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Consumer fair major
economic catalyst

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AI policy in final stage



Vice President and Minister of Finance, Mr Ndaba Gaolathe (left) being shown some technology gadgets by Vertice Mobile Health general manager, Mr Gustav Eschberger during a tour of stalls at the Botswana Tech Summit in Gaborone on Tuesday. Mr Gaolathe said government’s vision was to build an inclusive digital economy that created opportunity, enhanced efficiency and reduced inequality. Still at the summit, Assistant Minister of Communications and Innovation Mr Shawn Ntlhaile revealed that government was working on finalising a National Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy. He said this came after an AI Readiness Foundation initiative together with UNESCO verified Botswana’s readiness to AI technologies. Photo: Godfrey Mpuse

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FORENSIC AUDIT PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM

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‘Road project progress satisfactory’

By Aobakwe Molefhi

GOODHOPE - The works completed on the district’s road infrastructure project have been reported as satisfactory by Good Hope/Mmathethe council chairperson, Mr Daniel Nkwane. Addressing the full council session on Monday, Mr Nkwane expressed optimism about the

impact of ongoing road projects across the district. He said that once the projects were completed, the district’s landscape would be transformed. Mr Nkwane also highlighted the progress of the Output Performance and Reward Contract (OPRC) Package 2 Lot 1, awarded to Steelbase (PTY) LTD at a cost of approximately

P456,654,000. He noted that the project was currently on schedule, with overall progress at 92 per cent. He said that amongst outstanding works were construction of failed sections at Leporung and Dikhukhung, drainage works at Tshidilamolomo and building of Mabule/Banyana farms culvert, while the Good Hope-Kgoro-Gathwane Road was complete and opened to traffic. The chairperson also said that OPRC package 2 lot 2 awarded

to Tau grading and building construction at the sum of P653, 650,481.10 and commenced on April 8 2024 was currently behind schedule at 41 per cent compared to the envisaged 49 per cent. It is scheduled to run over 36 months. Mr Nkwane said construction of lot 2 which covered over 57.7 kilometers of road across various villages in the district, with the amount of work already done, the contractor would deliver the project on time and on budget. Mr Nkwane pointed out that

works on Malokaganyane-Sheepfarm Road had already started while Gamajaalela road was almost finished with a substantial section already open to the public. On other projects, he said construction of Metlojane, Hebron, Borobadilepe and Mokatako road was yet to commence, adding that the contractor was currently constructing detour road while awaiting the approval of the impact assessment for the proposed burrow pits. **BOPA**

Councillors approve Senonnori as name for new school

By Esther Mmolai

MAUN - North West District Council has officially approved the name Senonnori for the new primary school currently under construction in Senonnori ward, Maun. The decision was made during a special full council session, where councillors unanimously endorsed the name after confirmation that the proper procedures outlined in national guidelines had been followed. According to the council, the process adhered to Section 8.0 of the National Guideline on Naming of Streets, Roads, Public Facilities, and Localities.

This section stipulates that authorities must designate names for public streets, roads, local government facilities, open spaces, and cemeteries through formal council resolutions. Councillors also learnt that also learnt that a kgotla meeting with the community, village leadership, Ward Development Committee (WDC) for naming proposal was held on the March 13 and the name, Senonnori was approved through voting out of the four suggested names of Balusi Mhaladi, Mpho Motsamai and Masake Jobe. It was also informed that the application was presented to Physical Planning Committee on their sitting July 3 and they resolved to approve the name Senonnori Primary School as it was selected by the majority.

However, councillors appreciated the decision by residents and agreed upon the name even though some questioned the meaning of Senonnori but they were advised to engaged the ward leadership on the history of the ward. Meanwhile, recently, the council chairman, Mr Itumeleng Kelebetseng told media that the construction of new primary school was almost complete as currently the contractor was attending to the defects and tidying up the site in preparation for handover. The project, he said was 98 per cent complete and the contractor was completing storm water drainage and steel tanks. The school is being constructed into two packages with package one comprising of construction of academic facilities which has been awarded to LERS Electrical

at a total cost of P56, 874, 127.61 and expenditure to date is P51, 456, 752.43. The project started on the January 8 2024 and was due for completion on July 13 this yaear but experienced delay. Package two which comprise of construction of staff housing facilities has been awarded to Black Rubbie Properties at a total cost of P25, 000, 000.00 and expenditure to date is P11, 105, 973.85 while the project is 65 per cent complete. The project commenced on January 22 2024 and is scheduled to be completed on the September 29. The school is expected to reduce the long distance that learners have been traveling to access education. On other issues, councillors formed a council company which will serve as an investment wing aimed to generate revenue for the council. The council chairman, Mr Kelebetseng stated that the formation of the company followed a directive from the minster of Local Government and Traditional Affairs urging local authorities to establish business wings to generate income and become less dependent on government subsidies. He said the initiative would indeed help to boost sources of revenue for the council considering the fact that the council has not been able to adequately undertake some developmental projects due to strained budget and the Revenue Support Grant that has been declining with every financial year.

“We need to seek alternative revenue sources to overcome financial challenges and fund development projects aimed to benefit our communities,” he added. Councillors also endorsed changes in the standing order. They also elected new council committees. However, councillor for Chanoga/Samedupi ward, Mr Nico Folae proposed that sitting allowances for councillors be suspended for the next 12 months since the council was currently faced with financial constraints. By so doing, he said the council could be able to save money and channel it towards pressing issues. **BOPA**



South Africa couple Mr Mandla Mhlanga (left) and his wife, Ms Lee Buzwani-Mhlanga, touring the Three Dikgosi Monument in Gaborone under the guidance of site custodian Mr Onthusitse Ojang. Mr Mhlanga said they were visiting Botswana, particularly Gaborone, to explore various attractions, including the National Museum, Gaborone Game Reserve, Gaborone Dam, Sanitas Garden, and local malls. He praised the country’s safety, noting they felt comfortable walking around the city at night and that it was not their first visit, as they had previously travelled to Francistown and toured its major sites. Photo: Felicity Male

Rise in sexual offences against children worrisome

By Aobakwe Molefhi

GOOD HOPE - Good Hope Mmathethe District is facing a disturbing trend of high numbers of sexual offences against children, says council chairperson Mr Daniel Nkwane during a full council session on Monday. Mr Nkwane said that the social and community development recorded 59 cases of sexual abuse against children in the recent quarter. The breakdown includes 15 cases of rape, one attempted rape, and 43 cases of defilement. In response, the district has taken a step by convening its first-

ever conference involving key stakeholders in child welfare. The meeting brought together social workers, police officers, and legal professionals to collaborate on strategies to combat and address these violations. Council officials emphasised the importance of a united approach to safeguard children and prevent further incidents of abuse. “The purpose of the conference was to update each other on case status in the district, share experiences and challenges and map the way forward towards improving case management”, said Mr Nkwane. The chairperson said that just

like the rest of the country, the district was struggling with the scourge of gender-based violence. He urged councillors and the district leadership to rally constituents to unite and stand against GBV.. Mr Nkwane said gender office in partnership with Minister’s Fraternal also launched a week of prayer against GBV across schools and government departments. He said the initiative emphasised the need for collective spiritual action to address GBV, which had significant social and economic impact, particularly affecting women and children. **BOPA**

Boko presents awards to changemakers

GABORONE - President Advocate Duma Boko is in Cape Town, South Africa for the African Union-Continental African Water Investment Summit.

According to a press release from the Office of the President, the President is participating at the Summit in his capacity as the Chairperson of the Global Water Changemakers Awards where he presented the 2025 Presidential Global Water Changemakers Awards to six Heads of State and Government, in recognition for their contributions to water investment matters.

The initiative recognises global leaders who demonstrate commitment and leadership in advancing climate resilient water investments and promoting investment to support a more water secure world.

The summit, which started Wednesday and ends on Friday is hosted by South Africa in partnership with the

African Union Commission, the Continental Africa Water Investment Programme, the AU-AIP High-level Panel on Water Investments for Africa, and the African Union Development Agency.

Held under the theme: Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability, the summit has brought together African Heads of State, government ministers, investors and global leaders from the private sector and development institutions.

The release says the meeting will deliberate on Africa's pressing water security and infrastructure issues, including water investment priorities, sanitation services, cross border water governance systems and climate resilience.

President Boko is accompanied by Minister of Water and Human Settlement, Mr Onneetse Ramogapi and senior government officials. **BOPA**



President Advocate Duma Boko (left) being seen off to Cape Town, South Africa by Vice President Ndaba Gaolathe, (second left) Minister for State President, Mr Moeti Mohwasa and Permanent Secretary to the President, Ms Emma Peloetletse at Sir Seretse Khama International Airport in Gaborone on Tuesday. President Boko will participate at the African Union-Continental Africa Water Investment Programme (AU-AIP) Water Investment Summit from August 13 to 15. President Boko, who is the Chairperson of the Global Water Changemakers Awards presented the 2025 Presidential Global Water Changemakers Awards to six heads of State and Government, in recognition for their contributions to water investment matters.
Photo: Pheny Moalosi

Govt finalises National Artificial Intelligence Policy

By Ketshepile More

GABORONE - Government is working on finalising a National Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy, Assistant Minister of Communications and Innovation Mr Shawn Ntlhaile has said.

Speaking at a two-day Botswana Tech Summit held under the theme: Technology. People. Development, Mr Ntlhaile said this came after an AI Readiness Foundation initiative together with UNESCO, which verified Botswana's readiness to AI technologies in terms of methods, inclusivity, security, and alignment with the national development aspirations.

"Artificial intelligence has joined the ranks of great human inventions that have reshaped society. So, as a country, we are keen to harness the full potential of AI while safeguarding against its risks," said Mr Ntlhaile adding that government was supportive to home grown AI solutions tailored to Botswana's challenges, from livestock technology, climate modelling to indigenous language processing.

He further said government was actively shaping AI governance frameworks, promoting ethical use of data and drafting new policies on cyber security and digital services.

The assistant minister also said government was exploring the integration of AI in agriculture to predict cross-fields and manage foothills, piloting AI for health diagnostics in remote periods, and that soon more public services would be digitised; licensing to social welfare, with machine learning driving efficiency and responsiveness.

"We are fostering cross-sector collaboration between academia, industry, and government to unlock new discoveries and scale innovation, and recognise that with great technology comes responsibility.

Aligned with international standards, Mr Ntlhaile said Botswana was committed

to being a regional voice on responsible AI, collaborating with global partners to ensure that progress did not leave the values of Batswana behind.

He said the summit aligned with the vision and action pillars of the Transformation Agenda, directly supporting Botswana's push to reduce, organise and diversify into policy-based sectors.

He also said the summit acted as a catalyst for foreign direct investment and local private sector development.

Mr Ntlhaile further said the launch of Botswana Satellite recently in US was a symbol of the nation's aspiration to become Southern Africa's digital hub.

He said the Satellite launch was a declaration that Botswana was open to global innovators, researchers, and pioneers; that Botswana was building digital infrastructure necessary to host data centres, cloud service providers, and AI-driven enterprises that would shape the future.

"Technology is no longer an accessory to the economy, it is an engine. We are actively courting foreign direct investment in artificial intelligence, fintech, and cloud services. We are building an ecosystem where global innovators will find not only opportunity, but infrastructure, talent, and policy support," he said.

Vice President Ndaba Gaolathe said the future of Botswana was on online, "in the cloud, in the ambitions of young people, in the brilliance of our coders, our creators, our innovators."

He said the future of Botswana was in her capability to turn her digital potential into a national asset.

"We must now pivot, from sparkle to spectrum. From the limited brilliance of a single gem to the infinite possibilities of an interconnected, diversified economy driven by knowledge and innovation," he said.

As Botswana moves from

mineral resource based economy to a productive and technology diversification, he said Botswana Tech Summit gave a unique opportunity to explore how digital tools, data and innovation could be used to achieve the transformation.

Mr Gaolathe said government was forging a Botswana that was greener, healthier, and digitally empowered and a nation in full alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Moreover, he said Botswana should localise and scale on lessons and aspirations from countries such as Estonia, Rwanda, Kenya and India who used technology to transform their economies, even under difficult circumstances than Botswana.

Nevertheless, he said through the SmartBots programme, Botswana was already taking steps.

"Through this programme, government was deploying high-speed internet infrastructure to cover more than 80 per cent of our population. But access alone is not enough, we must ensure that every Motswana, regardless of where they live, can use that access to create value," Mr Gaolathe said.

He said government's vision was to build an inclusive digital economy that created opportunity, enhances efficiency, and reduced inequality; with policies geared toward attracting investment into fintech, agritech, clean energy, health tech and creative industries.

To achieve this, he said, government was seeking strategic and transformative values-aligned partnerships with companies such as Microsoft, Huawei, AfriLabs, Y-Combinator, and the African Fintech Network to support startup ecosystem; whilst engaging 'our SADC neighbours and regional institutions to develop shared digital policies, common data protection standards and collaborative innovation programmes.' **BOPA**

Youth key development partners in SDGs

By Benita Magopane

GABORONE - The youth are the positive force in driving sustainable development.

Giving the keynote address, during the International Youth Day celebrations on Tuesday, Minister of Youth and Gender Ms Lesego Chombo underscored the importance of ensuring young people had space to build their own platforms in clean energy, digital skills training, agri-tech, and sexual health education.

She said it was time to engage them as strategic partners, as they bring creativity, insight and

strong community ties that help bridge the gap between policy and practice.

Ms Chombo called for the integration of youth priorities into local strategies, along with fostering partnerships and collaboration with youth organisations.

"We can transform their ideas into impactful and long-lasting solutions," she said, urging government entities, civil society, the private sector, international agencies and development partners to move from tokenism to tangible support, and from listening to implementing youth-led solutions.

She assured the public that as her ministry reviews the National Youth Policy of Botswana, it would include the necessary platforms to enable young people to fully unleash their potential and actively participate in the national development process.

"It is important to appreciate and acknowledge that when the youth are rightly empowered, communities flourish and economies thrive," she added.

According to the 2022 Population and Housing Census, Botswana's youth population (ages 15-35) stands at 34.9 per cent, comprising 49.2 per cent males and 50.8 per cent females and over 60 per cent of Botswana's residents are under the age of 35. **BOPA**

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Ministry strategise to provide medical commodities

GABORONE - Ministry of Health has resorted to adopting strategic steps, such as reprioritising to redirect funds where possible to allow provision of medical commodities.

Answering a question in Parliament, Minister Dr Stephen Modise therefore called for community involvement and participation on how they would equitably distribute health care services across the entire country.

“I wish to reiterate once again my plea that we put our collective efforts towards finding a solution to this crisis of medicinal shortage,” he pleaded.

Addressing health care services challenges in Kgatleng East constituency, Dr Modise said the constituency’s drug availability was at 69.7 per cent while the Central Medical Stores (CMS) was at 55 per cent against a national target of 97 per cent.

He said shortage of drugs was attributed to low stock levels at CMS, mainly due to financial constraints.

Dr Modise further said Kgatleng East had a total number of nine health facilities, comprising of three clinics and six health posts.

He said there was one 24-hour facility at Oodi with maternity and staff complement of about 21 nurses, while other clinics had at least five to seven nurses and the health posts had at least two nurses each and two resident doctors based in Mathubudukwane and Oodi.

The minister noted that those health workers were part of the personnel transferred from the

Ministry of Health as part of the relocation exercise.

He added that mobile stop visits in the area were conducted on monthly basis with a current coverage of 90 per cent.

He further said assessments were conducted regularly and feedback given to the community in different platforms such as kgotla meetings and facility health talks.

Through such adopted efforts, he said the community could expect to witness visual and measurable improvements in health services when more resources were availed and they would also be community outreach services availed.

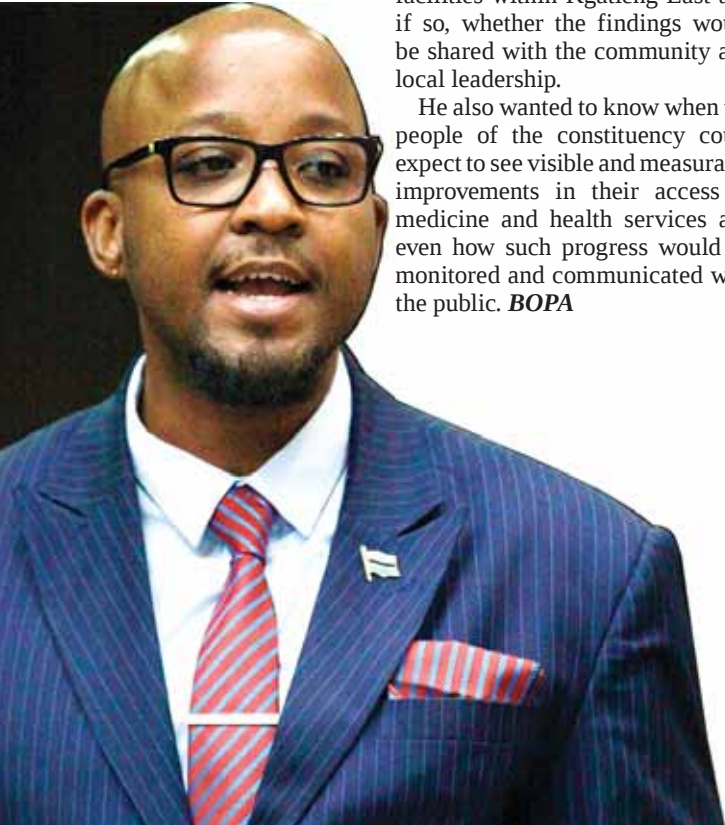
Dr Modise was responding to the MP for Kgatleng East, Mr Mabuse Pule, who had asked the minister to provide a detailed timely update on specific measures taken to improve the quality and reliability of health care services in the constituency and further state the current availability of essential medications in clinics and health posts throughout the constituency.

He also asked what the ministry had identified as key reasons behind recurring medicine shortages in clinics and health posts and if the constraints were currently being addressed.

Mr Pule further asked what specific interventions was the ministry implementing to improve access to health care in the constituency including staffing, equipment upgrade and mobile health services.

Moreover, he asked whether the ministry had conducted any recent needs assessments in the health facilities within Kgatleng East and if so, whether the findings would be shared with the community and local leadership.

He also wanted to know when the people of the constituency could expect to see visible and measurable improvements in their access to medicine and health services and even how such progress would be monitored and communicated with the public. **BOPA**



Dr Stephen Modise

Government to upgrade Maun to city

GABORONE - Following requests from other councils to upgrade certain villages to towns, government has acceded to the request to upgrade Maun to a city.

This was revealed by Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Mr Ketlhalefile Motshegwa when responding to a question in Parliament on Tuesday.

He said the upgrading exercise commenced with consultations by the local authority on May to pave way for inclusive consultations with all stakeholders and members of the community.

The minister said the initial projected timelines were to complete the consultation phase, which formed the baseline expected by August, but would be subjected to review due to other overlapping activities.

He said the upgrading of a village to a town or city was work in progress whose speed would be determined by the availability of all the needed resources during the planning processes.

Mr Motshegwa further explained that for Maun to attain full international city recognition, more resources would be needed, therefore it would also be important to take into consideration the current fiscal situation.

Highlighting why government acceded to the request, he said the current level of infrastructure development in Maun qualified it to be a city as per the Botswana National Spatial Plan (NSP) 2036 and owing to its unique ecological attributes.

He said the Maun Development Plan 2023-2043, which was aligned to the NSP 2036, would promote and capitalise on the local tourism potential and called for a deliberate intention to plan and govern it as a full tourism destination.

He said the spatial plans emphasised on the uniqueness of Maun and assigned it to high level of national urban status in the form of a tourism city as opposed to the current city model of Gaborone and Francistown.

He further said the National Spatial Plan envisioned Maun as the capital of the western part of the country as it was strategically located to form part of the green

preserve and serve as a basis for thriving sustainable world class tourism-based economy.

Member of Parliament for Maun North and also the Leader of Opposition, Mr Dumelang Saleshando had asked the minister to state if decisions to turn Maun into a city had been made and if the answer was in the affirmative, he should state the timeline within which, this would be achieved.

Mr Saleshando also asked if the infrastructure and resources required for this development would be achieved within the set timeline and if the city would be in any way modelled differently from the two other existing cities. **BOPA**



Maun North MP, Mr Dumelang Saleshando had asked Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs to state if decisions to turn Maun into a city had been made.

Fifteen security companies face licence cancellation

GABORONE - Fifteen security companies face licence cancellations due to failure to pay wages despite issuance of settlements and default agreements.

Minister for State President, Mr Moeti Mohwasa, who was responding to a parliamentary question on Tuesday, said P821,144.99 was owed to 171 employees.

Reasons for failure to pay wages, Mr Mohwasa said included under quoting for services tendering and win due to the least cost model of selection, following which they would be unable to sustain the wage bill. He also said companies had experienced delayed payments by procuring entities.

He further said there was mismanagement of finances among some of the security companies as they still failed to pay employees even upon payments by procuring entities.

“This cannot be acceptable and my ministry would continue to take serious action where the law has been broken,” he said.

He noted that the ministry had facilitated payments for employees by getting companies to commit to payment plans, which had assisted employees. Where the directors failed to honour their obligations as per the payment plans, he said the process to suspend and cessation of the licence would be imposed.

However, he cautioned that

cancellation of a private security service licence did not dissolve the affected companies. He said security companies as legal entities, still existed and were accountable for the accrued debts even upon their cancellation of their operational licences.

The minister further alluded that labour disputes such as payment disputes were resolved through existing disputes resolution mechanism such as negotiations, mediation and the labour courts.

The minister highlighted that the Private Security Services Act did not interfere with the process of the Industrial Court, thus proving that affected companies were duty bound to pay employees even upon their licence cancellations.

Tati East legislator, Mr

Tlhabologo Furniture had asked the minister to state the number of security companies whose licenses were cancelled due to failure to pay wages, coupled with reasons for the failure to pay wages by the companies.

He also asked about the total number of employees affected by the cancellation and the total amount of monies owned.

Mr Furniture further asked how the ministry intended to assist the affected employees after closing the companies to recover their wage benefits since the companies do not exist.

He also asked why the ministry did not allow the Industrial Court to apply its process of attaching and selling the companies properties to pay employees. **BOPA**



Mr Tlhabologo Furniture



Acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti said the Cannabis Bill, which aimed at governing the cultivation, production, storage, distribution, import and export of cannabis strictly for medicinal, scientific, research and industrial purposes, marked a significant policy shift in the country’s drug control landscape.

‘Management, promotion of digital services to be enhanced’

By Lorato Gaofise

GABORONE - The Digital Service Bill, 2025, (Bill No. 23 of 2025) is expected to provide for the regulation of digital services, enhance the management and promotion of digital services and processes.

It will also establish the Digital Services Authority in Botswana to accelerate the country’s digital transformation agenda.

The Minister of Communications and Innovation, Mr David Tshere presented the Bill before Parliament on Tuesday under a certificate of urgency.

Presenting the Bill for the second reading, Mr Tshere said once the Digital Services Authority was established, it would be responsible for the coordination and implementation of the country’s digital transformation agenda

He said the authority would also facilitate the development of quality standards, enforcement of interoperability of infrastructure and systems and universal access to digital services by citizens of Botswana.

The minister said Part one of the Bill, published on August 8, provided the definition of terms used in the law. “This law will apply both for public and private bodies that provides digital services and that carries out their businesses into, or from Botswana, irrespective of their physical location from which their activity was carried out,” he said.

He said the part also provided that the law shall not apply to the provision of digital services by, and on behalf of the state to the extent necessary, where it involved national security, defence or public safety. Minister Tshere said the

Second part of the Bill provided for a guiding principle for the provision of digital services, which included the need to focus digital services on the need of the public and businesses in the delivery of services.

He said it was also for the need to drive digital transformation through the development and utilisation of innovative design and integrated business processes, which were streamlined, collaborative and public-focused for enhancing service delivery.

The minister said Part three provided for the establishment of Digital Services Authority, as a public office governed by the laws regulating the public service.

Once established, he said the authority would be headed by the Digital Services Director General, who shall be responsible for the supervision of day-to-day affairs and the administration of the authority, enhancing the authority or ensuring that the authority carries out the functions and duties placed unto it in terms of this Act.

Furthermore, in Part four, the minister said the Bill provided for how digital services were to be regulated in terms of the law, as well as for the obligation on public and private bodies to develop accessible digital platforms for the provision of digital services.

Mr Tshere said it was also for the establishment of national standards, architecture blueprint and interoperability protocols for each infrastructure element for use by public and private bodies to enhance secure communication online, verify identities online and ensure data integrity.

“The part further places an obligation on the ministry responsible for national registration

to develop a digital platform to enable the verification of identities online, by passing a unique identifiable number to natural persons,” he said.

He said the part further provided that where any law required a payment to be made, or received, the requirement of the law was fulfilled if payment was made or received by secure electronic means.

Part five, he said provided for the authority to develop and coordinate national open data policy and for the public body to publish such data assets as a machine-readable and electronic formats.

He said the part further provided that the authority shall develop and maintain an enterprise data inventory in order to develop a clear, comprehensive understanding of the data assets in the possession of the body.

In Part six, Minister Tshere said the Bill provided that a public and private body shall ensure that the security measures and safeguards were embedded and adhered to in the provision of digital services in line with the relevant laws and policies.

He also noted that Part seven of the Bill provided for miscellaneous provisions, including a clause, which empowered the authority to conduct periodical audits on public and private bodies to ensure compliance with standards set up by the authority.

“The part further provides for the offenses and penalties, for any contravention of the provisions of this law, and a transitional arrangement that provides for a grace period of 24 months for public and private bodies to meet the requirement set by the law,” he added. **BOPA**

Bill shift in government stance on cannabis

By Lesedi Thatayamodimo

GABORONE - The tabling of the Cannabis Bill, 2025 (Bill No. 25 of 2025) before Parliament is a landmark move set to reshape Botswana’s regulatory approach to cannabis.

Presenting the Bill in Parliament on Tuesday, the acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti said the bill, which aimed to tightly govern the cultivation, production, storage, distribution, import and export of cannabis strictly for medicinal, scientific, research and industrial purposes, marked a significant policy shift in the country’s drug control landscape.

Dr Dikoloti emphasised the government’s commitment to creating a structured and secure framework that aligned with international drug control standards while unlocking potential economic and scientific benefits.

At the heart of the bill, he said, was the creation of the National Cannabis Control Authority, a new statutory body that would oversee licensing, compliance and regulation of all cannabis-related activities.

He said the authority would serve as the central node for monitoring and enforcing security measures surrounding the industry, ensuring that cannabis use remained confined to legal and regulated contexts.

“The authority will ensure transparency and accountability in the issuance of licenses for cultivation and use of cannabis for specified purposes, while also putting in place stringent controls to prevent abuse or diversion into illicit channels,” Dr Dikoloti said.

He said the Cannabis Bill also aimed to domesticate Botswana’s obligations under the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, a key international treaty that regulated narcotic drugs and aimed to prevent their misuse.

Dr Dikoloti said by incorporating those standards into domestic law, Botswana sought to position itself as a responsible player on the global stage, ensuring that any cannabis-related activity remained aligned with the international framework.

Among its provisions, Dr Dikoloti said the Bill outlined robust security protocols for all entities engaged in the cannabis value chain, including background checks, secure facilities, transport controls and stringent reporting requirements.

He explained that only licensed individuals or institutions would be allowed to handle cannabis and any breach of the conditions set forth by the authority could result in heavy penalties, including revocation of licenses and potential criminal prosecution.

The acting minister therefore

called for the Bill to be adopted saying, it would pave the way for a controlled but potentially lucrative medicinal and industrial cannabis sector in Botswana.

He said the Bill signaled a clear shift in the government’s stance on cannabis, prioritising regulation and innovation while maintaining strict public safety and international compliance.

Dr Dikoloti added that the Bill spoke to regulatory framework board of authority that would be the governing body to address crop development and production, agricultural research, law, pharmaceutical industry, medicine, economics, business, human resources management and information and communication technology.

While some lawmakers have welcomed the Bill as a progressive move with economic and scientific benefits, others have called for cautious deliberation, citing concerns over potential social and regulatory challenges.

Tswapong South MP, Dr Kesitegile Gobotswang, expressed concern about lack of transparency on the stance, describing it as alarming that the government continued to avoid discussing the issue of cannabis in public forums.

He noted that many Batswana misunderstood the subject, often assuming cannabis would be freely and irresponsibly available.

Dr Gobotswang emphasised the need for widespread public education, saying the matter should be openly discussed so that citizens could understand government’s intentions.

He stated that the cannabis programme should be presented as a high-value initiative, similar to diamonds that were not meant for everyone.

Dr Gobotswang also added that instead of focusing on industrial hemp and cannabis, the minister should prioritise horticulture and food production for the country, suggesting other high-value crops such as sunflower and cotton to be considered as well.

Ghanzi South MP, Mr Motsamai Motsamai supported the Bill, stating that as leaders, they were in a difficult situation marked by high unemployment.

He argued that the initiative could bring in much-needed revenue to help the country sustain itself.

Mr Motsamai said the cannabis industry could address unemployment and the shortage of medicine by creating production facilities that hire locals.

He noted that Botswana was lagging behind countries like Lesotho and Malawi, which were already ahead in that space.

Mr Motsamai highlighted the multiple uses of hemp, including in the production of clothing, lotions, and other product. **BOPA**

Lobatse tannery project on track

By Calviniah Kgautlhe

LOBATSE - In line with the Lobatse Town Council vision of rendering effective governance for improved and sustainable community livelihoods, Lobatse town mayor, Mr Aron Ganakgomo says the Lobatse tannery revitalisation project is progressing well and is expected to be complete by December, to open up employment opportunities. Presenting a strategic roadmap during a Botswana Television district council's interview on Monday, Mayor Ganakgomo said in order to boost the Lobatse's economy and create employment opportunities, the council promoted a private sector led economy.

He said the Botswana Meat Commission (BMC) was in the process of revitalising and operationalising the Lobatse tannery project, which included the refurbishment of the tannery to process hides and an effluent treatment plant expected to be completed by the end of the year. Mr Ganakgomo said BMC diversified to broaden its product portfolio through construction of a new meat value addition and processing plant, to include other value chains anticipated to be operational by June next year.

He said land servicing remained a challenge which caused slow land allocation as well as attracting investors.

Nonetheless, Mr Ganakgomo underscored that Lobatse had great potential to develop as it was strategically positioned on key economic routes; A1 Road and A2 Road along the Trans Kalahari Corridor and it was closer to two commercial borders; Pioneer Border Gate and Ramatlabama border, which placed it in a better position for facilitation of robust economic trade.

The mayor said currently, Lobatse was not economically vibrant hence the need to revitalise it, to create employment opportunities in the manufacturing sector especially for the youth.

"We want to position Lobatse as a cultural heritage tourism destination through operationalisation of our monuments and we do so through

partnerships. We have already started and are in partnership with the Ukraine Embassy and Sweden," he said.

He explained that heritage tourism would serve to attract visitors and generate revenue for development of the local economy.

Additionally, he said Lobatse played a meaningful role in the liberation struggle during the apartheid regime by bringing political stability in the Southern African region where icons such as the late South Africa president Nelson Mandela, and former president of Mozambique Samora Machel had sought refuge during such times.

He underscored that Lobatse was a town of many firsts hence

the need to develop its heritage sites to attract domestic and foreign investment.

The mayor noted that Lobatse was designated as a meat Special Economic Zone, with the vision of turning it into a meat and leather city and therefore, plans were underway to realise this critical element which was anticipated to economically transform Lobatse.

Additionally, he said the council should identify strategic industry development partners to work with as well as foster local economic participation and promote inclusivity.

Mr Ganakgomo said that there were numerous opportunities in different sectors which presented opportunities for the youth to

participate, adding that the youth and the business community could harness the value chains of the tannery and other upcoming projects.

Meanwhile, he said the environment for doing business was not so conducive as some companies folded due to low profit though the council continued to find ways of facilitating businesses, to ensure that they were profitable and remained anchored at Lobatse.

On other issues he said, akin to any other town, they faced challenges of taking services to the people due to resource constraints as such they have resorted to forming formidable business partnerships, encourage shared responsibility and have taken a

decision to hold a round table with the business community to discuss challenges faced and how they could collectively deal with them.

He said they have drawn a three-year roadmap in line with Ministry of Local Government and Traditional Affairs Decentralisation Policy to seamlessly facilitate the community, adding that the council shall employ robust revenue maximisation strategy for financial sustainability,

Lack of employment, according to Mr Ganakgomo remained a challenge hence the need to create job opportunities adding that the council was committed to serving the people through prioritising their needs and expectations into government plans. **BOPA**



Lobatse Town Mayor Mr Aron Ganakgomo laid the council roadmap in an interview with Botswana Television on Monday where he promised a people-centred approach in service delivery.

Kenya central bank cuts rate to spur economic activity

NAIROBI - The Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) on Tuesday reduced its benchmark lending rate to 9.5 per cent from 9.75 per cent to stimulate economic activity and boost private-sector lending in the country.

The bank's Governor Kamau Thugge, who chaired the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting, said there was room for further monetary easing to reinforce earlier measures aimed at expanding bank credit to the private sector and supporting growth, while keeping inflation expectations anchored and the exchange rate stable.

"Growth in credit to key sectors of the economy, particularly manufacturing, trade, building and construction, and consumer durables, improved in June and July," Thugge said in a statement released in Nairobi, Kenya's capital.

The MPC noted that central banks in major economies were also lowering interest rates, albeit at a more cautious and uneven pace, depending on inflation and growth prospects.

Kenya's overall inflation rose to 4.1 per cent in July from 3.8 per cent in June, remaining below the 5.0 per cent mid-point of the target range, Thugge said.

The apex bank said that it would closely monitor the impact of the rate cut and developments in the global and domestic economy, and stood ready to take further action in line with its mandate. **Xinhua**

Consumer fair major economic catalyst

By Gontle Merafhe

GABORONE - The annual Botswana Consumer Fair, which is expected to take place from August 23 to 31, is a major economic catalyst with positive effects in the transport, hospitality, retail and creative sectors.

Addressing the media Tuesday in Gaborone, Fairgrounds Holdings chief executive officer, Ms Gorata Gabaraane said through the fair, business sales, market reach and

partnerships would be improved as it enhanced visibility and growth opportunities for SMMEs and entrepreneurs, attracted local and international participants, earned foreign exchange and strengthened Botswana's trade offer.

She also said the fair generated short and long-term employment since about 200 temporary staff and multiple service providers would be engaged for a period over the seven days.

Ms Gabaraane further said

with local and international participants, the fair demonstrated Botswana's capacity to innovate, compete and lead the global stage.

Fair and exhibitions manager, Mr Ontlametse Ramokgalo said they had two categories of exhibitors and the stall prices were determined by space and place, with international exhibitors paying between P8,000 to P12,000.

Mr Ramokgalo said they expected exhibitors to bring

diversity, variety and inclusion sine 11 countries would be represented at the fair.

He said they had introduced Business to Business masterclass for the 2025 exhibition, to enhance training.

Mr Ramokgalo said they had partnered with Webtickets Botswana outlets, for patrons to buy tickets at Spar shops, selected Choppies supermarkets in Selebi Phikwe, Jwaneng, Tati, Francistown and Lobatse. **BOPA**

Court convicts cash-in-transit robbers

By Bonang Masolotatse

GABORONE - Four men charged with robbing a G4S Security cash-in-transit van at Turnrite Mall and stealing P2.3 million have been found guilty. Mothusi Matomela, Thapelo Lekobe, Mzwandile Mazibuko, and Ntholephi Elliot Ntshalintshali were convicted by Magistrate Goabaone Lesedi-Rammapudi of the Broadhurst Magistrate Court on Tuesday.

They will appear before the same magistrate on August 28 for mitigation.

During mitigation, Magistrate Lesedi-Rammapudi said the court would grant them an opportunity to address the court on exceptional extenuating circumstances,

considering the seriousness of the offense.

“On the day of mitigation, you are informed that you have the right to address the court on exceptional extenuating circumstances,” Magistrate Lesedi-Rammapudi said.

The magistrate also ordered the investigating officer to present the four convicts persons to the police for fingerprinting to assist the court in determining any previous convictions.

She also ordered the prosecution to serve the defence team with a copy of the case record within three days of receipt and further ordered that the four be remanded in custody.

Prior to the guilty verdict, Magistrate Lesedi-Rammapudi

said the state had proven its case beyond reasonable doubt on all counts of including robbery, unlawful possession of



Mothusi Matomela (left), Thapelo Lekobe (second left), Mzwandile Mazibuko (second right) and Ntholephi Elliot Ntshalintshali have been found guilty of robbing a G4S security cash-in-transit van at Turnrite Mall and stealing P2.3 million. Photo: Teko Letsholo

firearms, unlawful possession of ammunition, possession of goods stolen outside the country, as well as illegal entry into the country which only affected Mazibuko and Ntshalintshali.

“The state has proven its case beyond reasonable doubt and the court returns a verdict of guilty on each of the five counts,” she said, noting that the court rejected the alibis raised by each convict.

The first accused, Matomela, stated in his defense that he was arrested near Lamila Lodge in Mogoditshane, claiming he was being assisted by his friend, Tebogo Tsekane, to tow his vehicle from area near Julia Molefhe Clinic to Solomon Dihutso Primary School, adding that he had no involvement in the Turnrite Mall crime.

Lekobe also claimed he was mistakenly arrested, adding that he was apprehended shortly after getting off a combi in Mogoditshane to search for a car part, having travelled from Mmadinare to Gaborone for the part. His friend, Emmanuel Ikanyeng supported Lekobe’s version, telling the court that Lekobe was arrested in front of him near Lamila Lodge and further said they had spoken throughout the day.

Mazibuko and Ntshalintshali also denied any involvement in the crime, telling the court that they were arrested while waiting for a taxi after consulting a traditional doctor in Mogoditshane, on behalf of their ill grandfather back in South Africa.

The duo further claimed that they had entered the country legally and their passports were seized by the police during arrest. **BOPA**

Attorney calls for prompt assessments

By Gaolethoo Kgatitswe

MAUN - A defence attorney says prolonged psychological assessments are causing psychological stress on his client.

Therefore, Mr Joseph Carter pleaded with court to promptly conclude assessments and reports be shared with the defence to facilitate the adjournment of the matter of his client, 23-year-old Gontlemang Segolodi of Maun.

Segolodi, who appeared before Magistrate Gofaone Mosweu of Maun Magistrate Court for a status hearing, faces terrorism-related charges.

“My client has been subjected to these assessments for over six months and it is now complicating

his daily living. Everything should be completed as soon as possible and all reports be shared by the next hearing,” he said.

He questioned the detainment of his client without a charge arguing that suspects should only be detained after being formally charged hence the request for a detailed report outlining events from the onset.

For his part, Assistant director of public prosecution and head of international cooperation and cybercrime unit, Ms Merapelo Mokgosi pleaded with court to consolidate the case files, which was originally registered under case number 47, however due to miscommunication the file was mistakenly registered as a new

matter under a different number.

“Information contained in file number 47 will assist the matter as it is captured in the previous file since the psychological reports were submitted under the new file which is a continuation from the previous proceedings,” she said.

The prosecution also highlighted in response to the defence that section 15 of Botswana’s terrorism laws allowed for the arrest of suspects without formal charges in cases involving serious offenses.

She stressed the importance of a proper investigation in cases like the one where the matter carried heavy sentences like life imprisonment or even a death sentence.

“This matter carries a potential

life or death sentence, so court should allow all due process to ensure that justice is served,” she said.

Ms Mokgosi notified court that the case would be committed to the high court once investigations were complete.

Magistrate Mosweu informed both parties that the two files on the matter before court had been consolidated and the new file was withdrawn.

Segolodi was arrested in connection with alleged terrorism-related activities last year stemming from his controversial post on X in November 2024.

The matter is set for another status hearing on September 15. **BOPA**

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BDP initiates reconciliation efforts

By Ndingililo Gaoswediwe

GABORONE - The Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) has launched a reconciliation initiative, which on August 23 will see a delegation meet with Kgosi Khama IV, his uncles, and village elders in Serowe.

This follows the successful response to the party's request for a meeting.

During a press conference on Tuesday in Gaborone, BDP Secretary General, Mr Kentse Rammidi clarified that the meeting would take place at the Institute of Health Sciences hall to ensure legal compliance.

He said the move to hold discussions at a different place other than the Kgotla without party regalia was to respect traditional customs and government protocols.

Mr Rammidi explained that the decision came after new party leadership reflected on past events and recognised that certain actions had not been handled appropriately.

He recounted that when tensions arose between the government and Kgosi Khama IV, Bangwato sought to convene a meeting at the Kgotla to resolve the issues. However, their request was denied.

He stressed that the Kgotla was a cornerstone of democracy, serving as a forum for resolving disputes and fostering reconciliation.

Furthermore, he stated that the party had chosen to apologise to Kgosi Khama IV, noting that he had not pursued legal action regarding the matter.

While some cases are already before the courts, Mr Rammidi remained confident that justice would be served.

He added that BDP president Mr Mpho Balopi has already met with the Matsheka family and Kgosi Mosadi of Gamalete to extend apologies.

Addressing other concerns, Mr Rammidi urged the media

to verify their reports, warning against spreading unfounded stories that could be exaggerated and harm individuals and their families. He cautioned that such misinformation had, in some countries, led to mob justice.

Mr Rammidi also clarified that the forensic audit was not targeted solely at BDP members but was intended to identify and assess corruption across government departments.

He urged the public to refrain from finger-pointing and accusations, stressing that justice must take its course, and that BDP remained adamant that the audit was conducted professionally. **BOPA**



BDP members, Messrs Tshepo Makgalemele (left) and Kentse Rammidi at a press briefing in Gaborone on Tuesday. The party's secretary general Mr Rammidi informed the media that they had launched a reconciliation initiative after reflecting on the past events and recognised that certain actions had not been handled appropriately. Photo: Felicity Male

BoFiNet hands over refurbished computer lab

Thuso Kgakatsi

MAAKE - Chief Education Officer at Hukuntsi Sub-Region, Ms Kankane Sephiri has expressed gratitude to Botswana Fiber Network (BoFiNet) for their donation to Maitshoko Primary School, describing it as a noble gesture.

Ms Sephiri remarked at a hand over ceremony in Maake recently, where BoFiNet refurbished the school's computer laboratory at the tune of P120,000.

The hand over of the refurbished facility was made alongside the donation of 10 laptops, 8 tablets, 15 chairs, a printer, and cyber security awareness learning materials for the school library.

"This initiative will go a long way in helping the school overcome shortage of learning materials in the district," Ms Sephiri said.

She noted that the assistance would empower teachers to deliver e-learning, a key focus of the government's education strategy.

Highlighting the impact of ICT in teaching, Ms Sephiri

cited promising results already witnessed at Ngwatle Primary School. She commended BoFiNet for stepping up to adopt Maitshoko Primary School and committing to monitor the school's progress, noting that such support would inspire both educators and learners to strive for excellence.

"As the world embraces digitalisation, this timely intervention prepares our learners for the 21st century and a future where examinations will be computerised," she added.

Ms Sephiri also acknowledged the steady improvement in the school's academic performance over the years, attributing it to the dedication of teachers, learners, and the unwavering support of parents.

BoFiNet acting Chief Executive Officer Mr Keabetswe Segole said the donation was part of the company's efforts to bridge the digital divide between urban and rural schools.

"We learned that the school did not have a functioning computer lab, which deprived learners of vital ICT skills. Digital skills are no longer a privilege but a basic

necessity to thrive in today's world," Mr Segole said.

He explained that BoFiNet, which contributed to the Universal Access and Service Fund (UASF) through a levy imposed by the Botswana Communications Regulatory Authority (BOCRA), was collaborating with both BOCRA and UASF to ensure the school's internet connectivity met its needs.

"The donation follows a needs assessment that began six months ago, when the Ministry of Communications and Innovation selected Hukuntsi as host for the World Telecommunications & Information Society Day commemorations.

This initiative helped identify Maitshoko Primary as one of the most school in need of ICT support," he said.

Mr Segole stressed the importance of providing learners in Maake with the same quality of education as their urban counterparts.

"Children in Maake and surrounding areas deserve the chance to become computer engineers, AI specialists, and

digital entrepreneurs," he said.

He also praised the school's history of academic excellence.

Reaffirming BoFiNet's commitment to connect every Motswana to reliable and affordable ICT services, Mr Segole highlighted the company's achievement of nearly 90 per cent national broadband coverage, with a goal of reaching 100 per cent by 2028.

Providing further insight into the school's progress, Deputy School Head Mr Gaolathe Phuthogo shared that Maitshoko primary currently had an enrollment of 123 students.

He noted that since the school's establishment in 1998, performance, particularly in the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE), had been below expectations but had steadily improved in recent years.

"In 2021, the school achieved a pass rate of 46.67 per cent, followed by 31.33 per cent in 2022. However, the performance then significantly improved to 69.23 per cent in 2023 and remained steady at 69 per cent in 2024," Mr Phuthogo said. **BOPA**

Police investigate fire at Home Affairs office in Germiston

JOHANNESBURG

The office of South Africa's Department of Home Affairs in Germiston, Ekurhuleni, was set ablaze on Tuesday morning. The City of Ekurhuleni said the blaze broke out while officials were carrying out an eviction operation at nearby low-cost houses that were reportedly occupied illegally.

Ekurhuleni's Disaster and Emergency Management Service contained the blaze on the second floor of the two-story building and extinguished it before it could spread.

"Firefighters were forced to make entry to locked areas to secure the premises. No injuries have been reported at this time,"

said Phakamile Mbengashe, head of communication, marketing, and tourism at the City of Ekurhuleni. He said the cause of the fire remained undetected for now, though arson was suspected.

Mbengashe urged people to remain calm. Since the fire is suspected to have been started by protesters evicted from a nearby complex, he emphasised that people with complaints must channel them through peaceful and lawful channels.

Minister of Home Affairs Leon Schreiber later confirmed the fire on the social media platform X. He said authorities are working with the police to gather evidence to ensure the arrest and conviction of suspects. **Xinhua**



BoFiNet acting chief executive officer Mr Keabetswe Segole (left) and other dignitaries during the hand over of a refurbished computer laboratory to Maitshoko Primary School in Maake recently. Mr Segole said the donation was part of the company's efforts to bridge the digital divide between urban and rural schools. Photo: Thuso Kgakatsi



Mookamela mapodisi a Lobatse, Superintendent Boitshepho Kaisara a re ba mo patlong ya monna mongwe wa Gopong yo go belaelwang a itseetse dikobo ka dikgoka mo mosetsaneng mongwe wa motse oo ka letsatsi la Tshipi. Senepe: Calviniah Kgautlhe

Mmelaelwa o ineile naga

Ka Calviniah Kgautlhe

LOBATSE - Mapodisi a Lobatse a tlhotlhomisa tiragalo e mo go yone mme wa dingwaga tse masome a mabedi le bongwe a thubeditsweng ke monna wa dingwaga tse masome a mabedi le boferabobedi yo a kileng a bo a ratana le ene kwa Gopong gaufi le Lobatse.

Fa a bua mo potsolotsong le BOPA ka Mosupologo, mookamela mapodisi a Lobatse Superintendent Boitshepho Kaisara a re mapodisi ba amogetse pego eo ka Tshipi mo motshegareng, morago ga gore mme yoo a ikuele, a bolela fa mmelaelwa a itseetse dikobo ka dikgoka mo go ene ntle le tumalano.

Supt Kaisara a re mme yoo o tlhalositse fa mmelaelwa a ne a mo kukunela bosigogare kwa lelwapeng la gagwe mme a feta

a mo gogela kwa a nnang teng kwa a fetileng a itseela dikobo ka dikgoka a bo a tsena ka lenga la seloko.

A re e ne ya re morago ga go amogela pego, mapodisi a ragogela kwa lelwapeng la tiragalo, go batla mmelaelwa, mme ba fitlhela a ineile naga.

Supt Kaisara a re ditlhotlhomiso tsa mapodisi di santse di tswelletse, mme ba mo patlong ya mmelaelwa ka jalo setshaba se kopiwa gore ope yo o ka utlwalelang rre yoo, a itsise mapodisi a a gaufi.

One gape arotloetsa mmelaelwa gore a ipege kwa mapodising go ba thusa ka ditlhotlhomiso.

A supa jalo gore mapodisi ba tshwentswe ke go golela pele ga dikgang tsa kgokgontsho ya bong le dikgang tsa mofuta o, tse mo go tsone batho ba ba kileng ba bo ba ratana, fa ba sena go kgaogana go nne le dikgang tsa thubetso.

Ka jalo o ne a rotloetsa batho go ikgapha mo dikgannyeng tsa mofuta o. **BOPA**

Go sha ga ntlo go baka leso la mo-na-le bogole

Ka Kedirebofe Pelontle

GUMARE - Mookamela mapodisi a Shakawe Superintendent Ogototse Tampa a re o tshwentswe ke ditiragalo tsa molelo tse di tswelletseng ka go kekelala mo kgaolong ya gagwe.

O buile se, morago ga tiragalo e mo go yone monna wa dingwaga tse di masome a supa le boraro a shetseng mo ntlong kwa kgotleng ya Phachanga kwa Shakawe.

Mo potsolotsong le BOPA, Supt Tampa o tlhalositse fa ba sepodisi ba ne ba begelwa ke rre mongwe,

Ka Portia Rapitsenyane

PALAPYE - Mapodisi a Palapye a ikuela mo setshabeng go ba batlisa borre bangwe ba erileng ka Labotlhano wa beke e e fetileng ba thukhutha rre mongwe yo o dirang e le ngaka kwa Hirui Medical Centre kwa Palapye dilwana tsa madi a a ka tshwarang P11 200 le madi a a kana ka P3 000.

Mogolwane wa mapodisi kwa Palapye, Superintendent Kodziba Phuluweni a re rre yoo, o ne a tsenelelwa ke banna ba le bane mo ntlong bosigo kwa a nnang teng kwa Extension 4, ba ipipile difatlhego.

A re bone joo, bo ne bo ipapanne ka sengwe se se lebegang e le tlhobolo le thobane mme ba mmofa diatla ka mogala, ba mmaya kwa ntlwaneng ya boitiketso mme ba mo amoga dilwana tsa gagwe, ya re morago ba inaya naga.

Supt Phuluweni a re banna bao ba ne ba amoga rre yoo megala ya letheke e le mebedi ya madi a a ka tshwarang P4 200, laptop ya madi a a kana ka P7 000 le P3 000.

A re morago ga tiragalo eo, rre yoo o ne a kgona go ipofolola

mme a leletsa ba sepodisi ba ba neng ba tsiboga.

Bone joo, ga bo ise bo tshwarwe mme mapodisi ba santse ba le mo patlong ya bone ka jalo, ba kopa setshaba go ba thusa.

Supt Phuluweni o ne gape a supa matshwenyego ka mafelo a dino a a sa tswalweng ka nako a supa fa go le gantsi go felela go nna le ditiragalo tse di ngomolang pelo ka batho ba felela ba itshiele phetelela fa mo dinakong tse dingwe go felela go baka borukutlhi.

O ne a fa sekai ka tiragalo ya polao e e neng ya diragala bosheng kwa masimong a Makoro gaufi le Palapye, fa rre mongwe wa dingwaga tse 51 yo o tlholegang kwa Dukwi, a ne a tlhabiwa ke rre wa dingwaga tse 29 wa Lecheng ka sengwe se se bogale ba ne ba itisitse, mme a tlhokafala.

Supt Phuluweni a re tiragalo eo e diragetse ka nako ya boraro mo mosong mme se se supa fa lefelo leo la dino le ne le sa tswalwa ntswa go ne go le makuku.

O ne a kopa beng ba mafelo a dino go obamela dinako tsa go tswala. **BOPA**

yo e leng setlogolo sa monna yoo, fa ntlo nngwe mo lelwapeng la bone e e sha mme go na le mongwe mo teng ka Labotlhano ka nako ya lesome le bongwe bosigo.

Supt Tampa a re ba sepodisi ba ne ba ragogela kwa tiragalong mme ya re ba ntsha monna yoo ba fitlhela a shele fela thata.

A re ba ne ba mo isa kwa kokelong ya JP Kavindama kwa Shakawe kwa ba bongaka ba rurifaditseng fa a tlhokafetse.

Supt Tampa a re ditlhotlhomiso di tswelletse go batlisisa se se bakileng molelo fa mmele wa

moswi o ile go dirwa loaro le le tlhalosang se se bakileng loso kwa Maun.

Le fa go ntse jalo, Supt Tampa o kopile setshaba go tlhokomela bagolo ka ebile a supile fa moswi e ne e le mo-na-le bogole mme a ne a nna a le nosi mo ntlong le ntswa go na le bangwe ba masika mo ntlheng e nngwe ya lelwapa.

O tladitse ka gore ditiragalo tsa melelo di a tshwenya mo kgaolong ya gagwe, a re bosheng go nnile le tiragalo e e bakileng go sha ga matlo a le mane le tatlhegelo ya dithoto tse di jang P30,000. **BOPA**

Acrobats carry legacy across generations

DAR ES SALAAM - In the heart of Ilala Mchikichini, a bustling neighbourhood in Tanzania's port city of Dar es Salaam, the sound of spinning hoops and synchronised flips rings through the warm afternoon air.

At the centre of the action, nine-year-old Aisha Juma, a fourth-grader at Ilala Boma Primary School, twirls hula hoops with remarkable precision.

"I like acrobatics because it makes me healthy and sharpens my mind," she said with a smile.

Since beginning her training two years ago, Aisha has not only built strength and flexibility but also noticed better results in the classroom.

Her story is the latest episode in a tradition that began nearly six decades ago, when 20 young Tanzanians were sent to China to study acrobatics, a milestone in the history of Sino-Tanzanian cultural exchange.

The programme took shape after a Chinese acrobatic troupe performed in Tanzania, impressing national leaders and inspiring the idea of sending young talents for formal training in China.

In the winter of 1965, Hamis Adam Nyota and 19 others, 14 boys and five girls, aged between nine and 18, arrived in Wuhan, central China's Hubei Province.

"Life in China was tough at first," Nyota, born in 1954, recalled.

"Most of us fell ill, except for one."

Despite the challenges, they trained diligently at the Wuhan Acrobatic Institute.

Their dedication led to a historic meeting in 1968 with Chairman Mao Zedong, during a visit by Tanzania's founding President Julius Nyerere.

"We met Mao face to face, spoke with him, and took photos together. It was a tremendous honour," said Nyota.

Returning home in 1969, the group established the National



DAR ES SALAAM - Acrobatics have become popular in Tanzania with Hamis Nyota being at the forefront of reviving the art in the country. Photo: Xinhua

Acrobatics Troupe, the first of its kind in Africa.

Under government direction, they toured extensively within Tanzania and abroad, performing in Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, the Comoros and Malawi.

Nyota stayed with the troupe until 1977, when the government decentralised acrobatics training.

Posted to the Mtwara region, he continued to teach even as many of his peers left the profession.

Along with colleague Rajab Zubwa, he later founded Bantu International Acrobatic to revive the art.

"In time, every performing arts troupe wanted to include acrobatics," Nyota said.

"That's how the art grew, both locally and internationally."

One of his proteges, Saidi Ramadhani Yusuph, now serves as an instructor at Happy Center Acrobatic Talent.

Inspired by visiting Chinese performers, Yusuph began training with Nyota at the age of 16.

"He taught me for five years before I entered the profession," Yusuph recalled.

Since becoming a teacher in 2008, Yusuph has trained over 70 learners, focusing on balance skills and team activities.

Despite limited facilities and modest institutional support, he

remains committed to his work.

"Teaching is my passion and acrobatics is a talent within me," he said.

"Acrobatics brings many benefits. Physically and mentally, it builds strength. Financially, it can provide a livelihood. We have had job opportunities through

hotels, weddings, and various events, both in Tanzania and overseas," Yusuph explained.

He added that public perception has shifted.

Once viewed as simple entertainment, acrobatics is now recognised as a legitimate career path.

"Some artistes have secured contracts abroad, earning between US\$1,500 and US\$2,000 a month, a significant income in Tanzanian terms," he said.

Happy Center Acrobatic Talent, a registered institution, now boasts over 200 members.

Alumni include internationally known acts such as the Ramadhani Brothers, who competed on *America's Got Talent*, a popular US television talent show.

Nyota believed the Tanzania-China bond remains strong.

"Comparing the China we visited to the China of today shows a dramatic transformation. They have progressed impressively."

From the icy streets of Wuhan to the sunlit training grounds of Dar es Salaam, the story of Tanzanian acrobatics continues to unfold.

As young Aisha spins her hoops with poise and joy, she carries forward a tradition that bridges continents and generations.

Xinhua

'Avoid divisive partisan politics'

ACCRA - Ghana vice president Jane Naana Opoku-Agyemang on Tuesday urged African countries to practice democracy to ensure the transformation of their countries and bring the needed rewards to their people.

Opoku-Agyemang said at the opening of the three-day African Political Parties Summit in Ghana, that politics divorced from the well-being and transformation of the people was empty.

"Our people do not ask us to perform politics for its own sake. They deserve politics that translates into food security, decent jobs, functional schools, accessible healthcare, efficient infrastructure, security, and justice," the vice president stressed.

Opoku-Agyemang highlighted the need to avoid divisive partisan politics because political power must not be achieved at the expense of the peace and cohesion of society.

The summit is a collaboration between the Africa Governance Center, an Accra-based independent think tank committed to promoting governance excellence, policy development, and institutional capacity building to support Africa's economic transformation, and the government of Ghana.

Party delegates and government officials from 34 African countries are attending the summit, including Sao Tome and Principe president Carlos Vila Nova and deputy prime minister of Ethiopia Adem Farah. **Xinhua**

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Leteisi festival aims to celebrate cultural heritage

By Banyatsi Banyatsi

KANYE - Mmathethe is set to come alive on September 27 with the coming of the village's leteisi annual cultural and music festival, to be held at Shimrock Camping Site.

According to Obakeng 'Mokapi' Mooketsi, the founder and organiser of the event, the festival aimed to celebrate rich cultural heritage, focusing on music and lifestyle.

"This festival is more than just entertainment; it is about honouring our roots while embracing modern trends.

We aim to create a unique atmosphere where kids, couples, friends, and families come together to celebrate and enjoy the richness of our culture," said Mooketsi in an interview.

The event derives its name from the iconic Leteisi fabric, historically worn at significant special gatherings such as kgotla meetings and weddings.

Over time, Leteisi has evolved into a central piece in Botswana's fashion scene, and, Mooketsi believes its potential extends far beyond style.

"With more fashion brands experimenting with Leteisi designs, it is clear that our traditional fabric has global potential.

Through this festival, we want to showcase that cultural identity can coexist with modern expression."

Coinciding with Botswana's Independence Day celebrations, the event also aims to spark a cultural renaissance among young Batswana by encouraging them to take pride in their heritage while innovating for the future.

The musical line-up will be headlined by renowned traditional artist Ditiro Leero, with performances by Kalahari, Ashley Gops, Rrarona Ramonyaku, DJ Zaski, and Mmaratwa.

In support of emerging talent, the festival will also provide a platform for upcoming artistes, including Tinerman Kwaito, Spekere, and others from Mmathethe.

"We are passionate about giving our young artistes the spotlight they deserve. This is also a chance for small businesses to benefit from the event by renting food stalls at just P500 each," added Mooketsi. Standard tickets are available at selected Spar and Choppies outlets for P50, with Double Tickets priced at P80.

A VIP section for artists and special guests is currently being prepared. Attendees may bring their own cooler boxes for a fee of P20, while beverages will be sold on site. To ensure an inclusive and family-friendly atmosphere,



Mmathethe is set to come alive on September 27 with annual leteisi cultural and music festival.

the event will feature a Kiddies' Corner priced at P20, offering fun and safe activities for children.

Security is a top priority, with professional bouncers and bodyguards hired to safeguard both people and property.

"We are committed to delivering a well-organised event with improved sound, stage design, and beautiful decorations.

This year, we want to change how we celebrate in Mmathethe, with more unity, less conflict and

a stronger sense of community," Mooketsi said. He also appealed to all Mmathethe residents to support the initiative, honour the festival theme, wear Leteisi and ensure a peaceful, respectful celebration. **BOPA**

DJ Flames album hits radio charts

By Kelebogile Taolo

FRANCISTOWN - Kabo Thaelo's *Pela Tulo*, has been positively received by music supporters and is enjoying air play airplay across radio stations.

The album includes *Pela Tulo*, featuring Dr Tawanda, *Jehova o Lefika laaka*, featuring Mantshwabisi, *Re kopantswe ke Morena Jeso* and featuring MC Maswe. Of these songs, *Pela Tulo* and *Re a dumela*, Thaelo said he even created the videos and they were playing on the national TV which is helping boost the album's popularity.

In an interview Thaelo better known as 'DJ Flames' mentioned that the album officially dropped in April, after the songs were released as singles. He shared that *Pela Tulo*, a beloved hymn, had been reimaged to connect with a wider audience, mixing house kwasa gospel with a soothing vibe. Thaelo grew up in Majwaneng and discovered his love for music earlier on. For him, spreading the gospel through music has always been a dream.

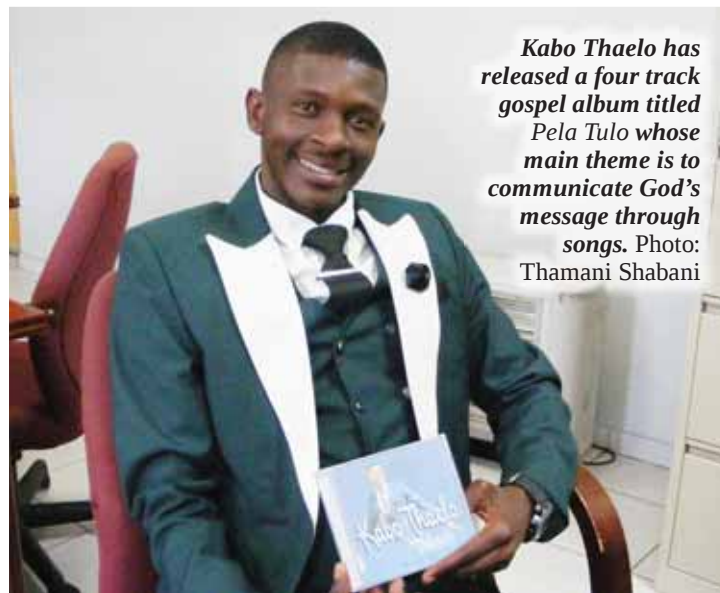
"The word of God is life," he said, urging listeners to lean on

God's word and the power of prayer to tackle life's challenges.

Since kicking off his music career in 2010 with the album *Lefu la Jeso*, Thaelo has made a name for himself in the industry and thanks to his family's support. He has earned an income through royalties and performances at various events, like parties and weddings.

His journey has also helped him connect with South African artists such as Tau di a Rora and Boss D, leading to gigs in places like Mokopane, Polokwane, and Venda. For those looking to break into the music industry, Thaelo advised that patience, perseverance, and consistency were crucial.

He encouraged young people to show respect, behave well, attend church, and find strength in the Word of God, believing this would help them on their path to success. **BOPA**



Kabo Thaelo has released a four track gospel album titled *Pela Tulo* whose main theme is to communicate God's message through songs. Photo: Thamani Shabani

Red Bull dance your style returns

By Ketshepile More

GABORONE - Botswana is gearing up for the highly anticipated second annual edition of the Red Bull Dance Your Style competition, set to take place Saturday at Molapo Crossing Piazza.

The event, more than just a dance competition, is a street cultural celebration that showcases raw talent and creativity.

Dancers will battle for the title of champion, with the winner earning the prestigious opportunity to represent Botswana on the international stage in Los Angeles in October.

Audience participation lies at the heart of the competition, as spectators decide who owns the floor through their cheers and enthusiasm. Dancers perform freestyle routines to an unpredictable selection of music

genres, ranging from Amapiano to hip-hop, chosen by the DJ on the spot.

Samantha Ncube, owner of Dance Space Studios and a Red Bull Dance Your Style consultant in Botswana, shared her excitement about the event.

"This competition is a great platform for talented dancers to gain recognition and possibly have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to represent our country in the United States," she said.

The competition, which first launched in Botswana in 2024, initially focused on Gaborone dancers.

However, Ncube revealed that this year's edition had expanded to include Francistown and she was impressed by the talent showcased there.

"The level of skill was incredible," she noted.

Ncube said that while Botswana

dancers possessed talent, there was a need to continue honing their craft. She encouraged dancers to showcase originality and creativity beyond trending TikTok dances.

"The essence of Red Bull Dance Your Style is to give dancers a platform to express themselves through their own style, regardless of the music," she explained.

Leading up to the big day, a series of events aimed at discovering, celebrating, and elevating local talent have taken place.

These included dance workshops, open public qualifiers and studio dance takeovers in both Francistown and Gaborone.

South Africa's dancer and choreographer Hope Ramafalo has been involved in hosting dance workshops in Francistown and Gaborone, to prepare the journey toward the finals. **BOPA**



Athletes from Kenya, Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa are expected to compete in the BDF Athletics Club Half Marathon to be held in Mogoditshane on Sunday.

Sponsors invest in BDF half marathon

By Anastacia Sibanda

GABORONE - The BDF Athletics Club Half Marathon scheduled for Sunday in Mogoditshane is back and has this time

around secured more sponsors. BDF Athletics Club vice chairperson Alfred Phinias said in an interview that they were happy that more

sponsors had come on board. He said the last edition of the marathon, struggled to attract sponsors despite the event being for a good cause. “We currently have two families in Mogoditshane and this will be our second year with them. Generally the marathon is used to benefit the community,” he said. Phinias said they expected a

good number of international athletes to compete and noted that they were expecting some from Kenya, Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. He said their target was to register at least 2 000 runners, and that late registration opens today until Friday. Phinias therefore encouraged those who had not registered to do so at Choppies store at

SSKB. Registration fee for 5km is P150, 10km is P250, while 21km is P300, and corporate registration for 10 people stands at P2,250. Winner of 21.1 km pockets P10,000, position two gets P6,000 while position three pockets P4,000. Those in positions four and five will receive P2,500 and P1,500 respectively. **BOPA**



Sebego joins FIFA Appeals Committee

By Anastacia Sibanda

GABORONE - Former Botswana Football Association (BFA) president Tebogo Sebego has been appointed to FIFA Appeals Committee.

Sebego revealed in an interview that he was roped in during the 2025 FIFA general assembly May meeting and would serve for four years.

He said the committee’s role was to hear appeals against decisions from disciplinary committees and the ethics committee that were not declared final by the relevant FIFA regulations.

He said the mandate was to also ensure that all the federations complied with FIFA statutes.

Sebego said they were also tasked with ensuring that fairness and justice in football prevailed, adding that key mandate was to protect the integrity of football. He said normally FIFA Appeals Committee comprised law experts with football knowledge.

Sebego’s rich profile couples him as a lawyer, football background, having had some time on the pitch and served in different committees including the disciplinary committee.

I was once BFA legal advisor until I was elected BFA president, he said.

Sebego, who had also served in the FIFA marketing committee, was of the view that football

leadership found it prudent to give him a nod to serve at the FIFA Appeals Committee BFA president, Tariq Babitseng celebrated Sebego’s appointment and said it was not just a personal achievement but a milestone for Botswana football. “It puts us on the global decision-making map, strengthens our

voice in international football governance, and opens doors for more Batswana to contribute at the highest levels of the game,” he said. He said BFA would work with Sebego to leverage his position to bring opportunities, knowledge, and influence back to Botswana football structures. **BOPA**



Former Botswana Football Association president Tebogo Sebego has been appointed to FIFA Appeals Committee.



Women International Master Boikhutso Modongo (second left) challenging some of Botswana’s strongest players at the recent 40+ Master Chess Tournament in Gaborone. One of only three women among 30 competitors, Modongo emerged the best female player, winning P750. The event, sponsored by the Sledge Chess Foundation in partnership with Hilton Garden Inn, also saw candidate master Barileng Gaealatshwe claim the overall title, followed by candidate master Moakofi Notha and Professor Reason Machete. Photo: Gaseitsiwe Moruakgomo



Botswana Football Association president, Tariq Babitseng (centre), vice president, Tebogo Kamati (left) and National Executive Committee member, chairperson - finance marketing, Bathusi Rathari during a media press brief in Gaborone on Tuesday. Photo: Teko Letsholo

BFA registers commercial wing

By Anastacia Sibanda

GABORONE - Botswana Football Association (BFA) has registered a commercial wing, Lekidi Investment, that will generate income for football.

Addressing the media on Tuesday, BFA president, Tariq Babitseng said the National Executive Committee also agreed to look for partners so that they revitalise what they had.

“We have land in Kang, Maun, Shakawe, Francistown and Kasane, we want to find the right partners for that,” he said.

Babitseng said they were not looking for a sponsor, but the right partners in the hospitality business to could create value.

He said already, they had partnered with Thomas Hall, Digi Worx, Mascom, and Black Mobile to boost fan

engagement with SMS competitions and football trivia.

Babitseng said they had just come from their first annual general assembly, where the NEC was there to account.

He said their vision was to build a united, competitive, and sustainable football ecosystem where every child in every village, school, club, or academy could dream, develop and rise to the highest level of the game.

“We exist for football development first, and everything else we do from governance reforms to financial stability is designed to enable that development,” he said.

Talking about the senior women national football team, he said they competed courageously at the 2025 WAFCON in Morocco, finishing third in

their group.

He said CAF awarded them P2 million in recognition of their effort, and said BFA would give them half of that amount as a bonus at their homecoming on August 20.

“This is a clear message, when you work hard for your country, Botswana football will recognise and reward you,” he said and noted that the Zebras were preparing for AFCON and FIFA World Cup qualifiers against Algeria, Mozambique, Uganda and Guinea followed by further training camps and a November tournament in Morocco.

“These matches are not just fixtures on a calendar they are opportunities to fly the Botswana flag high, to show Africa and the world the strength, skill, and determination of our national team,” he said.

Babitseng said BFA was committed to avail the team with resources and preparation to succeed, from technical support to quality training camps.

“But this is also a call to all Batswana, your support matters. Whether in the stadium, watching from home, or cheering on social media, stand with the Zebras.

Let us unite behind them so that when they step onto the pitch, they know they carry the pride of the nation,” he said.

Babitseng said BFA now had 19 regional football associations following the addition of Makgadikgadi and Okavango, a development that ensured more representation, more competitions, and better access to football development opportunities in areas that previously had to share administrative structures. **BOPA**



Botswana's Seabo Saleshando returning a serve from South Africa's Mbali Ndabu during ITF World Tennis Tour Junior, J30 tournament in Gaborone yesterday. He won 6-0, 6-3 to advance to the quarterfinals. Photo: Gothusang Lesego

Saleshando through to ITF World Tennis quarterfinals

By Anastacia Sibanda

GABORONE - Botswana tennis player, Seabo Saleshando is the last man standing as he advances to the quarterfinals of the ITF World Tennis Tour Juniors J30.

Saleshando secured his spot with a hard-fought victory over South Africa's Mbali Ndabu in a thrilling match at the National Tennis Centre yesterday in the boys' singles.

Today, Saleshando will face off against his close friend and doubles partner, Mooketsi Mokete, also from South Africa, in what promises to be an exciting showdown.

The last time the two met was last year, where Saleshando emerged victorious with a decisive 6-2, 6-1 win.

In an interview, Saleshando said despite their friendship, he was focused on the competition.

“Once we step on the court, he is just another opponent,” he said.

He added that he was prepared and confident heading into the match, stating his goal was to reach the finals.

Reflecting on his second-round match, Saleshando was pleased with his performance. “I started off very well, with minimal error and I was

confident in my shots,” he explained.

Although he started the second set slowly, he was happy to find his rhythm and close out the match.

In another tournament fixture, Martin Seetso was eliminated after a tough battle against Dehan Van Deventer, a finalist in the Region 5 Games.

Seetso fought hard from the start, but Van Deventer proved to be a formidable opponent, taking the first set 6-0.

Van Deventer's strategic play and punishing tactics ultimately led to Seetso's defeat in the second set. **BOPA**