement oversight structures was currently undergoing a comprehensive review and would ensure that new oversight positions were seamlessly integrated into the local authorities’ establishment.

“Council secretaries and town

clerks as accounting officers have instituted interim or ad-hoc structures to advice on all procurement matters for strict compliance to the Act and ensure fairness and objectivity to the whole procurement process,” he said. He stated that through utilising a structured,

sequential process involving ad-hoc evaluation structures and procurement managers at D2 scale, the ministry had maintained support and procedural system of checks and balances. He added that performance of the interim procurement oversight in place across local authorities had not so far warranted the need to conduct an assessment primarily due to the absence of the fully-fledged procurement oversight structure.

On one hand, he said the Public Procurement Act of 2021 required that local authorities submitted procurement plans and monthly reports to determine compliance to the Act and they complied.

To date, he said there had not been any reports on possible corruption maladministration actions or increase in tender-related complaints registered on account of absence of the oversight structure.

“The ministry continues to promote integrity and accountability through sensitisation initiatives conducted by the anti-corruption structures across local authorities,” he said. He further indicated that the ministry was pursuing relevant government stakeholders to conclude the proposed oversight structure which would form part of the ministry’s organisational new structure.

Member of Parliament for Tati East, Mr Tlhabologo Furniture, had asked the minister regarding the status of procurement oversight structures under the Public Procurement Act of 2021. Mr Furniture also sought explanations for delays in establishing such bodies, information on the specific officers and salary grades currently handling oversight as well as how such delays affected tender decisions by accounting officers.

He further asked whether lack of formal structures has led to increased corruption or maladministration and asked for details on any corrective measures being implemented. **BOPA**

## Bonno housing programme takes shape in Shashe West

### GABORONE

The long-anticipated delivery of 1 000 housing units under the Bonno National Housing Programme in Shashe West Constituency has taken a clearer shape, although with notable limitations in land availability and citizen uptake.

Responding to a parliamentary question recently, Minister of Water and Human Settlement, Mr Onneetse Ramogapi confirmed that only a fraction of the planned units would be directly funded by government in the 2026/2027 financial year.

Mr Ramogapi said out of the 1 000 earmarked houses, 31 units were budgeted under government financing and were spread across various schemes within the Bonno programme, including home improvement and turnkey housing initiatives targeting different income brackets.

He said the bulk of the housing delivery of 969 units would depend on private sector participation. However, he pointed out that progress on that front remained constrained, adding that Shashemooke had emerged as the only locality with available land for private development, with 3 834 hectares set aside.

He said the site was expected to

yield approximately 55 plots under a project spearheaded by Young Alum Pty Ltd.

Minister Ramogapi indicated that while government-funded projects were expected to commence in the upcoming financial year once funds were released, private developments would only begin after critical preparatory stages were completed.

He said those included land title issuance, finalisation of designs and investor mobilisation, steps that could delay broader rollout.

The minister outlined how the limited government funded units would be shared across villages in the constituency.

He said Borolong would receive the largest share under the turnkey scheme, while other villages such as Makobo, Chadibe, Jamataka, Natale and Mathangwane would receive smaller allocations. He said the uptake remained uneven, adding that of the 10 units initially earmarked under the Ordinary Home Improvement Scheme, only five applications were received.

Shashe West MP, Mr Jeremiah Frenzel had asked the minister whether the 1 000 houses allocated to the constituency under the Bonno National Housing Programme were included in the 2026/2027 financial year budget. **BOPA**

## Mohwasa explains Btv’s France24 partnership

... from page 5

Regarding the procurement models that were followed, he said the OB cameras and ENG camcoders were procured through direct appointment method. Mr Mohwasa said the reasons were that DEGA (UK) was a supplier of BTV systems, noting that in 1999 when Btv was established DEGA designed and supplied the system and other equipment.

He said they also integrated the system, hence they continued to provide maintenance and support to Btv. Parliament also learnt that Hitachi Kokusal (Japan) company won to supply an OB van and cameras through an open tender and the two companies owned the intellectual property to their designs and systems.

Member of Parliament for Serowe South, Mr Leepetswe Lesedi had asked how much

government had paid France24 for the evening Btv broadcast, how the station was selected and what procurement model was followed to contract the station.

Mr Lesedi also wanted to know how much was paid for foreign films versus locally produced content or films on average and what procurement model was followed for the same. He asked the minister to state when Btv would practice affirmative action and give preference to procure only local content.

Mr Lesedi probed how much was paid for the Family Feud Show and why the show was not shot on Botswana and which group was benefiting from Steve Harvey show. He asked which company supplied Btv with cameras whether the company had any links with any Btv employees and the procurement model that was followed. **BOPA**

# Arts & Culture

## Re imetswe: The hidden weight many carry

Kelebogile Taolo  
FRANCISTOWN

In the bustling streets of Botswana's cities, towns and villages, a phrase echoes through the crowds, 'Eish, re imetswe'. It is a silent scream, a whispered plea, a desperate cry for relief. 'Re imetswe,' is a phrase commonly used almost everywhere; it is used in situations where folks are fighting battles on multiple fronts.

Broken relations from romantic to family relationships, unemployment, the weight of high bills, inflation squeezing everyone's wallet, health battles, low business and the state of being broke, are many battles that many find themselves entangled in.

Different people react differently to the challenges, but many feel a heavy weight on their shoulders; they carry a burden so heavy it feels unshakeable.

For Fela Maela, a beautiful lady in her late 30's, an entrepreneur, a graduate and a hustler, it's a reality check that hits home every day.

Every morning before dawn, she drags herself out of bed. Her body screaming from fatigue, but because the day will not wait for her weak body to recover, she gets up to face her daily reality.

Around 8am she is already by her stall in front of Ntsho House in Francistown, ready to serve customers with her commodities ranging from perfumes, pre-loved clothes, drinks and an assortment of snacks and sweets.

Having been operating her stall for more than five years now, Maela, a Bobonong native, feels the impact of the economic meltdown as she now experiences low sales as people tend to spend less in the current state. "Most of my customers are government employees who work in Ntsho House. Their buying power has really dropped, this means reduced sales and revenue on my side," she said. As a mother of two, depending

on this business to care for her children, this really disheartens her, making life more difficult than it has ever been.

With many other small hustlers also out to eke a living, this saturates the market even further, making the few remaining customers a market way too small for the countless hustlers.

"Everyone tends to have a small business. Even government employees opt to have side hustles as their salaries no longer sustain them hence they resort to selling the same items that we sell like snacks, clothes and perfumes," she added.

There are times when Maela knocks off without having sold much, and the days of almost zero sales are becoming too common, and their frequency is affecting her ability to take care of her bills which include rental, groceries and other necessities.

This, coupled with other incidents that she sometimes experiences such as her stock being stolen, customers not paying for goods taken on credit as well as unfavourable weather conditions make her situation gloomier.

The business being her sole source of income adds salt to the wound, and while she can easily hide her sorrow behind her beautiful smile, a storm of uncertainty is usually raging deep within her soul.

Maela carries exhaustion, despair and the bitter taste of life's realities. "Indeed re imetswe, we are under a lot of pressure; the low and unstable income caused by selling without profits is draining us. Nako tse dingwe o kgona go tswa le P10 tota o sa mo rekisa," she said. With the cost of living getting out of reach every day for many people, people are left with no money and Maela believes this plays a role in affecting the poor mental of many people.

"We stay in survival mode, we live from hand to mouth, we don't have savings. We toil and toil just so that we

can pay rentals and buy groceries," she explained.

Maela acknowledges that this reality is also hitting hard on families, with unemployed women venturing into all sorts of small businesses to augment their husbands' and partners' salaries. However, the small businesses often fail to help because they struggle from the onset due to market constraints.

Also, with unemployment taking its toll on the majority of the citizens especially the youth, she believes Botswana are indeed overwhelmed.

However, with the situation escalating daily, Maela feels Botswana should brace themselves for even tougher times as it seems the road ahead will be longer than thought.

Re imetswe is not just a phrase, it speaks to the back-breaking burden that many Botswana are carrying just to survive any given day.

Meanwhile, a mental health and psychosocial support practitioner, also a counsellor, Dr Blinkie Oteng said the phrase 're imetswe' is more than a statement but a psychological and emotional distress signal. Dr Oteng perceives the statement to be reflecting a population carrying invisible burdens, financial pressure, relationship pain, grief and unmet expectations.

"When people say re imetswe, they are not just tired, they are overwhelmed beyond their coping capacity, and if not addressed, this state can significantly affect mental, physical and social wellbeing," she remarked. Nonetheless, Dr Oteng agrees that even in that state of being overwhelmed, help is possible.

"When we speak, when we are heard supported; the weight begins to lift. **BOPA**



'Eish, re imetswe' is a phrase used in situations where folks are fighting battles on multiple fronts. For entrepreneur, Fela Maela it is a reality check that hits home everyday as she feels the impact of the economic downturn, as reduced consumer spending continues to slow sales in her business.

## Giving relics new breath of life

HOHHOT

At the Inner Mongolia Museum in north China, a relics restorer in a white coat maneuvers an X-ray fluorescence (XRF) spectrometer close to a gilt silver saddle from the Tang Dynasty (618-907), and within a few dozen seconds, data about the object's metallic elements flash across the screen, which will guide the meticulous restoration to come. It is a vivid example of how modern technologies are reshaping heritage conservation in China.

Here, in what the museum staff calls a "cultural relics hospital," tradition meets technology. Equipped with specialised labs for inorganic and organic materials, the "hospital" helps identify basic information and assess the condition

of artifacts prior to restoration work. Pointing to a restored Warring States Period (475-221 BC) bronze mirror etched with a four-mountain motif, a conservator explains that the first task is to distinguish harmful rust from stable patina. To the untrained eye, corrosion on bronze may look the same. But for the experts, harmful rust resembles a spreading skin disease, silent, irreversible, and corrosive. Early diagnosis is essential.

Using the XRF spectrometry, the conservator quickly confirms the mirror's composition: a classic tin-bronze alloy of copper, tin and lead.

That forms an initial assessment of the artifact's condition, and conservators will then conduct follow-up tests to determine the precise treatment needed.

"Naturally formed rust, which is stable in condition, is also part of a relic's historical information.

We must follow the principle of minimal intervention in restoration," said Sonirhaan, deputy director of the museum's cultural relics conservation department. "Just as no two patients are alike, no two artifacts share the same "constitution." In addition to the XRF spectrometer, the "cultural relics hospital" is equipped with a variety of other instruments for examining cultural relics.

A museum staff member displays a bag of residue samples unearthed from silk fabrics and explains that the Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy instrument can identify material characteristics by analysing the samples' infrared

absorption and reflection spectra. Also in the "hospital," conservators use metallographic microscopes to reveal how ancient metal objects were made.

"Bronze production involved both casting and forging, which create very different crystal structures," they explain. By examining a sample's cross-section, they can easily tell which technique was used.

Additionally, the "hospital" has applied hyperspectral imaging technology to mural research and restoration and has utilised high-performance liquid chromatography to analyse binding media, pigment composition, and organic residues.

These modern technologies provide a crucial scientific basis for formulating and implementing cultural relic restoration plans. In

2025 alone, the museum's "cultural relics hospital" successfully restored nearly 300 artifacts.

Blending traditional skills with modern technologies, the project has breathed new life into historical treasures. "We hope the 'hospital' concept helps the public understand our work, and recognise that safeguarding ancient artifacts requires both hands-on skills and high technologies," said Wang Jiajuan, director of the museum's cultural relics conservation department.

"Looking ahead, the 'hospital' will continue to leverage technologies in restoring artifacts, while expanding public access, allowing more people to experience the wonder of cultural heritage conservation," Wang said. **Xinhua**



# DailySport

## Botswana Golden Grand Prix attracts top athletes

Anastacia Sibanda  
GABORONE

Top athletes have shown appetite in competing at the coming Botswana Golden Grand Prix billed for the National Stadium on April 26. Those who have confirmed participation include Canadians Andre De Grasse and Jerome Blake, Kenya's Ferdinand Omanyala, Mark Otieno, Isaac Omurwa as well as South Africa's Bradley Nkoana, Wayde Van Niekerk who will be competing in the 200 meters men category. The 2024 Olympic champion from USA, Gabby Thomas with the duo of Leah Bertrand and Eyayu Mekuanent from Trinidad and Tobago will take part in the 200 meters women category. Botswana's rising athletics

stars in the likes of Tshepiso Masalela and Kethogile Haingura will take part in the 800 meters distance. Botswana Golden Grand Prix spokesperson, Calistus Kolantsho said preparations were at an advanced stage, adding that the aim was to re-claim the golden status.

Kolantsho said the event sponsors would be unveiled in the coming days, adding that most of the sponsors were not new to the event as they had been working with them in the past years.

He said with the caliber of athletes they were bound to attract, they were confident to sell tickets in large numbers and fill the stadium to full capacity. **BOPA**

## Uganda announces visa waiver for AFCON 2027 visitors

KAMPALA

The Uganda government has announced visa waivers for visitors travelling to the country during the 2027 CAF Africa Cup of Nations AFCON.

Uganda will co-host the tournament with Kenya and Tanzania between June 19 and July 18, 2027.

"The Cabinet has decided to grant a visa waiver for visitors coming to Uganda, starting one month before the kickoff of AFCON 2027 and ending one month after the tournament. This decision is intended to encourage more visitors to come to Uganda as part of the marketing and promotion of Destination Uganda," Uganda's AFCON chairperson, Dennis Mugimba, said during a press conference in Kampala.

He added that Uganda was working with co-hosts Kenya and Tanzania to facilitate seamless cross-border movement for fans and visitors.

"To facilitate the ease of movement of fans and guests during the tournament, government is pursuing the option of a special purpose joint PAMOJA visa with Kenya and Tanzania during the tournament," Mugimba said.

A total of 28 teams will compete in the 2027 AFCON, including co-hosts Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania, which qualify automatically. **Xinhua**



## Namibia hosts Kenya in FIFA U-17 women qualifiers

WINDHOEK

Namibia under-17 women's squad, known as the Baby Gladiators, has intensified training ahead of the FIFA U17 Women's World Cup qualifiers, the country's football governing body announced on Tuesday.

Namibia will host Kenya at the University of Namibia Stadium in Windhoek on April 12, with the return leg scheduled for April 18 in Nairobi, Kenya, the Namibia Football Association (NFA) said.

The NFA confirmed that the team's current training block

began on Tuesday morning at the Independence Stadium. From Wednesday, the team moved its sessions to the UNAM Stadium, where it will train in both morning and afternoon sessions.

A total of 31 Confederation of African Football member associations, excluding Morocco, registered teams for the competition.

The qualifiers will determine the four teams that will join automatically qualified host Morocco in the final tournament of the 2026 FIFA U17 Women's World Cup. **Xinhua**