

BOTSWANA

Daily

News

THE PAPER THAT INFORMS AND EDUCATES



Solo
wins big
at Lyric
Leap
show

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DIKGANG

Ba tlaa
tswelela
ka leina la
Tumasera

Portia Rapitsenyane
TUMASERA

Dikgotlana tsa Tupya, Maletle le Rasesa mo Tswapong South di tla nna motse wa Tumasera fela jaaka go ne go ntse kwa tshimologong.
Tshwetso e, e rotswe ke Tona wa lephata la selegae le tsa ngwao, Rre Ketlhalefile Motshegwa kwa phuthegong ya kgotla e a neng a e buisa kwa Tumasera ka Mosupologo.

E tswelela ... Tsebe 7

NEWS

Ministry consults
on National Health
Insurance

Tshiamiso Mosetlha
PAJE

Residents of Paje have been informed that the National Health Insurance (NHI) will alleviate financial hardships associated with accessing healthcare services.

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Tebogo receives 'golden key'

Three-bedroom property, valued at P2.1 million cements government's commitment of fulfilling its pledge to reward exceptional sporting achievement.



Minister of Sport and Arts, Mr Jacob Kelebeng (left) handing over a three-bedroom house at Kgale View yesterday, to sprint sensation, Letsile Tebogo (centre) in recognition of his historic achievement at the Paris 2024 Olympics Games. Tebogo made global headlines after winning the gold medal in the 200m race, becoming the first Motswana athlete to claim a Gold Olympic title in the event. Minister Kelebeng said the gesture fulfilled the ministry's promise that athletes who excelled and brought home medals would be rewarded accordingly. Photo: Thompson Keobaletswa

SEE STORY PAGE 10



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Bonds within families foster peace - Selolwane

Lorato Gaofise
GABORONE

Even as Botswana enjoys a reputation for stability, peace is not always present where it matters most, that is in homes, workplaces and communities.

This was the central message at the two-day Peace Conference that ended last Friday at the University of Botswana (UB), organised by the founder of Little Eden's Justice and Peace Centre (LEJAPEC), Dr Enole Ditsheko.

Little Eden's Justice and Peace Centre is a Non-Governmental Organisation registered under Companies Intellectual Property Authority in 2014, aimed at tackling growing social challenges, like drug abuse, crime, high divorce rates, corruption and Gender Based Violence, among others.

In a lecture hall at UB, a Social Development Analyst, Dr Onalenna Selolwane's voice carried a message that resonated far beyond academia that peace is not just a national or global ideal, 'it begins within the walls of our homes'.

Addressing participants during the Peace Conference, Dr Selolwane who is also former UB senior lecturer and head of the Department of Sociology, explored how personal responsibility, family dynamics and cultural expectations intersect to shape communities.

"There is no peace in our walls," she said, reminding the audience that even in societies that appear stable, conflict often simmers quietly in households, workplaces and neighbourhoods.

Her reflections delved into the complexity of parenthood, particularly the challenges facing young parents and single-parent families.

Drawing on psychological perspectives and social research, she explained how early parenthood and societal pressures can contribute to unresolved conflict and intergenerational struggles.

"When people say culture is to blame, it's very simplistic. Culture gives us the tools to become responsible adults, but outcomes vary. We see both responsible and irresponsible fathers and mothers," she added.

Dr Selolwane emphasised that the responsibilities of raising children often extend beyond biological parents.

She recounted how many adults nurture children they did not father, becoming integral in shaping their identity and sense of belonging.

Without broader support, she cautioned that bitterness and unresolved conflicts can foster, impacting future relationships and marriages.

Marriage, she argued, has

historically served as a framework for shared responsibility, bringing together families and communities.

She expressed concern that nowadays societal changes have shifted family structures, with more children being raised in single-parent households.

"When we look at history, marriage was a way to ensure that children had more than one adult responsible for them," she noted, adding that modern legal systems often struggle to reconcile customary and statutory laws, leaving many women and children in insecure positions.

Dr Selolwane further linked historical economic pressures to family dynamics, explaining how labour migration in the past led to the absence of men from households, which in a way disrupted traditional family formation.

She highlighted how these patterns continue to influence social behaviour, property rights and marital arrangements.

Throughout her talk, she urged attendees to recognise that peace is cultivated through deliberate effort, understanding and shared responsibility.

"When we are not at peace with ourselves, entering a marriage or raising a family can exacerbate unresolved conflicts. We must help one another grow into responsible and loving individuals,

especially those who missed out in childhood," she advised.

The lecture was as much a call to action as a reflection on societal trends, blending scholarship with empathy.

Participants left with a renewed awareness that lasting peace starts with nurturing relationships at home, valuing shared responsibilities and creating supportive networks for the next generation.

In the end, Dr Selolwane reminded the audience that the task of building peace is ongoing and personal.

"It is never a single thing that contributes to the failure or success of parenting, but a whole lot of things. It is in understanding, supporting and loving one another that we truly find peace," she added.

The annual Peace Conference, which was this year themed, Tackling Pressing Social Problems Affecting Peace and Security, reminded attendees that the pursuit of peace starts at home and requires participation of every member of society.

As Botswana navigates social change, the initiative offered a needed platform for dialogue, understanding and shared responsibility on how best to address the challenge of growing social ills. **BOPA**

Partnership ensures inclusive education

Esther Mmolai
MAUN

The partnership between Tshidilo Stimulation Centre (TSC) board, staff, parents and donors has been hailed as a model of shared commitment to children with special needs.

The centre provides services for children with disabilities, focusing on their academic, physical, social and emotional well-being.

In his opening remarks at a graduation ceremony of 11 learners held at the Maun Centre for Special Education recently, TSC board chairperson, Mr Mosebo Molapisi, said unity and collaboration had kept the centre strong as all key stakeholders believed in inclusive education for all, including children living with disabilities.

Mr Molapisi appreciated that all the partners continued to actively work as a unit to provide a more inclusive and supportive environment by eliminating discrimination and other barriers that prevented full participation in education.

Their efforts, he said, could not go unnoticed as they had shaped lives and planted seeds that would bear fruit for years to come.

He also stated that the graduation was not just an academic achievement but a significant step forward in the learners' journey of learning, growth and development.

"These young stars have shown courage, resilience and determination and for many of them, today is not just a ceremony but a transition to the next phase of life.

Some will continue their learning through home-based care programmes, others will move on to specialised units like Moremi Special Unit, and all will carry with them the love, skills and confidence they gained at the centre," he added.

Special education teacher from TSC, Mr Stanley Mushaniga, revealed that the graduation was testament that at the centre, progress was not measured by speed but by every step taken to shape the lives of the learners.

Mr Mushaniga commended parents, caregivers, partners and other stakeholders for their unwavering support and unshakeable hope, which he said had been the foundation of the children's success.

He also appreciated the centre's staff, saying their commitment had helped unlock potential that once seemed hidden.

He reminded parents that disability was not inability, citing that each child had abilities waiting to shine when all stakeholders created the right environment, support and belief.

"Let us continue to advocate for inclusion, for understanding and for celebrating all learners not for who we want them to be but for who they already are. Behind every milestone achieved is a network of love, patience, and commitment," he added.

The graduation ceremony was held under the theme, Celebrating Milestones, Embracing Abilities. **BOPA**

Experts scrutinise patriarchy

...examines its influence on gender-based violence

Ndingillilo Gaoswediwe
GABORONE

A diverse group of experts convened in Gaborone on Saturday at the call of host, Ms Njiramanda Mbewe-Boatey, to examine the influence of patriarchy on gender-based violence (GBV).

Held under the theme, From Blame to Accountability, The Great Debate, the patriarchy and GBV edition 2025, brought together individuals from law, religion and other fields, igniting a critical dialogue on systemic gender inequalities.

In her welcoming remarks, Ms Mbewe-Boatey emphasised that the time to address GBV was now. She urged participants to interrogate patriarchy amid soaring statistics of suicides and passion killings.

She lamented that progress had been slow and systems remained stagnant, but was hopeful that the debate would enable attendees to trace where failures occurred and explore remedies to restore peace, which was currently under threat.

Court of Appeal Judge, Lot Moroka explained that while patriarchy contributed to GBV, it cannot be solely blamed.

Judge Moroka noted that patriarchy underpinned many societal foundations, including law, particularly common law such as marital law.

However, he highlighted that the legislative progress was gradually dismantling patriarchal structures, with statutory law progressing in that regard. On GBV, he urged



Kgosi Mosadi Seboko of Balete (left), Justice Lot Moroka (centre) and SeniorAssistant Commissioner of Police, director of gender and child protection, Ms Goitseone Ngono during the Great Debate on patriarch and gender based violence (GBV) in Gaborone on Saturday. Justice Moroka said patriarchy was not the sole cause of GBV, explaining that GBV arose from a complex and multifaceted interplay of economic, legal and political factors. Photo: Gothusang Lesego

people to resist conditioning to abuse, warning that tolerance had led to lives lost, describing GBV as a crime in all its forms.

Media personnel, Mr Kealeboga Dihutso attributed the breakdown of family structures to a vacuum left by changing societal dynamics.

Mr Dihutso observed that children today were often raised by single mothers, whereas in the past, raising children was a community effort involving extended family members like uncles.

Botswana Council of Churches (BCC) vice president, and a human rights activist, Reverend Thabo Mampane, said patriarchy existed within the church, citing biblical origins where man was created first and woman from man's rib.

He acknowledged that church leadership had historically been male-dominated but emphasised the need for growth and inclusion, clarifying that the church was

the hospital of the soul. Speakers including Dr Morena Rankopo, a social educator at the University of Botswana, Kgosi Mosadi Seboko, Paramount Chief of Balete and psychologist, Mr Leshomo Sebati stressed that much work remained to break inequality barriers.

They called for early interventions to change perpetrators' mindsets and urged research to address trauma responses that continued to haunt men. **BOPA**



Minister for State President, Mr Moeti Mohwasa (centre), permanent secretary in the ministry, Ms Goitsewang Morekisi (left) and UNDP Resident Representative in Botswana, Ms Lovita Ramguttee at the UN International Day for Persons with Disability commemoration in Jwaneng recently. Ms Ramguttee hailed Botswana's efforts towards inclusion of persons with disabilities. Photo: Kehumile Moekejo

Ramguttee hails Botswana efforts

Kehumile Moekejo
JWANENG

Resident Representative for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Botswana, Ms Lovita Ramguttee has hailed Botswana's efforts towards inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Speaking at a recent UN International Day for Persons with Disabilities commemoration held in Jwaneng, Ms Ramguttee said developing several frameworks such as the Persons with Disability Act, Revised National Policy on Disability and Recruitment Policy, among others, were testament to the country's commitment to promoting human rights and enhancing sustainable development.

"These achievements for us reflect Botswana's unwavering commitment to building a society where no one is left behind. The United Nations here in Botswana has been very happy and supports the government on this journey, whether it is in relation to legal framework, all the way to training parliamentarians on the issue of the Convention on Persons with Disabilities and capacity building," she said.

Nonetheless, she acknowledged that public awareness, data collection, employment opportunities, stigma and

Institutions should align their policies, programmes and financial planning initiatives with the inclusion concept in order to enhance equality and dignity for persons with disabilities.

inaccessible infrastructure were some of the areas with gaps that hindered the overall goals of inclusion and full participation of persons with disabilities. She underscored the need for stakeholders to collaborate efforts to address these challenges.

"Addressing these challenges will require collaboration, innovation and sustained investments through the whole of government and the whole of society. Today let us reaffirm our commitment to the principle of Leaving No One Behind, which is a core principle of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, which is central in human rights centric administration," she noted.

She implored institutions to align their policies, programmes and financial planning initiatives with the inclusion concept in order to enhance equality and dignity for persons with disabilities. She also reassured the UN's support towards operationalisation of the Persons with Disability Act of 2024, which was declared officially commenced during the event.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry for State President, Ms Goitsewang Morekisi said government was committed to

advancing disability inclusion as a national priority as evidenced by the creation of a clear blue print for all stakeholders.

Ms Morekisi said government had invested in various frameworks over the years, with the objective of enhancing the lives of persons with disabilities.

She applauded Debswana for taking the lead in implementing the Affirmative Action, which she said should also be effectively implemented in government structures.

She also said there was need to involve persons with disabilities in decision making processes to inform the policies and programmes.

She urged all stakeholders to collaborate their efforts in implementing the frameworks to advance the rights of persons with disabilities and create a fully inclusive society.

"I urge all of you to join hands and play a role in ensuring that all the frameworks I talked about are actually implemented," she said.

Debswana Chief People Officer, Ms Matlhogonolo Mponang noted that through their robust Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, the company had increased the number of differently-abled employees from 18 in 2020 to the current 113 deployed in various roles of their operations. She said the strategy also emphasised the concept of belonging by all employees, irrespective of their differences.

She noted that such inclusion and belonging was also reflected in their investment initiatives aimed at accommodating all employees.

"It is also important to note that we have actively spent capital to ensure that the environment speaks to belonging.

There has been serious investment in software that enables others that need it to be able to work, we are in the process of outfitting and retrofitting braille technology, and we continue to ensure that we have access," she said.

One of the caregivers, Ms Julia Dibeela emphasised the importance of patience and dedication as key factors to overcome the challenges that came with caring for persons with disabilities. **BOPA**

Antimicrobial Resistance contributes to 1.27million deaths globally

Portia Rapitsenyane
PALAPYE

Minister of Health, Dr Stephen Modise, says World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates show that Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) was directly responsible for 1.27 million deaths globally in 2019 and contributed to nearly 5 million more.

Speaking at the World Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Commemoration Day held in Palapye recently, Dr Modise said in Botswana AMR was listed as the number one public health threat and it was estimated that approximately one in 10 patients admitted to a hospital experience a Healthcare-Associated Infection (HAI), and AMR was now estimated to be the sixth leading cause of death in the country.

Dr Modise attributed this largely to patients demanding antibiotics for viral infections like the flu or a cold, followed by misuse or failure to finish the full prescribed course.

"When we do not finish a prescribed course of treatment, we allow the strongest germs to survive and multiply," he explained.

The minister further cautioned against the risk of pharmaceutical waste and improper disposal of medicines contaminating water and soil, thus spreading resistance far and wide.

He advised the public against sharing unprescribed medication at home and against stopping medication before the actual time, which disrupted the healing process.

Other speakers at the event said there was an urgent need for coordinated action across animal health, human health and the environment.

Ministers from various ministries of Lands and Agriculture, Environment and Tourism, Water and Human Settlement as well as Local Government and Traditional Affairs emphasised the need for the proper and responsible use of antibiotics in both livestock and humans, along with strengthened infection prevention and improved community awareness.

Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) occurs when microbial pathogens evolve, developing mechanisms to evade the actions of antimicrobials, resulting in infections in humans and animals that are no longer sensitive to the treatments available.

Acting Minister of Lands and

Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti, highlighted that AMR was the greatest existential threat to humanity after climate change. Dr Dikoloti noted that the world was running out of treatment options as pathogens developed resistance to virtually all antimicrobials.

"This is happening at a much faster rate than new ones are developed or become available to the healthcare system," he stated.

He pointed out that developing countries like Botswana were particularly vulnerable to the debilitating effects of AMR.

"This is due to underdeveloped healthcare systems that are already under severe strain from the high prevalence of infectious and increasingly non-communicable diseases, all of which require antimicrobials for management," he said.

Furthermore, he indicated that developing nations facing food insecurity would see the problem worsen as AMR undermined production and productivity. That, he said necessitated developing countries and governments to take AMR seriously.

In agriculture, Dr Dikoloti lamented irresponsible use of antibiotics, including the use of antibiotic growth promoters in animal nutrition, as a major driver of AMR.

He said another significant factor was the blanket use of antibiotics to prevent infections instead of implementing good animal husbandry practices, such as hygiene and vaccination.

He therefore asserted that AMR and other health risks associated with the environment, land, water and agriculture cannot be addressed in isolation but must be tackled holistically through the One Health approach.

He said government was committed to the global effort to combat AMR and planned to continue promoting prudent use of antimicrobials such as antibiotics, antivirals and antifungals across the agriculture, food, environment and health sectors.

Assistant Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Mr Ignatius Moswaane, said the ministry would commit to ensuring that local service delivery structures promoted clean and safe environment.

Mr Moswaane emphasised that preventing infections was one of the strongest tools available to reduce the initial need for antimicrobials. **BOPA**

unforeseen circumstances as it protects people from unplanned expenses and offers a financial cushion from accidents, illnesses and more other health challenges. He said the scheme was to ensure citizens were able to use the closest NHI accredited facility and all health services providers within their reach.

In their response, the residents noted that for NHI to thrive, it will be in order for government to first focus on improving service at all public health centres and do away with queues and unprecedented long waiting hours for one to access health services. **BOPA**

Ministry consults on NHI

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Addressing a consultative kgotla meeting on Monday in Paje, a team of experts from public health unit in the Ministry of Health said NHI require citizens to have health coverage, often through mandatory contributions to cover for medical costs and strengthen health system.

Dr Keatlaletse Siamisang indicated that the NHI scheme would be designed to ensure that every Motswana regardless of income or background has equal access to quality, affordable and timely health care.

Dr Siamisang stated that insurance act as a vital shield against

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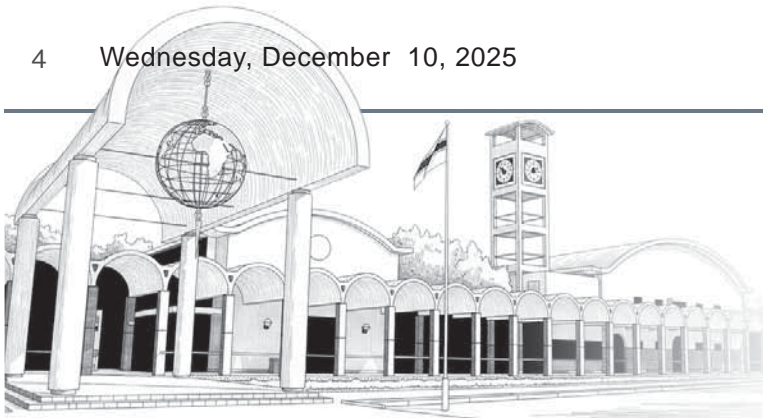
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PARLIAMENT 2025

BPC stabilises operations

GABORONE

The Botswana Power Corporation (BPC) has recently experienced delays in settling payments to some of its suppliers. This was said by the Minister of Minerals and Energy, Ms Bogolo Kenewendo in response to Tati East Member of Parliament on Monday, who wanted clarification on the number of Botswana contractors who were owed by the corporation since 2019, the total amount owed and what was being done to normalise its operations and pay contractors on time.

Minister Kenewendo explained that the delays were largely driven by significant financial pressures arising from elevated power import costs over the past several years.

“It is important to highlight that for the 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years, there were no corresponding electricity tariff adjustments despite sustained increases in the cost of generation and supply,” said Minister Kenewendo.

She stated that the structural misalignment between revenue and operating costs had placed considerable strain on BPC’s liquidity position, thereby affecting its ability to consistently meet supplier obligations within the prescribed timeframes.

Notwithstanding these challenges, she said BPC remained committed to restoring financial stability, strengthening internal controls, and improving payment turnaround times.

The Minister said as at October 31, BPC confirmed that there were no outstanding invoices dating back to 2019, and that should any supplier provide evidence or invoices from that period, BPC was ready to investigate and resolve the matter promptly.

Minister Kenewendo further stated that the corporation acknowledged outstanding

invoices relating to the 2020 to 2023, valued at P3.72 million, owed to five small works contractors.

The delays in concluding these payments primarily stemmed from unresolved technical issues encountered during project commissioning, which prolonged the verification and final acceptance processes required prior to payment, Minister Kenewendo said.

She said the corporation had among others, instituted a suite of interventions aimed at improving its financial position and normalising payment performance.

Minister Kenewendo assured the House of BPC commitment to further stabilising its operations and ensuring that contractors were paid timeously in line with contractual requirements or obligations. **BOPA**



Minister of Minerals and Energy, Ms Bogolo Kenewendo

Ministry complied with court order - Mmolotsi

GABORONE

The Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs has complied and adhered to the High Court judgment which ordered that; (a) a declaratory be issued that the respondents actions of failure to adhere and implement the new scheme of service as per Directive No. 27 of 2014 Ref DP/19/72 VI (88) dated 10/28/2014 is unlawful and a legal nullity.

Minister of Environment and Tourism, Mr Wynter Mmolotsi, answering on behalf of Minister of Labour and Home Affairs on Monday, said the judgement further gave an order that (b) the applicants affected members were entitled to be paid remuneration for performing extra duties that they were not supposed to be performing as per Directive No. 27 of 2014.

He said in terms of Court Order (a), the ministry had complied and adhered to the Court Order and regarding Court Order (b) the ministry had so far, through the Department of Civil and National Registration compensated a total of 103 out of 104 employees who were affected and eligible for compensation as per the Court Order.

Mr Mmolotsi said the total cost of implementing the judgement was P25,436,793.62 for the 104 employees, inclusive of outstanding amount for the remaining one employee.

However, the minister said the one employee had been partially paid and the calculations for the outstanding amount was being verified for payment in the January 2026 payroll.

He further said the ministry was not planning to launch an



Minister of Environment and Tourism, Mr Wynter Mmolotsi

investigation into the matter because the arguments of the matter at the courts were adequate not to warrant further investigations. Minister Mmolotsi said the findings had actually been made as to how the situation occurred, and at the time the deployments officers had not adequately separated the duties of different position levels along the Scheme of Service such that officers from lower levels ended up performing duties of higher salary scale. He added that the compensation that accrued over time were for payment of officers who were found to have been performing duties above their job descriptions.

Mr Mmolotsi said the department continued to deliver service to the public despite the implementation of the judgement hence there was no impact on service delivery caused by the implementation of the judgement.

Minister Mmolotsi added that the appropriate deployment meant that officers were tasked with duties relevant to their positions.

He said to enhance service delivery, the ministry was currently

reviewing the Job Effectiveness Descriptions (JEDs) and the Schemes of Service (SoS) for the Department of Civil and National Registration, to align with the new functional structure. He said the review included all the functions such as the revenue collection, certifying of documents, and data verification among others.

Mr Mmolotsi added that the exercise was anticipated to be completed by end of the financial year and the implementation to commence in the next financial year, an arrangement that would separate duties, roles and responsibilities to avoid the situation that led to the court order.

Shoshong MP, Mr Moneedi Bagaisamang had asked the Minister of Labour and Home Affairs to appraise the House on the implementation of the High Court Judgement MAHGB-000294-17 as directed by the Court of Appeal Judgement CACGB-183-19. He said in particular he wanted to know whether the judgement had been fully implemented in terms of order (a) and (b), and the total cost of implementing the above judgement.

He further asked if there were plans to launch an investigation into how the ministry allowed employees to work outside of provided Scheme of Service for over 10 years resulting in the court order.

He also asked how the implementation of the judgement had impacted on the service delivery of the department and state the short and long term plans in place to plug the gap of service delivery in revenue collection, certifying of documents, data verification brought about by the implementation of the judgement. **BOPA**

‘Compliance to EIA necessary’

GABORONE

Parliament has learnt that Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure is proactive in dealing with environmental sustainability in road projects.

Assistant Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Mr Keoagile Atamelang said Monday that this was also demonstrated by the existence of relevant legislation and drafting of the guidelines for road construction, entitled Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of Roads that provided a comprehensive technical basis for decision making through integrating EIA into planning process.

In that regard, he said the EIA recommendations ensured that roads were planned and designed in an environmentally sensitive manner.

He said EIA further ensured road alignment avoid wetland, wildlife habitats, cultural sites, community land, productive farmlands and where it was unavoidable to realign the road, effective mitigation measures

recommended in the EIA were implemented.

Mr Atamelang said assessment on the impact of the project to people and property was done during the EIA, and where people were to be displaced or lost land, a Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) was prepared in line with Acquisition of Property Act and relevant customary land provisions (Tribal Land Act) practices which governed expropriation, valuation and compensation procedures.

Resettlement needs are identified and effected before construction work begins, Mr Atamelang said.

He also noted that contracts included Environmental Management Plan (EMP) compliance, on-site environmental monitoring through independent consultants to monitor EMP implementation.

‘Routine environmental monitoring is also conducted during construction by the Department of Environmental Protection, moving mitigation from paper to contractual

obligation for contractors,” he stressed.

Mr Atamelang also explained that there was Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) to be followed during construction stage, which ensured that a clear, accessible complaints register for the community was kept on site by the contractor with defined response times for resolving disputes.

During construction, he said, community access and safety was ensured through provision of detours, signage, speed control and flag personnel and that regular maintenance of detours was effected, to ensure safety for the road users and local community.

Furthermore, he said work hour limits near sensitive areas such as schools and markets were also effected. Selebi Phikwe East MP, Mr Kgoberego Nkawana had asked the Minister of Transport and Infrastructure to state the plans in place to ensure that new road construction projects were environmentally sustainable and minimised disruption to local communities. **BOPA**



Minister of Labour and Home Affairs, Major General Pius Mokgware told Parliament that out of the 696 farm workers currently employed by Selebi Phikwe Citrus Project, 320 were Batswana engaged on permanent basis, while 110 were Batswana temporary workers. He cited lack of professional picking and packaging skills, which were not available in Botswana, as one of the reason for importing labour from other countries.

Selebi Phikwe Citrus Project to train pickers

GABORONE

Out of the 696 farm workers currently employed by the Selebi Phikwe Citrus Project, 320 are Batswana employed on permanent basis while 110 are Batswana temporary workers. In addition to that, 200 are seasonal temporary Batswana workers engaged for picking and packing while 66 are seasonal temporary foreign national

farm workers engaged for the same purpose. There were no permanent foreign nationals farm workers at the moment. Minister of Labour and Home Affairs, Major General Pius Mokgware shared with Parliament recently, also stating that there were 14 Batswana workers who occupied managerial positions and one Motswana at directorship position while eight foreign nationals also occupied

the same positions. Maj. Gen. Mokgware cited lack of professional picking and packing skills, which were not available in Botswana as one of the reason for importing labour from other countries. This is a job or skill that is learned overtime and needs a lot of practice and muscle memory for one to be able to do fast and without damaging the fruit, Maj. Gen. Mokgware said, adding that the company was in the process of conducting on the job training, to impart skills to the locals so as to allow them to learn from the experienced foreign pickers.

Minister Mokgware said that Selebi Phikwe Citrus was anticipating to further employ at a rate of two Batswana per foreign national as pickers and packers in the coming season. The project anticipates that it will need around 450 pickers and packers in total for the coming season hence would need 150 more farm workers. Selebi Phikwe Citrus Project started five years ago in collaboration with various stakeholders who continue to work closely together, produces valencia oranges, seedless lemon and grapefruit mainly for export. It has harvested 22 000 tonnes of produce in the current season with an intention of producing 40 000 tonnes in the next planting season. Selebi Phikwe West MP, Mr Reuben Kaizer had requested the minister to share the number of foreigners versus Batswana currently employed as farm workers, the number of Batswana who occupy managerial and directorship positions respectively and the reasons for importing labour from neighbouring countries. **BOPA**



Minister of Labour and Home Affairs, Major General Pius Mokgware

'Acquistion of citizenship by settlement provision available'

GABORONE

In terms of catering for someone who has been identified as stateless, there is a provision for acquisition of citizenship by settlement, which allows the registration of persons who have been resident in Botswana for a continuous period of 20 years.

Section 6 of the Citizenship Act provides that a person who is not a citizen of any county, or has no right to any citizenship or nationality and has legally lived as a member of a particular community in Botswana for a continuous period of 20 years, shall on making a declaration in such form as may be prescribed, be entitled to be registered as a citizen of Botswana, Minister of Environment and Tourism, Mr Wynter Mmolotsi told Parliament on Monday.

Mr Mmolotsi, who answering a question on behalf of the Minister of Labour and Home Affairs, said the ministry was aware of individuals who were unable to renew their national identity cards (omang) due to inconsistencies in their parental details leading to questionable citizenship status. He said these were people who deliberately provided false information to fraudulently acquire citizenship, and whenever, such persons presented their

request to the ministry, thorough assessments were conducted to establish their citizenship status and whether they were stateless as alleged. Mr Mmolotsi said those who had stayed in Botswana continuously for 20 years, might be considered for registration as citizens by the President under special circumstances in terms of the powers vested in him by Section 10 (b) of the Citizenship Act

He said considering the above provisions, non-citizens under various circumstances could have their citizenship status regularised after proper and authentic assessment had been made as the ministry undertook such an assessment from time to time or whenever such circumstances arose.

The minister was responding to Nkange MP, Mr Motlhaleemang Moalosi, who had asked if the minister was aware that a number of young adults have had their identity cards (omang) not renewed because of mistakes, errors or dishonesty by their parents when they were registered as children of Batswana by grandparents, aunts and uncles and if he was aware that most of the affected people grew up in Botswana with no relationship with any relative outside the country.

He also asked if the minister would consider offering the same people amnesty and give them citizenship to ease the suffering they were currently going through as stateless people. **BOPA**

Oodi-Machaneng BoFiNet project on

GABORONE

Parliament has learnt that the Oodi-Machaneng Botswana Fibre Networks (BoFiNet) project is being implemented under the National Backbone Network Project, and involves the supply, installation and commissioning of an overhead optical fibre link from Oodi to Machaneng.

The project aims to establish voice and data traffic connectivity from Oodi and Machaneng, including various villages along the route.

Responding to a question in Parliament recently. Minister of Communications and Innovation, Mr David Tshere, said the connected villages were; Oodi, Modipane, Dikwididi, Mabalane, Sikwane, Mmathubudukwane, Ramonaka, Malolwane, Oliphant's Drift, Ramotlabaki, Mmaphashalala, Dovedale, Kudumatse, Makwate, Machaneng and Parr's Halt Border Post.

He said the project was provisionally accepted and activated last year December and

was currently undergoing final acceptance, except the standby diesel generators, which were planned to be commissioned by January 31, 2026.

Mr Tshere explained that the main benefits included connecting communities along the route to high-speed Internet, thus expanding on the government's mandate to connect every Motswana from all corners of the country to high-capacity ICT infrastructure and ecosystem. During the construction stage, 133 jobs were created and more jobs will be created as mobile operators and Internet Service Providers (ISPs) establish their operations along the route, Mr Tshere said.

Furthermore, he said future upgrades and network expansions would be undertaken to meet the required demand for ICT services as and when the need emerged.

Kgatleng East MP, Mr Mabuse Pule had asked the minister to provide an update on the progress of the project, its benefits to residents of Kgatleng East and plans to further improve or expand the project in the future. **BOPA**



BMWU calls for industry realignment

Chendzimu Manyepedza
SELEBI-PHIKWE

Botswana Mine Workers Union (BMWU) president, Mr Joseph Tsimako has called for the mining industry to realign its goals and practices with industrial relations standards.

Mr Tsimako was speaking during the BMWU General Council and Business Insights seminar held in Selebi-Phikwe recently.

He said there was a need for the mining industry to realign its goals and practices to navigate towards the 'True North' strategic vision.

Furthermore, he expressed the need for a collaborative, cordial, and transparent relationship between mining stakeholders, aiming for a sustainable and equitable future for the sector.

"The idea of the summit was born from the realisation that the mining industry in the context of industrial relations was yet to find its 'True North'. This follows a month of engagements between the union, business partners, and other relevant stakeholders," said Mr Tsimako.

He spoke of the need for solidarity among mining stakeholders in pursuit of common objectives of navigating towards the 'True North'.

In addition, he encouraged open dialogue and sustainable partnerships, and an environment where every voice was heard and valued.

Touching on mining industry challenges, Mr Tsimako said such includes a wide gap between employers and employees characterised by trade disputes, non-recognition of the union along the mining supply chain, poor

mining operational standards, as well as marginalisation of the union in key policy and mineral development processes, hence the need for collaborative measures.

Moreover, he mentioned the evolving mining landscape, which he said called for the advent of technology in the workplace, innovative ways to conduct activities, citing the shift from a fossil fuel-driven economy to a green one.

The purpose of the BMWU General Council and Business Insights seminar, Mr Tsimako noted was to discuss the future of mining in Botswana, the future of employment in the mining sector, as well as emerging challenges in the evolving mining landscape.

The seminar was also set to encourage transition towards digitalised and technology-driven operations, dialogue about labour-employee cooperation for

a sustainable and equitable mining industry.

Senior Employees Relations Manager at Debswana, Mr Tebatso Hule, emphasised the need for the mining industry to embrace cutting-edge technology to drive innovation and enhance operational efficiency.

He explained that integrating advanced technologies could significantly improve productivity and safety standards within the sector.

Furthermore, Mr Hule emphasised the critical role of trade unions, asserting that they must prioritise transparency and accountability in their operations.

He said such a move would accord unions an opportunity to effectively represent and advocate for the interests of their members, ensuring that workers' voices were heard and their needs met.

BOPA



As Botswana's mining landscape evolves, Botswana Mine Workers Union calls for collaborative, tech-driven approaches to improve operations, safety and industrial relations.

LED strategy to boost local economy

Esther Mmolai
MAUN

North West District is developing a five year (2026-20230) Local Economic Development (LED) strategy to give the local economy a clear vision and direction.

The LED approach guide government, businesses and the community to work together to boost local economy, reduce poverty, create responsible employment opportunities and improve livelihoods by leveraging local resources and skills through strategic planning, infrastructure investment and support small, medium entrepreneurs.

Addressing a full council meeting, Council Chairman, Mr Itumeleng Kelebetseng said LED would not solely be driven by government, urging full participation of all other stakeholders. He said investment

and leadership were at the pinnacle of a successful LED strategy.

Mr Kelebetseng said the economic development of the district was dependent on a strong partnership between government, private enterprises and the community.

"Our district is a region of diverse economic potentials, tourism, agriculture, fisheries, crafts, small scale trade among others and through strong collaboration, consistent participation, open dialogue and joint action, we will drive innovation and competitiveness. We will create an attractive destination for investment to mention but a few," he added.

He called on fellow political leaders and other stakeholders to share the journey which was focused on improving the overall wellbeing of the community through better services and a more vibrant local economy.

Mr Kelebetseng also highlighted that efforts to establish meaningful international relations were progressing well citing that recently, he hosted the Deputy Chief of Mission from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Botswana, who expressed commitment to deepening cooperation in tourism and cultural exchange.

"After my return visit to the Embassy, I am pleased to report that there are promising prospects for the council to benefit from training seminars that will support our human capital development," he said. He said the recent launch of the use of drones in delivering medicines to health facilities was a transformative step in the health-care delivery system by ensuring that essential medical supplies reach communities swiftly and efficiently.

On other issues, Mr Kelebetseng noted that community consultations on the proposal of

upgrading Maun into a Green City have been completed in November.

He said the task team was currently working on the compilation of the district position paper covering comments and ideas from different stakeholders.

Mr Kelebetseng also reported that the district was currently experiencing illegal developments particularly in larger villages such as Maun and Sehithwa.

He added that the situation was also common within in the Okavango Delta area, entailing commercial developments especially tourism related accommodation facilities.

"Our communities should be aware that the entire district is a planning area and therefore the process of development has to be followed to the latter. As the council we continue to strengthen our enforcement processes to safeguard the community against these illegal developments."

BOPA

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Myanmar approves 14 new investment projects

YANGON - The Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) has approved 14 new investment projects, state media reported on Tuesday. At its meeting on Monday in Nay Pyi Taw, the MIC approved five new foreign investments and nine new local investment projects in the industry, hotel, tourism and service sectors, a report from The Global New Light of Myanmar says. The total investment is nearly US\$79 million, and the projects are expected to create 4 119 jobs, it says. The approved businesses include EV motorcycle and automobile assembly, education services, food processing, and garment manufacturing. As of the end of November 2025, Singapore, China, and Thailand remain the top. **Xinhua**

Philippines' manufacturing output increases in October

MANILA - The Philippines' manufacturing output increased in October, with the value of production index (VaPI) rising 1.7 per cent year-on-year from 1.6 per cent in September, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said on Tuesday. The volume of production index (VoPI) increased by 1.4 per cent from 0.8 per cent in the previous month. The manufacturing sector's VaPI growth in October accelerated largely due to a sharp rise in the manufacture of computer, electronic, and optical products, which grew by 16.8 per cent and accounted for 60.1 per cent of the sector's overall uptrend. Additional support came from a slower annual decline in chemicals and chemical products at 23.5 per cent and a rebound in wood, bamboo, cane, and rattan manufacturing at 15.1 per cent. Of the remaining 19 industry divisions, 13 posted annual increases while six recorded declines. The leading contributors to the year-on-year growth of the manufacturing VaPI in October were the manufacturing of computer, electronic and optical. **Xinhua**

Chinese yuan weakens against US dollar

BEIJING - The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, weakened 9 pips to 7.0773 against the U.S. dollar Tuesday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 per cent from the central parity rate each trading day. The central parity rate of the yuan against the U.S. dollar is based on a weighted average of prices offered by market makers before the opening of the interbank market each business day. **Xinhua**

Dikgang

PAMPIRI YA THUTO LE DIKITSISO

IPAPATSE FA

LELE TSA

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

Tshwaragano ya banni konokono

Kelebogile Taolo

TATISIDING

Banni ba Tatisiding ba supile fa tshwaragano ya boeteledipele jwa motse jaaka ba bogosi, khansele le komiti ya ditlhabololo tsa motse e le botlhokwa.

Ba buile se kwa phuthegong ya kgotla e e neng e buisiwa ke mothusa tona wa tsa selegae le tsa ngwao, Rre Ignatius Moswaane bosheng kwa ba tlhalositseng fa ba se jesiwe diwelang ke go tlhoka go tshwaragana ga bogogi mo motseng wa bone.

Banni ba kaile fa go sa tshwaragana ga baeteledi pele go baya motse wa bone ka fa mosing mabapi le tsa ditlhabololo ga mmogo le kgolo ya motse

Mongwe wa banni ba Tatisiding, Mme Gladys Manise o supile fa go sena tomagano ka mongwe le mongwe wa bogogia gogela go sele, mme a kaya seo se sa beye motse sentle.

Mme Manise o tladitse ka gore Tatisiding o tshwanetse ke go nna motse setoropo, mme fa bogogi bo ka tshwaragana, ga nna le tirisano mmogo e lolameng, motse o ka nna le ditlhabololo tse di maleba. Mongwe wa banni ba Tatisiding, Mme Kelebeletse Moleta yo supileng fa ba sale ba thibelela ka 1950 mo motseng oo, le ene o tlhalositse fa go sena morero mo Tatisiding.

Are sese diragore matshwenyego a bone e le banni a seka a rarabololwa ka nako ka jaana ba lela ka go tseelwa masimo mme le mo nakong e no ba ise ba thusiwe.

Mme Moleta a re bogogi jwa motse wa Tatisiding bo tshwanetse go ithulaganya go dira dilo ka fa go tshwanentseng go tla matshwenyego le go sa thusiwa ga morafe . Fa a ba kgwa kgaba, Rre Moswaane o kopile gore go nne le tshwaragano fa gare ga bogogi jwa motse.O kopile le dikgosi go

tsaya taolo ya motse gore go nne le tirisano mmogo

O rotloedirse banni go tla ka methale le ditsela tsa gore motse wa Tatisiding o ka tlhabololwa jang, a kaya fa Tatisiding e saletse morago ka ditlhabololo mme e le motse o golang thata.

O ne a rotloetsa banni ba Tatisiding le bogogi bo go ema ka dinao go tla ka tsela tsa go gatela pele mo go tlhabololeng motse, a tlatsa ka gore ba bereke ka natla go ntsha maduo. “Fa badiredi mo motseng ba tshwana le dikgosi, baruti ba dikereke, ba tsa metshameko ga mmogo le maphata ka go farologana ba ka ema ka dinao go supa gore tsela go tsewa efe, se se ka tlisa ditlhabololo,” ga tlhalosa Rre Moswaane.

A re puso e boloditse mananeo a National Development Plan 12 le la Botswana Economic Transformation Programme go leka go hetlha mebereko gore lefatshe le kgone go tlhabologa.

Rre Moswaane o ne gape a lekodisa banni ka dikgang tsa itsholelo, a kaya fa lefatshe le santse le itemogela kwelo tlase ya itsholelo mme puso e leka ka gotlhe go tokafatsa seemo seo.

Mogo tse dingwe, Rre Moswaane o ne a lekodisa banni fa puso e tsere tshwetso ya go ka kgaogana le dikhamphani tse di ikemetseng go thapa badisa dikago ga mmogo le baphepafatsi gore janong puso e nne yone e iphirelang babereki bao.A re se tsile ka ntlha ya gore dikhamphani tse di ne di sa duele babereki ba sentle le ka dinako mo go bakileng gore badiri ba ba kokonelwe ke lehuma.

Fa gakolola banana, Rre Moswaane o kaile fa tiriso ya maranyane mo malatsing ano e na le dipelo ka jalo a ba kopa go dirisa maranyane a tshwana le a bo Facebook go dira letseno ga mmogo le go reetsa dikitsiso le dilo tsa botlhokwa. **BOPA**



Banni Tumasera ba le kwa phuthegong ya kgotla e e neng e buisiwa ke Tona wa lephata la dikgaolo le tsa ngwao, Rre Ketlhalahlele Motshengwa bosheng. Rre Motshengwa a re puso e tsere tshwetso ya gore dikgotlana tsa Tupya, Malete le Rasesa kwa Tswapong borwa, di tswellele fela jaaka di ne di ntse, mme di bidiwe Tumasera. Senepe: Portia Rapitsenyane

Tupya, Malete le Rasesa di tlaa tswellela di bitswa Tumasera

...go tswa tsebe 1

Gape a re puso e tsere tshwetso ya go bula kgotla ya Tumasera gore e tswellele ka go neela morafe ditirelo jaaka e ne e ntse e dira pele.

Rre Motshengwa o ne a supa gape gore, dikgosana tsa Tupya, Malete, Rasesa, di tlaa tswellela di eteletse pele dikgotla tsa bone.

O tlhalositse fa puso e tsere tshwetso e lebile mabaka a morafe a neng o itela ka one fa o ntsha dingongora mabapi le molawana wa National Settlement Policy wa 2024.

E ne ya re ka kgwedi ya Phatwe, Tona Motshengwa a buisa phuthego kwa banni ba neng ba kopa puso

gore e busetse leina la motse wa Tumasera le ba neng ba dumalane ka bongwefela jwa pelo go bitswa ka lone. Kwa phuthegong eo, banni ba ne ba supa fa ba ne ba kopana e le metse e meraro ya Tupya, Malete le Rasesa mme ba dumalana ba bo ba tsamaya ka ditsela tsotlhe tse di maleba go isa leina la Tumasera, mme puso ya dumela gore ba bitswe ka lone.

Ba ne ba supile fa tshwetso ya go bitswa ka leina leo ba ne ba e tsaya ka ba ne ba bona ba nna mo thoteng e le nngwe, mme metse ya bone ka bongwe ka bongwe e sena dipalo tse dintsi, ka jalo ba bona go tshwanetse gore ba kope ditlhabololo ba ikopantse.

Ba ne gape ba re maina a metse

ya bone ga e a nyelela ka a ntse a teng aa dirisiwa.

Kwa phuthegong eo, banni ba ne gape ba supa fa ba ne ba gakgamala fa e rile ka ngwaga wa 2023, puso ya tsaya tshwetso ya go tla go phatlalatsa leina leo, gore motse mongwe le mongwe o ikemele, e bile e laola gore kgotla e ba neng ba e dirisa ya Tumasera e tswalwe ntle le morero ope.

Ba re magosi mangwe a dikgotla tsa bone a ne a fudusetswa kwa Palapye, fa yo mongwe a isitswe Mahalapye, mme se se dirilwe go sena morero ope.

Tona gape o ne a rola tshwetso ya puso ya gore Seleka a tswellele e ntse e le motse jaaka kgotla-tshekelo e ne e sale e laotse. **BOPA**

Dipalo tsa ba ba belegelang kwa malwapeng di a tshwenya

Kedirebofe Pelontle

GUMARE

Dipalo tsa bomme ba ba belegelang kwa malwapeng kgotsa pele ba goroga kwa dikokelong di kwa godimo kwa kgaolong ya Okavango.

Se se builwe ke moemedi kwa lephateng la botsogo kwa kgaolong ya Okavango, Rre Teko Mmoko kwa kwa segopotsong sa letsatsi la bolwetse jwa HIV/AIDS kwa kgaolong eo se se neng se tshwaretse kwa Etsha 13.

Rre Mmoko a re bana ba le masome a mararo le boferabongwe ba belegwe pele

ba tsena kwa kokelong kwa kgaolong ya Okavango mo sephatlong sa ngwaga sa bobedi ngwaga ono.

A re dipalo tseo, di dira lesome le bongwe mo lekgolong, a kaya seo se baya matshelo a bana bao mo diphatseng tsa malwetse jaaka jwa mogare wa HIV.

Rre Mmoko a re go supagala fa bomme bangwe ba le maoto a tshupa go ikwadisetse boimana le go itlhatlhobela mogare ba le nosi kgotsa le bakapelo.

O tlhalositse fa seo e le nngwe ya dikgwetho tse di fokotsang gore ba botsogo ba ka fitlhelela maikemisetso a lenaneo la 95-

95-95 la gore batho ba itse seemo sa bone sa mogare wa HIV, ba tsene mo lenaneong la kalafi ya diritibatsi tsa mogare wa HIV/AIDS, le gore ba ba mo kalafing mogare wa bone o wele kwa tlase o sa itshupe mo tlhatlhobong.

Le fa go ntse jalo, Rre Mmoko o tlhalositse fa ba botsogo mo kgaolong ya Okavango le makalana a mangwe a puso le aa ikemetseng ka nosi ba tswelletse ka go tsibosa setshaba ka tsa botsogo le go ba rotloetsa go itlhatlhoba.

A re ba tshwanetse ba batla metlhale e mengwe ya go fitlhelela batho ba bantsi bogolo

jang banana gore ba itlhatlhobe go santse go na le nako gore bat le ba kgone go bona thuso go na le nako.

Rre Mmoko a re mo sephatlong sa bobedi ngwaga ono, ba le makgolo a mabedi le masome a marataro le borataro ba itlhatlhobetse mogare wa HIV, mme ba le batlhano ba fitlhetswe ka mogare.

Le fa go ntse jalo, a re batho ba le masome a boferabongwe le boferabongwe mo lekgolong ba ba mo lenaneong la diritibatsi, mogare wa bone ga o itshupe.

Fa antsha la gagwe, mogolwane wa ofisi ya tsa bolwetse jwa

HIV/AIDS kwa kgaolong, Reverend Samuel Kenaape o ne a re setshaba se tshwanatse sa tsiboga le go tshwaraganela ntwaga katlanong le kgokgontsho ya bong bogolo jang mo baneng ba basetsana ka dipalo di supa fa ba amilwe ke mogare ka selekanyo se se kwa godimo mo lefatsheng leno ka bophara.

A re bana ga bana bokgoni jwa go ka ikemela mo go tsa tlhakanelo dikobo.

Rev. Kenaape o kopile setshaba go itlhokomela mo malwetse a a sa tshelwaneng ka le one a gapa matshelo a batho ka dipalo tse kwa godimo. **BOPA**

Tebogo receives BHERO 2000

Gontle Merafhe
GABORONE

When the Olympic gold medallist, Letsile Tebogo streaked across the finish line in Paris, France in 2024, he did not just win a race but ignited a promise. That promise materialised on a recent event in Gaborone, not as another medal, but as a gleaming, heavy-duty symbol of national purpose, a BHERO 2000 tractor.

The presentation of the BHERO 2000 tractor, a long-awaited pledge from African Agriculture, transcended a simple corporate handover. It became a powerful public statement about the connection between sporting excellence, private sector commitment and Botswana's ambitious economic transformation agenda.

At the heart of the ceremony was a celebration of what Botswana can achieve when its own hands guide the process. Minister of Minerals and Energy, Ms Bogolo Kenewendo, highlighted the significance of the BHERO 2000's origins.

Ms Kenewendo noted that the tractor was assembled in Botswana and carried the national identity and embodied the spirit of industrial self-reliance.

"The BHERO is a homegrown brand that embodied the local capability and industrial confidence that the national transformation agenda required," Minister Kenewendo said.

The homegrown success story mirrored Tebogo's own journey, which the minister linked directly to the nation's ethos. "It is quiet profound that Letsile embodies the spirit of excellence, of ambition that inspires the future as well. So together, we are reminded that Botswana's future will be built by our own hands, by ingenuity, by our ideas, by our beliefs in what is possible," she added.

While Tebogo's victory was in athletics, the accompanying gift placed him squarely in the realm of agriculture, the very sector Botswana is championing for diversification and sustainability.

The minister argued that the gesture supporting farming went far beyond one champion, saying it was about supporting food sustainability in Botswana and securing the future of agriculture, merging well with the national programme like Lemang Dijo.

"It is contributing to a sector that will define our economic transformation, that will create jobs that will modernise our production across the country," the minister said, positioning the tractor as a tangible tool in the fight for economic independence.

Botswana National Sport Commission (BNSC) chairperson, Mr Marumo Morule, said the donation was timely, because the tractor arrived during the height of the Lemang Dijo programme.

For Tebogo, now a De Beers Group

Global Ambassador, the tractor presented a new kind of challenge, stewardship.

While the BNSC's Mr Morule celebrated the encouragement the donation provided to other athletes, he also cautioned Tebogo to delegate the responsibility of efficiently running the farm to prevent it from distracting him from his critical training schedule.

For his part, a humble and grateful Tebogo, said his plan was to put the BHERO 2000 to good use at Letsile Farms. The Olympic champion, who chased gold on the track, now prepares to sow seeds of prosperity back home.

He said his tractor was not just farm equipment, but a monument to the symbiotic relationship between national aspiration, private support and the relentless pursuit of excellence as well as true golden harvest for Botswana. **BOPA**



Minister of Minerals and Energy, Ms Bogolo Kenewendo (left) and Africa Agricultural CEO, Mr Miles Nan (right) handing over a tractor to Olympic gold medallist, Letsile Tebogo in Gaborone recently. Ms Kenewendo, representing the Minister of Sport and Arts, said the tractor symbolised resilience, independence, youth empowerment and the nation's development vision. She applauded the private sector for supporting agriculture, noting that such initiatives strengthened food security, drove economic transformation, created jobs, modernised production systems and empowered communities. Photo: Gaseitsiwe Moruakomo

Ngwaketse Land Board pledges 2 000 plots

Thandy Tebogo
KANYE

Ngwaketse Land Board pledged 2 000 plots to Bonno National Housing programme. Each constituency will be allocated 1 000 plots in an effort to respond to government's call to provide affordable and decent housing for the citizens.

This was revealed by Ngwaketse Land Board deputy secretary, Mr Phillip Makhura during a recent Kanye District Full Council meeting.

He said pledges were in the form of blocks of land and single plots adding that the move would not affect land earmarked for applicants on the waiting list.

He was responding to Councillor Alfred Tsie of Selokolela ward, who had requested the land board to explain how it was able to allocate approximately 2 000 plots to the Bonno National Housing Programme within a short period of time, despite ongoing challenges of land shortages and lack of surveyors that had hindered plot allocations.

While Mr Makhura acknowledged that the allocation of Secure Land Titles was slow, he said the land authority was working round the clock to ensure that they avail the title deeds within a reasonable time.

He further explained that allocation format was an end product of plot allocation recording all details of allocation and did not delay any allocation.

He added that sketch plans were no longer needed since all allocations were done in the system and were prepared to aid

plot allocation where there was no layout.

He indicated that there were factors, which were considered to approve or disapprove applications, sketch plans and allocation format were not part of them.

He was responding to Councillor Mothibinyana Kelesitse of Marapalalo ward who had complained that preparation of sketch plans and allocation formats caused delays in land allocations.

Councillor Kelesitse emphasised that the administrative requirements created backlogs, making it difficult for the land board to allocate plots timeously and prolonging waiting periods for applicants.

Furthermore, Mr Makhura indicated that repossession of undeveloped plots was in line with legal conditions in the titles for business and customary land allocated to individuals.

He stated that failure to abide to the conditions constituted a breach and the land board was empowered to repossess the plots if no justification was availed.

Again, he told the meeting that Ngwaketse Land Board continuously repossessed such plots on case by case, however noting the concern and would implement the repossession accordingly.

Mr Makhura was responding to Councillor Michael Mohutsiwa of Lotlhakane East-Moreane, who had expressed concern over the plots in Lotlhakane that had remained unoccupied for an extended period.

He called for identification of the old plots for repossession and appropriate re-allocation. **BOPA**

Consultations to upgrade Palapye to city status ongoing

Omphile Ntakhwana
LERALA

Consultations to upgrade Palapye from village to city status is ongoing.

Speaking at the Lerala Village Extension Team (VET) Christmas party recently, Palapye District Council chairperson, Mr Kabo Ketshogile said the move would bring positive developments to the entire district.

He said there was a possibility that another council district would be established.

"Villages that are currently being serviced by Palapye District Council will get affected as Palapye gets upgraded to city status," he said.

On other issues, he urged public service employees stationed in Lerala to continue being united in their pursuit to efficiently and adequately service the public in the village.

Mr Ketshogile further said as the council chairperson, his door was open to the public.

The move, he said would help him to render advice and share pointers on how best to advance the agenda of the ruling party for the betterment of Botswana and Batswana.

He said next year, he would with councillors, Mr Loeto Tsebenyane of Lerala West and Mr Andrew Supang of Lerala East donate a cow to Lerala VET as a way of appreciating their service in the village.

"Next year, we are going to do things differently, better and make sure that we transform our village," Mr Ketshogile said.

For his part, Mr Supang applauded the unity of public service employees in Lerala and pledged to continue working with them.

"We all need each other to perform to the best of our abilities and we appreciate you for servicing our parents, teaching our children with patience, love and persevering," said Mr Supang.

Ms Dorothy Mookodi, Lerala VET chairperson, said this year's Christmas celebration was about appreciating public service employees.

"You are the ones that ensure that water is flowing, the lights are on, children are taught, there's law and order, peace and tranquillity, amongst other things in Lerala," she said. She lauded public service employees as they worked with dedication behind the scenes to build a better Lerala.

"Its a season of beautiful things, joy, giving. Public servants understand giving better. We give our commitment, patience, time, love, understanding and the list is endless for a better Botswana," said Ms Mookodi.

"Next year let's embrace the opportunities and address challenges in a timely manner, with integrity and compassion. There's nothing we cannot accomplish together and let us carry the light of this season in our everyday dealings," she added.

Mr Molemogi Molemogi, whose venue hosted the celebrations, thanked public servants and parastatal workers for their continued support of their business. **BOPA**

Arts & Culture

Solo wins big at Lyric Leap show

Benita Magopane
GABORONE

Who says a mom-to-be cannot be a champion? Naledi Diketso, better known as Solo, defied all odds when she was crowned the winner of the music business show Lyric Leap's first season at eight months pregnant this past Friday.

Solo stepped onto the Lyric Leap stage as the second act of the night, following Blair Wa Seopedi and preceding Hazel, both of whom had delivered performances that made their ambitions unmistakable.

With three backup singers behind her, Solo belted into the microphone, delivering a jazz-infused track enriched with a distinctly gospel undertone as she sang, *motho ga a fele!*, a bold declaration that she, too, was there to win.

A P30 000 cash prize and a recording deal both designed to help launch a sustainable music career hung in the balance.

Only one of the three finalists could take the title, based on strong vocals and the best original song.

Solo took the audience to church, singing as though her life depended on it. And in many ways, it did, for the little life growing inside her depended on nothing less than her very best.

Solo joins a long line of

inspirational female performers who refused to press pause on their dreams due to societal expectations around motherhood, especially in the public eye.

One striking example is the 2025 America's Got Talent winner Jessica Sanchez, who won the competition at nine months pregnant.

Her victory became a historic moment for AGT and a powerful testament to women balancing ambition and motherhood.

Also notable is comedian Ali Wong, who filmed her 2016 Netflix special Baby Cobra while seven months pregnant.

In an interview with ELLE Magazine, Wong said she wanted to use her pregnancy as a source of power, a weapon, not a weakness.

In her opening monologue, she joked that many female comedians disappear once they fell pregnant, for reasons known only to them.

Yet her point cut deeper: decades ago, a baby bump was something to be concealed, restricted by strict rules and social prohibitions.

What should have been a joyful experience often became a "stumbling block" for women in the workplace, a question of whether they could keep up and remain productive.

For women in the limelight, pregnancy was often perceived as a threat to their attractiveness, and by extension, their opportunities.

But the tide has turned.

Women like Solo are boldly and publicly chasing their dreams, even while expecting.

Those old



Hazele (left), Naledi "Solo" Diketso (centre) and Blair Wa Seopedi during Lyric Leap grand finale in Gaborone recently. Solo was crowned the winner of the music business show's first season. Photos: Teko Letsholo

rules and social prohibitions have steadily lost their hold as women redefine motherhood and dismantle long-standing stigmas.

Perhaps it is the very life growing inside them that fuels their determination, a powerful motherly instinct that makes them, against all odds, a force to reckon with.

When she entered Lyric Leap, Solo, a wife and mother-to-be had recently lost her job.

For Sanchez, also a wife and expectant mother, the road had been long, marked by years of auditions and earlier setbacks.

Yet something about carrying new life seemed to push them both to fight harder than ever before.

A testament that motherhood is the ultimate dream-catcher, not a dream killer. **BOPA**

Chinese-sponsored talent show inspires young Zimbabweans

HARARE

A Chinese-sponsored talent show is helping young artists reach their full potential and bring their dreams to life in Zimbabwe.

On Friday night, 17 artist groups filled a theater in Harare with vibrant performances as they competed for the top prize in the ninth season of Dreamstar Zimbabwe, hosted by the Zimbabwe Jacaranda Culture and Media Corporation (JCMC), an entertainment company, in partnership with the China-Zimbabwe Exchange Center.

The grand finale was a culmination of auditions held throughout Zimbabwe, identifying raw talent in music, dance, magic, opera, and other disciplines.

Three performers ultimately claimed the top prizes, which included cash rewards, all-expenses-paid tours to China, and recording deals with JCMC.

Pandazz Dance Hub, a Harare-based dance group, wowed the panel of judges with their captivating performance.

The group also emerged as the fans' top choice after showcasing their prowess in dancing.

Shadreck Moyo, founder of the seven-member youth group, was beaming with joy following the

announcement of the winners.

"It's an amazing feeling, I do not want to lie. This is the first time that a dance crew has won Dreamstar. It is a dream come true for us.

We had so many ups and downs, but we are here today," he said.

Moyo said the opportunity to visit and perform in China would enable the dance group to experience an international stage and strengthen their global profile.

Liu Bing, a Chinese female participant who was among the top 10 finalists in the inaugural Dreamstar in 2014, said the show had been elevated to international standards over the past decade.

"Compared to 2014, the local response is now very strong. It is similar to some of the most popular events in China right now. It has also had a very positive impact on cultural exchange in Zimbabwe.

Every year, some outstanding contestants go to China to perform and gain valuable learning experience, which is excellent," she said.

According to Zhao Ke, founder of Dreamstar and the China-Zimbabwe Exchange Center, the talent show's mission was to discover Zimbabwe's talented

artists hidden in communities and transform their dreams into realities.

"Lots of Zimbabwean people have talents in arts and culture, but they do not have a platform to showcase their talents," he said, adding that Dreamstar had propelled many unknown artists from the backstage to the front stage since its launch in 2014.

Through the initiative, about 300 young artists had visited China for cultural exchange programmes, and some had received scholarships to study there, said Zhao.

Zhao Zhanyu, board member of China Railway No. 9 Engineering Group (Zimbabwe), which sponsored the event, told Xinhua in an interview that the show had provided a platform for Chinese enterprises in Zimbabwe to help talented young artists realise their dreams, further promoting people-to-people exchange between the two countries.

"On the stage, the sincere connections between the two peoples have overcome barriers of language," Zhao said, adding that Chinese enterprises would make greater efforts to organise more cultural activities to deepen the friendship of the two sides in the future. **Xinhua**



Solo delivering a victory performance during the Lyric Leap show. She won P30 000 and a recording deal designed to help launch her music career. Photo: Teko Letsholo



Tebogo receives ‘golden key’

Taboka Ngwako
GABORONE

The air in Kgale View, Gaborone sizzled with anticipation yesterday, as 2024 Paris Olympic champion, Letsile Tebogo received the keys to a brand-new house, a gift befitting his golden performance and celebration of a historic achievement that had put Botswana on the global map.

The Minister of Sport and Arts, Jacob Kelebeng, handed over the three-bedroom property, valued at P2.1 million and sitting on a 562-square-metre plot.

The handover, cemented government’s commitment of fulfilling its pledge to reward exceptional sporting achievement.

“This is a promise made to the athletes that anyone who does exceptionally well and brings home a medal will be rewarded accordingly,” Minister Kelebeng said.

He highlighted the collaborative effort behind the gesture, which included the Botswana National Olympic Committee (BNOC), the ministry and the Botswana National Sport Commission (BNSC), who worked seamlessly with developer, Time Projects to ensure that the house was completed on schedule and tailored to the athlete’s needs.

The Minister praised Tebogo as a household name both locally and internationally and emphasised that his unprecedented success

continued to inspire many young Batswana athletes to dream beyond limits.

Tebogo, whose blistering pace shattered records in Paris and made history as Africa’s first-ever 200m Olympic gold medallist, accepted the honour with grace and gratitude.

He acknowledged that the gesture not only recognised his past victory, but strengthened his determination to keep excelling on the global stage.

Tebogo also shared a message from his teammates that elicited applause from the attendees.

“I have also been sent by the other athletes to tell you, Minister, to prepare more houses, because more wins are coming back home,” said the Olympic champion.

Botswana Athletics Association acting president, Oabona Theetso, said the reward would serve as a strong motivational tool ahead of the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, adding that athletes were determined to raise the national medal tally.

He acknowledged that the bar had been set and said, “I will be very happy this time around if a female athlete becomes the next recipient of a house. **BOPA**

‘This is a promise made to the athletes that anyone who does exceptionally well and brings home a medal will be rewarded accordingly.’



Botswana's sprint sensational Letsile Tebogo has received keys to a brand-new home in Kgale View in recognition of his historic 200m gold medal win at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

WORLD ATHLETICS RELAYS Gaborone 26	
TIMETABLE	
LOCAL TIME	
DAY 1 SATURDAY 2 MAY 2026	
14:05	4X100M MIXED RELAY ROUND 1 X
14:30	4X400M MIXED RELAY ROUND 1 X
15:05	4X100M RELAY WCH Q1 W
15:30	4X100M RELAY WCH Q1 M
15:55	4X400M RELAY WCH Q1 W
16:30	4X400M RELAY WCH Q1 M
DAY 2 SUNDAY 3 MAY 2026	
14:02	4X100M MIXED RELAY WCH Q2 X
14:20	4X400M MIXED RELAY WCH Q2 X
14:44	4X400M RELAY WCH Q2 W
15:08	4X400M RELAY WCH Q2 M
15:30	4X100M RELAY WCH Q2 W
15:47	4X100M RELAY WCH Q2 M
16:05	4X100M MIXED RELAY WAUC Q FINAL X
16:13	4X400M MIXED RELAY WAUC Q FINAL X
16:24	4X100M RELAY FINAL W
16:32	4X100M RELAY FINAL M
16:40	4X400M RELAY FINAL W
16:51	4X400M RELAY FINAL M
WCH Q1 = World Championships Qualification Round 1 WCH Q2 = World Championships Qualification Round 2 WAUC Q = World Athletics Ultimate Championship Qualification Round	

Cricket Namibia appoints consultant ahead of 2026 T20 World Cup

WINDHOEK

Cricket Namibia has appointed former South African cricketer and World Cup-winning coach Gary Kirsten as a consultant to the country’s national men’s team.

Cricket Namibia’s marketing manager, Natalia Nauyoma, confirmed Monday that Kirsten began his role on December 5 and will remain with the team on an open-ended basis.

Kirsten enjoyed a distinguished international career with South Africa from 1993 to 2004, playing 101 Test matches and 185 one-day internationals.

“It is indeed a privilege to work with Cricket Namibia. I have been thoroughly impressed with the dedication and determination to create

a high-performance cricket environment,” Kirsten said. Kirsten’s appointment reflects Cricket Namibia’s efforts to strengthen its high-performance structure and support the existing coaching setup.

He will work closely with head coach Craig Williams, contributing to the team’s technical direction and long-term development.

As a coach, Kirsten guided India to victory at the 2011 International Cricket Council Cricket World Cup, and later served as head coach of Pakistan’s national team.

He has also founded a cricket academy in Cape Town, South Africa, and has held a range of coaching and mentorship roles worldwide. **Xinhua**

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