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President Murmu jets in



President Advocate Duma Boko (right) welcoming India President, Ms Droupadi Murmu at Sir Seretse Khama International Airport for a three-day historic state visit in Gaborone yesterday. President Murmu, who is in the country at the invitation of President Boko, was also welcomed by Vice President Ndaba Gaolathe, Minister for State President, Mr Moeti Mohwasa, Minister of Minerals and Energy, Ms Bogolo Kenewendo and senior government officials. The visit aims to strengthen the existing bilateral relations between the two countries and further explore areas for enhanced cooperation in health, education, agriculture, mining, trade and investment. During the visit, the two leaders will hold bilateral talks and President Murmu will address Parliament. She is also expected to among others, visit the Diamond Trading Company Botswana, to appreciate Botswana's diamonds for development story. President Murmu will also visit Mokolodi Nature Reserve, where the country is expected to hand over a donation of eight cheetahs to India. Botswana and India established diplomatic ties in 1966 and continue to enjoy friendly relations and excellent cooperation in various sectors of the economy. Photo: Phenyo Moalosi



STATE VISIT TO BOTSWANA

11th - 13th November 2025

Her Excellency Mrs. Droupadi Murmu
President of the Republic of India



‘SONA ignites citizen-centric agenda’

By Marvin Motlhabane

GABORONE - President Advocate Duma Boko’s 2025 State-of-the-Nation Address (SONA), his second as head of state, has ignited a fervent, citizen-centric agenda, framing poverty as a “human rights abomination” and pledging immediate, measurable upliftment through social safety nets and green innovation, according to the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) executive secretary and director of Strategy and Policy, Dr Patrick Molutsi.

Reflecting on the address delivered on Monday, Dr Molutsi told BOPA that the speech was firmly anchored on the UDC manifesto, clearly outlining achievements over the past 12 months, and detailed the new administration’s promises for the nation moving forward.

For instance, he highlighted the introduction of sponsorships for master’s and PhD students in the education sector as a step in the right direction. Dr Molutsi said that he was particularly excited about the P200 million fund drawn from the alcohol levy to empower youth and the creative industry, an initiative that would not only help young people earn a decent living but also create sustainable jobs.

In line with skills transfer for youth, Dr Molutsi praised the launch of the International Graduate Development Programme, a rolling two-year initiative in which young graduates would work across De Beers’ global operations to develop future-fit skills for the diamond industry.

He also welcomed the revamped Ipelegeng programme and TVET reforms, which would jointly



Dr Patrick Molutsi

expand beneficiaries’ skill sets, enabling them to start and grow sustainable businesses capable of employing others.

Dr Molutsi reiterated his enthusiasm for the government’s stance on tackling drug and alcohol abuse, noting that the new 50-bed, youth-friendly rehabilitation centre in Serowe would ease a significant national

burden.

He said President Boko laid a clear foundation for sectors that would create new employment opportunities for Batswana, while also addressing the development of access roads and railway infrastructure, projects that would generate jobs and enhance intra-SADC connectivity for easier trade.

Dr Molutsi said the President outlined new pathways to revitalise the agricultural sector, including a programme to increase the national herd through animal health inspections, reproductive diagnostics, artificial insemination, and farmer training in sustainable livestock farming. The national cattle herd has declined from three million in the 1970s to an estimated 1.7 million today, with off-take rates languishing at six per cent against a recommended 15 per cent.

He further appreciated the new Botswana Mercantile Exchange intervention, which he said would deliver better proceeds to farmers and boost farm-level production. The primary challenge for farmers

has been the ridiculously low prices offered by the Botswana Meat Commission (BMC) and the Botswana Agricultural Marketing Board (BAMB). With farm produce now open to sale through the stock market, prices would be globalised, attracting higher rates.

Dr Molutsi noted that these newly modelled programmes would be cascaded by parent ministries and departments in the coming weeks, adding that the short timelines announced by the President deliberately demonstrated the administration’s agility to build a better Botswana.

Notably, he welcomed the introduction of a nationwide cleaning campaign to tidy up the country. Dr Molutsi said the UDC administration had noted a growing communication gap with Batswana and that its strategy office was devising ways to onboard citizens on the new government’s priorities.

To achieve this, he said, they were ready to collaborate with civil society organisations and the media, to ensure clear messaging across the country. **BOPA**



Umbrella for Democratic Change executive secretary and director of strategy and policy, Dr Patrick Molutsi highlighted the introduction of sponsorships for masters and PhD students in the education sector as a step in the right direction.

Official warns of looming disaster threats

By Esther Mmolai

MAUN - As the country continues to experience rains, residents of the North West region have been urged to take the necessary precautions to protect themselves and their properties from flooding threats.

North West district commissioner Mr Thabang Waloka revealed in an interview that the district was highly susceptible to floods hence it was advisable for residents to start inspecting and strengthening their houses to prevent water damage and structural deterioration.

He said it was unfortunate as some economically-challenged residents still used rudimentary materials such as mud and cans to construct residential structures, which he said made the houses prone to damage from heavy rains and floods.

“We are anticipating more rainfall this year and yet most of our households are on floodplains. As such I urge residents to take precautions focusing on home preparedness to mitigate damage,” he said.

Mr Waloka emphasised the importance of carrying of maintenance proactively and clearing of potential hazards around properties.

He said late last year and early this year, the district experienced heavy rains that led to a significant impact including damage to property, threats to life and a disruption of livelihoods.

The torrential rains he said, also caused flash floods, leading to the collapse of some mud houses while some families experienced stagnant water in their homes, making accessibility into their properties difficult.

Mr Waloka said the flooding had also made some roads across the district impassable.

As is usually the case, he said the district disaster response committee was well prepared in case of emergencies, citing that evacuation centres had been identified and other relief items such as tents had been sourced.

Furthermore, he said the heavy rains did not only cause damage to property and posed a risk to human life as well.

He said such rains could also

lead to other disastrous incidents such as disease outbreaks and loss of crops and livestock.

Mr Waloka cited that stagnant water could exacerbated the risk of water and mosquito-borne diseases such as malaria and thus encouraged residents to keep their environment clean all the time.

He said proper environmental management and good sanitation were crucial parts of integrated malaria control strategies.

“Malaria is a dangerous disease that can be fatal if not treated properly, as such I advise members of the community to be alert and do the right thing more so that our district is prone to the disease”.

With regard to ploughing, he said last year farmers did not have a bumper harvest because of low rainfall at the start of the cropping season while the heavier rains which were received later did not have the desired impact to their lateness.

Mr Waloka therefore advised farmers to plough on time and make use of the good early rains, saying timely planting was important for a successful harvest.

BOPA

Achievements sign of better things to come - Keakopa

By Bonang Masolotat

GABORONE - Amid the challenging economic trajectory, the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) has performed satisfactorily, although under duress.

This was the viewpoint of the leader of Madibelathopho, Mr Michael Keakopa, in response to the State-of-the-Nation Address (SONA) by President Advocate Duma Boko on Monday.

Madibelathopho is UDC’s group whose task was to ensure fairness in last year’s general elections.

Mr Keakopa said President Boko’s address basis was the UDC manifesto.

“He addressed the achievements, which were the promises that he made to Batswana,” said Mr Keakopa.

He said that through the SONA, the President highlighted the achievements attained during the first year in power, as well as highlighting those still lagging behind.

This, he said, laid a foundation for more promises to be fulfilled in the coming years.

He said the President also highlighted the difficult fiscal pressure that the country faced, adding that when the UDC attained power, it faced a severe shortage of funds.

He said among the achievements highlighted by President Boko was job creation, as Batswana continued to find employment, giving hope that many would with time be employed.

Mr Keakopa also said that President Boko acknowledged Botswana’s high unemployment rate but assured the nation of continued efforts to create jobs



Mr Michael Keakopa

and improve lives.

His view was that the UDC had done well in implementing its manifesto, because when it was crafted, it was not anticipated that the economy would be poor.

He said the achievements were a sign of better things to come under the UDC government.

However, Thamaga/Kumakwane MP, Mr Palelo Motaosane, said the SONA did not offer solutions to the problems facing the country.

For instance, he said the health sector was faced with shortage of medicines, and the SONA failed to give hope on the matter, other than making promises without delivering.

Gaborone City mayor, Mr Oarabile Motlaleng, said the SONA articulated issues affecting the country and interventions in place.

Mr Motlaleng said the President, through the SONA, highlighted what the UDC government had achieved within a year

The SONA which was the second under President Boko, marked the beginning of this year’s last Parliament session which is expected to last until December 19. **BOPA**

Govt makes progress in fulfilling commitments

GABORONE - Government has made significant strides in fulfilling its non-financial commitments outlined in the previous State of the Nation Address, which centred on restoring public trust and actively upholding the constitutional rights of all citizens.

In his second State of the Nation Address on Monday, President Advocate Duma Boko emphasised government's commitment to competence and non-discrimination.

The President announced a series of strategic, meritocratic appointments to the judiciary and the Directorate of Public Prosecutions (DPP).

Government also appointed a new Commander of the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) and made appointments at the Attorney General's Chambers.

New board appointments to State-Owned Enterprises (parastatals), President Boko said, had reportedly begun the process of turning them around.

He also indicated that public servants had been employed in various positions throughout different ministries, adding that they would continue to make the right appointments. He further affirmed government's commitment to delivering dignity and constitutional rights to all Botswana, citing a symbolic act of burying a man in his ancestral home. The President underscored the restoration of freedom of speech and expression, noting that an enraged and frustrated population had taken to the streets on several occasions without fear of police brutality. On one hand, President Boko said the introduction of different languages to national news broadcasts was a major step toward inclusivity.

"This is your Botswana, you are safe here, you are part of this country's story. When the resentful accuse the UDC government of trampling people's rights, remind them that for the first time in a long time, the rights

we are enjoying in this country are not words on a fading parchment, but are tangible and real. They flow from that grand power of attorney, the Constitution of this Republic," he added.

Addressing critics, President Boko emphasised that the rights currently enjoyed in the country were not words on a fading parchment, but were tangible and real, flowing directly from the country's Constitution.

Meanwhile, the President confirmed that government's future roadmap, developed after elected representatives spent months traversing the country and listening to Botswana for ideas, was firmly anchored in the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) manifesto.

"The UDC Manifesto is a social contract upon which Botswana based their decision to appoint the UDC to lead," he stated, adding that all major policy frameworks, including the National Development Plan 12 and the Botswana Economic Transformation Programme, drew inspiration directly from the sacred and national contract.

Furthermore, President Boko said that based on valuable ideas and insights, government refined its roadmap to building, step-by-step, the Botswana envisioned by all, that of a nation of shared prosperity, dignity and sustainable growth that left no one behind.

Meanwhile, the President's address outlined the next steps on the shared journey, including shifting the public service culture towards greater accountability, launching comprehensive economic diversification programmes, renegotiating Botswana's position in the global diamond market and responding decisively to acute crises in the healthcare and education systems.

"There is no looking back on this journey that we have started together. We march forward and we are not tripping though we may stumble sometimes," President Boko said. **BOPA**



Assistant Minister of Water and Human Settlement, Mr Motsamai Motsamai (centre), Kgatleng District commissioner, Mr Innocent Maotwe (left) and acting deputy Kgatleng land board secretary, Mr Neo Rakodu during the launch of private investors for Bonno National Housing Programme in Mochudi recently. The ministry unveiled 10 investors who will partner with government for the programme. Photo: Teko Letsholo

Ministry unveils 10 Bonno project investors in Kgatleng

By Mmoniemang Motsamai

MOCHUDI - Ministry of Water and Human Settlement on Friday unveiled 10 investors who will partner with government for the Bonno National Housing programme in Kgatleng District. The programme is aimed at providing accessible and affordable housing for citizens across various income brackets.

Unveiling the investors in Mochudi recently, Assistant Minister of Water and Human Settlement, Mr Motsamai Motsamai said government, through the national transformation agenda, prioritised private sector led investments.

He said such partnerships contributed to economic growth and well-being of the society.

Conversely, he also said the initiative would further empower artisans by improving their skills in construction.

He commended investors for their trust and commitment to the vision, adding that building 100 000 housing units was such an ambitious initiative that needed the support of all.

Furthermore, Mr Motsamai commended Kgatleng District for responding swiftly to the programme by availing land and further implored district authorities to support the investors.

He said the housing units would provide decent and affordable housing for low income residents, adding that owning a home restored one's dignity and offered some form of security especially for people who had always longed to own decent homes.

Meanwhile, Kgatleng Land Board acting deputy secretary, Mr Neo Rakodu said the 10 investors would construct housing units in all the three constituencies of Kgatleng Central, Kgatleng West and Kgatleng East covering 73

hectares of land for constructing a total of 1 162 plots.

He said Kgatleng District was ready for such developments and that the district had set up a team that would facilitate the investors.

Mr Rakodu said there were some negligible challenges in some parts of the district, but noted that overall, the programme was progressing well, with some plans approved, while some would be approved by November 20. Bakgatla Deputy Chief Kgosi Bana Sekai commended government for ensuring that Kgatleng was not left out while specially elected councillor, Ms Kentse Mollentze said Bakgatla were ready for the housing units that would give the district a facelift.

She assured the investors of unwavering support from the district authorities and that they would ensure that hired artisans provided good workmanship. **BOPA**

Church plays role in nation building

By Keith Ketl

SELEBI - PHIKWE - Minister for State President, Mr Moeti Mohwasa has reaffirmed government's appreciation for the

church as a vital moral partner in nation building.

Speaking during Tlhatlogang Catholic Mission thanksgiving ceremony in Selebi-Phikwe on Saturday, he said the progress of any nation could not be measured only by economic growth, but also by the strength of its faith, the soundness of its values, and the compassion of its people.

Minister Mohwasa said the church continued to guide communities with wisdom and love, ensuring that even in times of difficulties, challenges, trials and tribulations hope was never lost.

"In your prayers, in your outreach, and in your daily acts of service, you remind us that Botswana's foundation rests

upon faith and unity," said Mr Mohwasa. He thus encouraged all to renew their personal relationship with Christ, to love their neighbours more deeply, and to serve their country with clean hands and humble hearts.

"Let us remain steadfast in prayer, patient in trials, and faithful in our mission as Christians.

May Tlhatlogang continue to be a shining light in this community a place where the word of God is lived, not just preached," he said.

Mr Mohwasa wished the peace of Christ could dwell richly among the congregants and His love to continue guiding the church from time to time and strength to strength.

He pleaded with the church

to continually put the President before the Lord in their prayers so that God may grant him wisdom, discernment and divine guidance as he leads the nation with integrity and compassion.

In addition, he implored the church to pray for the country so that the spirit of anger, intolerance, and violence that sought to divide the nation may be subdued by the power of God's peace.

To this end, he wished harmony and love could dwell amongst the people for a better Botswana, and that communities may reject every act of hatred and abuse.

Minister Mohwasa criticised Gender-Based Violence, which he said was a direct violation of both moral and legal principles.

He was of the view that as citizens and believers, it was a sacred responsibility to promote peace, uphold justice, and build a nation where unity, respect, and love for one another remained the cornerstone of the nation's coexistence.

He showered the church with praises, pointing it had been more than a place of worship; it had been a pillar of education, compassion, and hope.

Therefore, he said through their work with children, families, and the less-fortunate, the church had lived the gospel message in Matthew chapter 25 verse 40, which reads, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." **BOPA**

DailyNews

Published by: Department of Information Services
37795 Wellie Seboni Drive
Private Bag BR 139 Gaborone
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dailynews@gov.bw

Online Edition: <https://dailynews.gov.bw>

Printed by: Government Printing and Publishing Services

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Circulation 20 000 per day except Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays.

Clean-up day every second Saturday

GABORONE - President Advocate Duma Boko has announced the start of a national clean-up campaign, designating the second Saturday of every month as a clean-up day, to augment government's waste management efforts.

Delivering the State-of-the-Nation Address on Monday, President Advocate Duma Boko said every community member would take part in cleaning their respective environment, calling upon businesses, institutions and the informal sector to keep their immediate and greater surroundings clean at all times.

Furthermore, President Boko said government had taken a decision to ban single use plastic bags.

"The industry has advanced to a point where biodegradable packaging is available, hence there is no excuse. The modalities to implement these necessary interventions will be communicated by the relevant authorities following consultations," said President Boko.

With respect to sustainable environment, he said Botswana was committed to the Paris Agreement and to the global fight against climate change, hence developing a comprehensive National Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) strategy, due to be completed by end of the financial year.

President Boko said the strategy would lay a foundation for a national framework and action plan that would empower businesses and investors to integrate sustainability in their planning.

President Boko said ESG principles would also be embedded into the national development and investment architecture, adding that in parallel, Botswana was also strengthening its climate finance architecture.

He said the National Development Bank (NDB) was finalising accreditation with the Climate Change Adaptation Fund, and that government was actively exploring opportunities with the Green Climate Fund, with the view to unlock new avenues for financing climate-resilient infrastructure, green innovation and sustainable livelihoods, further reinforcing the country's commitment to a low-carbon, climate-smart future.

Further, he said in pursuit of the national commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable development, government, in partnership with UNDP, had commenced the development of a comprehensive protected areas resource mobilisation strategy and partnerships plan.

President Boko said the initiative represented a bold and forward-looking response to the country's protected areas, adding that the accreditation of Kasane-Kazungula and Shakawe as wetland cities under the Convention on Wetlands Accreditation Scheme affirmed Botswana's leadership in safeguarding globally significant ecosystems.

A national ecosystem assessment project is underway, offering a comprehensive evaluation of biodiversity, ecosystem services, and interdependence between nature and society, President Boko said.

He said Botswana was ranked number one globally for megafauna conservation, proudly hosting the

most significant African elephant population.

However, he said while wildlife remained the cornerstone of Botswana's tourism economy and a vital source of rural livelihoods, poaching and human-wildlife conflict remained concerns.

Thus, President Boko said the national anti-poaching strategy had been developed, and the Wildlife Conservation and National Parks Act amended, to empower officers with appropriate arms to combat militarised poaching syndicates.

Updating the nation on the Bonno Housing scheme, he said, "against a the target of 100 000 units over a three-year period, a total of 31 745 housing units country wide have been contracted with various developers, with construction of 5 880 housing units across the country already having commenced and expected to be completed by end of the next financial year, including the 3 000 being built through the Botswana Housing Corporation in Kgale."

BOPA

GABORONE - Government has prioritised transformation of the Central Medical Stores (CMS) and medicines supply chain to ensure that the country never return to the dire situation of shortage of medical supplies.

President Advocate Duma Boko informed Parliament on Monday during the State-of-the Nation Address.

He stated that CMS would be restructured, informed by an evaluation currently underway, saying it was in keeping with the medium to long term strategies detailed when State of Public Health Emergency was declared.

Government he said undertook necessary reforms that included immediate digitisation of the health system.

President Boko indicated that government had implemented several short to medium term measures to further address supply-chain disruptions with medical commodities.

The measures he said included establishment of Health First Botswana Partnership, which he said was a fund intended to raise funding to support the Ministry of Health with efficient procurement of healthcare supplies to meet the needs of people sustainably.

He said that another measure was approval for the use of the Emergency Procurement method, as provided for under the Public Procurement Act, to respond swiftly to the current predicament.

The National Steering Committee and the National Task Force, which government created on August 25, both led from the Office of the President, he said, would continue to lend full support to the Minister of Health to coordinate and ensure successful closure of this situation.

Furthermore, President Boko expressed concern that the administration inherited a health system plagued by non-functional and obsolete equipment requiring significant investment to rehabilitate.

"We have recently bought two new state of the art x-ray machines for Princess Marina Hospital and



President Advocate Duma Boko announced the start of a national clean-up campaign, designating the second Saturday of every month as Clean-Up Day to support government's waste management efforts. He urged all community members, businesses, institutions and the informal sector to take responsibility for keeping their surroundings clean.

CMS transformation strategic priority

as a medium term intervention, we are deploying three mobile x-rays in Gumare, Gweta and Bobonong primary hospitals, which have no radiology services," he said.

Laboratory services he said were also adversely affected due to equipment that was obsolete, and shortage of reagents.

The Ministry of Health, the President said would transition towards equipment placement models for both laboratory, radiology services with both local suppliers and original equipment manufacturers at a cheaper cost than the current to address the challenge and the high cost of purchasing and maintaining equipment.

President Boko said government would therefore, only pay for the tests while equipment owners would be responsible for their maintenance and availability of reagents under strict Service Level Agreements. He informed Parliament that cervical cancer remained a leading cause of cancer deaths in Botswana, attributed to low screening rates as well as late diagnosis among others.

He stated that government had invested in health promotion and education to encourage Batswana to have regular screening, which would facilitate early diagnosis and better clinical outcomes.

As part of the global call and sustainable development goals to end malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS by 2030, he pointed out that the government was fully committed to eliminating malaria by the year 2027. In the last decade, government had made significant progress towards malaria elimination, with a 43.5 per cent reduction in malaria cases, he added.

President Boko stated that to optimise the provision of specialised care and ensure efficiency, government approved Sir Ketumile Masire Teaching Hospital (SKMTH) to function as a State- Owned Public Hospital.

The aim he said was to create a single pool of medical specialists with similar working conditions to enable realisation of the triple mandate of SKMTH of high-quality clinical services, training and research. He stated that urgent attention was required to support implementation of the National Health Insurance. "While our fiscal space is limited, we cannot afford to ignore the deteriorating conditions of our health facilities.

Thus, the Health First Botswana Partnership that will be sealed during this month between the Ministry of Health and the Botswana Development Corporation will help urgently to address this challenge," he said.

Government he said received a generous grant of USD 50 million, approximately P700 million, to drive our commitment to transform the health system to a primary care focus, with emphasis on promotion of health, prevention, early detection and treatment. **BOPA**



President Advocate Duma Boko informed Parliament on Monday that government had prioritised transformation of the Central Medical Stores and medicines supply chain to address shortage of medical supplies.

Agriculture pivot in economic transformation



President Advocate Duma Boko said agriculture remained the mainstay of rural economies and imperative for national food security.

GABORONE - Government aims to raise agriculture's contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from the current two per cent to at least six per cent in the immediate term, while ensuring greater rural development and agro-processing opportunities.

This was said by President Advocate Duma Boko when delivering his second State-of-the-Nation Address on Monday. Central to this vision, he said was a renewed focus on livestock production, targeting an increase in the national herd from the current 1.7 million to five million by 2030. He noted that livestock contributed a significant share of agricultural GDP and anchored rural livelihoods.

The President pointed out that the national cattle herd has declined from three million in the 1970s to the current 1.7 million, with off-take rates at six per cent against a recommended 15 per cent.

He acknowledged that persistent challenges, including disease outbreaks, recurring droughts, poor land management, and production inefficiencies such as low calving rates and high mortality rates, which had eroded productivity.

In response, he said government launched a beef sector productivity programme in August to enhance extension support services.

These include animal health inspections, reproductive diagnostics, artificial insemination, and farmer training in sustainable livestock management.

Through a partnership with the Green Climate Fund, he said government was implementing the Rangeland Restoration Project, launched in Tsabong in May so as to improve rangeland resilience and sustainability.

The project targets communal farmers as part of efforts to restore grazing areas and achieve the five million-herd goal. President Boko announced that the Botswana Meat Commission (BMC) had shown positive signs of recovery, with payment turnaround times improved from several months to seven days. He added that the recently launched Direct Cattle Procurement Scheme in Ngamiland allowed farmers to be paid instantly, addressing longstanding market access challenges in the region.

On dairy production, the President said government had developed a strategy for the sector through Milk Valley, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Botswana Development Corporation.

He said local milk production currently met 13 per cent of national demand, with plans to increase this to over 60 per cent by next year.

To support this goal, he revealed that government recently completed a mission to Brazil to secure the importation of 1 000 Girolando cattle, with technical partnerships being finalised to ensure skills transfer and project success.

He said recognising feed availability as critical to the dairy value chain, government was finalising out-grower programme guidelines to engage contract farmers around Lobatse, with

future expansion planned across other regions once a sustainable business model was established.

President Boko reported that during the 2024/25 cropping season, planted area increased by 34.2 per cent compared to the previous season, yielding an estimated 144 000 tonnes a significant rise from 39 795 tonnes in 2023/24. He said this achievement aligned with the Umbrella for Democratic Change manifesto objective of tripling national food production.

Despite climate challenges such as droughts, pests, floods,

and bushfires that cause annual losses of up to 5 000 tonnes, he said Botswana was shifting toward climate-resilient farming.

Horticultural output also rose to 88 670 tonnes from 2 400 hectares, including 77 398 tonnes of vegetables and 11 272 tonnes of fruits, meeting 80 per cent of national vegetable demand and 29

per cent of fruit demand, he said.

President Boko further said was pursuing a policy shift to enable the licit cultivation and use of industrial hemp and medicinal cannabis.

To this end, Hemp Innovations, a global company with expertise in the field, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with government to work with BUAN and NARDI

on research and pilot production, he said. He said the project would start with trials at BUAN before expanding to local farmers, once the Cannabis Act and related regulations were fully operational.

Pilot cultivation is expected to begin in December 2025, under strict oversight from relevant authorities, he said. **BOPA**

Govt presses hard on corruption

GABORONE - The ongoing forensic audit on government expenditure, functional efficacy of existing systems and institutions will foster a culture of transparency and accountability across the economy.

Delivering his second State-of-the-Nation Address in Gaborone on Monday, President Advocate Duma Boko said the completion of the audit was scheduled for March 2026. He further assured the nation that findings would be acted upon.

President Boko also highlighted additional efforts that would go toward rooting out corruption from the economy, among them being the review of the Corruption and Economic Crime Act (CECA) of 2013. The move, he said, would be in recognition of the need for a modern, independent anti-corruption institution, adding that the revised Draft Bill, currently under legal vetting, proposed to grant the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime (DCEC) greater operational independence, including a redefined reporting structure and enhanced protections for the office of the Director General.

President Boko, who also announced that the CECA Draft Bill would be tabled for approval during the current sitting of Parliament, said DCEC would be delinked from the mainstream public service, a process that had been initiated and submitted

for inclusion under National Development Plan 12.

He said the exercise carried a projected budget of P35 million for development and P48 million as recurrent expenditure.

"Notably, Section 3 (e) of the Employment and Labour Relations Act has officially delinked the DCEC from the public service, and implementation is pending the conclusion of the review of the CECA," he added. On other issues, he said the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) had successfully developed and installed a new Elections Management System (EMS), which was currently in the process of migrating data from the old system to the new.

On another matter, President Boko said the Ethics and Integrity Directorate would establish a top-tier asset declaration system that would assist in the monitoring of interests, income, assets and liabilities to effectively detect corruption, money laundering, and acquisition of property from proceeds of crime.

Furthermore, he said the Directorate, in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, was in the process of developing comprehensive guidelines on Conflict of Interest.

The President further said Legal Aid Botswana had begun implementing its 2025/2030 strategic plan, with specific focus on reaching marginalised and rural

communities. Further, President Boko said reforms were ongoing to strengthen the Court of Appeal in a bid to ensure that any errors could be corrected promptly, protecting citizens' rights and preventing the appeal process itself from becoming a source of delay.

Additionally, he said the Judicial Service Commission had increased the number of judges in both the High Court and the Court of Appeal, adding that the establishment of a dedicated Criminal Court Division would also allow for specialisation, leading to faster trials, more consistent sentencing and a focused attention on cases involving personal liberty and public safety.

The President said the primary objective of the Cybersecurity Bill, which was passed into law during the July Parliament, was to establish and empower a cybersecurity institutional framework that ensured a safe and secure cyber environment. That, he said, would protect the Critical National Information Infrastructure, making Botswana a more attractive destination for investment and fostering trust in digital growth, adding that The Act provided for the establishment of a National Cybersecurity Commission.

President Boko further said Parliament had enacted a total of 24 Acts, including the Refugees (Recognition and Management) Act, which made provision for the recognition and management of

refugees. The law, he said, was also an affirmation of the commitment Botswana had made under the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951, the Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1967, and the Organisation of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa of 1969.

He further said overall crime, including violent and serious offenses, had decreased by 8.2 per cent in 2024 compared to 2023, indicating however that high levels of violence persisted in crimes such as rape, murder, adding that robbery remained a major source of concern.

To counter the vice, he said the Botswana Police Service (BPS) was strengthening community engagement and partnerships to address crime and reduce public fear. He also pointed out that gender-based violence (GBV) remained a challenge to the nation's moral fabric and social stability, with the BPS, in 2024 alone, having recorded 14 020 GBV cases, with 4 468 of the crimes committed against children below 18 years.

To address GBV, he said government was reviewing the National Strategy Towards Ending GBV to infuse emerging issues and trends as well as adopt a human rights approach to the provision of services. He said efforts were also underway to establish GBV one-stop service centres to better assist survivors.

President Boko also said integration of Special Constables into mainstream policing was advancing, with 874 undergoing training and expected to graduate by December, leading to the completion of the absorption process by 2026/27.

He further stated that government remained committed to combating illicit drug use and trafficking and that the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) was leading national drug control efforts, and enhancing interdiction capabilities through new detection and testing equipment at border points.

President Boko also highlighted ongoing efforts to address growing money laundering-related risks and the misuse of emerging financial technologies, pointing out that to counter the ills, Parliament had passed the critical laws. **BOPA**



Members of Parliament and invited guests during the State-of-the-Nation Address in Gaborone on Monday. President Advocate Duma Boko reaffirmed his administration's commitment to transparency and accountability. Photo: Phenyo Moalosi

'Power projects to meet demand'

GABORONE - Energy remains a sector where more investment is required to meet growing national demand.

Delivering the State-of-the-Nation Address on Monday, President Advocate Duma Boko said the country's current peak demand stood at 700MW and nominal demand at 450MW.

He said 65 to 70 per cent of national demand was met through local generation, while the remaining 35 per cent was sourced through imports.

President Boko emphasised that to ensure a secure and sustainable energy supply, as well as create capacity for exports, government had embarked on increasing local generation through renewable and thermal power projects.

He said government was developing a total of 900MW of solar photovoltaic (PV) power generation in Maun, Letlhakane and Isang, while 600MW of thermal power was being developed at Mmamabula.

These projects, he said were expected to close the energy deficit and open opportunities for power export, adding that by December, more than 100MW of solar PV would be added to the national grid, while the 600MW thermal plant was targeted for completion in December 2027.

President Boko also highlighted progress at the Morupule B Power Station, noting that ongoing remediation works had started yielding positive results.

"Three units are already operational, with the final unit expected to be completed by December 2025," he said.

This development, he added, would bring Botswana's total

local thermal generation capacity to 720MW, including Morupule A's 120MW.

He said government was further enhancing transmission infrastructure to support both domestic distribution and regional power exports. The North West Transmission Grid Phase 2 Project, he explained, would improve power transmission to the north-western part of the country and facilitate export to neighbouring states.

"Our country is positioning itself to partake in the growing global market for renewable energy certificates," President Boko said, noting that in July, Botswana submitted an application to the I-Track Foundation to become an authorised issuer of International Renewable Energy Certificates.

He said once approved, this would create a new revenue stream for project developers and corporate buyers seeking to meet carbon neutrality goals.

On petroleum security, President Boko said government continued to prioritise stable fuel supply, noting that Botswana Oil Limited, through government funding, was advancing strategic storage projects aimed at increasing reserves to 90 days of national cover.

"Our current strategic fuel stocks stand at 15 days of cover," he said, adding that the expansion of the Francistown Petroleum Depot from 38 million to 98 million litres was 88 per cent complete, while the Ghanzi Depot stood at 55 per cent and was scheduled for commissioning in April and August 2026, respectively. **BOPA**



President Advocate Duma Boko said government had embarked on increasing local generation through renewable and thermal power projects to ensure a secure and sustainable energy supply.

Unsustainable debt burden to Africa resilience

ADDIS ABABA - A high-level Group of 20 (G20)-Africa dialogue on debt sustainability, cost of capital, and financing reforms was held on Monday, calling for strengthening partnerships.

The conference is organised by G20 Presidency South Africa in collaboration with the African Union (AU) at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa.

AU Commissioner for Economic Development, Trade, Tourism, Industry, and Minerals Francisca Tatchouop Belobe said the resilience of African nations was being tested by an unsustainable debt burden and a financial system that penalised Africa.

"The rising debt burden is a cause for Africa's financial constraints," Belobe said, highlighting that in 2024 alone, debt service payments exceeded US\$470 billion as a significant

number of African governments are spending more on servicing debt than on investing in human development.

Noting that Africa's public debt has grown from approximately US\$100 billion in the 1990s to roughly US\$1.8 trillion now, or about two-thirds of the continent's GDP, she said the continent's rising costs of public debt servicing were diverting scarce resources. The AU commissioner said about 57 per cent of Africa's population lives in countries where debt servicing surpasses social spending, underscoring that the situation is 'unsustainable, not only economically but morally'.

"Such iniquities in the global financial system restrained African nations of the means to invest in what truly matters, such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, energy transition, and the green and digital economies that will define the

future," Belobe warned.

The AU commissioner called for a partnership that treats Africa 'not as a risk to be managed, but as a partner to be empowered'.

She also outlined AU initiatives, including efforts to establish an African debt monitoring mechanism for fiscal transparency and Africa's financial autonomy.

South Africa's Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Alvin Botes stressed the urgency of the dialogue to address 'one of our foremost priorities, ensuring debt sustainability for low-income countries'. "We are working to ensure that the sovereign credit ratings are fair and transparent and to address high risk premiums for developing economies," Botes said, adding that South Africa is reviewing the cost of capital during its G20 presidency. **Xinhua**

Freeway transforms regional connectivity

WINDHOEK - Namibia officially inaugurated the Dr Hage G. Geingob Freeway on Monday in Windhoek, marking the completion of a landmark infrastructure project set to transform regional transport and boost economic development.

Namibia funded the first and second phases of the project in 2016 and 2020, while the Chinese firm Zhong Mei Engineering Group constructed the third phase in 2021, supported by a Chinese government grant. The China-aided project, a 21.3-

km four-lane dual carriageway known as Phase 2B of the three-phase programme, was officially handed over following the signing of completion certificates. With the new freeway now open, travel time between downtown Windhoek and Hosea Kutako International Airport has been cut from about 50 minutes to just over 20 minutes, improving transport efficiency and easing congestion in the capital.

In his keynote address, Minister of Works and Transport Veikko Nekundi hailed the project as a

milestone in Namibia's national development and community upliftment. He noted that the project formed an integral part of Namibia's regional trunk routes development programme, promoting inter-regional trade.

Nekundi emphasised that the road stood as a testament to Namibia's commitment to ensuring safety across its national road network and highlighted the importance of maintaining a balanced partnership between international and local ventures.

"It is for this reason that

the Namibian government has consistently advocated for viable joint ventures between local and foreign contractors. Infrastructure must not only connect places, it must also uplift people," he said, noting that it is a win-win situation. During construction, the project employed about 850 Namibians and engaged 54 local subcontractors, contributing to skills development and job creation. Conrad Lutombi, chief executive officer of the Roads Authority, which manages Namibia's national road

network, commended China for its continued support. Chinese Ambassador to Namibia Zhao Weiping described the highway as a 'vivid testament to China-Namibia friendship'.

"This wide and smooth road not only carries the Namibian people's aspiration for a better life but also unblocks the key link for regional connectivity, laying a solid foundation for the construction of the Kalahari transport corridor of the Southern African Development Community," he said. **Xinhua**



Kgosi Boitiro Dithapo wa Sehithwa (fa gare) le mohumagadi wa gagwe, Mme Rolang ba le kwa moletlong wa tsamaya sentle bosheng. Kgosi Dithapo o tlogela tiro ka bogodi, morago ga go direla banni dingwaga di feta masome a matlhano e le moemela kgosi yo o motona. Senepe: Esther Mmolai

Botsogo konokono ya botshelo

Ka Esther Mmolai

MAUN - Banni ba Maun le metse e e mabapi ba akgoletswa go tsaya botsogo jwa bone tsia ka go tlhatlhobela malwetse.

Seo se buile ke mopalemente wa Maun bokone, Rre Dumelang Saleshando mo potsolosong morago ga letsholo le le neng le rulagantswe ke ofisi ya gagwe ka mafelo a beke kwa Life Centre go fa banni sebaka sa go itlhatlhobela malwetse ka go faralogana.

Letsholo leo, le le tshwarang ngwaga le ngwaga le ne le ngokile dingaka ga mmogo le bo mmantswitswidi ba tsa botsogo go tswa mo Maun le Gaborone ba ba neng ba ithaopetse go fa ditirelo tsa bone mahala.

Malwetse a a neng a tlhatlhobela a ne a akaretsa bolwetse jwa matlho, kankere, diphilo, sebetengammogo le madi a matona.

Rre Saleshando o ne a leboga banni go menagane a re monongwaga ba ne ba tsile ka dipalo palo go tsaya karolo mo letsholong la go itlhatlhoba, selo a reng sea nametsa ka jaana ba tlaa itse diemo tsa bone go le nako mme ba tseye kgato.

A re dipatlisiso di supa gore mo Botswana, dintsho tse di diragalang di feta masome a mane mo lekgoleng (40 per cent) di bakiwa ke malwetse a a sa tshelwaneng a tlatsa ka gore se se ngomolang pelo ke gore batho ba le bantsi ga ba itse gore ba a lwala.

“Ke ka moo re boneng go tshwanela go rulaganya letsholo le go fa banni monyetla wa go itlhatlhoba gore ba tswe fa ba itse seemo sa bone sa botsogo mme ba ba amegileng ba tseye kgato nako e sale teng go thibela dintsho, a tlatsa jalo.

Rre Saleshando o ne a gape a lebogela boithaopo jwa ba botsogo go bo bane ba tsaya karolo mo letsholong leo a tlatsa ka gore maikaelelo ke gore bao ba ba ka tlhokang go dira loaro le le botlana go tsewe maina a bone mme ba felele ba bone thuso e e maleba.

O tswetsetse a re bangwe ba dingaka ba ithaopile go thusa ntle le dituelo. O ne a ntsha sekao ka go latlhegelwa ke pono a supa fa loaro lwa go busetsa pono lo sa tseye nako e telele.

Rre Saleshando o boletse fa go ya pele ba tlaa sekaseka gore a ba ka seke ba oketse malatsi gore letsholo leo le tseye malatsi a mabedi ka jaana la monongwaga le ngokile matshwitshwiti a tlatsa ka gore bangwe ba dingaka ba supile kgatlhego go tsaya karolo ngwaga o o tlang.

Mongwe wa ba botsogo, Mme Cinderalla Gaebowe yo a lebaganeng le goisa ditlamelo

kwa bathong le ene o supile fa ba itumeletse tshologelo ya batho a tlatsa ka gore seo se ba nametsa pelo ka e le sekao sa gore Batswana ba nyoretse dithuso tsa botsogo.

A re kwa bofelong jwa letsholo ba batla gore Batswana ba nne le botsogo jo bo nonofileng, ba itse gore ba ka tsela sentle, ba ka thibela jang malwetse a ka laolesegang jaaka sukiri le madi a matona.

Mongwe wa banni e bile e le monana, Mme Ntshang Kamba o ne a leboga ofisi ya ga mopalemente go bo e rulagantse letsholo la go itlhatlhoba a supa fa bontsi jwa banana ba sa bereke mme ba felele ba gatelelwa ke maikutlo kgabagare ba felela ba gomagomediwa ke malwetse a masesenyane. O tswetsetse a re ditlamelo dingwe tse ba di akolang mo letsholong leo ga diyo mo dikokwelwaneng ka bontsi.**BOPA**

Ba Farmers Field School ba tlhatlhelela balemi

Ka Tebogo Masuruke

TUTUME - Molemi wa masimo a Beyanga kwa Tutume, Mme Chikadzi Rodger a re fa go tla mananeo ape a balemisi ba reng a siametse temo, o nna tsebe ntsha go reetsa le go kopa dikgakololo mo go bone mme a lekeletse.

Mo potsolotsong le **BOPA**, Mme Rodger wa dingwaga tse di masome marataro le boraro a re ene le balemi ba bangwe ba le masome mararo ba tsene mo dithutong tsa temo dikgwedi tse di fetileng go ipaakanyetsa temo.

A re dithuto tseo, di ne di rulagantswe ke ba Mayombo Muphane ka fa tlase ga lekalana la Farmers Field School(FFS).

Maikaelelo a dithuto tseo e ne e le go ba suga le go fa balemi bao maele a go ntsha mhero wa muthwa, go lema nawa ya lablab le lebelebele le gore ba ka thiba jang mesele e e epegileng mo masimong ka ntsha ya dipula.

Mme Rodger a re balemi ba ba tseneng dithuto tseo, ba ya go seegela fa thoko, diekere tse pedi tse ba yang go diragatsa se ba se rutilweng, fa maiteko a bone a ka

tswa tema,e tlaa nna bone ba ba rutang balemi bangwe.

A re lenaneo leo, le lemogile fa balemi ba sa kgone go ntsha dijo tse di lekaneng ka jalo le ba thusa go oketsa thobo. Ba lenaneo leo la FFS ba lemogile fa molemi a kgona go tswa ka dikgetsi tse di fa tlase ga lesome mo ekereng e go solofetsweng e ka bo e ntshitse masome mabedi kana go feta. O tswetsetse a re gape dithuto tseo ke go fedisa kana go tlogedisa balemi mokgwa wa go ikaega ka go ya go bereka kwa Pandamatenga mme ba leme mo masimong a

bone. A re masimo a fetogile dikgwa, batho fa ba re ba lemile ba lema ekere fela, fa bangwe ba lema mme ba phuaganye masimo a bone. O ne a leboga balemi ba masimo a Beyanga, a re ba santse ba lema thata ka dipalo tse di kwa godimo.

Mme Rodger a re go sala morago ditaelo le go diragatsa se balemisi ba se buang ke pheko e tona mo temong,ka jalo a kopa balemi go tsaya dithuto tsa balemisi tsia le go di diragatsa gore ba kgone go jesa lefatshe leno le go tlhabolola matshelo a bone.**BOPA**

Ka Esther Mmolai

SEHITHWA - Dikgosi di rotloediswa go tsepama mo tirong ya bone gona le go ikamanya le sepolotiki.

Kgakololo e ntshitswe bosheng ke kgosi ya Semboyo mo kgaolong ya bokone bophirima, Kgosi Baemedi Lelatlhego kwa moletlong wa tsamaya sentle o o neng o diretse Kgosi Boitiro Dithapo yo o tlogelang tiro ka bogodi.

Kgosi Dithapo o diretse banni ba Sehithwa le metse e e mabapi dingwaga di feta masome a matlhano e le moemela kgosi yo motona.

Kgosi Lelatlhego a re bangwe ba diga serudumo sa bogosi ka go ikamanya le sepolotiki, mme a ba kopa go tsaya malebela mo go Kgosi Dithapo a supa fa a ne a dira tiro ya gagwe ka boammaruri le botswapelo.

Kgosi Lelatlhego o tlhalositse fa Kgosi Dithapo a ne a rata tiro ya gagwe thata e bile a e dira a sa tseye letlhakore.

A re o gakologelwa gore o tsene mo bogosing ka nako tse di thata ka 1977, a fitlhela botlhoka tsebe bo ile kwa Sehithwa, mme ka e le mo rata kagiso a baakanya seemo.

A re thupa e ne e lelela boatleng mme serudumo le thitibalo mo motseng tsa boela, e bile banni ba ne ba simolola go tshela ka kagiso le boitumelo.

Kgosi Dumi Kanduu yo o berekileng le Kgosi Dithapo le ene o ne a iteela kobo moroko a supa fa mongagwe a dirile le bone ka bokgabane le lorato ka jaana a ne a ba kaela le gone go

ba gakolola.

A re e sale a tsena mo kgotleng ka 2004, o anywile go le go ntsi mo go Kgosi Dithapo ka a ne a sa ba kaele mo go tsa bogosi fela mme ane a ba gakolola gape ka tsa botshelo ka kakaretso.

Kgosi Munduu o lebogetse gape gore Kgosi Dithapo o ne a eteletse pele merafe ka go farologana mme a netefatsa gore botlhe ba nna le kemedi mo kgotleng.

Moemedi wa ba lelwapa, Rre Sesentle Madisa o boletse fa Kgosi Dithapo e le motho yo o ratang dilo tse di tlhamaletseng. A re o ne a rata gore dikgang tsa motse di buelwe kwa kgotleng gore morafe ka kakaretso o nne le seabe mo tlhabolong ya motse wa bone.

A re o dumela fa yoo otlatsayang mo go Kgosi Dithapo a tlaa tswaledisa tiro e ntle eo ya go bereka le morafe ka lorato le gone go tswaledisa fa a emeng teng.

Moemela kgosi go tswa kwa Maun, Kgosi Oleyo Ledimo o boletsetse morafe fa ba tlaa supa kgosi yo moshale pele mo nakong e e khutshwane.

O boletse fa Kgosi Dithapo e le mogaka ka jaana a tsene mo tirong ka nako ya fa go sena didirisiwa mme a bereka ka natla. “Re le bantsi re ithutile go le gontsi mo go ene ka e le motho yo o ratang go gakolola e bile a rata dilo tse dintle”.

Kgosi Ledimo le ene o boletse fa a ne a ila botlhoka tsebe lobaibai a tlatsa ka gore motse wa Sehithwa o ne o tumile ka setlhophale sa diganka mme kgosi hedisa maitshole a o ka ponyo ya leitlho.**BOPA**



Mr Tshephang Brooks



Ms Diana Kaartze



Mr Kealeboga Kapeko



Mr Phenyio Sedimonyane



Mr Tokyo Modise

Candidates reach out to voters

By Naomi Leepile

TSABONG – The Radio Botswana debate brought together five candidates eyeing

the Kgalagadi South constituency as by-election scheduled for Saturday draws close. During the debate held in Tsabong on Sunday, candidates

presented their visions for the constituency which fell vacant following the passing of Member of Parliament, Dr Micus Chimbombi, on July 26.

Hopeful to win hearts of the voters include Mr Tshephang Brooks of Botswana Congress Party (BCP), Mr Phenyio Sedimonyane representing the

Botswana Patriotic Front (BPF), Ms Diana Kaartze of Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) and Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC)’s Mr Tokyo Modise as well as Independent candidate Mr Kealeboga Kapeko.

In their debate, they focused on challenges besieging the constituency among them health crisis, poor infrastructure particularly the district’s neglected road network.

BDP’s Ms Kaartze expressed concern about shortage of essential medicines and the general poor state of health facilities.

She expressed confidence that her professional background and experience within the government health system uniquely qualified her to improve services if elected.

Mr Kapeko, an independent candidate argued that the deplorable state of roads in the area limited developments and efforts to boost economic activities.

He said Kgalagadi presented business opportunities, which if harnessed may serve as a game changer.

Mr Sedimonyane of BPF described the roads as “poor and dangerous,” referencing a tragic accident a month ago on the Struizendum road where a vehicle transporting a corpse was involved in an accident, resulting in a fatality.

He argued that it was about time, the status of the roads improved.

On issues of policy, BCP’s Mr Brooks stated that if elected to Parliament, his focus would be on addressing youth unemployment, which he described as the district’s challenging social issue.

Candidates also expressed concern over slow delivery of promises by the UDC-government regarding among others increase of Ipelegeng monthly wages, the 100 000 jobs, and the P300 allowance for nursing mothers.

However, UDC’s Mr Modise acknowledged the challenges and reassured the public that, given time, things would return to normal.

Mr Modise, an experienced educator, also expressed confidence in his ability to improve and transform the local education system. **BOPA**

Gaolathe hails Modise as worthy successor

By Naomi Leepile

TSABONG – The Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) has launched Mr Tokyo Modise, as the party’s candidate for Kgalagadi South by-election, scheduled for November 15.

At a rally held in Tsabong on Saturday, UDC Vice President Ndaba Gaolatlhe urged

constituents to vote for Mr Modise, describing him as an exemplary educator and a man of wisdom.

He hailed Mr Modise as a worthy successor to the late Dr Micus Chimbombi, and said the constituency was fortunate to have such a principled and experienced leader.

He highlighted Mr Modise’s

extensive career in education.

“Mr Modise has been a teacher and a head teacher all his life, transforming teachers and children around the country.”

Mr Gaolathe praised the candidate’s patient and dedicated service, noting that he had taught children in Kgalagadi South “with love and patience” and had been actively involved in

sports development. He further linked Mr Modise’s professional experience to the constituency’s pressing challenges, assuring the electorate that, once elected, he would prioritise improving the performance of local schools and addressing education-related concerns.

He added that Mr Modise’s leadership would also help stimulate small business growth in the district.

“With Mr Modise in Parliament, we have no doubt that small businesses in this district are going to grow.”

Emphasising the candidate’s strong local ties, Mr Gaolatlhe noted that Mr Modise was a native of Kgalagadi and fully understood the area’s challenges, particularly the critical water and land issues.

He also referenced the Botswana Economic Transformation Programme (BETP), describing it as a national initiative requiring “strong women and strong men like Mr Modise to implement.”

The BETP, he explained, was a multi-year reform strategy aimed at reducing Botswana’s dependency on diamond exports by diversifying the economy toward sectors such as financial services, tourism, manufacturing, and digital infrastructure.

The programme’s key goals include stimulating private sector growth, attracting investment, reducing unemployment, and improving public service efficiency.

For his part, Modise pledged to lead with patience, diligence, and respect if elected. He promised to transform the lives of the people of Kgalagadi South.

Expressing gratitude for the overwhelming support, he urged voters to exercise wisdom on Saturday and to maintain public order by cooperating with the police and polling officers during the election process. **BOPA**



Umbrella for Democratic Change Vice President Ndaba Gaolathe (left) launching Mr Tokyo Modise as the party’s candidate for Kgalagadi South by-election in Tsabong recently. Mr Gaolathe urged constituents to vote for Mr Modise, describing him as an exemplary educator and a man of wisdom.
Photo: Gaseitsiwe Moruakgomo

Kriste play to inspire faith

By Benita Magopane

GABORONE - Actor Maxwell Dichi's upcoming play *Kriste*, set to be staged on December 6 at Maitisong, promises to deliver a high-quality production and a faith-awakening experience for Christians and biblical story enthusiasts alike.

The two-hour play, which begins at 1830 hours, brings to life the famous biblical story of the birth of Jesus Christ in a live musical theatre performance by local theatre group Tsogo, but with a unique twist.

"Most Christmas plays exclude characters like John the Baptist, whose birth is fundamental to the coming of Christ. He paved the way for Him," said Dichi, who is both the writer of the play and founder of Tsogo, in an interview.

The play would feature characters rarely seen in traditional Christmas productions, such as Zachariah and Elizabeth, the parents of John the Baptist as well as Simeon and Anna, the two elders who long awaited the birth of Jesus.

"We want to revive the Christian faith, hence the need to capture this story in its entirety," Dichi explained.

Dichi, who will portray Joseph, the betrothed of Mary, affirmed

that *Kriste* would dazzle audiences with its strong performances, music, and attention to detail. The production features a cast of professional actors, dancers, and singers, including Pesalema Motshodi, a gospel music award winner.

"People can expect a play that's out of the ordinary. We have actors in their late sixties portraying the three wise men, fitting their biblical roles perfectly in both age and stature. Mary will be played by a 17-year-old girl," he said.

The production would take back audiences to the time of Christ through authentic props and set design, including a manger with live animals and pillars reflecting ancient Israel's architecture.

A three-month-old baby from the Spring of Light Orphanage in Ramotswa will take on the special role of Baby Jesus. The orphanage will receive part of the proceeds from the play.

For Dichi, who once believed that the story of Jesus was merely a fable, bringing *Kriste* to life represents a personal and spiritual transformation.

"If people can come to believe, even if it's just one person, that Jesus truly existed, as I have come to believe, then it will be an achievement," he said. **BOPA**



Maxwell Dichi's upcoming play, *Kriste* is set to be staged at Maitisong in Gaborone on December 6. The production promises to deliver high-quality performance and faith-awakening experience for Christians and biblical story enthusiasts alike. Photo: Courtesy of Dichi Media

Crochet designer ventures into sustainable fashion

By Gaolethoo Kgatitswe

MAUN - As the world grapples with waste and unemployment, one woman's hands are quietly weaving a solution.

Janet Chivaura, a crochet artist from Gaborone, is redefining sustainable fashion by transforming discarded can caps into elegant,

hand-woven handbags, a craft that caught the attention of many at the Maun Trade Expo's first edition.

Speaking to *BOPA* in an interview, Chivaura revealed that she learned to crochet from her parents at a young age and has decided to turn her passion for the art into a business venture.

Her booth stood out for its

fusion of art and environmental consciousness, displaying a colorful range of crochet pieces from bags and hats to headbands and household décor items, all made with intricate care and a touch of innovation.

"People often throw away can caps without realising they can be reused creatively. I decided to

incorporate them into my designs as a way of promoting recycling and protecting the environment," she said.

She highlighted that creativity was a tool that many took for granted, but it could unearth gems when taken seriously and with determination.

"I came all the way from

Gaborone to Maun for this expo because I wanted to reach new customers and show that crochet is not just for decoration, rather it is also a form of environmental responsibility," she explained.

Beyond her craft, Chivaura is determined to empower young people with skills that could sustain them financially.

She is opposed to the notion that some people hold, that crocheting was a pastime for older women, arguing instead that the art presented a great business opportunity for the youth.

Chivaura believed that innovation in traditional crafts could open new economic doors, especially in the face of rising unemployment.

Freely has she been taught the crochet skills, and freely was she willing to pass on what she has learned to a younger generation, free of charge.

She highlighted that there was so much potential in utilising available resources to create something valuable.

Chivaura's creativity underscores the vital role of artisans and small businesses in promoting environmental responsibility and generating wealth. **BOPA**



Janet Chivaura, a crochet artist from Gaborone displaying her designs at the Maun Trade Expo recently. She showcased a colourful range of crochet pieces from bags and hats, to headbands and household decor items, all made with intricate care and a touch of innovation. Photo: Gaolethoo Kgatitswe



Botswana National Olympics Committee (BNOC) chief executive officer, Dorothy Tlagae-Gaseitsiwe (left) and president Tshepo Sitale at a media briefing in Gaborone on Monday. Sitale said BNOC was committed to fostering partnerships to build a strong sport ecosystem.
Photo: Gothusang Lesego

BNOC receives doping report

By Anastacia Sibanda

GABORONE – The Botswana National Olympic Committee (BNOC) has confirmed receipt of a comprehensive report investigating the recent rise in doping cases in Botswana. Speaking during a press conference on Monday, BNOC chief executive officer, Dorothy Tlagae-Gaseitsiwe said the investigative team had completed and handed over the report, which has already been presented to the BNOC board.

She noted that before the report could

be made public, due process must be followed, including its presentation to the relevant committee that deals with sport matters.

Tlagae-Gaseitsiwe emphasised the need to handle the report carefully to avoid confusing the public.

BNOC president, Tshepo Sitale acknowledged that Botswana continued to face challenges in school sports development.

He said the committee would provide recommendations to relevant stakeholders on how best to address the issue. Sitale added that the BNOC

would soon meet with the Minister of Sport and Arts to share proposals on how the National Olympic Committee could contribute to strengthening school sport structures.

On the issue of Olympic Solidarity, Sitale explained that national federations are required to submit names of athletes for consideration.

He however decried that they often recorded a low number of submissions from the federations. Furthermore, he said selection is not based on favouritism and if Botswana failed to submit its best athletes, the country

risked having no one selected.

He added that in Olympic Games, there are set standards and in athletics qualification was determined by recorded times, while in other sporting codes, cumulative rankings were used to assess eligibility.

Sitale also revealed that BNOC's technical sponsorship deal with Diadora is nearing its end.

"The board will soon meet with the sponsor to chart the way forward. For now, we cannot disclose much as we remain bound by the terms of the existing contract," he said. **BOPA**