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Acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti (centre), District Agricultural coordinator, Mr Nickson Molefhi-Tshuma (right) and Assistant District Commissioner, Mr Lee Lesetedi visiting Ramatlabama Border after a Good Hope kgotla meeting yesterday. Dr Dikoloti visited the border to check compliance for bio-security protocols and also appreciated the challenges that the officers encounter when executing their daily duties. He revealed that the Foot and Mouth Disease had been detected in at least five villages in Borolong area thus far. Photo: Aobakwe Molefe

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Duo partners to advance offender rehabilitation

Lesedi Thatayamodimo
GABORONE

A renewed hope for social harmony and offender rehabilitation took centre stage as Alpha Outreach and the Botswana Prison Service (BPS), sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), marking a significant step toward strengthening reintegration efforts.

Speaking at the MoU signing ceremony in Gaborone recently, BPS Commissioner, Mr Anthony Mokento emphasised that social harmony remained a critical aspiration for any nation, describing it as a state in which people coexisted peacefully, resolved

conflicts constructively and worked collectively toward common goals.

Mr Mokento said the MoU was expected to contribute to broader regional aspirations, with reference to supporting social harmony efforts beyond Botswana.

He further said the initiative reflected a shared commitment to building a more peaceful and cohesive society through rehabilitation, education and community engagement.

Commissioner Mokento reiterated that BPS was mandated not only to provide custodial care but also to equip inmates with the tools needed for successful reintegration into society.

He said through structured psychosocial programmes, inmates were encouraged to develop empathy, adopt new perspectives and avoid retaliatory behavior.

"These interventions aim to reshape attitudes and promote positive social interaction," he said.

He said it was through such programmes that the Prison Service found alignment with Alpha Outreach, a registered trust focused on social development and community transformation.

"We cannot do it alone, partnerships provide the technical support we need and that support must translate into real, measurable outcomes," Mr Mokento said.

Sharing similar sentiments, Alpha Botswana chairperson, Mr Vijaya Prasad underscored the importance of shared responsibility in rehabilitating offenders, highlighting the role of faith-based organisations in complementing government efforts.

Mr Prasad said the partnership reflected a broader understanding that criminal behaviour was often shaped by misdirection rather than deliberate harm, particularly during formative years.

He said the initiative sought to rebuild lives and restore dignity.

Mr Prasad said the MoU outlined a comprehensive framework focused on rehabilitation, spiritual empowerment and personal development.

Its key components included counselling, moral guidance and faith-based teachings aimed at encouraging personal transformation.

He added that vocational training and life skills development would also form part of the initiative to support reintegration.

"This agreement represents a shared commitment to rebuilding lives and nurturing a society grounded in peace, love and unity," Mr Prasad said, further saying "it took a community to restore dignity and guide individuals toward a renewed path."

Mr Prasad commended Botswana for its compassionate approach to rehabilitation and its continued support for faith-based initiatives,

which have enabled sustained outreach within correctional facilities.

He added that the programme would extend beyond inmates to include families, recognising their crucial role in successful reintegration. He said churches and other organisations were expected to be mobilised to create a broad support network for offenders transitioning back into society.

Mr Prasad said the agreement would serve as a guiding framework to ensure accountability and sustained cooperation between stakeholders, adding that once fully implemented, it was expected to strengthen efforts to transform former offenders into productive members of society.

"This is not just about correction, it is about transformation. Together, we can help individuals become assets to the communities they return to," Mr Prasad said. **BOPA**



Botswana Prison Service Commissioner, Mr Anthony Mokento (left) and ALPHA Botswana chairperson, Mr Vijaya Prasad (right) during signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in Gaborone recently. Mr Mokento commended ALPHA Botswana for their volunteer work, donations and sponsorships. He also encouraged greater involvement from community members, businesses and local organisations. With them is deputy director - legal services, Assistant Commissioner Kose Thabo. Photo: Washa Bofelwang

Few meet parole conditions

Bonang Masolotatse
GABORONE

Only a small number of prisoners have been released on parole, despite swelling inmate numbers in local prisons.

Recent statistics reveal a nationwide prison population of 4 468 inmates, signalling appalling overcrowding. The courts continue to send more people to prison.

The situation is also compounded by the new Bail Act, which introduced stringent conditions for being admitted to bail.

Assistant Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Mr Augustine Nyatanga, said during a visit to Gaborone Central Prison on Friday that while parole could help reduce numbers, that had not been the case due to stringent requirements that left many inmates ineligible.

Among the requirements was an assessment report, he said, which must include the offender's rehabilitation progress.

The report should show the offender's progress from the time of admission until the time the report was authored.

He said it should show a detailed account of the inmate's performance, thus encouraging inmates to take advantage of programmes such as character moulding, anger management, and substance abuse treatment.

The assistant minister said that for inmates to qualify for parole, there should be evidence that they had reformed, adding that parole could help reduce overcrowding in prisons.

Mr Nyatanga also said he was aware that the new Bail Act had made bail requirements difficult, thus contributing to overcrowding.

He further acknowledged the problem of smuggling drugs and phones into prisons, and cautioned inmates against such behaviour.

He said to curb the problem, collaboration between prison staff and inmates was necessary, noting that engaging in such acts could prolong prisoners' stay in prison as those involved could lose sentence

remission and parole eligibility.

Nonetheless, Mr Nyatanga commended Central Prison inmates for their good conduct and behaviour, saying it showed emotional maturity.

He said that in the past six years, no escapes had been reported from the facility.

During comments, inmate Oteng Tshogofatso said most of the inmates had served more than half of their sentences, thus qualifying for parole.

He also decried congestion and advised that some crimes did not warrant custodial sentences.

He further implored the government to extend amnesty to prisoners, noting that they had learned their lessons.

Another inmate, Agisanyang Motukwa, commended the Commissioner of Prisons, Mr Anthony Mokento, for the change in the conduct of prison officials, saying assaults on inmates had stopped since his elevation to the top position.

He said Mr Mokento had been advocating for their welfare, including the enjoyment of conjugal rights.

Motukwa also said foreigners took longer awaiting trial, noting that one inmate had been incarcerated for over 14 years over a murder case, and that another, a Motswana, has been awaiting trial for seven years.

He said that should those prisoners not be convicted, government stood to lose millions if sued.

Further, he said government, which defines itself as human rights-centred, should ensure the enjoyment of rights by all citizens, including prison inmates.

He added that some inmates only came to prison to become hardened criminals, arguing there was no need to send those with short sentences to prison as it only hardened some.

He also complained that some magistrates remanded suspects for more than the 14 days prescribed by law and called for the introduction of a regulated public phone for inmates to communicate with their families.

Goitsekgosi Mojadigo said there was a need for assessment of judgments from magistrates before convicts were incarcerated, saying some were imprisoned on faulty judgments while the appeal process was lengthy. **BOPA**

Boot camp drills learners in discipline and character

Gaolethoo Kgathitswe
MAUN

Discipline has been identified as a critical driver of academic success, with stakeholders emphasising that character and behaviour remain central to achieving excellence among learners.

The emphasis comes as Tsodilo Junior Secondary School in Maun rolls out a week-long boot camp targeting about 450 Form Three students, aimed at strengthening discipline and preparing them for their Junior Certificate examinations.

Conducted by Leaders Boot Camp Training Institute, the programme focuses on character development, self-awareness and responsibility as key pillars that support academic performance.

Chairperson of Leaders Boot Camp Training Institute, Mr Mosalagae Setofane, said the training was designed to monitor, teach and coach students, enabling them to take ownership of their

conduct and future.

He said academic excellence cannot be sustained without discipline, noting that good behaviour remained a fundamental requirement for success.

Mr Setofane further stated that by the end of the camp, students are expected to have identified their talents and developed the capacity to maximise their potential.

Speaking at the official opening, Tsodilo JSS alumnus (Class of 1994), recently, Dr Gaerolwe Masheto encouraged learners to embrace challenges as steppingstones towards achievement.

He urged students to actively participate in both academic and extracurricular activities, noting that such involvement played a significant role in shaping discipline and character. "We have been where you are and faced even greater challenges, but we chose perseverance and refused to let circumstances define us, and now the choice rests with you," he said.

Director of Education for the North West Region, Mr Kegodile Mahudinga commended stakeholders for facilitating the initiative, describing it as a necessary intervention in a challenging socio-

economic environment.

He said the investment made in students' education required commitment and discipline in return.

"Many have invested their time and resources into your future, and you owe it to them and yourselves to make meaningful use of this opportunity," he said.

Impact Manager at Chobe Holdings, Mr Ibo Madandume said discipline was a personal choice that must be cultivated from within, adding that decisions made at this stage of life had long-term consequences.

Tsodilo JSS school head, Mr Galalea Ntshonga said while external support was important, success ultimately depended on hard work and perseverance.

He urged students to remain focused and consistent in their preparation for examinations.

Parents were also encouraged to provide a conducive environment that supported effective learning in order for students to thrive in academic excellence.

The boot camp equipped students with both academic strategies and life skills that reinforce discipline, responsibility and resilience. **BOPA**

Xigera Safari Lodge gifts Tshwaragano JSS 100 chairs

Gaolethoo Kgatitswe
MAUN

Shortage of chairs has forced Tshwaragano Junior Secondary School in Maun, into a double-shift arrangement, turning what should be a structured academic day into a continuous cycle that leaves little room for proper supervision.

This has seen pupils rotating through classrooms from morning until evening in a system that has strained both learners and teachers.

Acting deputy school head, Mr Geoffrey Dimbo, explained during an event to donate chairs yesterday that the school had lost its rhythm, making it difficult to monitor learners, implement programmes and maintain order.

Tshwaragano Junior Secondary School head, Ms Lynett Setumo, said the crisis intensified this year after the school admitted about 500 Form One learners, overwhelming infrastructure that was already insufficient.

"The double-shift system has

erased essential school routines, with no time for assembly or registration as lessons begin immediately at 7:30am and continue until 5pm, it has become overwhelming for all," she said.

Ms Setumo said the school now ran without pause, leaving teachers, heads of department and management with no time even for meals as they moved from one class to the next.

She explained that even basic services such as feeding, had been compromised, as preparing meals for two groups had proven difficult, leaving some learners inadequately catered for.

The strain has begun to show in learners' behavior, with discipline weakening and learners no longer consistently adhering to school uniform standards due to reduced supervision.

The school head further said academic performance had also declined, as some learners failed to attend under the shift system, with Term One results reflecting the impact of the disruption.

Ms Setumo described the situation as deeply concerning, noting that the school no longer had the time to engage learners, guide them, or monitor their progress effectively.

Fortunately, Xigera Safari Lodge has donated 100 chairs, some relief to a school that has been operating under pressure.

Assistant human resource manager at Xigera Safari Lodge, Mr Motshwantshi Bakhai, said that although the company received many requests, the situation at Tshwaragano was urgent.

He said supporting schools was an investment in the future and pledged continued assistance where

possible. Ms Setumo welcomed the timely donation and called on other stakeholders to lend a helping hand.

She also commended Kgosing/Kubung councilor, Mr Magonamo Mmolainyana, for mobilising support. For his part, Councilor Mmolainyana said the chairs would significantly improve learning conditions and called for continued collaboration to fully resolve the challenges facing the school.

"The situation is bad to a point where students share a single chair without a desk and that has been affecting the quality of the education the pupils are receiving," he said.

While the donation brings relief, it also highlights a broader reality, where rising enrolment continues to outpace infrastructure, leaving schools to stretch limited resources at the expense of quality education.

BOPA

Five villages record FMD cases

Aobakwe Molefhi
GOOD HOPE

Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) continues to spread across the Borolong area despite control measures in place.

He said it was now up to farmers and the community at large to adhere to protocols and heed advice from veterinary services officers on how to control the spread of the disease.

The acting minister said the situation was a national crisis requiring joint efforts, stressing that government could not defeat the disease without support from other industry players.

He said Botswana Meat Commission (BMC), which had been doing well lately, had since suspended operations.

"BMC has at least P2 million worth of meat on its storage some of which was already paid for by international customers. This now means that we will not be able to deliver the beef," the acting minister said, noting that the commission was going to make huge loss. He further said BMC was looking forward to operating round the clock in the near future had it not been disturbed by the FMD outbreak.

Dr Dikoloti urged the community to monitor each other to help control the disease in the district, warning that some farmers might relocate their livestock risking spreading FMD further.

The acting minister encouraged farmers to kraal their animals at night and also to avail them to surveillance teams as that would help detect the disease on time.

For their part, the community implored government to provide vaccines, saying it would help curb the spread of the disease.

However, Dr Dikoloti said vaccines were normally the last means of defence, pointing out that it would adversely affect the monetary value of the cattle.

He said even the European Union market would take a knock as they needed vaccine free meat.

One of the farmers, Mr Patrick Ralotsia concurred with Dr Dikoloti that the disease could only be won through cooperation and guarding against elements that may want to sabotage the efforts of keeping the district a green zone.

The community was further cautioned that if they did not cooperate with officials, the district could be declared a red zone in 24 months, making it difficult to regain green zone status, which might take years.

BOPA



Kazungula Bridge Authority executive director, Mr Mukela Muyonda said the transition to 24-hour operations at Kazungula One Stop Border Post were halted due to delays in the harmonisation of border management systems in both Botswana and Zambia. Operations were expected to begin on April 1, following a directive from President Advocate Duma Boko and his Zambia counterpart, President Hakainde Hichilema.

System hiccups stall 24-hour operation at Kazungula border

Portia Keetile
KAZUNGULA

Delays of implementation systems that enable seamless transition have stalled 24-hour operation at Kazungula One Stop Border Post (OSBP).

The newly launched Kazungula Bridge Authority had earlier announced that the 24-hour operation would begin April 1, following a directive from President Advocate Duma Boko and his Zambian counterpart, President Hakainde Hichilema.

The Authority's executive director, Mr Mukela Muyonda, said the transition to 24-hour operations were halted due to delays in the harmonisation of border management systems in both countries.

The 24-hour operation hinged on border management systems and coordination from border agencies in both countries which at the

moment was a work in progress.

At the moment, there is no definite timeline as to when the facility would commence the 24-hour operation, Mr Muyonda said and implored all border agencies to expedite processes to ensure

that presidential directives were implemented promptly to support economic growth in Botswana and Zambia.

"It is only through growing our economies that jobs will be created, livelihoods of our citizens will be made better and this is why the two heads of state made such a pronouncement," said Mr Muyonda.

He explained that the idea of a 24-hour facility, a move from 6am to 10pm, was strategic and sought to grow the economy because round the clock operations meant that activities would not halt at any point, travelers and goods would be processed efficiently.

Mr Muyonda stressed that Kazungula Bridge Authority remained committed to launch the change as soon as possible, even with existing manpower.

However, he said that staffing shortages might pose a challenge and that was to be expected but at the end of it all, implementation must take place. Mr Muyonda stated that the Kazungula Bridge Authority had engaged key stakeholders: Botswana Unified Revenue Service, Zambia Revenue Authority, immigration authorities and security agencies, in order for them to appreciate the urgency to implement the Presidential directive. **BOPA**



Kazungula Bridge Authority Executive Director Mr Mukela Muyonda

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Editors

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

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

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

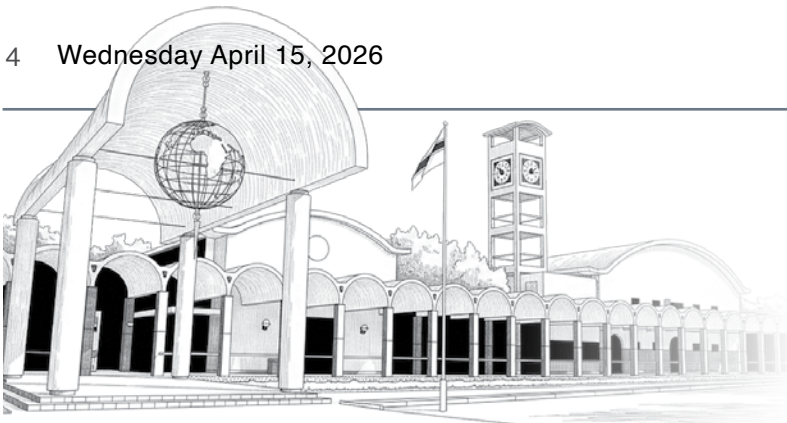
Ms Sereki Mpitse
Tel: 365 3595
Email: smpitse@gov.bw

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

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

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

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Rural industrialisation key to development

Thato Mosinyi
GABORONE

Rural industrialisation holds significant potential for both economic development and poverty reduction in the country, Specially Elected Member of Parliament, Major General Pius Mokgware has said.

Contributing to the debate on the adoption of the Revised National Policy on Rural Development 2025 in Parliament on Monday, Maj. Gen. Mokgware highlighted that Botswana was fortunate to possess abundant natural resources countrywide and therefore, it was vital to transform such resources into tangible economic opportunities.

Maj. Gen. Mokgware noted that the industrialisation strategy should strategically leverage such natural assets and the country's considerable tourism potential to directly address the critical challenges of poverty and unemployment.

"For resource-based industrialisation to succeed, it will require tailored policy instruments. It is crucial to ensure that we diversify our rural industrialisation efforts beyond exclusive focus on mineral-based industries," he said.

He added that the need to identify institutional reforms required creating an enabling environment for rural development to ensure that they were responsive to the needs of rural communities.

He further noted the need to reflect on models that could be adopted to facilitate improved access to essential infrastructure and services, such as energy, transportation, communication, healthcare and education.

That, he argued, would enhance living standards and economic opportunities while considering

cost-effective solutions to address the infrastructure deficit in rural areas. Bobonong MP, Mr Taolo Lucas, challenged government to make poverty alleviation a top priority and play a crucial role in designing targeted interventions.

Mr Lucas highlighted that addressing the critical issues faced by rural communities required a holistic and integrated approach, one that was context-specific, participatory and responsive to the diverse aspirations of rural populations.

By understanding the unique challenges faced by different regions, Mr Lucas said government should craft approaches that addressed not just economic factors, but also the social and cultural aspects that contributed to poverty.

He argued that rural development must be viewed as something much broader than traditional agriculture, focusing instead on total social and economic well-being.

"Agriculture should therefore be seen as a business and its associated value chains, as the lifeblood of our rural economy," he said.

Kgatleg East MP, Mr Mabuse Pule, stated that government should prioritise rural infrastructure development as a key component of economic growth.

Mr Pule argued that infrastructure should take precedence in the National Rural Development Policy, adding that the policy should be biased toward face-lifting rural areas to mitigate rural-urban migration.

"Despite the provision of infrastructure developments in rural areas, further rural infrastructure development projects will curb the current surge in rural-urban migration and reduce overcrowding in urban areas, which on its own has negative implications," he said.

BOPA

New labour law mandates employers to transport night shift employees

GABORONE

Night-shift workers will no longer have to navigate the challenges of unavailable public transport following the introduction of a new legal mandate requiring employers to provide door-to-door transit.

Responding to parliamentary question on Monday, Labour and Home Affairs Minister, Major General Pius Mokgware said the 2025 Employment and Labour Relations Act officially closed a long-standing gap in the previous labour laws regarding nocturnal commutes.

"The Employment Act CAP 47: 01 does not currently have any

provision pertaining to provision of transport for employees working at night. However, the new Employment and Labour Relations Act of 2025, under section 217 (2) (b) mandates the employer to provide transport for night work employees. Transport will be provided from place of residence to work and back as from 1800 hours to 0600 hours," Minister Mokgware said.

Jwaneng/Mabutsane MP, Mr Omphemetse Kwapa had asked the minister whether there was any law binding specific businesses to transport staff to and from work at night, particularly during hours when public transport was unavailable. **BOPA**



Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Mr Kethhalefile Motshegwa said the Revised National Policy for Rural Development 2025 would drive rural industrialisation and align rural development with the country's broader transformation agenda.

Policy aims to turn villages into engines of prosperity

Marvin Motlhabane
GABORONE

The Revised National Policy for Rural Development 2025 marks a bold policy overhaul that seeks to reposition rural areas as engines of economic growth and national prosperity, moving away from traditional views of them as centres of subsistence and dependency.

Tabling a motion for adoption in Parliament on Monday, Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Mr Kethhalefile Motshegwa, emphasised that once approved, the framework would drive rural industrialisation and align rural development with the country's broader economic transformation agenda.

Minister Motshegwa said the revised policy resulted from a thorough and evidence-based review process supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The minister said consultations reached all 25 rural districts to ensure that no area was left behind and involved a wide range of stakeholders, including local community organisations, government ministries, state-owned enterprises, Rural Development Council, performance management fora and the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Local Governance and Social Welfare.

"Two national validation workshops were held and the draft received widespread support," he told Parliament, adding that "Botswana has spoken with clarity; rural areas must no longer be seen primarily as sites of poverty, but as centres of national prosperity."

He outlined the historical progression of rural policy in Botswana, stating that the 1973 Land Development Policy focused on alleviating rural poverty through agriculture, infrastructure development and basic service delivery. He said in the 1980s and 1990s, priorities expanded to include health, education, road infrastructure, decentralisation and improved governance. "The Revised National Policy for Rural Development of 2002 later reinforced sustainable, community-driven approaches. These earlier initiatives delivered measurable progress. Many villages now enjoy access to clean water, sanitation, roads, electricity, schools, clinics and more recently,

internet connectivity. Studies show improvements in rural living standards thanks to sustained government investment in social development," he explained.

Despite such gains, he said significant obstacles continued to constrain full rural transformation, including high youth unemployment, persistent poverty, gender inequality, limited access to quality health services especially for vulnerable groups and growing disparities between rural and urban areas.

Mr Motshegwa further noted that such challenges must be addressed decisively under the new policy. He said the revised policy represented a clear break from earlier welfare-oriented models, owing to its central goal to transform the rural landscape from a traditional informal sector into a modern, commercial and inclusive ecosystem.

He said its core objectives included enhancing the quality of life by building economically vibrant and socially resilient communities. Again, he stated that the policy aimed to create local opportunities that curbed rural-urban migration and its associated problems, such as urban unemployment, pressure on infrastructure, informal settlements, family breakdown and social disintegration.

"It also seeks to reduce the long-term government welfare burden by promoting self-reliance among individuals and households, while generating a multiplier effect through private sector attraction, introduction of modern technologies and increased demand for locally produced goods and services, ultimately boosting job creation," he said.

Mr Motshegwa said the policy was fully aligned with key national frameworks, including the Botswana Economic Transformation Programme, National Vision 2036, National Development Plan 12 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) principle of 'leaving no one behind'.

"It directly implements the current administration's manifesto commitments following the 2024 general elections, which placed inclusive growth at the centre of efforts to deliver quality lives for all Botswana," he said.

He stated that its implementation would rest on two critical pillars, including building a deep

rural economy, with emphasis on commercialisation, value addition, entrepreneurship and integration into national and regional value chains as well as focus on land management, climate resilience and green economy, promoting sustainable land use and environmentally responsible development.

Minister Motshegwa stressed that the strong political commitment to reviving rural areas cannot go unnoticed, saying a stronger rural economy was expected to attract businesses, stimulate innovation and contribute to balanced national development while easing pressure on urban centres.

He said the policy formed part of a new chapter in Botswana's socioeconomic journey, shifting the focus toward productive inclusion and self-sufficiency in rural communities.

Debating the motion, Specially Elected MP, Major General Pius Mokgware supported the adoption of the Revised National Policy on Rural Development, arguing that should it be fully executed, it would bring redress to youth unemployment and migration to cities. Maj. Gen.

Mokgware also emphasised the need to create local economic opportunities for young people to stem rural-urban drift, reduce pressure on cities and prevent social issues like informal settlements and family breakdown.

He said to reduce or deter occurrence of crime in cities its paramount for developments to reach people in rural areas, not the other way round.

Kgatleg Central MP, Mr Mpho Morolong supported the strategic shift as proposed by the minister and welcomed the move away from subsistence models toward commercial rural economies, stressing the need for practical implementation plans to translate policy into tangible job creation and private investment in villages.

Mr Morolong said producers in villages ought to be supported with adequate market access to avoid migrating to towns for selling their goods.

He further called for clear timelines, adequate funding, coordination across ministries, especially agriculture, land and environment and robust monitoring mechanisms to avoid past policy gaps. **BOPA**

Somelo settlement exists to improve livelihood

GABORONE

Parliament has been informed that Somelo settlement was established in 1998 under the Rural Area Development Programme (RADP) to improve the livelihood of people living in remote areas far from established services.

Responding to a parliamentary question on behalf of Minister of Lands and Agriculture recently, Minister of Water and Human Settlement, Mr Onneetse Ramogapi, said the settlement was established from the former Farm No. OM-73 Hainaveld measuring about 14 616 653 hectares.

Minister Ramogapi said due to the enactments of the Amended Deeds Registry (2019) and Tribal Land (2022) Acts, the area was now registered as Cadastral Area 255 at the Deeds Registry office and designated for mixed land use.

“Currently, land utilisation indicates that the build-up area covers approximately 198 hectares while ploughing fields occupy about 510 hectares,” he said.

He added that although it was established in 1998, Tawana Land Board began official plot allocations in 2006 in which 382 residential plots were allocated of which six were held under Common Law Leases, four commercial plots, 85 ploughing fields and eight civic, a primary school, kgotla, clinic and tribal office.

He stated that Somelo settlement had an estimated population of about 1 040 people and increased to 1 170 when associated localities were included while application list stood at 156 for residential plots and



Minister of Water and Human Settlement, Mr Onneetse Ramogapi said Somelo settlement was established in 1998 to improve livelihood of people living in remote areas.

122 for ploughing fields.

He also said the last residential plot allocation was in December 2025 and for ploughing fields was in 2015.

“This level of demand relative to the settlement population highlights that while land is available in extent, land allocation for ploughing field has been lacking despite availability of about 452 plots for various land uses,” he said.

He further highlighted that the implementation of the approved layout was presently constrained by the existence of self-allocated plots within the layout area and such developments required realignment and regularisation to ensure compliance with the approved plan

by end of June.

He said the total utilised area was approximately 708 hectares, leaving an estimated 13 908 653 hectares available for future development and allocations.

MP for Maun East, Mr Goretetse Kekgonegile had asked the minister about the vastness of the land applicable for utilisation by the Somelo community in terms of cattle post, ploughing fields, business and residential plots allocations.

Mr Kekgonegile also wanted to know the total measurement of the farm bought for use by Somelo community, land currently under use and the difference in measurement between the allocated area and that not allowed. **BOPA**

Assistant Minister appraises Parliament on police savings and loan scheme

GABORONE

The Botswana Police Savings and Loan Guarantee Scheme was established in 1999 as an in-house welfare scheme.

This was said by Assistant Minister for State President, Defence and Security, Ms Maipelo Mophuting-Dikoloti when responding to a question from Member of Parliament for Tati East, Mr Tlhabologo Furniture on Monday.

Ms Mophuting-Dikoloti said the objective of the scheme was meant to enable regular savings by officers during their employment to maximise their financial security at the end of their service.

“This was also intended to allow officers to use recognised financial institutions for financial assistance, to enhance officers’ creditworthiness so that they could purchase property and to promote an investment culture among members,” the assistant minister said.

She added that it was also set to enhance the commitment of members of the service to long-

term service in view of accrual returns within the service and to enhance officers’ motivation at work, knowing that they were financially stable as well as motivate them at work, knowing that they were financially secure.

She also explained that membership was open to both serving and retired members of the police service, as stipulated under Regulation 68 (9) while Regulation 68 (11) provided the framework for the member contributions.

She said initially, members were required to contribute a minimum of P100 per month, which was later revised to P300 in 2021.

Contributions, she said, were invested with different financial institutions at an agreed interest rate and interest earned was distributed to scheme members proportionate to their individual savings.

She said so far, the scheme remained sustainable in terms of meeting the objectives.

She further clarified that dividends paid out in 2025 were declared from funds accumulated through Mphempe Insurance

Agency (MIA), which was a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) established in 2019 to provide negotiated insurance solutions to scheme membership and were the first dividends to be declared from the MIA operations.

“Dividends were paid only to serving and retired members of the police service, who were contributing monthly to the scheme at the time (active scheme members), in accordance with Regulation 68 (11) of the Police Act,” she said.

The Tati East MP had asked the minister to apprise Parliament of the Botswana Police Savings and Loan Guarantee Scheme’s performance over the last year.

Mr Furniture also requested that the minister state the years for which dividends were declared and clarify the status of all dividends declared since the scheme’s inception in 1999.

Furthermore, he inquired about the criteria used to select retired officers for payouts, noting that some former members appeared to have benefited while others were excluded. **BOPA**

Gobotswang urges govt to invest in rural agro industries

Thato Mosinyi
GABORONE

Tswapong South legislator, Dr Kesitegile Gobotswang, has requested government to invest in rural agro-industries to stimulate industrialisation and revitalise the rural economy.

Dr Gobotswang made the call during a debate on the Revised National Policy on Rural Development, arguing that rural agro-industries had the potential to create employment opportunities for unskilled personnel within the agricultural sector.

He noted that agro-industries constituted a vital link between agriculture and industry and growth in such sectors could provide an impetus for the tertiary sector, including banking, transport and communication.

Dr Gobotswang also argued that lack of local opportunities had forced many young people to migrate to large cities.

“Agro-based industries by raising the income levels of the rural workers can bring significant changes in the standard of living and the social and cultural attitudes of the rural population in general. Further, rural agro-based industries can contribute to the per capita income at the national level. The impact of rural agro based industries can be at the micro level and macro level,” he said.

He further called for prompt allocation of land in rural areas, specifically for agricultural purposes.

Member of Parliament for Ngami, Mr Philemon Aaron, echoed the same sentiments and called for the establishment of agricultural product value-chain processing entities. Mr Aaron argued that the rural economy could not be developed through the primary agricultural sector alone, but rather through value addition

within those extractive sectors.

He stressed the need for dedicated interventions to move beyond the existing product range, aiming instead for a repertoire of high-value, high-technology products for regional and global export markets.

Mr Aaron also raised concerns regarding government’s perceived inability to implement many of its manifesto promises.

Kanye West MP, Mr Victor Phologolo, implored government to implement stringent monitoring of rural development projects to ensure their sustainability.

Mr Phologolo stated that project monitoring was of paramount importance and consistent with the country’s aspiration for rural community empowerment.

The aim, he said, should be to draw lessons and put corrective measures in place to ensure long-term viability, as such projects were intended to create much-needed sustainable jobs.

He further highlighted the need for the policy to introspect on how current measures address critical issues.

“There is need for an update on the interventions taken to address poor project implantation and management and government cannot continue to invest on rural development while Batswana do not directly benefit from such investments,” he said.

Similarly, Charleshill MP, Mr Motsamai Motsamai, indicated the need for a suitable model for community-based projects that would effectively uplift the livelihoods of beneficiaries.

Mr Motsamai warned that social protection programs were likely to be overstretched due to famine in many households. He opined that the policy must be more vigilant and strive for prompt response to relieve poverty-stricken communities. **BOPA**

Mathoothe advises Lobatse leadership to apply for special economic zone status

GABORONE

Assistant Minister of Trade and Entrepreneurship, Mr Baratiwa Mathoothe has advised the leadership of Lobatse to submit a business proposal to the Special Economic Zone Authority (SEZA) for consideration to declare Lobatse a special economic zone.

Mr Mathoothe made the call when he was responding to a parliamentary question on Monday. The assistant minister said section 4, sub section 2 (e) of the Special Economic Zone Act of 2015, provided for the SEZA to develop a portfolio of public sector, private sector and public-private sector partnership Special Economic Zones as dictated by the market.

He indicated that SEZA was not yet established at the time the 2013 parliamentary motion, which had called for Lobatse to be treated as a special area as a way of reviving its economy was adopted.

He however noted that even though Lobatse was not gazetted as a special economic zone, the ministry continued to invest in projects such as the Milk Valley, Delta Technologies and Lobatse Clay Works among others, with a view to diversify the economy of the town.

Lobatse MP, Mr Karmal Jacobs had wanted to know when the parliamentary motion, adopted in 2013, which called for Lobatse to be treated as a special area, would be implemented. **BOPA**



Daily Business

BUSINESS BRIEFS

World Bank approves US\$500m loan to Morocco

RABAT - The World Bank will provide a US\$500million loan to Morocco under its First Morocco Jobs and Green Growth Development Policy Loan, the state news agency MAP reported Monday.

The financing will support better labour market policies, stronger business activity, especially among small and medium-sized firms and investment in clean energy, energy efficiency and export-oriented pharmaceutical industries, the report said. It is the first in a series of three planned operations. The programme seeks to expand active labour market programmes and reach more than 330 000 job seekers by 2029, with a focus on young people and women. **Xinhua**

Algeria emerges as Europe gas partner amid Hormuz risks

ALGIERS - As tensions in the Strait of Hormuz disrupt global liquefied natural gas (LNG) shipments, Algeria is strengthening its position as a reliable gas supplier for Europe, offering pipeline exports that bypass vulnerable sea routes.

European officials, including Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares, have recently visited Algiers, with both sides describing Algeria as a 'reliable and consistent' partner.

Unlike seaborne LNG that must pass through the volatile Strait of Hormuz, a key route for global LNG shipments, Algerian gas reaches Europe directly via pipelines, avoiding maritime disruptions.

According to European data, Algeria currently supplies about 14 per cent of the EU's gas imports. In 2025, Algeria delivered between 39-40 billion cubic meters to the EU, accounting for around 13-14 percent of total imports. **Xinhua**

Partnership to boost investment inflows

LUSAKA - Zambia has strengthened its partnership with eastern China's Jiangsu Province to boost investment inflows, the country's investment agency said Monday. The Zambia Development Agency (ZDA) said in a statement that the agency held a roadshow in Nanjing, capital of the Chinese province, and the collaboration reflects the southern African nation's increasing appeal as a premier investment destination in Africa.

ZDA Director-General Albert Halwampa said the partnership is a transformative step in Zambia's investment promotion strategy.

The partnership, he added, aligns with Zambia's broader strategy to deepen economic cooperation with China and attract investment into priority sectors.

"Establishing ZDA's presence in Jiangsu Province is a strategic milestone that will enhance investor engagement, improve information flow, and position Zambia to attract high-quality investments," he said. **Xinhua**

Benikwa ventures into food colourants and flavours business

Kelebogile Taolo
FRANCISTOWN

Ms Chanana Benikwa, a business woman venturing into supplies of food colourants and flavours, takes her business with utmost seriousness to ensure its stability and growth. Born in Tsamaya, Ms Benikwa's business is only based in Francistown but able to reach out to potential customers across the country.

After completion of her studies at tertiary, Ms Benikwa found herself at a crossroads without a job. Wondering what she could do while waiting for employment opportunity, a friend noticed her passion for business and suggested that she turn her dream into reality by sourcing food flavours, colourants, and ingredients for ice pops and drinks for business purpose.

The idea led to the creation of the business called Ice Candy, in 2019 which got officially registered in 2021. After the registration, Ms Benikwa never looked back and started right away by sourcing high-quality colourants, flavours, sweeteners, stabilisers and other ingredients essential for making drinks and ice pops.

"I started to order all these ingredients from Zimbabwe for reselling. Upon realising that I am consistent in business, my suppliers in Zimbabwe asked me to be their agent in Botswana so that I can buy in bulk and supply the country," she explained.

As the business grew, Ms Benikwa started to also make ice pops for reselling, which also boosted her business.

"I supply different schools around Francistown and many other street



Food flavours and colourants entrepreneur, Ms Chanana Benikwa of Ice Candy store during an interview in Francistown recently. She said despite venturing into business due to unemployment, she embraced her new-found entrepreneurial spirit and planned to expand her venture, with diversification also in the pipeline.

Photo: Ogopoleng Kgomoethata

vendors, it bring good profits," she said.

The growth of the business hired two dedicated team members to meet the rising demand. Based in Francistown only, Ms Benikwa uses buses and sprint couriers to supply to those outside Francistown.

However, she said she faced some challenges within her business, her biggest hiccup being at the borders where clearing her Zimbabwe-sourced stock was cumbersome. "Most of the times I encounter challenges at the borders, officials give me hard time, asking for many documents though I always have them, it seems there is confusion in categorising my stock" she said.

Another hiccup that she experiences is operating from one location which she said makes some customers feel she is too far away. As a supplier and seller of ice pops,

she is aware of the nature of her business being seasonal, but still thrives besides the circumstances.

"My business is seasonal, Ice pops sell well in summer, when winter comes, the business slows down. Nonetheless we keep on going," she explains.

Despite these hurdles, Ms Benikwa remains determined. Her innovative spirit did not stop with the supply of ingredients only as she also offered free training sessions for aspiring ice pop makers. Furthermore, she sells ice pop machines to new entrepreneurs. For marketing the business, she said she depended on social media platforms to gain customers, adding that the word of mouth does the trick for her as well. "The word-of-mouth referrals brings in more customers.

I give a very good customer

service and this helps me as my customers spread the word and recruit more customers for me," she confidently.

Ms Benikwa envisions a future where she creates a thriving business by providing not just products but also inspiration and support. When the time is right, she hopes to expand beyond Francistown to be closer to her other customers. For now, she's proud of her success in Francistown.

She stand as an inspiration to others to turn their passions into thriving businesses especially the youth who have graduated and have not secured jobs. "Do not give up, try some business to earn a living, that idea you have, work on it and see how it grows into a tangible thing," she encourages others, embodying the entrepreneurial spirit. **BOPA**

China eases citrus export rules on South Africa

JOHANNESBURG

South African Minister of Agriculture John Steenhuisen on Friday welcomed the amendment of cold treatment requirements regulating the export of South African citrus to China, saying the move would help expand trade opportunities and deepen bilateral agricultural cooperation.

Speaking during a signing ceremony at the Chinese Embassy in Pretoria, Steenhuisen said the updated phytosanitary arrangement would improve export efficiency, reduce logistics costs and enhance the competitiveness of South African citrus in the Chinese market.

South Africa places a high value on its relationship with China, which continues to create meaningful opportunities across the agricultural sector, said the minister, noting that 'these agreements are the result of trust, respect and sustained cooperation, and they are helping open doors for our producers at a time when diversification has never been more important.'

Noting that China remains one of South Africa's most valued agricultural trading partners, he

said the country's citrus industry supports about 140 000 direct jobs and the continued expansion of citrus exports consequently plays a crucial role in sustaining rural livelihoods and driving inclusive economic growth.

Chinese Ambassador to South Africa Wu Peng praised South African citrus for its excellent quality and said it complements China's domestic production through its counter-seasonal supply.

"That is a very positive contribution to Chinese consumers' fruit baskets. With China's huge market of 1.4 billion people, our cooperation has enormous potential and bright prospects," he said.

Wu noted that China would fully implement zero-tariff treatment for products from 53 African countries with diplomatic ties with China starting May 1, and will further expand access for African exports by upgrading the 'green channel' and adopting additional facilitation measures.

South African agricultural products, including citrus, will benefit from both zero tariffs and optimized quarantine standards when exported to China, he said.

Xinhua



PRETORIA - South Africa Minister of Agriculture, John Steenhuisen, and China Ambassador to South Africa Wu Peng attending a signing ceremony at the Chinese Embassy in South Africa. Steenhuisen on Friday welcomed the amendment of cold treatment requirements regulating the export of South African citrus to China, saying the move would help expand trade opportunities and deepen bilateral agricultural cooperation. Photo: Xinhua

Dikgang

PAMPIRI YA THUTO LE DIKITSISO

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Lephata le tthalosa ka ditesi letso tsa mafelo a go kampa



Phuthego ya khansela ya Letlhakeng e tthaloseditse gore tsesetso ya go gweba mo mafelong a go kampiwang mo go one, e fiwa mogwebi lebaka la dingwaga tse di lesome le botlhano.

Ka Puseletso Kenyaditswe LETLHAKENG

Phuthego ya khansela ya Letlhakeng e tthaloseditse gore tsesetso ya go gweba mo mafelong a go kampiwang mo go one (Camp Sites), e fiwa mogwebi lebaka la dingwaga tse di lesome le botlhano.

Mogolwane wa lephata la diphologolo le makgabisanaga kwa Letlhakeng, Rre Gabriel Gami o tthalositse bosheng gore tsesetso ya mafelo a go kampiwang kwa go one e ntshafadiwa dingwaga dingwe le dingwe tse thano go fithela dingwaga tse di lesome le botlhano di wela.

Rre Gami o tthalositse gore lefelo

le le sikilweng go nna Camp Site ke la sennela ruri, ka jalo ga go a tshwanela gore ba ba kampang foo, ba nne ba suta suta mo lefelong le le sikilweng.

O buile jalo a tsibogela dipotso tsa makhanselara ba ba neng ba kopile go tthalosediwa ka ditesi letso tse di amang mafelo a dirisiwang go kampa mo lefelong la diphologolo la Khutse. Ba ne ba kopile go itse gore mogwebi o fiwa lebaka le le kae go dirisa lefelo le.

E rile a tsibogela dikgang tse dingwe tse di amang diphologolo le makgabisanaga, Rre Gami a supa gore tsamaiso ga e letle gore tau e namagadi e ka bolawa le fa e setse tsohetse. A re tau e e ka bolawang fa e setse e tsohetse thata ke e tonanyana.

Fa a lekodisa ka letseno le le dirwang ka mohama wa bojanala mo Khutse, Rre Gami a re ka ngwaga wa 2021 ba dirile P249,480, wa ngwaga wa 2022 ba dirile madi a P344,463.

O tswetse a re ka ngwaga wa 2023 ba dirile P415,961, ka ngwaga wa 2024 ba dirile madi a P337,086, fa ngogola ba dikile ba dirile P285,387.

Ka jalo a re madi otlhe a ba a dirileng mo dingwageng tse thano ke P1,632,378.

Fa a araba potso ya mokhanselara wa Dutlwe, Rre Julius Tshaila yo a neng a boditse ka seemo sa koloi ya ofisi ya Dutlwe, Rre Gami a re ba itse fa lephata la diphologolo le makgabisanaga kwa Dutlwe le dirisa koloi e kgologolo thata, ka jalo e sokodisa.

Le fa go ntse jalo a re lephata ga le kgone go reka dikoloi tse disha ka ntsha ya tlhalelo ya madi.

O tswetse a supa gore lephata le dira ka bojotlhe go sireletsa bajanala, gore ba tswelile ka go akola bontlenyane jwa di-tsa tlhologo tse di akaretsang dimela le diphologolo tse di mo lefelong la Khutse gore lefatshe le kgone go dira letseno le le kgotsofatsang ka mohama wa bojanala. **BOPA**

Lenaneo la Ikageng le tlhoka megopolo

Grace Sebape LOBATSE

Molomaganya ditiro wa lenaneo la Ikageng mo Lobatse Rre Philip Diseko o kopile morafe wa Lobatse go tla ka megopolo e e ka tsamaisang lenaneo la Ikageng.

Rre Diseko o buile jalo kwa Lobatse ka Labotlhano mo phuthego ya kgotla a kopa morafe go tla ka megopolo e e ka tsamaisang lenaneo la Ikageng le a boletseng fa le ise le nne le ditshetlana tse di le tsamaisang (guidelines) a re mme le fa go ntse jalo le tshwanetse go tswelela.

O tswetse a tthalosa fa Ikageng e le lenaneo le ka lone Batswana ba tlaa rutintshiwang mo dikitsong mme e re kwa bofelong jwa ithutuntsho eo ba fiwe ditlankana tse ka tsone ba ka ikopelang tiro kana ba nna le tshiamela ya go ithamela ditiro.

Rre Diseko o boletse gore lenaneo le, le tlaa tsaya dipalo tsa batho tse di ntseng di tsewa ke lenaneo la Ipelegeng mme batho ba tsena ka go fapaana, a tlatsa ka gore lenaneo la Ikageng le tlaa tsaya motho wa dingwaga tse di lesome le bofera bobedi go ya kwa dingwageng tse di masome a marataro le bone.

Mo go tse dingwe o boletse gore ithutuntsho eo e dirwa ke ba lekalana la CITEF, a tlatsa ka gore mo ikatisong eo go tlaa tswa fela gore ke ya tiro e e thata gole kae, a a fa sekai sa gore fa e ka tsaya dikgwedi tse thataro, ba ba setseng ba tlaabo ba letile ka nako eo ba sa dire sepe, go fithlelela sebaka sa bone sa ithutuntsho se goroga.

O ile a fa sekai ka tshugo ya matlalo e a reng banni ba Lobatse

e ka ba tswela mosola ka lebaka la gore bontsi jwa dikgomo di bolawa kwa BMC, mme e bile le madirelo a tshugo ya matlalo a mo Lobatse.

Rre Diseko o supile fa dituelo tsa lenaneo la Ikageng tsa P817.00 le tsa bagolwane tsa P900.00, di sa fetoga mme di ntse di duelwa fela jaaka kwa Ipelegeng, a tlatsa ka gore seo se bakilwe ke kwelo tlase ya Itsholelo gore a bo di sa tsholetsega.

E rile a akgela mme Flora Phatsima a supa gore lenaneo la Ikageng le tsile go ba bolaisa tlaa ka jaana, ba ba setseng ba tswa dithutong ba sa dire sepe.

Monni wa kgaolwana ya Tsopeng bokone Mme Kelebetse Pelekeae a re ene o eletsang gore le fa bangwe ba isiwa dithutong mme bangwe ba tswelile ba theogela gore kwa bofelong jwa letsatsi ba nne le sengwe sa itshetso, a gatelela ka gore banni ba Lobatse ba a sotlega.

Mogolwane go tswa kwa khanseleng ya Lobatse Mme Lesego Makobye o lekodisitse morafe gape ka melawana e mesha e e tsamaisang ditlhopho tsa komiti ya ditlhabolo tsa motse a bolela gore komiti eo e tshwanetse go nna le maloko a le lesome, mme e bile tsamaiso ya ditlhopho e fetogile.

Mme Makobye a re mo malatsing a le masome a marataro khansela e tshwanetse ya bo e pegile mekwalo ya ikopelo go nna maloko a komiti ya ditlhabolo tsa motse, a bolela gore yo o eletsang go ema o tsenyeko.

A re mekwalo ya ikopelo e direlwa mo difomong tse ditsewang kwa khanseleng,

O tswetse a bolela gore fomo eo, e tlaa thusa gore motho yo o ikopelang a na le tse kgatlanong

le tsamaiso ya ikopelo jaaka fa mongwe a kile a dira molato, ba sepodisi batlaa itse ka pele ga e busiwa e feta ka sepodisi, a gakolola gore ba tshophe ka tlhwafalo.

Mo go tse dingwe o boletse gore go solofelwa gore dikomiti di dire di Trust le dikoporase go tlhabolola metse ya bone le go tlhama mebereko.

Mme Mokobye a re motho yo o

tlhophilweng o tshwanetse go nna dingwaga tse tharo mo komiting, a tlatsa ka gore go tlhophiwa batho fela ba dingwaga tse di lesome le bofera bobedi go ya kwa godimo a na le bokgoni.

O boletse gore yo o eletsang go tlhopho o tla ka Omang kwa matlhophelong a bo a ikwadisa, fela jaaka kwa ditlhophong tsa setshaba.

BOPA

BOTSWANA

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Celebrating Nationhood

Describe the time you felt most proud to be a Motswana?

Being a Motswana is worth way more than gold. The fact that the country has produced stars who have represented it well internationally such as Mpule Kwelagobe, Letsile Tebogo and Collen Kebinatshipi is an honour I would not trade for anything. Many of Botswana have also excelled academically for the development of the country.

Boitshepo Kgosiemang I feel most proud when Batswana come together in moments of purpose—whether responding to challenges or building something meaningful in their communities.

It's in these moments of unity and shared effort that we show who we truly are as a nation.

Louis Sibanda Ke ikutlwa ke motlotlo thata go nna Motswana ka nako tsotle. Lefa gone re sokola ka go bona ditiro, ke ikgomotsa ka gore mme gone puso ea leka ka mananeo a nakwana a tshwana le a Tirelo Sechaba. Se se dira gore re kgone go itse tiro le gone gore abo rele mo seemong se se siametseng gore reka tsena mo mmerekong.

Nametso Morewa Nako ee ke kileng ka utlwa ke le motlotlo ka go nna Motswana ke fa puso ya Botswana e akaretsa dteme tsotlhe gore di buiwe mo seromamoweng sa Botswana (RBI) le mo Television ya setshaba ka nako tsa dikgang. ka bona sentle gore jaanong re Batswana ka go lekana rotlhe.

Kgosi Molodi Motalaote It was when Mpule Kwelagobe won the Miss Universe World pageant in 1998.

Tiiso Mpedi When the flag flew high at Dakar Rally plus when Ross Branch was crowned world champion, when the flag flew high on world stage as Lesego Chombo was crowned the fairest of them all in the African continent and when the flag flew high at the 2025 World Athletics Championships in Tokyo with our relay team cc Letsile School-boy Tebogo Lee Bhekimpilo Eppie, Bayapo Ndori, and Busang Collen Kebinatshipi.

Team Jwaneng Racing Leadership exchange from Masisi to Duma; speeches of acceptance, grins on their faces, handshakes and hugs. Goosebumps. Tjeenyekgotla Nkgotla Baleseng Every time I stand in a queue to vote Thomphang Senamelo Ha kele ko nne ke bolella baithuti ka nna gore dite mane le nama ya kgomo e e tatswa e bonelwa ko Baswaaaana.

KidBoy Base Ke ikutlwa ke le motlotlo thata ke le Motswana ha ke le mo patlong re laa ngwetsi le go amogela dikgomo, bomme ba letsa mogolokwane go opelwa pina tsa setswana go aperwe setswana. Akanyang Isaac

Ke kgona go ikutlwa ke le motlotlo go nna Motswana fa ke eile kerekeng ko Moria(SA), fa ba ka utlwa ke bua setswana ba itumela bare “o tlhaga kae? Kere Botswana, bare” woow ke kgole Botswana neh? Ere re bone chelete ya Botswana” ke tlaabo ke ntsha madi a dipula le dithebe ke ba bontsha ba itumetse ba nkgobokanetse proud ka my Country Naledi Radibeke

Batswana are generally a peace loving nation, closely knitted with strong community ties. There was this one particular time when I felt really proud to be a Motswana. The time when Letsile Tebogo made history at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games winning the first ever men's 200m Gold medal, not only for Botswana, but for the African continent. This brought me so much joy, and that God is with us. I felt so much alive seeing our national flag being hoisted high on the world stage.

The way Batswana came together during the celebrations showed the world who we are as a nation. Amantle Thoke



Kgosi Molodi Motalaote



Akanyang Isaac



Naledi Radibeke



Nametso Morewa



Amantle Thoke

Yipi eyi
wa dimuka
no ditunga
dyoye?

#omang

O itse eng
ka lefatshe
la gago?

#omang

U tjiua
tjike ko
munda uehi
rue?

#omang

Arts & Culture

DJ LATTY leap of faith yields rewards

By Ketshepile More
GABORONE

Moving to a new country in pursuit of better opportunities is a bold and often daunting step, but for Leatile 'LATTY' Motlhalamme, it has proven to be a transformative journey marked by growth and resilience.

“Brave is moving to another country with a suitcase and a plan, visas, contracts, a new landlord, a new bank, figuring out a city where nobody knows your name, learning new systems, carrying a bed up a staircase, and still waking up hungry for more. Anyone who does that is unshakeable,” said Motlhalamme, reflecting on his relocation to South Africa in search of greener pastures in the entertainment industry.

Hailing from Gabane, Motlhalamme is steadily cementing his place in South Africa's competitive music scene. His passion for showbiz began in childhood, when he dreamt of performing on children's programmes such as Mantlwaneng and competing in talent shows. However, like many Batswana households, his ambitions were initially discouraged by his family, particularly his grandmother who raised him.

Despite this, his

love for music endured.

“Music makes me happy, and as an emotional child, it helped me through difficult times. I cannot doubt my love for the art,” he said.

A graduate of YDJ Academy, Motlhalamme has always been drawn to emotional and spiritual sounds, naturally gravitating towards afro house and afrotech. His dedication paid off in 2025 when he won a YAMA Best Amapiano Song award for a collaboration with Thato Tladi and Dalom Kids. He encouraged the entertainment sector in Botswana to embrace alliances and partnerships as a way to strengthen, grow and sustain the industry. He urged stakeholders to move away from the perception that collaboration diminishes individual success, emphasising instead that joint efforts often produce greater and more impactful outcomes.

Amapiano is often associated with spirituality, he describes himself as a believer whose spiritual journey is still evolving.

A believer in God word, Motlhalamme still upholds principles and foundations of christianity.

“I have always had an inquisitive mind and I am still trying to understand a lot of things which would otherwise not make sense, but I believe in God and strongly believe that things do not just come by chance.”

Relocating to South Africa came with its own challenges, forcing him to confront his fears and grow both personally and spiritually.

“I was alone in a foreign country. It pushed me closer to God. I went through a period of sobriety, letting go of anything that could slow me down. It was just me and God, facing my emotions head-on,” he shared.

Although the move had long been part of his vision, he admitted to previously postponing it. In January 2025, he finally took the leap, boarding a bus to Johannesburg to chase his dreams.

Before relocating, Motlhalamme strategically built networks by reaching out to industry players via social media and during visits to South Africa. He also connected with Botswana creative export Jack Botlhoko for guidance.

Upon arrival, he performed at several unpaid gigs to build his portfolio and gain exposure.

“It's part of paying your dues. You need something solid to show potential clients. But choose free gigs wisely ensure there's value, like exposure, footage or access to key industry players,” he explained.

His encounter with the duo got him a gig in their lifestyle event which is one of the most celebrated in South Africa, the Friends of Black Motion (FOBM). He later featured in a Black Motion single video Monateng, which later won an award. “I am always ready with my USB. Opportunities come when you least expect them,” he said.

Beyond music, Motlhalamme has secured a partnership with Soweto-based fashion brand Project Inflamed, where he features in campaigns and events. Project

Inflamed is a fashion house born in Soweto, Made in Maboneng, with a line defined by fearless creativity and crafted for those with a discerning eye for style.

He has also aligned himself with KUNYE, an afro house platform curated by DJ Shimza, where he has performed and now works as an artist liaison for both KUNYE and Best of Both Worlds events.

The role has allowed him to network with top artists such as Kabza De Small, DJ Maphorisa and Sun-El Musician, while gaining insight into large-scale event production.

This has been a lesson for him because he is able to appreciate and understand how successful events are curated in South Africa.

Within a year of relocating, Motlhalamme released his hit single Aftermath, featuring Motswana vocalist Kali Mija. The track has performed well on local charts and received strong airplay.

The single was released under Dance Africa Records, though LATTY has since launched his own label, PULA Recording.

Although he would have loved to release his new single under his own record, Motlhalamme said he needed to learn the systems, work with experienced people and experts before he does it on his own.

“Even great artists started somewhere; learning systems from those who were already in the game, the likes of Jay Z and P Diddy for example,” he said.

He plans to release more music this year as he continues to build his international profile.

Despite his success, Motlhalamme revealed he is currently not accepting bookings in Botswana, citing concerns over fair compensation. **BOPA**



Leatile 'LATTY' Motlhalamme said relocating to South Africa came with its own challenges, forcing him to confront his fears and grow both personally and spiritually.

Egypt celebrates spring festival

CAIRO

Under a bright spring sun on Monday, the banks of the Nile River were filled with colour as millions of Egyptians celebrated Sham El-Nessim, an ancient festival that marks the start of spring.

The holiday's name means 'smelling the breeze.' It dates back thousands of years to the time of the Pharaohs.

Today, it remains a special day that brings all Egyptians together, no matter their religion or social status, to eat salted fish and painted eggs in the fresh air. But this year, the celebration felt the weight of a tough economy. Egypt is currently facing high inflation.

The price of salted fish, an

important part of the holiday meal, rose by about 30 percent this year due to higher fuel and shipping costs.

In Helwan, a green district south of Cairo, the parks were crowded despite the costs. Magdy Salib, a government worker, spent the day with his wife and two children.

He said the tradition is part of who they are.

“We are living through a time of high prices, and the fish is more expensive this year,” Salib said.

“But this is a ritual we can't skip. It is the one day that brings every Egyptian together.”

In Cairo's busy markets, the high prices have changed how people shop. Mohamed Ali, who has sold salted fish for 35 years,

said his shop was still crowded, but people were choosing cheaper options.

“Many families are buying herring this year because it costs less than fesikh (fermented mullet),” Mr. Ali said.

To help families, the Egyptian government stepped in. The Ministry of Supply sent thousands of tonnes of food to state-owned shops, selling fish and eggs at a 25 percent discount.

This help allowed many families to enjoy the feast without spending too much. For many, the holiday was a chance to forget about money and appreciate the safety of home.

With many conflicts happening in the region, the peace of a public park felt like a blessing.

Xinhua



DJ LATTY

DailySport




Ticket Prices

PREMIUM STAND
(Southern Stand at the finishing line):

Day 1 – \$170
(approximately BWP 2251)

Day 2 onwards – \$200
(approximately BWP2468)





Minister of Sport and Arts, Jacob Kelebens (right), Golden Door Sports Agency director, Glody Dube (centre) receiving P6 million sponsorship for Botswana Golden Grand Prix from FNB Botswana CEO, Steven Bogatsu during the sponsorship unveiling in Gaborone on Monday. The event is scheduled for April 26 at the National Stadium. Photo: Pheny Ramatu

FNB TITLE SPONSOR

Anastacia Sibanda
GABORONE

First National Bank Botswana (FNBB) has been the title sponsor for the Botswana Golden Grand Prix (BGGP). FNBB will inject P6 million for the meet scheduled for the April 16 in Gaborone.

Despite having been relegated to Silver status, the event is expected to attract a reasonable number of the world top athletes, more so that some athletes will use the event to acclimatise for the Debswana World Athletics Relays Gaborone 26.

Speaking at the sponsorship launch on Monday, Minister of Sport and Arts, Jacob Kelebens said FNB Botswana Golden Grand Prix will serve as a test event for the World Athletics Relays, which Botswana will host on May 02-03.

Kelebens said the event provide an opportunity to demonstrate Botswana's

readiness to deliver world class events with excellence and professionalism.

Kelebens said partnerships of such nature do a lot to anchor sport, strengthen its credibility and give it room to grow.

He said FNBB's investment was not only financial, but equally an expression of confidence in the talent, ambition and potential of Botswana.

"For us as government, this partnership reinforces our mission to develop sport as a pathway for opportunity, pride and national progress.

For the organisers, it provides the foundation required to deliver an event that meets global standards. For the nation, it is a moment to rally behind a project that unites us and showcases our capabilities to the world," he said.

Kelebens said beyond the track, the effects of the Grand Prix extended into the broader economy, because hosting

an event of this magnitude stimulates economic activity, creates opportunities for local businesses, and boosts sectors such as tourism, hospitality, creative industries, transport and services.

He added that ordinary Botswana benefit, directly and indirectly, from the success of the event, adding that it was an affirmation that sport was not only about medals but also served as a driver of development.

FNBB, Chief Executive Officer, Steven Bogatsu said Botswana was living through a defining sporting era given that athletes has changed how the world sees the country.

He said they had shown that excellence could rise from schools, communities and national discipline, and athletes have also given young people something of priceless proof, that global greatness could wear Botswana's colours.

"Proof that the world can come to

Gaborone when the standard is high enough. Proof that sport is not peripheral to national development; it is part of it," he said.

In that regard, Bogatsu said FNB Botswana Golden Grand Prix was one of the clearest expressions of the new era.

"Under the leadership of Glody Dube and with the commitment of partners across the sporting ecosystem, this event has grown into far more than a competition," he said.

Bogatsu said the event was now a platform of national significance, as it tells the world that Botswana could convene elite sport, inspire local talent and convert athletic excellence into broader economic and social value.

Furthermore, he said it demonstrates that the nation could host with confidence, organise with professionalism and compete with credibility. **BOPA**

Queiroz Black Stars coach

ACCRA

Portuguese national Carlos Queiroz has been appointed head coach of Ghana's senior men's national football team, the Black Stars, the Ghana Football Association confirmed late Monday.

The former coach of Real Madrid,

Manchester United, Portugal and Iran will lead Ghana's campaign at the 2026 FIFA World Cup, which is scheduled to take place in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Queiroz has an extensive background in world football, having led South Africa to qualification for the 2002 FIFA World Cup, guided Portugal to the knockout stage at the

2010 World Cup, and taken Iran to the 2014 and 2018 tournaments.

He has also had coaching spells with Egypt, Oman, Japan and Qatar and is expected to begin work with the Black Stars immediately. Ghana, making its fifth World Cup appearance, has been drawn in Group L alongside Panama, England and Croatia. **Xinhua**



Carlos Queiroz