

BOTSWANA

Daily News

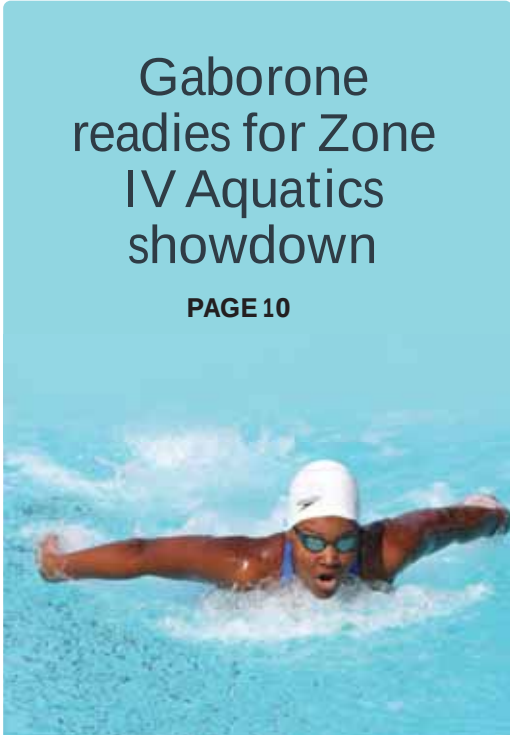
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‘Adopt modern and flexible public service’



Bonang Masolotatse

GABORONE

Botswana's public service should modernise its workplaces to accommodate employees' family responsibilities and embrace flexible ways of working instead of treating workers merely as production machines, Chief Executive Officer of AFRINEX Limited Mauritius, Mr Thapelo Tsheole, has said.

Speaking at the 2nd Annual Botswana Public Service Leadership Conference, Mr Tsheole said an excessive focus on task delivery was coming at the expense of employee wellbeing and, ultimately, long-term performance.

“We do not have a work environment that accommodates family here.

That is something we need to address,” he said, noting that workplace flexibility and work-life balance had become defining issues for the global workforce.

Drawing on his experience leading the Botswana Stock Exchange, Rwanda’s Capital Market Authority and now AFRINEX in Mauritius, Mr Tsheole said institutions across the continent were increasingly adopting models that protected employees’ family time without compromising efficiency.

He described Botswana’s public servants as intelligent and educated adding that the country’s relatively low levels of corruption compared with other African countries could be attributed partly to its strong emphasis on compliance and controls.

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Traditional knowledge potential for economic transformation

Baleseng Batlotleng
KGALE

Government recognises indigenous knowledge as it holds immense potential to anchor Botswana's economic transformation.

This was said by Assistant Minister of Communications and Innovation, Mr Shawn Ntlhaile, during the final national stakeholder validation consultative engagement at the Ave Maria conference facility on Monday.

The meeting was considering the consolidated draft final Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) Policy after comments from the last consultative engagement held in January this year.

Mr Ntlhaile said the systems encompassed the knowledge, technologies, skills, practices and beliefs that had enabled communities to sustain their livelihoods within their natural environments over generations.

"It is therefore, important that we harness, protect and promote this knowledge as Botswana continues its journey towards a knowledge-based economy. Traditional or indigenous Knowledge has the potential to support economic diversification, particularly in rural areas through the commercialisation of local knowledge, skills and technologies," he said.

He said value chains that were rooted in traditional knowledge could be developed with supported innovation and strengthened



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Assistant Minister of Communications and Innovation, Mr Shawn Ntlhaile

linkages among traditional knowledge-based enterprises.

Mr Ntlhaile said in 2022 Parliament passed the Access and Benefit Sharing Act which provided a legal framework for the sharing of indigenous knowledge and enabled local communities to derive livelihoods from that knowledge.

"The act creates a conducive environment for biodiversity conservation and recognises the importance of conserving biodiversity, regulating access to genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, and ensuring the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilisation," he added.

Mr Ntlhaile said government was committed to promoting training

and capacity building in indigenous knowledge skills and technologies through the revision of the National Rural Development Policy.

He said through cultural mapping, communities would be supported to manage resources in their areas and to protect their indigenous knowledge including through appropriate intellectual property mechanisms.

Assistant Minister Ntlhaile said traditional knowledge could strengthen national health security and stimulate rural economies as well as create employment opportunities.

He highlighted that it had great potential to support the development of alternative raw materials for industrial production and promote

the sustainable harvesting and processing of natural resources.

He added that traditional Knowledge values had also played a critical role in maintaining social cohesion and sustaining nationhood over time.

"Through research, development and innovation, traditional knowledge can revitalise key sectors of the economy. Symbiotic partnerships between traditional knowledge holders and scientists can support the establishment of a vibrant pharmaceutical industry, strengthen SMMEs, preserve biodiversity, protect ecological integrity and revive rural economies through industry and trade" he said.

For his part, Ministry of Communications and Innovation

permanent secretary, Mr Cecil Masiga said the engagement testament of the critical value that government placed on the wisdom, innovations and practices that had shaped communities and a nation overtime.

Mr Masiga said traditional knowledge had been the pillar of lives for many years and past generations had leveraged it to sustain various ecosystems such as health, cultural identity and social cohesion.

He said despite its enduring legacy traditional knowledge remained susceptible to biopiracy, misappropriation and remained marginalised in the formal legal and developmental frameworks.

"As a result, government through this policy intends to leverage traditional knowledge as a strategic intellectual asset for social and economic development. Among others, the policy will help to create a conducive environment for ethical Traditional Knowledge beneficiation and safeguarding. Hence, the draft policy marks another critical milestone by Government to integrate Traditional Knowledge into the development planning process," he said.

Mr Masiga said the policy complimented other national frameworks that supported preservation of culture, promote efficient natural resource management, preserving biodiversity and ecological integrity as well as ethical traditional knowledge beneficiation. **BOPA**

Chombo appeals fair youth treatment

Loago Thomas
GABORONE

Minister of Youth and Gender Affairs, Ms Lesego Chombo says government must shift from treating young people as passive beneficiaries of programmes to engaging them as active partners in solving the challenges they face.

Speaking during a consultative meeting with Student Representative Council leaders from tertiary institutions across the country on Monday, Ms Chombo said meaningful collaboration between government, institutions and students was key to addressing persistent administrative and policy gaps.

She acknowledged that weak coordination across government systems had contributed to some of the difficulties students experience. Stronger youth representation in leadership and decision-making, she added, would improve information flow, strengthen governance and support long-term succession planning.

To give effect to the new approach, Ms Chombo proposed the establishment of an all-SRC consultative forum for continuous engagement between government and student leaders. She also proposed that student concerns be captured in a formal action register to ensure issues are tracked and followed up.

She urged SRC leaders to consolidate their concerns into a common position, comparing the process to how African countries

coordinate positions before United Nations engagements.

"A unified student position would enable government to respond more effectively to common challenges, while still allowing individual institutions to raise issues specific to their circumstances," she said.

Ms Chombo further proposed that the full SRC collective meet with the ministry on a quarterly basis.

On deteriorating sports facilities, Ms Chombo said the ministry did not have a developmental budget but has pursued private sector partnerships to refurbish youth centres. One facility was completed last year, and another was at an advanced planning stage, she said.

Regarding the appointment of the Botswana National Youth Council board, she said the call for expressions of interest was advertised through print and social media before candidates underwent vetting.

Any confusion around the process, she suggested, could have resulted from gaps in information reaching students rather than a lack of transparency.

Ms Chombo said the ministry's legal team was reviewing existing legislation, including the Rent Control Act, to identify measures to cushion students against rising living costs. The allowance shortfall itself, she noted, was being addressed by the relevant ministry.

Mental health support was also discussed. Ms Chombo reaffirmed



Minister of Youth and Gender Affairs, Ms Lesego Chombo during a meeting with tertiary students council representatives in Gaborone on Monday. The meeting was aimed at addressing issues affecting the youth and to establish a formal forum with students' leaders. Photo: Gaseitsiwe Moruakgomo

government's commitment to decentralising counselling services so students could access support on-site without financial barriers.

She said the ministry had reserved some executive positions for young people in response to calls for reduced experience requirements. Government is also working with the Directorate of Public Service Management to move toward a competency-based rather than experience-based approach to recruitment across the public service.

On youth entrepreneurship, Ms Chombo highlighted ongoing engagement with the Ministry of Innovation to expand funding opportunities for youth-led

innovation. She also pointed to the P200 million allocation to the creative sector announced last year, with part of the funding earmarked for educational content on issues such as gender-based violence through music, film, art and other platforms.

She added that the men's sector was transferred from the Office of the President to the Ministry of Youth and Gender Affairs last year, to allow designated officials to address issues affecting men independently.

Student leaders raised a broad range of issues, including delayed allowances, unaccredited courses, disparities between in-house and off-campus allowance rates, and

sponsorship shortages in fields considered saturated. They also called for greater support for young people outside the formal education system and for a formally recognised SRC union.

Ms Chombo said several issues raised, including sponsorship shortages, had already attracted the attention of Higher Education representatives present at the meeting. The meeting ended with the ministry reaffirming its commitment to move beyond consultation toward meaningful youth participation, with students positioned not as mere recipients of government decisions but as partners in shaping solutions. **BOPA**

Ministry and De Beers partnership yields fruit

Minister of Higher Education
Mr Prince Maele

Tumisang Moilwa
GABORONE

The partnership between the Ministry of Higher Education and De Beers Group is delivering tangible opportunities for young Batswana through internships, international placements and specialised skills development programmes.

Speaking during an engagement with De Beers, Minister of Higher Education, Mr Prince Maele said the collaboration showed the value of ensuring Memoranda of Understanding translate into practical results.

“When we signed our

Memorandum of Understanding earlier this year, we did so with a clear understanding that the future of a nation is determined not only by the resources it possesses, but by the capabilities it builds,” Mr Maele said.

Under the partnership, young Batswana have gained exposure to key areas of the global diamond value chain, including polished diamonds, science and technology, safety and sustainability, finance and data analytics.

Seven interns took part in the programme in 2025. A further eight joined in 2026, with five of them from Technical and Vocational Education and Training

(TVET) institutions.

The initiative is designed to bridge the gap between classroom learning and the workplace by giving young people a chance to apply their knowledge in real settings while building professional skills and confidence.

The programme has also opened doors internationally. Two Batswana interns are currently working with the polished diamond team in London. Three graduates have been placed with Science and Technology in Maidenhead, United Kingdom, while two others are gaining experience with Element Six in Springs, South Africa, and

London.

“These placements are more than international exposure. They are an investment in Botswana’s future technical, scientific and commercial leadership,” Mr Maele said. He added that the skills gained should boost Botswana’s competitiveness and strengthen the country’s participation in the global diamond industry.

Mr Maele also stressed the need for technical skills in national development, noting that Botswana must pursue both academic and technical excellence.

The partnership has further supported the TVET Revitalisation

Agenda through the De Beers Diamond Academy Educator Skills Development Programme. Twenty tertiary educators received specialised training in rough and polished diamond technical skills. Participants came from institutions including the University of Botswana, Oodi College of Applied Arts and Technology, and relevant government bodies.

For 28-year-old Katlego Gabothlalefe, a jewellery design and manufacturing student at Oodi College of Applied Arts and Technology, the programme provided direct industry exposure aligned with his field of study.

Ms Gabothlalefe expressed gratitude for the opportunity, saying the experience allowed him to complement classroom learning with practical industry knowledge.

De Beers Group Senior vice president, Ms Thabile Moipolai said the company was honoured to be part of a collaboration creating meaningful opportunities for young Batswana, and that more was still to come.

The programme forms part of wider efforts to strengthen collaboration between government, industry and academia. It also seeks to ensure that Botswana’s diamond resources contribute not only to economic growth, but to the development of local skills and expertise. **BOPA**

‘Adopt modern and flexible public service’

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However, he said the strong rule-based culture could also contribute to delays in adopting new ways of working, embracing innovation and deploying technologies that could improve the workplace.

Mr Tsheole observed that Botswana demonstrated its ability to adopt new working methods during the COVID-19 pandemic, including remote working, but quickly reverted to traditional practices once the pandemic subsided.

“The world is moving in different directions,” he said, stressing the need for Botswana to strike a balance between compliance and embracing change.

He said although public offices were accessible to the general public, service delivery is not as efficient in some other countries.

Mr Tsheole further stressed the importance of accountability in the public service, saying every thebe spent should be accounted for and performance measured against

clear outputs. He said execution accountability should apply at both political and administrative leadership levels, with leaders expected to set clear targets and deliver measurable outcomes.

On digital transformation, Mr Tsheole said some countries had moved ahead by adopting web-based office management systems through which services, including payments, could be accessed and completed online.

He said Botswana had greater potential but was not taking full advantage of available opportunities, adding that government needed to move faster in digitising public services.

Meanwhile, Director of the Directorate of Public Service Management (DPSM), Ms Gaone

Macholo, said the conference had achieved wide outreach, attracting more than 2 500 participants physically, online and through social media platforms.

She said the conference came at a time when the public service needed to reposition itself as a disciplined delivery engine capable of responding to rising citizen expectations amid increasingly constrained fiscal conditions.

She added that while the number of activities and programmes undertaken was significant, the true measure of success should be the actual outputs and outcomes achieved. The two-day 2nd Annual Botswana Public Service Leadership Conference is held under the theme “Year of Delivery.” **BOPA**



Directorate of Public Service Management Director, Ms Gaone Macholo said the conference came at a time when the public service needed to reposition itself as a disciplined delivery engine capable of responding to rising citizen expectations.

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Editors

Ms Lorato Okaile
Tel: 365 3640
Email: lgaleage@gov.bw

Mr Sefhako Sefhako
Tel: 365 3589
Email: seseefhako@gov.bw

Ms Masego Pilane
Tel: 365 3569
Email: mkipilane@gov.bw

Ms Sereki Mpitse
Tel: 365 3595
Email: smpitise@gov.bw

Head of Photography Mr Yobe Shonga
Tel: 365 3604
Email: yshonga@gov.bw

Head of Marketing Ms Lucretia Chima
Tel: 365 3574
Email: ichima@gov.bw

Head of Graphics Mr Edward Matlala
Tel: 365 3557
Email: ematlala@gov.bw

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Work hard and start now - Gaolathe

Lorato Gaofise
GABORONE

Vice President Mr Gaolathe urged pupils at Maikano Junior Secondary School to begin building their futures now, telling them not to wait until secondary school or university to decide who they want to become.

Addressing the school assembly, Mr Gaolathe reflected on his own time in Standard One and said it was remarkable how quickly years had passed from being a young schoolboy to standing before them as Vice President of Botswana.

“His story, he said, was proof that the future can arrive faster than children imagine,” he said.

Mr Gaolathe told the pupils that dreaming was not just a childhood exercise, but the beginning of a journey. While in Standard One, he said he dreamed of studying outside Botswana at a time when such an ambition felt distant.

He recalled that his uncle, who was studying Computer Science in Canada, had given him and his

classmates a glimpse of possibilities beyond the country’s borders. At the time, some classmates doubted it.

Years later, he said, every one of those friends achieved their dream of studying abroad. His own path took him to the United States, where he studied Mathematics and Economics, lived in Washington, D.C., and later studied Finance in Philadelphia before working for an investment bank in New York City.

Yet he told pupils his story was not to suggest he had reached the highest point.

“You can do better than me. Much better. You can go higher than I can ever go,” he said, challenging them not to measure their potential against those who came before.

The Vice President stressed that dreams must be protected through hard work, discipline and determination, and that pupils should resist those who say their ambitions are too big.

He said success was built not

only on academic achievement, but also on character. Using the eagle as an example, he encouraged pupils to aim high while lifting others.

He urged them not to ridicule classmates struggling with Mathematics, History or English, but to help one another.

“Do not climb alone. Pull one another up,” he said.

Mr Gaolathe also called on pupils to respect parents and teachers, and to ask questions of people they admire to learn about the challenges and decisions behind their success. He paid tribute to teachers for their role in “building, grooming and shaping young lives.”

The assembly ended with a collective affirmation led by the Vice President:

“We are going to work hard. We are going to dream big. We are going to become great men and great women. We are going to respect our teachers. We are going to respect our parents.”

Maikano JSS Student

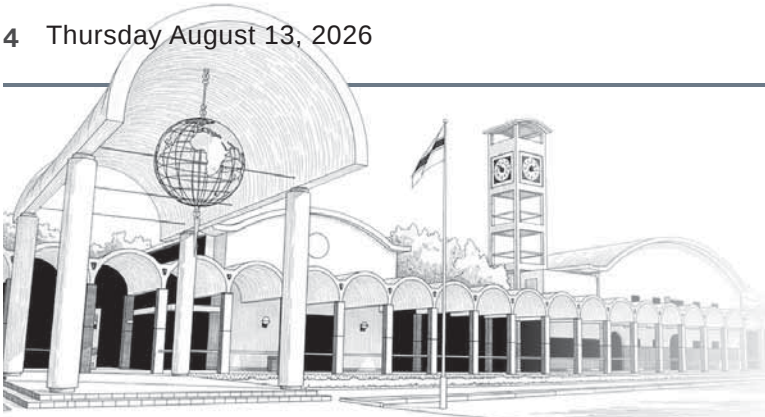
Representative Council President Chantel Onneile thanked the Vice President for donating books to the school, describing them as more than learning materials.

A Form Two pupil, House Cheetah member and chairperson of the Gaborone District Children’s Consulting Forum, Onneile said the books would help pupils “learn, dream and understand the world around them.”

“A book is not only writing on paper, but it is an embodiment of knowledge and power,” she said.

She challenged fellow pupils to use the books to prepare themselves not only as leaders of tomorrow but also as leaders of today.

By the end of the assembly, Maikano JSS had witnessed more than a visit from a senior government official. It had seen a man who once sat in a classroom dreaming of studying abroad return to tell another generation that their dreams were worth protecting. **BOPA**



PARLIAMENT 2026

Briefs

Plans for border patrol authority progressing well

Government is considering establishment of a Border Patrol Management Authority with implementation planned for NDP 12. Answering a question from in Parliament, the Minister for State President, Defence and Security, Mr Moeti Mohwasa said already, consultations and benchmarking exercises were ongoing towards establishing the authority. “Government is in the process of appointing a Deputy Director for Boundary Management, responsible for promoting border management and security and ensuring the integrity of boundary lines for territorial integrity,” he explained. He said establishment of the authority were part of efforts aimed at enhancing security along Botswana’s national borders. He said in the interim, border management was being handled through through a multi-agency approach involving different ministries and departments responsible for border control. These include the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Botswana Police Service, Botswana Unified Revenue Service (BURS), BDF and Mophato regimes. He further said government, through the Ministry of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, was encouraging communities to form Mophato regimes under the leadership of Dikgosi and in accordance with developed guidelines. Mr Moeti Mohwasa said the major cross-border crimes encountered included livestock rustling or stock theft, smuggling of goods and illicit drugs, vehicle trafficking and poaching. Okavango East MP Mr Gabotsholwe Disho had wanted to know measures in place to address security challenges posed by the country’s long and porous international border, noting that numerous incidents of cross-border crime were reported every year.

Govt reviews Bogosi Act to address structural gap

The Ministry of Local Government and Traditional Affairs is reviewing the Bogosi Act of 2008 with the intention to address structural gaps. The minister, Mr Ketlhalefile Motshegwa told Parliament that it was envisaged that upon completion of the review and subsequent implementation of the approved recommendation, the existing structural gaps would be appropriately addressed. He said they were aware of the structural gap between positions of Senior Chief Representative and Chief Representative, particularly with regard to their respective salary scales. Mr Motshegwa was answering a question from the MP for Lentsweleta/Lephephe, Mr Tshenolo Bogatsu who had asked if there were any considerations to bridge the gap where the Senior Chief Representative was pegged at D2 salary scale while the Chief Representative was at D4 salary scale.

Thirty-two students opt to remain at DDT College

The Ministry of Higher Education has engaged DDT College of Medicine and other relevant stakeholders on issues concerning regulatory compliance, quality assurance, accreditation and learner protection. Responding to a question from Tswapong South MP, Dr Kesitegile Gobotswang, the Minister, Mr Prince Maele said one of the outcomes of the engagements was that 32 government-sponsored students were currently studying at DDT College of Medicine. He explained that the students had opted to remain at the institution and complete their studies after being given an opportunity to transfer to other institutions. “The Ministry has not awarded sponsorship to any new students to study at DDT College of Medicine for the 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 academic years,” said Mr Maele. He said students who requested to transfer to recognised local tertiary institutions were assisted, subject to programme availability and the admission requirements of the receiving institutions. Minister Maele further explained that students who were at an advanced stage of their studies had returned to DDT College of Medicine to complete their outstanding academic requirements. On the employability of DDT College of Medicine graduates, he said no tracer study had been conducted to date to determine their employment status. However, he noted that graduates in Medical Laboratory Sciences and Pharmacy could be employed within government, subject to the availability of vacancies. Mr Maele also revealed that a total of 437 students had been awarded sponsorships to continue their studies at various tertiary education institutions. Dr Gobotswang, had sought an update on the outcomes of the ministry’s engagements with the management of DDT College of Medicine, as well as the number of students who continued to receive government sponsorship at the institution.



Assistant Minister of Trade and Entrepreneurship Mr Baratiwa Mathoothe said the original Letsema Horticulture Market model was designed as a wholesale buy-and-sell facility, supported by trading, cold storage and logistics infrastructure, with an independent SPV structure to attract private-sector and development partners.

Letsema Horticulture Market operates as Special Purpose Vehicle

GABORONE

Government acknowledges that the original design and conceptual framework underlying the Letsema Horticulture Market (LHM) was informed primarily by a supply-side philosophy, one that prioritised the creation of physical market infrastructure without sufficiently anchoring that infrastructure in confirmed, structured demand.

Answering a question in Parliament on Tuesday, the Assistant Minister of Trade and Entrepreneurship, Mr Baratiwa Mathoothe said the original model treated the construction of a trading floor, cold storage and logistics facilities as sufficient to organically attract both producers and buyers.

He said the operational model was primarily that of a wholesale buy-sell facility in which, the market purchased produce from farmers and resold it to buyers trading on margin.

Mr Mathoothe further said in terms of governance, Letsema Horticulture Market was structured as an independent Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) designed to ensure operational autonomy and the ability to attract private sector and development partners over time.

He said the SPV operated under a Board of Directors accountable to CEDA and it consisted of independent directors with expertise in commercial agriculture, human resources technology and innovation, agricultural research, procurement and financial management.

Mr Mathoothe said regarding market access, LHM does not have full market access of all procurement entities in the country and competed with other horticultural produce sellers in the market.

In terms of pricing, Mr Mathoothe added that LHM operated as a price taker with major of-takers particularly retail supermarket chains, effectively dictating purchasing prices.

He said LHM sold in bulk to a concentrated buyer base, therefore lacked the negotiating leverage to influence price discovery and this dynamic consistently disadvantages upstream farmers who before the cost of production yet have no meaningful input into prices at which, their goods are sold.

Mr Mathoothe said on farmer participation, LHM operated a registered producer programme under which farmers, co-operatives

and producer organisations were formally onboard as authorized suppliers.

He said as at the end of the 2025/26 financial year, LHM’s supplier register included domestic producers and cooperatives with 355 farmers registered.

The assistant minister said the key challenges affecting LHM performance included limited national reach due to unavailability of regional collection centres, limited and inconsistent access to markets.

He noted that a major constraint had been the absence of structured and guaranteed off-take arrangements, particularly from large and reliable buyers such as retailers and supermarkets.

Mr Mathoothe further said another challenge was partial digital integration, absence of a fully integrated digital platform including real-time price dissemination, mobile interfaces, logistics management and financial reconciliation.

He said high operating cost and risk burden remained a challenge, the wholesale buy-sell model placed the heaviest operating cost and risk burden on the market, requiring substantial working capital, exposing LHM to inventory and shrinkage losses, and necessitating intensive cold chain and logistics management, all with throughput volumes insufficient to sustain the associated cost base.

The assistant minister added that supply inconsistency and lack of farmers awareness was another challenge as smallholder production in Botswana was characterised by seasonality, variability and vulnerability to weather events and many producers were still learning about the LHM’s existence.

He added that the future of LHM was anchored on a three-phase roadmap to make it a demand driven, export oriented horticulture hub.

Mr Mathoothe said Phase 1 being Gaborone Horticulture Market Centre was built and operational and Phase 2 being National Collection Centre Network with current priority being rolling out regional collection centers and each center would have cold storage, sorting, grading and would be linked to HMC via refrigerated logistics.

He further said Phase 3, full value-chain integration and export was where they would deploy the full digital platform for all

stakeholders.

The assistant minister said this would add value-added services including pre-packing; branding and G.A.P certification with target export markets being SADC, the EU under the EPA, and AfCFTA.

He said the shift was informed by three things, benchmarking in 2024 and 2025 to leading markets in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Freshing Vaal and Rustenburg where it was learnt that location and design were critical, that commission models required strong regulation, that technology must be embedded from the start, that waste management was key to profitability and that inclusion required deliberate policy.

Mr Mathoothe said the second thing being operating model analysis confirmed that government could not sustainably carry market and price risk and a facilitator model was more viable and the third private sector input on engagement of market operators, buyers and investors showed their input directly shaped the SPV structure, the agent regulations and the focus on service based revenue.

He said LHM was transitioning from a single building to a national market system and added that challenges were real but so was the plan to address them and with Phase 2 infrastructure, digital systems, regulated agents and private sector partnerships, government was positioning LHM to reduce imports, increase farmer income and create jobs.

Member of Parliament for P for Shoshong, Mr Moneedi Bagaisamang had asked the minister to update Parliament on the Letsema Horticulture Market and to state whether government acknowledged that its initial design was based on an outdated supply-driven model with limited market integration.

He also asked the minister to state the current operational strategy, including governance, market access, pricing and farmer participation and further state key challenges affecting performance, particularly competitiveness coordination and sustainability.

Mr Bagaisamang further asked about the future development strategy to reposition the market as a demand driven, export oriented horticulture hub and what informed the shift in government’s approach including lessons learned and private sector input. **BOPA**

FMD vaccination drive yields positive results

Ketshepile More
GABORONE

The mass vaccination programme has suppressed the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreaks in Zones 3c-Maitengwe and 6b in the North East District.

Addressing Parliament on issues affecting the country's national cattle herd on Tuesday, Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti said the outbreaks had been formally closed by the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), marking a significant achievement that shows the effectiveness of science-based interventions against FMD.

He said vaccination would continue in these areas to sustain herd immunity and guard against potential transboundary virus introduction.

To secure an absolute victory,

targeted vaccination was ongoing to strengthen herd immunity against trans-boundary threats, he said.

He said based on strong epidemiological evidence, the ministry was compiling a dossier for WOAH to achieve FMD Free-With-Vaccination status, crucial for reopening global markets for livestock and animal products.

Dr Dikoloti said implementing strong bio-security measures was essential for disease containment, protecting rural livelihoods, ensuring national economic stability and restoring Botswana's international trade status for livestock and products.

He said bio-security was crucial for preventing disease spread in animals and that any unnecessary animal movement or breaches of veterinary controls could enable viral transmission.

Dr Dikoloti emphasised that overcoming FMD demanded comprehensive commitment from all sectors, including farmers and communities.

He said while there was pressure to lift restrictions and stimulate rural economies, premature lifting could lead to renewed outbreaks and extended trade bans.

To expedite trade restoration, Dr Dikoloti said a containment zone was being established to isolate affected areas while protecting the disease-free regions of the nation.

The minister said the Southern Boundary stretched along the Botswana-South Africa border from Sakutswane Lands to Verda, while the northern boundary runs from Sakutswane Lands through Mogobane and Ranaka bypasses, continuing through the Kanye and Mmathethe passes to Tsoaneng, Sekutlhane, and Masampa-Verda.

He said upon completion of the boundary fence and certification by the Director of Veterinary Services, government would inform WOAH for recognition of the containment zone, allowing Botswana beef to re-enter the global market.

Dr Dikoloti said safe movement protocols had been implemented to maintain local value chains.

He said livestock from non-outbreak areas could be processed at designated abattoirs within Zone 11 and intensively managed livestock from BAITs-registered units might be slaughtered at approved establishments in the containment zone.

Furthermore, Dr Dikoloti said government had initiated a masterplan for recovery focusing on resilience, infrastructure and international partnerships with key actions including a unified national emergency response led by the Office of the President, infrastructure upgrades, including a 182 km fence and repairs to over 1 152 km of veterinary borders and

smart rezoning to optimise trade.

Moreover, he said high-precision mapping was being employed for animal traceability, while regional alliances aimed to secure borders.

He also said global expertise was being leveraged for laboratory modernisation and health integration, while efforts to establish "Brand Botswana Beef" aimed to promote the country's organic beef products in premium markets.

Meanwhile, Dr Dikoloti said active FMD transmission in the southern regions of the country, particularly in Zones 11 and 13, was localised primarily along the Botswana-South Africa border. In Zone 11, he said it is focused around Phitshane-Molopo and Tshidilamolomo, while in Zone 13, certain ranches like the Banyana Farms continued to be impacted.

Dr Dikoloti therefore, assured stakeholders that efforts were underway to resolve the situation, urging patience for long-term benefits over hasty actions. **BOPA**

Shashe West land allocation subject to surveyed layout

GABORONE

Land allocation in Shashe West will be carried out when the surveyed layout is available and the expected number of plots to be allocated known after the design and survey of acquired land.

Answering a question in Parliament on Tuesday, the Assistant Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Mr Motsamai said allocation of new residential plots would be carried out after completing land acquisition process that was land acquisition, demarcation, surveying and land registration.

Mr Motsamai said according to Botswana Land Policy of 2019, all land must be planned and surveyed prior to allocation.

He said Shashe Mooko was last allocated in 2022 with the layout redesigned and approved by the Physical Planning committee in November 2025.

Mr Motsamai said 916 residential plots were planned for survey and allocation in the financial year 2026/27 and that the plan was still on track as surveying was scheduled for third quarter (October-December 2026) with allocations expected to follow in the fourth quarter of this financial year.

He said the delay in allocation of plots in these villages was due to unavailability of planned land and added that the village's growth points were on ploughing fields abutting village boundaries.

Mr Motsamai said the process of acquisition of the ploughing fields was prolonged by disagreements on the compensation values.

The assistant minister said the land rights owners took time to submit their counter valuations. He noted that the markets rates were high and were increasingly expensive for government due to limited budget for land acquisitions and repossessions.

Also, he said one factor that led to the delays was non-responsiveness of the land rights holders. Mr Motsamai said some areas, which were earmarked for expansion encountered ploughing fields owners who did not heed calls for consultations.

He said there was also issues with regard to ploughing fields boundaries a factor that contributed

to conclusion of consultations.

Mr Motsamai said Borolong was last allocated in 2022 and the layout design had not commenced, as investigations were ongoing to find land rights owners for the purpose of land acquisition.

The assistant minister said the process was envisaged to be completed by end of October 2026, adding that the village of Chadibe was last allocated in 2015 and consultations for the base map area had now started and were expected to be completed by December 2026.

He said Mathangwane was last allocated in 2022 and the layout was estimated to yield 1 773 plots but after layout approval, 1 928 plots had been realised.

Mr Motsamai said it was anticipated to be surveyed by the end of December 2026 and allocations planned by end of 2026/27 financial year.

He said Matsitama was last allocated in 2024 and layout plan had 393 plots and was approved in 2026 pending survey and registration.

The assistant minister added that Mabesekwa was last allocated in 2015 with a layout, which was previously designed and was subsequently reviewed with a projected 1 030 plots.

He said the layout was still to be presented before the Physical Planning committee this month (August) and was expected to be surveyed in quarter three.

Also, he noted that the Makobo layout was at an advanced stage and expected to be approved this quarter with the survey, registration to follow in the third quarter and allocations done in quarter four, adding the last allocations were done in 2013.

Mr Motsamai said compensations for the 240 residential plots that remained during the 2023 allocations in Natale had since been completed and allocations were planned by December 2026 as the general plan was in the process of being uploaded in the LIS system for system allocations.

He said 34 ploughing fields were allocated in July 2025 in Natale with identification for additional ploughing fields at an advanced stage.

The assistant minister said in

future, ploughing fields would be allocated from pre-planned layouts with their sizes reflecting the diminishing land resource.

Mr Motsamai said due to lack of financial resources, land delivery across the country was very much negatively affected.

He said in the technical cadre, there were 26 vacancies across landboards nationally, which were key personnel for land service delivery.

Mr Motsamai was responding to a question from Shashe West MP, Mr Jeremiah Frenzel who wanted an update on the state of land allocation in his constituency following indications that there were ongoing plot surveys in some villages.

Mr Frenzel had also asked the minister to state when land allocations would commence in Shashe Mooko and when the residents of Borolong, Chadibe, Mathangwane, Matsitama, Mabesekwa and Makobo should expect to be assisted with residential land allocations.

He also asked the minister when residential and ploughing fields plots would be allocated in Natale. **BOPA**



A mass vaccination programme has suppressed the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak in Zones 3c-Maitengwe and 6b in the North East District. Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti told MPs when addressing Parliament on issues affecting the country's national cattle herd.

Kanye Prison congestion at 37 per cent above capacity

GABORONE

The Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Mr Nelson Ramaotwana says he is aware that the holding capacity of Kanye Prison was 129 inmates and that it is true that the prison is holding more than its capacity.

Answering a question in Parliament on Tuesday, Mr Ramaotwana said as at 7th August 2026, the prison had 177 inmates. "Congestion at the prison is 37 per cent above its capacity.

We are in the process of arranging transfers of some of the inmates to Gantsi and Tsabong prisons, which are holding inmates far below their capacity.

The transfers will reduce the

congestion and hopefully, bring it down to the capacity of the prison," said Ramaotwana.

The minister said there were plans to expand or upgrade to build a prison at Lobatse during the next plan period, adding that the project had been approved under the title Lobatse Rehabilitation Centre.

He said the prison would have a much bigger capacity and it will therefore ease congestion at prisons and consequently allow for improved delivery of programmes.

Mr Ramaotwana promised that government was committed to addressing the situation.

"We will be constructing 12 housing units at the station next year. It is expected that the houses will be completed in December

2027.

In the meantime, we are working towards increasing rented houses for officers in Kanye.

So far three houses have been identified and we are working towards procurement of leases for the houses," he said.

MP for Kanye East, Mr Prince Mosanana had wanted clarification on measures government was taking to address overcrowding challenges at the facility.

Mr Mosanana also wanted to understand whether there were plans to expand or upgrade Kanye Prison to ensure acceptance standards of inmate accommodation, rehabilitation and safety of correctional officers. **BOPA**



Botswana and Nigeria seek to expand trade horizons

Mpho Mosojane
GABORONE

Business Botswana Chief Executive Officer, Ms Tumi Mbaakanyi has called on stakeholders to pursue targeted, result-oriented policy measures aimed at creating a more efficient and conducive trading environment between Botswana and Nigeria.

Officially opening Botswana and Nigeria high-level business forum in Gaborone recently, Ms Mbaakanyi highlighted the longstanding diplomatic relations between the two nation, founded on mutual respect and cooperation, noting that opportunities remained for expanding bilateral trade, investment and private sector collaboration. Held under the framework of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the forum sought to facilitate direct business-to-business engagements between private-sector companies and business-support organisations from the two countries.

“May today’s session be more than just a discussion, but a reflection of a belief that meaningful economic transformation happens when governments create enabling environments for businesses to invest, innovate and collaborate,” she said.

Speaking at the same occasion, Botswana Investment and Trade Centre export promotion manager, Mr Calvin Ketshabetswe underscored the substantial opportunities available to businesses in both countries.

He said leveraging the comparative strengths of Botswana and Nigeria could enable entrepreneurs to establish new value chains, unlock investment opportunities, facilitate knowledge and skills transfer, and ultimately contribute to the creation of sustainable and decent employment.

The two countries are seeking to expand bilateral trade and



Business Botswana chief executive officer, Ms Tumi Mbaakanyi (left) and LeLook Manufactures of Bags CEO, Ms Chinwe Ezenwa during Botswana and Nigeria high-level Business Forum in Gaborone recently. Ms Mbaakanyi said the session was more than just a discussion, but a reflection of a belief that meaningful economic transformation happened when government created enabling environment for businesses to invest, innovate and collaborate. Photo: Phenyo Moalosi

investment through the AfCFTA framework, with potential opportunities identified in sectors including agribusiness, mining services, manufacturing, logistics, financial services, digital technologies and the creative industries.

High Commissioner of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to Botswana, Mr John Shama Shaga, reiterated that the primary objective of the AfCFTA was to establish a single continental market for goods and services, encompassing more than 1.2 billion people, while deepening economic integration and promoting intra-African trade.

“This forum will deepen trade between the two countries if both capitalise on Nigeria’s population as a substantial market, while Botswana, with its stable resource management, can build resilient

supply chains that can yield economic prosperity of immense propensity,” he said.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) highlighted its commitment to supporting inclusive economic growth and sustainable development across Africa, particularly by ensuring that women, youth and small, micro and medium enterprises (SMMEs) benefit from market opportunities arising from the implementation of the AfCFTA.

Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP Botswana, Ms Josephine Lewis, said it was important for SMMEs to develop a sound understanding of AfCFTA trade protocols, including rules of origin, goods classification, certification requirements and market-access procedures.

“We stand ready to support governments and private-sector

entities in realising the AfCFTA vision and encourage them to use platforms such as these for tangible outcomes in building lasting connections that drive prosperity across Africa,” she said.

The successful implementation of AfCFTA trade opportunities between Botswana and Nigeria has the potential to strengthen bilateral economic relations, promote private-sector collaboration and contribute to broader continental economic integration.

Available trade statistics indicate considerable volatility in trade flows between the two countries. Botswana’s exports to Nigeria declined from approximately US\$1.4 million in 2023 to US\$147,000 in 2024, while imports from Nigeria decreased from US\$376,000 in 2023 to approximately US\$161,000 in 2024. **BOPA**

BUSINESS SERVICES

Intelligent solutions to fast-track green transition

NAIROBI - Chinese telecom firm Huawei on Tuesday pledged to strengthen its partnership with the Kenyan government to accelerate the east African country’s green energy transition through smart technologies. Speaking at the Kenya Energy Transition Forum in Nairobi, co-hosted by Huawei and Kenya’s Ministry of Energy and Petroleum, James Sun, deputy chief executive officer for public affairs at Huawei Kenya, said that deploying intelligent solutions is critical to boosting renewable energy adoption across households and industrial sectors in the country. Sun reaffirmed Huawei’s commitment as a long-standing partner to local energy providers, emphasising that the company will continue offering smart power technologies to enhance connectivity and fuel industrial growth. **Xinhua**

Ghana trade value rises nearly nine-fold in two decades

ACCRA - Over the past two decades, the value of Ghana’s merchandise trade has increased nearly ninefold, according to a report released Tuesday by the Ghana Statistical Service. The Ghana’s Merchandise Trade 2004-2025 report said the country’s trade value grew from US\$6 billion in 2004 to US\$52.5 billion in 2025. Government Statistician Alhassan Iddrisu, who launched the report, said exports grew from US\$1.93 billion in 2004 to US\$32 billion in 2025, while imports, which stood at US\$4.1 billion in 2004, increased to US\$20.5 billion in 2025. “For most of two decades, Ghana bought more than it sold.” **Xinhua**

New payment system to enhance cross-border trade

KAMPALA - Stanbic Bank Uganda has launched China’s Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS) to enhance cross-border transactions, reduce foreign exchange risks and strengthen bilateral trade. Stanbic Bank Uganda, a subsidiary of Standard Bank Group, said the integration would enable Ugandan businesses to settle transactions directly in the Chinese currency renminbi, eliminating the need for intermediary currencies while improving the speed and efficiency of international payments. David Bahati, Uganda’s minister of state for trade, industry and cooperatives, said CIPS is not merely a payment innovation but a strategic economic infrastructure, according to remarks released by his office on Friday. “By enabling direct renminbi settlement, reducing transaction costs and improving efficiency, CIPS strengthens Uganda’s competitiveness within one of our largest trading relationships.” **Xinhua**

Tinubu approves reform to unlock US\$50 billion in deep offshore investment

ABUJA

Nigerian President Bola Tinubu has approved an ambitious reform aimed at unlocking up to US\$50 billion in deep offshore investment and reviving stalled projects.

The reform will replace project-by-project negotiations with a transparent, rules-based investment framework to attract long-term capital to the deep offshore oil and gas sector, according to a statement issued

by the State House on Tuesday. The framework will support a new generation of deep offshore developments, beginning with the approximately US\$10-billion-Bonga South West project, and is expected to strengthen Nigeria’s competitiveness in attracting globally mobile investment capital, the statement said.

The Nigerian government has recently engaged with foreign investors to discuss measures to unlock the country’s deep

offshore investment pipeline, local media reported Wednesday. Rather than adopting project-specific solutions, the government has developed a comprehensive framework applicable to multiple qualifying developments.

Established through the Deep Offshore Oil and Gas Projects Incentives (Tax Remission) Order, 2026, the framework introduces transparent eligibility criteria and clear implementation procedures. It also provides greater certainty

for investors while safeguarding long-term national value.

“This reform reflects our determination to build an investment environment defined by clear rules, strong institutions and enduring partnerships,” the statement quoted Tinubu as saying. “We are creating the conditions for capital to flow, for Nigerian businesses to grow, for our people to prosper and for our natural resources to deliver lasting national value.” **Xinhua**

Dikgang

PAMPIRI YA THUTO LE DIKITSISO

Ipapatse Fa Leletsa

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261 0480 | 241 3402 | 365 3500





Mothusa Tautona e bile e le tona wa madi, Rre Ndaba Gaolathe a na le baithuti ba Diphetogo Primary School fa a etetse sekole seo bosheng. Rre Gaolathe o rotloeditse baithuti go dira ka natla. Senepe: Phenyio Ramatu

‘Gopolang ba ba tlhokang’

Grace Sebape
LOBATSE

Kgosi Tebogo Kemoabe wa kgotla ya Peleng kwa Lobatse, a re toropo eo, e aperwe ke lehuma, ka moo a leboga thata banni ba ba gwetlhegang go thusa ba ba tlhokang.

Kgosi Kemoabe o buile mafoko ao, kwa Lobatse bosheng jaaka maloko a Bandler United Fest ba ne ba abela bana ba ba tlhokileng lesego diaparo le melora, e le tsela nngwe ya go supa fa ba kgathala ka matshelo a bone.

O ba kopile gore ba tswellele ka mowa oo wa bopelotlhomogi, le boikarabelo a re Modimo o tlaa tswellela a ba segofatsa.

Mookamedi wa Bandler United Fest, Rre Bokang Motswedi yo o itseeng ka leina la Rhym Killa, mo go tsa bodiragatsi o boletse gore tiro e ba e dirang ya go abela bana ke go leboga ba ofisi ya boipelego ka tiro e ba e dirang, a supa fa le ene ba mo thusitse nako ya fa a na le letlhoko.

O tlhalositse gore le ene o ne a thusiwa ka dijo le diaparo a tlatsa ka gore mo nakong e, o abela bana go busetsa seriti le monyenyo mo go bone.

Rre Motswedi a re e le badiragatsi bane batla ka mogopolo wa go dira dikgaisano tsa motshameko wa kgwele ya dinao, gore ba kgone go bona bonnyennyane, go thusa bana.

O tswelletse ka go bolela gore ba tlaa tswellela ba thusa mme a ikuela a kopa gore ba bulelwe dikgoro gore ba kgone fitlhelela maikaelelo a bone.

Mo go tse dingwe o boletse fa ba dikgobokantse diaparo ka go di kopa mo bathong mme ba kgona go reka melora ya madi a a kanang ka sekete sa dipula le makgolo a mararo a dipula.

Mongwe wa bo mmaboipelego Mme Makopo Montshiti, o lebogile Bandler United Fest go gopola ba ba tlhokileng lesego mo botshelong, a tlatsa ka gore Modimo a segofatse letsogo le le abang.

Mokhanselara wa kgaolwana ya Peleng Central Rre Steven Mpofu o boletse fa badiragatsi ba toropo ya Lobatse le bana-le seabe botlhe ba dirile tiro e tona ka go thusa ba ba tlhokong, a tlatsa ka gore Modimo a ba godise.

Kgaisano ya go kgobokanya madi go thusa e ne e tsenwe ke ditlhopho tsa kgwele ya dinao di robabobedi tsa toropo ya Lobatse **BOPA**

Bana ba rotloediwa go ikaga

Lesedi Thatayamodimo
GABORONE

Baithuti ba rotloeditswe go nna le ditoro tse dikgolo, go ithuta ka natla le go ikaga ba sa ntse ba le bannye, gore ba atlege mo botshelong.

Fa a buisa bana ba sekole se se botlana sa Diphetogo bosheng mo Gaborone, mothusa Tautona Rre Ndaba Gaolathe o ne a ba gakolola gore ditshwetso tse ba di tsayang ba sa ntse ba le bannye di ka nna le seabe se setona mo bokamosong jwa bone.

Rre Gaolathe yo e bileng e le tona wa tsa madi, o ne a lebogela barutabana tiro e tona e ba e dirang go ruta le go godisa bana sentle.

“Ke leboga barutabana ba lona ka tiro e tona e ba e dirang ya go

le ruta le go le godisa sentle, ke ba leboga ka boineelo jwa bone,” ga rialo Rre Gaolathe.

Rre Gaolathe o ne a ba gakolola gore le ene o kile a lekana le bone a le mo lekwalong la ntlha kwa sekoleng, mme a tlhalosa gore le fa go lebega bana ba sa ntse ba na le nako e ntsi pele ga ba gola, nako e tsamaya ka bonako thata.

O ne a kopa bana go nna le toro, a ba kgothatsa go lora ka bokamoso jwa bone.

Bana ba ne ba kgothalediwa gore fa ba eletsa go nna dingaka, barutabana, matona a puso, ditautona, badiredi ba puso, bagakolodi, baruti kgotsa sengwe le sengwe se ba se eletsang, ba tshwanetse go simolola ka go lora.

Ba ne ba gakololwa gape gore ba se ka ba letla mafoko a batho

ba bangwe go ba kgoba marapo.

R r e Gaolathe o ne a gatelela g o r e bana ba tshwanetse go dumela mo go bone le mo bokgoning jwa bone.

“Le tshwanetse go dumela gore lo ka kgona, le gore lo siame mo go lekaneng, tshwara toro ya gago ka thata.” Rre Gaolathe o ne a kgothatsa baithuti go ithuta ka natla.

Ba ne ba rotloediwa go bala dibuka, go botsa dipotso le go

“Ke leboga barutabana ba lona ka tiro e tona e ba e dirang ya go le ruta le go le godisa sentle, ke ba leboga ka boineelo jwa bone.”

batla kitso mo barutabaneng, batsading, masika le batho ba bangwe ba ba atlegileng mo botshelong.

Bana ba ne ba gakololwa gore fa ba etela bo nkukuabone le borremogolo kwa magaeng, ba tshwanetse go ba reetsa le go ba botsa dipotso, ka gone kitso le maitemogelo a bagolo a ka ba thusa thata mo botshelong.

Rre Gaolathe o ne a kopa bana go ikaga, a re ba rotloetswa go dira se ka go reetsa barutabana le batsadi. O ne a gatelela gore mekgwa e e siameng e tshwanetse go simolola bonyaneng, ka gone e thusa motho go gola a na le maikarabelo le maitsholo a a siameng.

O ne a gakolola baithuti gore ba se ka ba tshega kgotsa go sotla ba bangwe fa ba sa dire sentle mo dithutong mme ba ba thuse le go ithuta go dira mmogo jaaka setlhopho.

Rre Gaolathe o ne a kgothatsa bana go dira tiro ya bone ya kwa gae mmogo, go tshameka mmogo le go naya ba bangwe sebaka sa gore le bone ba gole mo bokgoning jwa bone. Molaetsa o mogolo e ne e le gore katlego ga se ya motho a le mongwe fela, mme bana ba tshwanetse go thusana gore botlhe ba kgone go fitlhelela ditoro tsa bone. **BOPA**

Mapodisi a tlhotlhomiso polao

Cathrine Simane
MIDDLEPITS

Rre wa dingwaga tse di masome mabedi le bobedi o ikgapetse botshelo morago ga go bolaya mme wa dingwaga tse di masome mabedi.

Mookamela mapodisi a Middlepits, Superintendent Keadire Mmopi, o tlhaloseditse BOPA fa tiragalo e, e diragetse ka Mosupologo go ne kwa motseng oo.

Supt Mmopi a re bobedi jo, bo ne

bo bereka mmogo kwa polasing ya puso kwa Lobu gaufi le Khuis, rre a tlhologa kwa Bogogobo fa mme ene e ne e le wa Kolonkwaneng.

A re e ne yare go amogela pego, mapodisi ba ragogela kwa tiragalo e diragetseng teng mme ba fitlhela mme a lotleletswe mo ntlung kwa lwapeng lwa mosimane, a lebega a se mo botshelong.

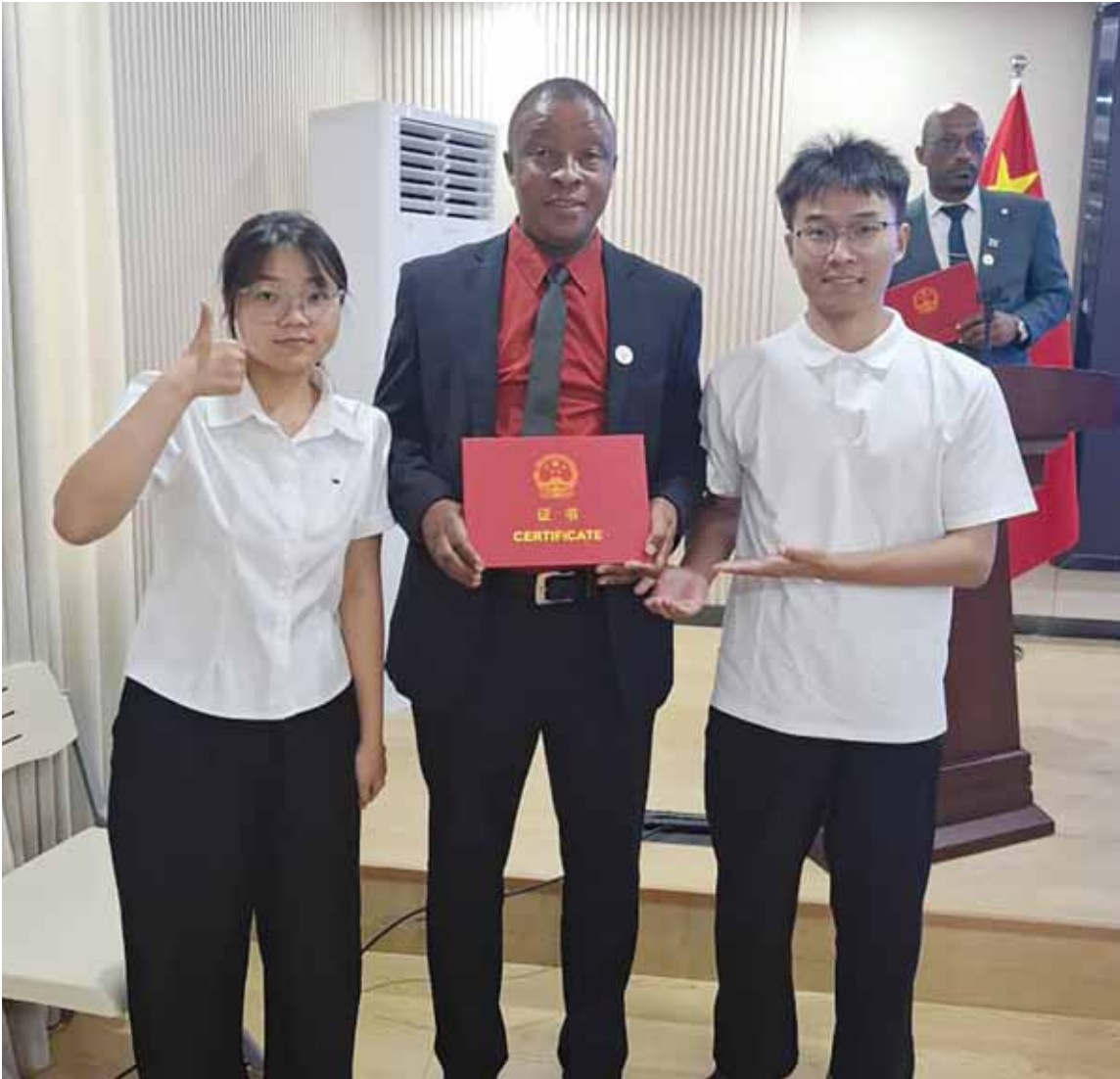
O tlhalositse fa e rile morago ga tiragalo eo, rre a inaya naga mme mapodisi ba mo tsaya ka motlhala, ba fitlhela a akgega mo setlhareng, go lebega a ikgapetse botshelo mo

sekgweng dikhilommethara di ka nna tharo go tswa mo motseng.

Supt Mmopi o supile fa ba ne ba isiwa kwa go ba bongaka kwa kokelong ya Tsabong kwa ba fetileng ba rurifatsa fa ba tlhokafetse. O tlhalositse fa bobedi e ene e le baratani ebile ba tlogela ngwana wa dikgwedi tse thataro.

Mapodisi ba tswelletse ka ditlhotlhomiso, go itse se se ka tswang se bakile tiragalo e.

Supt Mmopi o kopile setshaba go nna ba kopa thusa fa ba lebanwe ke mathata. **BOPA**



Tsabong District Council chairperson, Mr Elias Motlhanke said the district was set to roll out a localised agricultural overhaul inspired by China's poverty alleviation model. Photo: Naomi Leepile

Tsabong adopts China model to fight poverty

Naomi Leepile
TSABONG

Tsabong District is set to roll out a localised agricultural overhaul inspired by China's poverty alleviation model, in efforts to lift rural communities through specialised farming, desert technology and green energy investments.

Returning from a two-week benchmarking seminar in Wuhan, Tsabong District Council chairperson, Mr Elias Motlhanke said in an interview that transforming the district relied on three core pillars, including dedicated community specialisation, targeted youth involvement and strong public-private collaboration.

Mr Motlhanke said to implement such vision, they proposed adapting the Chinese 'One Village, One Product' strategy across local communities.

Under the model, he explained that a village like Tsabong could focus exclusively on bean production, while Logaganeng could leverage its natural spring to supply fresh vegetables to the broader district.

He added that focusing on regional strengths would allow government to deliver tailored support, establish efficient supply chains and build deep local expertise.

He further said to overcome harsh regional weather, they were looking to deploy high-tech desert agriculture, including greenhousing, drought-tolerant crop species and small-animal farming such as piggery and poultry.

Beyond core agriculture,

he highlighted several key investment opportunities to international partners during his visit, including Sengaparile (Devil's Claw) pharmaceutical processing, leather and textile manufacturing linked to local abattoirs, solar energy expansion and an upgraded local airport to boost tourism surrounding the Kgalagadi Trans-frontier Park.

Central to the transformation were young people, whom Mr Motlhanke viewed as primary drivers of technology integration, product branding and market creation.

By reversing urban youth migration and providing specialised training through facilities like Lobu Farm alongside university partnerships, he believed that the district can build a modern and sustainable agrarian economy.

He also emphasised that lasting poverty alleviation ultimately required a 'willing government and willing client' model where communities led from the ground up.

He indicated that plans were currently underway to hold leadership workshops to cascade lessons to all local councillors.

Meanwhile, Mr Motlhanke attended the Seminar on Rural Poverty Alleviation and Development for Botswana in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, from July 2 to 15.

The programme was organised by the Hubei Vocational College of Bio-Technology and sponsored jointly by the Ministry of Local Government and Traditional Affairs and the Chinese Embassy.

Reflecting on the trip, he noted that China shared structural similarities with Botswana,

balancing heavily populated urban hubs with vast, arid and sparsely populated agricultural zones, a nation that successfully lifted roughly 98 million rural citizens out of extreme poverty between 2000 and 2020. **BOPA**

Increasing defilement cases spark alarm

Goitsemodimo Williams-Madzonga
TUTUME

The rise in defilement cases calls for society to acknowledge the societal ill and face it head-on though some people find it an uncomfortable subject to talk about.

Speaking at the launch of Mpepu's Sireletsa Ngwana, Sireletsa Bokamoso campaign in Tutume on Friday, First Lady Ms Kaone Boko said defilement had far-reaching consequences for victims, including teenage pregnancy.

She said it was disheartening that majority of families opted to protect perpetrators instead of victims by not reporting cases to the police.

Ms Boko further said the victims were left destroyed emotionally, psychologically and left with pregnancies that resulted in them being discriminated against by even their family members.

In Tutume district, she said it has been revealed that from January to June this year alone, 135 cases of teenage pregnancies had been recorded, with most not having been reported to relevant authorities such as social workers and the police.

In addition, she pointed some of the teenage pregnancies that resulted from defilement were not even registered at health facilities for victims to receive ante-natal care, adding that there were reports of victims being made to deliver their babies at home without proper medical care as parents feared that taking them to hospital would expose

their family secrets in cases where perpetrators where family members of the victims.

Ms Boko said it was time that society held the uncomfortable conversations around defilement and to bring to the fore the challenges faced by children at the hands of those supposed to be their protectors or guardians.

"We need to strengthen our collective response to these challenges faced by children," she said

As an intervention, she said she had asked bahumagadi ba dikgosi or wives of dikgosi to set up a safe haven in the district where young girls could comfortably share their ordeal without being judged or victimised.

Meanwhile, an official from the office of the First Lady Ms Florence Ntsabang highlighted that during engagements that preceded the launch of the Sireletsa Ngwana, Sireletsa Bokamoso campaign, young people proposed that a one-stop centre dealing directly with issues pertaining to children be set up to allow for better handling of children's issues.

She added that there was also an appeal for sexual offenders not to be given bail while awaiting trial because in many instances the same people tended to offend again.

Ms Charlbie Lentswe, children's representative for the Tutume district proposed that laws be amended to have male students who impregnate their fellow female counterparts to also leave school so that not only the girl child was forced to abandon their education because of the pregnancy. **BOPA**

2026/27 performance plan.

Mr Botlhasitse applauded the South East Region for its consistently strong showing in the national examinations, attributing the achievements to the tireless commitment of everyone in the school ecosystem, including the often-unsung heroes behind the scenes.

"While teachers inspire learning inside the classroom, non-teaching staff provide the essential foundation that allows our schools to function effectively. Awardees, we are proud of you. It is your dedication that is truly pushing this ministry forward," he said.

Award winners were urged to see their achievements as proof of what visionary leadership can accomplish, while those who walked away empty-handed were reminded that excellence was not a single destination, but an ongoing journey. **BOPA**

Awards drive success in South East Region

Tumisang Moilwa
GABORONE

Education has long been dubbed humanity's great equaliser, but in the South East Region, a little recognition has proven to be the secret spark powering classroom success.

Gathered under the theme: Royal Excellence: Crowned Amidst the Economic Crunch, educators, learners and support staff recently came together for the South East Region's third annual excellence awards.

The event was a testament to how a culture of appreciation can turn around the fortunes of struggling schools.

According to regional officials, schools that once lagged in academic metrics are now turning the tide and the secret is motivation and celebration that inspire both teachers and learners to raise the bar year

after year.

Delivering keynote remarks, Botswana Gambling Authority, chief executive officer, Mr Moruntshi Kemorwale said an educated citizenry remained the bedrock of a prosperous and sustainable nation.

"Every lesson taught and every learner supported contributes directly to building a stronger Botswana," Mr Kemorwale said, commending the nominees for their dedication and professionalism.

He also expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Child Welfare and Basic Education for the invitation, saying it was a privilege to stand alongside those shaping the country's future.

Speaking on behalf of the Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education, secretary for general education, Mr Steve Botlhasitse, indicated that recognising top performers was now anchored in the ministry's

Arts & Culture



Kearoma Rantao performing songs from her new *The Zambezi Soul* album during its launch in Gaborone on Saturday.
Photo: Phenyio Ramatu

Tankiso Mogapi
GABORONE

Music has a strange ability to fold time. One minute you are sitting in a modern ballroom and the next, a single horn line or vocal swell transports you straight into the golden era of African jazz and global pop. That was the magic on tap when local songstress, Kearoma Rantao, unveiled her latest album, *Zambezi Soul*, at the Avani Gaborone Resort & Casino recently. Billed as *Rhythm Through the*

Ages under the glittering banner of 60’s, 70’s, 80’s, *Legacy Glamour*, the night was less of a standard album launch and more of a grand and cross-generational love letter to the icons who paved the way. Rather than keeping the spotlight entirely on herself, Rantao transformed the stage into a living museum of sound. The evening’s standout moments came through a powerhouse line-up of tribute performances that paired local heavyweights with global legends. Punah Gabasiane channelled the majestic strength of Miriam

Makeba, while Nnunu Ramogotsi tackled the soaring vocal heights of Whitney Houston. Nono Siile brought the velvety acoustic warmth of Jonathan Butler, Fifi Afrika electrified the room with the raw energy of Tina Turner and Shanti-Lo delivered a show-stopping nod to the late and great Brenda Fassie. Adding to the genre-bending feast, crowd favourites Johnny Mokhali and Vee Mampezy took to the stage and ensured that the energy spanned everything from classic melodies to high-octane modern rhythms.

Between sets, DJs Mox, Buddhahblaz, Jazzman, Ms Laura and Bats Matash kept the floor warm and weaving decades of hitmaking into a seamless sonic tapestry. For Rantao, launching *Zambezi Soul* against this backdrop was a deliberate choice and a way to anchor her new project within the deep lineage of southern African music. “I am so grateful to my team, the organisers and everyone who worked behind the scenes to make this launch a success,” Rantao said after the show.

“A big thank you to Avani Gaborone Resort & Casino for hosting us and supporting the vision. To the artistes who gave their time and talent and to everyone who came out to support, thank you. This night was about honouring those who came before us and I’m proud that we did it together,” she added. Meanwhile, weaving the roots of the past into the unveiling of her future, Rantao reminded everyone in attendance that while eras changed, true soul was timeless. **BOPA**

Author turns pain into purpose

Kedirebofe Pelontle
GUMARE

Life will throw everyone off balance at some point. What sets people apart, says Maun author Keatletse Mapodisi, is the courage to rise again. That message sits at the heart of her new book, *Peace Over Pain*, a testimony of faith, healing, and resilience published under her own imprint, Beacon of Hope Publishing. Mapodisi, 39, is a nurse, relationship and marriage counselor, and the founder of Beacon of Hope Publishing based in Maun. She says her professional work and personal journey both pushed her to put her story on paper. “*Peace Over Pain* was birthed out of my own personal journey. Life took me through seasons of pain, disappointment, loss, marriage struggles, motherhood

challenges and moments that tested my faith,” she said. Through those seasons, she learned that pain does not cancel out peace. “God gave me peace that surpassed my understanding, even during some of my most difficult moments,” she said. The book is written as both encouragement and guide for readers in a difficult season. Mapodisi wants them to know their struggles were not the end of their story. *Peace Over Pain* blends personal testimony with practical lessons and scripture. Topics include disappointment, loss, marriage, relationships, motherhood, emotional healing, resilience, forgiveness, and trusting God during hard times. “In a nutshell, *Peace Over Pain* is about healing, hope, faith, and discovering that difficult seasons do not have to define the rest of one’s

life,” Mapodisi said. She described the writing process as emotional but healing saying the writing journey was emotional but also healing because writing about personal experiences meant revisiting some difficult moments. “At the same time, I could look back and recognise how far God has brought me,” she said. The book was published through Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing, known as Amazon KDP, under Beacon of Hope Publishing. Mapodisi says it has been a valuable experience to be both author and publisher. While the book is rooted in Christian faith, she said its themes of hope, healing, resilience and peace could speak to anyone going through a tough time. Mental health is also a key focus. Mapodisi noted that emotional pain could take a serious toll on wellbeing, and urged readers not to suffer in silence.

“Faith is very important to me, but I also believe that prayer and professional support can work together. My message is, acknowledge your pain, talk about it, seek help when you need it, and never lose hope that healing is possible,” she said. She encouraged people to find safe spaces to talk, whether with a counselor, healthcare professional, trusted friend, family member or spiritual leader. *Peace Over Pain* is available on Amazon. Mapodisi is already working on her next book, *Breaking Free: Healing Wounds, Breaking Chains and Transforming Generations*, which she says is almost complete. **BOPA**



Keatletse Mapodisi author of *Peace Over Pain*.



Molwantwa clinches junior featherweight crown

Baleseng Batlotleng
GABORONE

Hard hitting boxer George Molwantwa has been crowned the new junior featherweight division national champion.

The stocky pugilist reclaimed top status in his rank Saturday night after a highly charged and gruelling battle with his bitter rival Tshephang Gomotho at the Boipuso Multipurpose Hall.

In what many considered a rematch of the 2025 interclub tournament 54kg match, all the three judges on the night waved to Molwantwa’s favour in every round of the 8 round headliner.

Perfect timing, grit and determination set the tempo for the visiting Molwantwa who was fighting from the corner of Master Fitness Centre on the night.

The equally impressive Gomotho from Bond boxing promotions found no answers to slow the pace or mount any meaningful counterattack.

In the middle rounds Rambo as

Gomotho is fondly called threw a couple of clear combinations but his opponent remained in resolute command.

Buoyed by a sold out home crowd Gomotho chased Molwantwa around the ring in the opening rounds curbing any pressure the visiting boxer planned to execute.

Molwantwa quickly changed tempo of the game using his strength and quicker hands to control action from a distance landing clean punches in attack.

He pressed continuously turning portions of the exciting match into a real physical battle.

Towards the closing bell Gomotho was seemingly running out of steam and nearly went down on one knee after missing a left hook and lost balance.

Molwantwa came charging and used speed and impressive footwork to take command and complete a remarkably close contest.

In other exciting supporting bouts Onkarabile Mothibedi won by judges’ split decision in the junior lightweight division against Aobakwe Ditodi in what was undoubtedly the best bout of the supporting acts.

The two exciting boxers gave out a heart-warming performance much to the delight of the crowd who packed the ring to the rafters.

In the light heavyweight division Reward Ndlovu relied on his size and body attacks to break down Monty Chiepe before

the scheduled four round fight was halted by the referee in the second round as the latter was outclassed.

In the bantamweight class Kagiso Letsholo made a combination of

hard shots to punish the hapless Kealeboga Alton through a technical knockout.

In the junior welterweight class Nonofo Molatlhegi could

not find enough composure against the highly charged Karabo Motshwarakgole who also emerged victorious after a technical knockout. **BOPA**



Hard hitting George Molwantwa (left) landing a left hook on Tshephang Gomotho during the Bond Boxing Promotion Junior Featherweight National Championship fight in Gaborone on Saturday. Molwantwa was crowned the new featherweight national champion after all the judges unanimously declared him the winner. Photo: Pheny Moalosi



Gaborone readies for Zone IV Aquatics showdown

Anastacia Sibanda
GABORONE

Local sport fans are in for a treat next month as Botswana prepares to host the Africa Aquatics Zone IV Championships, bringing the region’s finest young swimmers to the capital city.

The four-day aquatic celebration is set to run from September 2–5 at the University of Botswana pool.

Over 315 swimmers and nearly

100 technical officials will be making the trip, representing 13 different countries from across the region. Comoros is the only nation in the zone that would not be taking part this year.

Botswana Swimming Sports Association (BSSA) president, Kgaotsang Matthews, confirmed in an interview that the local organising committee was in great shape and putting the finishing touches on event plans.

“While the local organising

committee is ready, we are currently wrapping up final logistical details to ensure a flawless event,” Matthews said.

She said the venue was almost set to go, though organisers were keeping an eye on one small detail of installing a shade net over the pool stands to keep fans comfortable during daytime races.

Matthews said she was confident that the university would have the net replaced in time for opening day.

She further said hosting over 400 international visitors was not just great for local sports, but it was also a big win for the city given that hotels, restaurants and transport services in Gaborone were expecting a boost throughout the week.

More than anything, she said they were hopeful for a fun and well-run event that would put Botswana on the map to host even bigger sporting events in the future. **BOPA**

Over 315 swimmers and nearly 100 technical officials, representing 13 countries from across the region will descend in Botswana for the Africa Aquatics Zone IV Championships, bringing the region’s finest young swimmers to the capital city.