

BOTSWANA

Daily News

THE PAPER THAT INFORMS AND EDUCATES

Music festivals test fans loyalty

PAGE 9



Silver Sky wins premier cup grand race

PAGE 10



NEWS

Ministry to ascertain report on two missing Batswana

PAGE 2

BUSINESS

Gaolathe pleads for common ground on eviction talks

PAGE 6

DIKGANG

Sepodisi se eme sejaro kwa Tsabong

PAGE 7

Botswana on high alert as SA reports FMD outbreak

Ministry of Lands and Agriculture urges farmers and stakeholders particularly in districts bordering South Africa; Tsabong, Good Hope, Ramotswa, Tlokweng, Kgatleng and Mahalapye to be vigilant.

STORY PAGE 3

High-tech traffic control centre to address road safety

Thato Mosinyi

GABORONE

Evidence shows that red-light violations remain a major cause of accidents in Botswana, often resulting in long-term health challenges and high medical costs, President Advocate Duma Boko has revealed.

Cont... page 3



President Advocate Duma Boko launched the modernised Traffic Signal System and Centralised Traffic Control Centre for Gaborone and surrounding areas yesterday. He stated that the launch demonstrated government's commitment to improving public safety, transport efficiency and emergency preparedness. The President also said the system provided government with accurate traffic data to strengthen transport planning and support data-driven decision-making. Photo: Phenyio Moalosi

YOU CAN DO IT ALL, RIGHT HERE AT SPAR

BILL PAYMENTS

DSTV Botswana

Sunbet .co.bw

Nimble Group Botswana

Bradlows

HiFiCorp

incredible

Sleepmasters The Bed Experts

MONEY TRANSFER

mukuru

FNB CashPlus

AIRTIME & DATA

MASCOM

orange

btc

ELECTRICITY

BOTSWANA POWER CORPORATION

SPAR



Swaneng Hill School Special Education and Resource Teacher, Ms Mahohoma Zendanemako during the commemoration of International Day for Persons with Disability in Serowe recently. She said People with Disabilities had to be accorded opportunities such as employment because they were equally deserving. Photo: Baldwin Nyamande

PWDs capable

Tshiamiso Mosetlha
SEROWE

Unemployment remains prevalent among People with Disabilities (PWDs), a situation that robs them of their dignity and diminishes their roles in the community.

This was said by Special Education and Resource Teacher at Swaneng Hill School, Ms Mahohoma Zendanemako at the People With Disabilities commemoration in Serowe recently.

She said PLWDs had to be accorded opportunities such employment, not because they were disabled but because they were deserving.

She further said they needed education, good health, clean environment and should not be discriminated against.

Ms Zendanemako also noted that PWDs must be brought on board on issues pertaining to their lives to ensure their views and needs were catered for and to accord them the necessary support when there was a need.

Their rights, she said should be recognised.

Also, she implored all to ensure that their challenges were addressed.

Encouraging PWDs, she urged them to accept themselves as that would boost their confidence and morale.

On PWDs caregivers, she said they faced daily challenges including physical and emotional strain, financial burdens, lack of adequate support and training and poor community recognition.

These stressors, she said often led to high risk of caregivers' burnout

Ms Keneilwe Thipe, deputy chairperson of Gallery Albinism in Serowe region said they were often discriminated against because of their skin colour.

and a diminished quality of life.

Kgosi Seretse Peter Khama, deputy chief of Bangwato said PWDs should be given love and not discriminated against.

He also encouraged community members and businesspeople to show support to PWDs.

One of the speakers, Ms Keneilwe Thipe, deputy chairperson of Gallery Albinism in Serowe region, shared that they were always forgotten when decisions were made.

She said they were often discriminated against because of their skin colour.

She called on government to avail services nearer to them so as to avoid travelling in scorching sun as that exposed them to the risk of contracting skin cancer.

Another speaker, Central Association of the Blind Vice Chairperson, Mr Baikaketse Lebogang decried that their grievances were not addressed, saying the business community and general populace perceived the visually challenged as incapable. **BOPA**

Ministry to ascertain report on two missing Batswana

GABORONE

The Ministry of International Relations is working on ascertaining the authenticity of the report on the matter relating to two males who allegedly fell victim to a dubious recruitment process and to establish their whereabouts and condition.

According to a press release from the ministry, the two, aged 19 and 20, are alleged to fallen victim to a deceptive recruitment process and

ended up fighting on the frontlines of the ongoing armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

The release states that the two young men were led to believe they would be enrolled in a short-term military school training programme in Russia.

According to the release, the ministry received a report saying the two allegedly found themselves deployed in active combat zones linked to the conflict.

Meanwhile, the ministry

has cautioned Batswana youth against falling prey to dubious and life-threatening international recruitment schemes, particularly those offering monetary benefits in exchange for participation in combat activities.

The ministry further urged the youth to consult relevant authorities, including Botswana diplomatic missions to verify the authenticity of any questionable recruitment offers before committing to them.

BOPA

Gontle Merafhe
GABORONE

Thanksgiving should be practiced even in times of economic hardship as gratitude is not dependent on favourable circumstances.

According to First Lady Kaone Boko remaining steadfast in faith during crisis was itself reason enough for thanksgiving and praises God.

She said this in Gaborone on Sunday at the National Prayer and Thanksgiving ceremony, which drew many worshippers from different denominations.

Ms Boko further said people united in prayer were multiplied, blessed and sustained with peace during challenging times.

“Lord, we will lift your name up high. We are saying to God, we love you and nothing will stop us from thanking our God. I pray that the Lord blesses you, keeps you, shines His face upon you and is gracious to you. I pray the Lord gives you peace,” she said.

For his part, President Advocate Duma Boko said gratitude was a function of faith, noting that one could not be grateful without faith.

He said the secret to prayer was not merely asking, but believing that what was asked for had already been received.

The President added that when he spoke, he ignored surrounding limitations and focused on visioning for the country.

“Visioning for the country is spiritual. I am never despondent,” he said. President Boko expressed gratitude to the Church, saying its prayers sustained him, his family, the Cabinet and the nation of Botswana



President Advocate Duma Boko (centre), First Lady Kaone (second right) and Vice President Ndaba Gaolathe at the Second National Thanksgiving Prayer Service in Gaborone on Sunday. Ms Boko said people united in prayer were blessed and sustained with peace during challenging times. Photo: Felicity Male

Nation unites in thanksgiving and prayer

Delivering a sermon, Calvary Apostolic Church of Botswana, Reverend Dr Lebo Rathedi acknowledged that thanksgiving was not meant for entertainment or mere spiritual upliftment, but for alignment, empowerment and spiritual positioning.

She further said the ceremony held under the theme: A Nation United in Prayer and Purpose, was a moment of repositioning, noting that unity was not optional but foundational, while purpose was divine. Dr Rathedi said unity without purpose became directionless, while purpose without

unity struggled to gain traction.

She further noted that national unity refreshed leadership, fostered respect for authority and benefited the country as a whole, adding that where unity dwelt, multiplication and consistent restoration followed.

According to Dr Rathedi, the coming together of different church denominations was a sign of alignment that would ultimately contribute to the restoration of the economy.

The ceremony was the second one following the launch of the National Prayer and Thanksgiving ceremony last year. **BOPA**

‘Intensify awareness on Lemang Dijo programme’

Marvin Motlhabane
MOSHUPA

Councillors are calling for sensitisation of the agricultural subsidy programme, Lemang Dijo, to ensure maximum uptake by subsistence farmers.

The call was made by councillors during Moshupa District Full Council meeting recently.

While the councillors welcomed the programme, they raised a number of concerns saying the one-hectare ceiling might exclude some family members with large arable fields, delays in e-voucher activation experienced under similar past initiatives including inadequate

publicity in remote settlements of some areas in Moshupa District such as Rungwana, Motshwagole and Gasita, among others.

“We welcome Lemang Dijo, but we do not want a repeat of Temo Letlotlo where some of our people only heard about the programme after the application window had closed,” one councillor remarked, prompting the house to direct the District Agricultural Office to roll out kgotla meetings and radio campaigns before the January 2026 deadline.

For his part, Department of Animal Production officer, Mr Othusitse Sebolaakhudu said applications for the Lemang Dijo grant were now open countrywide

through the Crop Management System.

He said key features of the programme as outlined, included 100 per cent government subsidy on tillage services and pesticides for up to one hectare per beneficiary, an e-voucher worth P4 400 redeemable for the subsidised services, strong emphasis on technology adoption, integrated crop-livestock-bee farming models, and a primary objective of achieving household food security and reducing reliance on drought relief.

Moreover, Mr Sebolaakhudu stressed that the programme targeted non-tax-paying Botswana citizens aged 18 and above. **BOPA**

High-tech traffic control centre to address road safety

...from page 1

Speaking at the official launch of the Traffic Signal Modernisation and Centralised Traffic Control Centre (CTCC) for Gaborone and surrounding areas, President Boko hailed the facility as an intelligence platform that would shape transport policy and urban planning for decades to come.

President Boko stated that the launch demonstrated government's commitment to improving public safety, transport efficiency and emergency preparedness.

"We have installed a unified

command centre. It is the most significant investment in integrated traffic management and crisis response infrastructure in the history of our nation," said President Boko.

He noted that the centre would provide critical information to support effective decision-making by law enforcement and the courts. "This will ensure the quicker disposal of cases and offer invaluable data for experts involved in accident management," he added. He added that the CTCC was a cornerstone of future crisis management and highlighted its role as a central coordination

hub for key stakeholders during emergencies.

"It will be the brain and heartbeat of our emergency response. It will assist in coordinating police, fire services, emergency medical services, public health authorities, and transport departments under one roof," he said.

He emphasised that a well-coordinated response was vital during disasters to avoid the confusion, miscommunication and duplication of efforts that often put citizens at risk.

Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Mr Noah Salakae, said the ministry and the Botswana

Police Service were currently finalising regulations that would govern the use of red-light and speed violation cameras for traffic enforcement.

Mr Salakae said the regulations were expected to take effect before end of the current financial year.

The project is being executed under a Design, Build, Maintain, Operate and Transfer (DBMOT) contract at a total cost of P534,164,575.00.

Having commenced in November 2017 with a contract duration of 123 months, the project is scheduled for completion in February 2028.

BOPA

Research and innovation to steer Botswana forward

Benita Magopane
GABORONE

The launch of National Research Agenda (NRA), marks a significant step toward building a dynamic research and innovation ecosystem in Botswana. Speaking at the launch, Minister of Communications and Innovation, Mr David Tshere, said the NRA signified the beginning of a strengthened national commitment to a knowledge-driven future anchored on science, technology, research, innovation and evidence-based decision-making, key pillars of national development.

Envisioning a transformed Botswana under NRA, Mr Tshere highlighted improved access to services such as remote learning and healthcare through universal connectivity.

He noted that the digital divide would be narrowed, enabling the development of smart communities while addressing unemployment and rural-urban migration.

While Botswana has strong training and research institutions, supported by sound policies, the minister said the national STI system remained fragmented.

He cited low private-sector participation, inadequate research financing and limited coordination as challenges that had constrained the measurement of progress and socio-economic impact.

He explained that the NRA provided strategic direction by aligning national research efforts across eight priority areas: agriculture, digital economy, energy, environmental sustainability, health, manufacturing, social development and mineral beneficiation.

Mr Tshere further emphasised that the NRA identified critical capability gaps requiring urgent strengthening.

These include postgraduate training and talent retention, world-class research infrastructure and digital systems, cross-sector collaboration, sustainable and diversified research funding, as well as strong research standards, ethics and data protection frameworks.

"For Botswana to thrive in the next decade, we must ensure that our policies, strategies, programmes and actions are built on evidence rather than assumption," he said, adding that the country aims to significantly increase investment in research and development (R&D).

He noted that while Africa targeted R&D spending of one per cent of GDP, and Botswana's 2012 policy set a target of two per cent, the current government had committed to an ambitious three per cent of GDP.

As a first step toward this goal, he revealed that the National Research Fund, established in November 2024, was now operational, with a Research Fund Management Committee in place to steer solution-oriented research over the next three to four years. **BOPA**

Govt to make farming attractive

Efforts to attract international partners with expertise on precision farming on

Marvin Motlhabane
KANYE

Government will adopt the precision farming model to optimise resources, boost yields and minimise environmental impact.

Addressing a kgotla meeting in Kanye on Monday, President Advocate Duma Boko highlighted his efforts to attract international partners with expertise to accelerate the rollout of precision farming in Botswana.

He noted partnerships with entities like Space AI from the United Arab Emirates, which could help transform the agricultural sector, currently contributing less than 2 per cent to the country's GDP.

Precision farming involves the use of technology to observe, measure and respond to variability in crops, soil and fields.

Rather than applying inputs such as water, fertilisers or pesticides uniformly across an entire field, the approach tailors them to specific areas based on data-driven insights.

President Boko, who was

responding to concerns raised by residents regarding agricultural subsidies further said revitalising agriculture through precision farming method would support the country's export-led economy.

"With precision farming method, farmers on one hectare will produce more than before."

He reiterated that investing in technology for production would not only raise yields but also ensure quality and high-value output.

The President said advanced precision farming technologies could even detect underground minerals, adding that experts from Space AI had demonstrated some of the rich mineral resources with which the country was blessed with.

In addition, he stressed the need for Batswana to benefit meaningfully from their produce, stating that food self-sufficiency was long overdue.

To help farmers increase yields and overcome challenges, he advocated assigning agronomists to provide ongoing mentoring for sustainable development.

He further outlined government's intention to improve market access for farmers, ensuring they sold their produce at attractive prices.

Going forward, he noted that the Botswana Agricultural Marketing Board would be the sole entity responsible for purchasing from producers at satisfactory prices.

He cautioned that farmers must be protected from exploitative buyers, adding that successful adoption of precision farming would spur agro-processing initiatives, including techniques such as chilling and freezing to preserve foodstuffs for export.

The President also urged the public to revive farming clusters, which fostered synergies through cooperation, shared resources and value-chain integration.

This approach, which is promoted by organisations like the Food Agriculture Organisation, he said had succeeded in countries such as Oman and India.

In efforts to resuscitate the Botswana Meat Commission (BMC), the President said the State-Owned Enterprise was working round clock to become profitable and address challenges, which had persisted for some time.

However, he noted that BMC had now improved on their turnaround time of paying suppliers.



Government intends to adopt the use of precision farming method, which involves the use of technology to observe, measure and respond to variability in crops, soil and fields.

As for Air Botswana, the President assured the residents that works were being done behind the scenes to revamp the company processes and turn it into a profitable entity.

On another matter, he emphasised the need to establish a Constitutional Court saying the country had for long relied on laws adopted from various jurisdictions, which did not always reflect indigenous concepts.

He therefore encouraged the nation to familiarise themselves with the implications of a Constitutional

Court.

In his welcome remarks earlier, Kgosi Malope II of Bangwaketse noted that Phase I of water reticulation and new-pipe installation was nearing completion in parts of Kanye.

He hoped Phase II would soon commence in other settlements.

Kgosi Malope II also warned about rising cases of gender-based violence and murder in the village, calling for urgent interventions.

He further highlighted alarming levels of stock theft. **BOPA**

Botswana on high alert as South Africa reports FMD outbreak

GABORONE

Botswana is on high alert following the outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in the Waterberg District in the Limpopo Province in South Africa.

According to a press release from Ministry of Lands and Agriculture, farmers and stakeholders particularly in districts bordering South Africa; Tsoabong, Good Hope, Ramotswa, Tlokweng, Kgatleng and Mahalapye have been urged to be vigilant.

As a precautionary measure, the ministry has further called for observance of FMD preventative measures. The measures, the release states are control movement of livestock by herding and kraaling

especially at night and identifying all cattle by branding and BAITs ear tags. The release further calls for any suspected signs of FMD in animals such as lameness, drooling (excessive salivation), ulcers in the mouth, muzzle and hooves be reported to the veterinary office or the Botswana Police Service.

In addition, the press release states that South African cattle livestock that have crossed into the country, Botswana livestock that have crossed into or livestock suspected to have returned from South Africa, vandalism of the disease control fence or illegal crossing at undesignated points, suspected illegal use of, or smuggling of FMD vaccine into Botswana be reported. **BOPA**

DailyNews

Published by: Department of Information Services,
Plot 37795 Wellie Seboni Drive,
Private Bag BR 139 Gaborone.
Printed by: Government Printing and Publishing
Services
Online Edition: <https://dailynews.gov.bw> email:
bopa@gov.bw email: dailynews@gov.bw
Circulation 20 000 per day except Saturdays, Sundays
and Public Holidays.

EDITORS

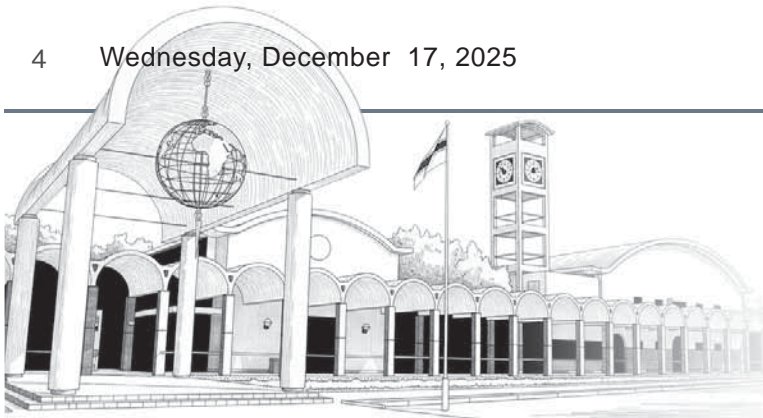
Ms Lorato Okaile
Tel: 365 3640 - lgaleage@gov.bw

Ms Masego Pilane
Tel: 365 3569 - mkpilane@gov.bw

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

HEAD OF MARKETING **HEAD OF PHOTOGRAPHY**

Ms Lucretia Chima **Mr Yobe Shonga**
Tel: 365 3574 Tel: 365 3604
lchima@gov.bw yshonga@gov.bw



PARLIAMENT 2025

Government commit to comprehensive upgrade of schools

GABORONE

The Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education, Ms Nono Kgafela-Mokoka, says government would commit during to a comprehensive overhaul of education physical infrastructure, transforming it into modern, safe, optimally fit-for-purpose, and sustainable teaching and learning environment during NDP 12.The minister was responding to a question in Parliament from Lentsweletau MP, Mr Tshenolo Bogatsu, who had asked if the minister would consider upgrading the school’s classroom capacity to cater for the ever-increasing student population, provide a timeframe for the work, and increase staff accommodation in line with the school’s capacity. This strategy she said, aimed to improve access, equity, inclusivity,

quality, and efficiency in teaching and learning, aligning with the provision of 21st Century skills. She said that Kopong Junior Secondary School was operating significantly beyond its intended capacity and requires substantial upgrades. Ms Kgafela-Mokoka acknowledged the severity of the situation, stating that Kopong Junior Secondary School was initially designed for nine streams but was currently running at 18 streams, which necessitated the construction of additional classrooms to accommodate existing students and future growth trends. For Kopong and other schools, expansion projects would address all the MP’s concerns, including the construction of additional staff houses, the upgrading of toilet facilities, and the modernisation of the administration block, hostels, and all academic facilities. **BOPA**

Lands and agriculture ministry needs 39 physical planners

GABORONE

The Ministry of Lands and Agriculture is working on rationalising some of the vacant positions to create physical planner posts for the land boards and sub land boards.

Answering a question in Parliament on behalf of the Minister of Lands and Agriculture, the Assistant Minister of Trade and Entrepreneurship, Mr Baratiwa Mathoothe said to sufficiently resource all land boards including sub land boards, a minimum of 39 additional posts for physical planners were needed.

“At this envisaged staffing level, each land board will have an assistant physical planner and the sub land board and a principal planner II at the main land board,” said Mr Mathoothe.

He explained that due to resources constraints, the ministry had no immediate capacity to hire physical planners and assistants for all land board and sub land board offices.

Currently, he said the ministry had nine vacant positions of physical planners, for which recruitment was ongoing to address critical needs at land boards and sub

land boards.

Mr Mathoothe had also indicated that the current number of physical planners employed by land boards and sub land boards across the country was 19, of which four were at Ngwato, Kgatleng and Kweneng with three each, Maletse, Ngwaketse and Tawana, two each, Tati, Chobe and Kgalagadi, one each.

He said Rolong, Tlokweng and Ghanzi were assisted by desk officers based at the Department of Town and Country Planning and Physical Planners at district councils.

Mr Mathoothe was responding to a question from Tati East MP, Mr Tlhabologo Furniture, who had asked the minister to state the number of physical planners who were employed by land boards and their location.

Mr Furniture also asked the minister to state what was being done to ensure that all land boards including sub land boards had physical planning officers in order to facilitate efficient execution of developments such as subdivision, consultation and other planning activities.

He further wanted the minister to state how long it would take to hire physical planners and their assistants for all land board offices. **BOPA**

Botswana considers citizenship by investment

Minister of Labour and Home Affairs Major General Pius Mokgware on Monday presented before Parliament a bill to introduce citizenship by investment programme. Key among the major changes in the law is the multiple citizenship, which is a departure from the dual citizenship.

Bonang Masolotatse
GABORONE

The government has brought before Parliament a bill to introduce citizenship by investment programme, to attract investors and stimulate economic growth.

The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2025 was presented by Minister of Labour and Home Affairs Maj. Gen. Mokgware on Monday.

Key among the major changes in the law is the introduction of multiple citizenship, which is a departure from the recently introduced dual citizenship and introduction of citizenship by investment, which Minister Mokgware said with the country faced with high unemployment rate, particularly among youth, the amendment aimed to lure investors who would, in turn, assist in job creation and bring more skills into the country, thus creating employment opportunities.

Unlike dual citizenship, which demands a waiting period of up to 10 years before applying, he said the citizenship programme would allow multiple citizenship, as well as allowing those interested to apply immediately.

Nonetheless, there would be set requirements they would have to

satisfy. The minister said an investor would be expected to have a set amount of money and invest in the country within an agreed period.

Failure to comply with the set contractual agreement would lead to the loss or withdrawal of Botswana citizenship.

Minister Mokgware explained that even developed countries have similar programmes targeting investors and people with specific skills, he further noted that investors would be thoroughly assessed by multiple stakeholders, including security organs, to ensure that they had no linkages or records of criminal behaviour, such as money laundering, illicit drugs, and human trafficking, among others.

He said this was to ensure that the country did not fall back into grey listing.

However, the minister said he was not in a position to state the amount of money that would be required for one to qualify for the country’s citizenship, but it would be determined by all relevant stakeholders, though the country should be competitive and also compare with what was happening in other countries.

Among the skills the country would be looking to attract include manufacturing, mining and

energy, agriculture, infrastructure, financial services, and green economy and renewable energy, among others, or such sectors that might be prescribed.

Even with Botswana citizenship, the minister said such investors would not be allowed to among others, register or vote in the general elections or any elections under the Local Government Act, hold public office, have access to free education in any school owned or funded by the government, apply for government funding, be allocated state or tribal land, and work in disciplined forces.

The money from the programme would be channeled into the Economic Citizenship, whose minister would prescribe its use, Minister Mokgware said and added that such citizens would not have to commit any financial crime while in Botswana or outside the country, and that the minister could withdraw their citizenship should they fail to fulfill their obligations.

However, Maun East MP, Mr Goretsetse Kekgonengile, said the bill looked good from a distance, as it could present good economic opportunities, but warned that it also exposed the country to financial terrorism, corruption, and eventually grey listing.

He doubted that government had the capacity to implement such a law, adding that the government had failed to implement the dual citizenship programme, especially for people living along border lines.

Mr Kekgonengile said the country lacked the capacity to implement multiple citizenship and the ability to detect money laundering.

He also said the proposed bill raised litigation dilemmas, as it intended to withhold certain rights from the programme beneficiaries, yet the Constitution bestowed such rights upon them.

The legislator therefore, called on the government to ensure that the vetting process would be thoroughly done, to protect the interests of the country, as well as the value of the country’s passport.

Letsweletau-Lephephe MP, Mr Tshenolo Bogatsu, supported the bill on the basis that it sought to introduce what many other countries were doing to grow their economies and attract skills.

Mr Bogatsu further noted that luring investors through investment could also be advantageous for rural communities, which were struggling to attract foreign direct investment.

The MP noted that most communities, like his constituency, had resources that needed investors to partner with, stressing that the bill could provide a solution, once turned into law.

He dismissed those arguing that the bill opened the door to state capture, noting that many countries had the same arrangement but had never experienced anything of the sort. **BOPA**



Minister of Labour and Home Affairs Maj. Gen. Pius Mokgware on Monday brought a bill to introduce citizenship by investment programme to attract investors and stimulate economic growth.

‘COVID-19 pandemic had long-lasting impact’

GABORONE

Based on the scientific information gathered so far, COVID-19 vaccinations have side-effects profile which are generally similar to those of routine vaccines.

The use of the vaccines and other medicines in health care are always a risk-benefit exercise, Minister of Health told Parliament recently.

Dr Stephen Modise said that following COVID-19 vaccinations, there were some adverse events recorded in Botswana but assured

the Parliament that COVID-19 vaccines remained safe to be used, to protect lives when faced with a pandemic of the proportion of COVID-19.

He said the vaccines were approved by reputable health authorities and played a crucial role in reducing severe illness, hospitalisation and deaths.

A total number of 1.7 million in Botswana received two doses, translating into a total of 3.4 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccines, Dr Modise said.



Minister of Health Dr Stephen Modise said COVID vaccines were approved by reputable health authorities and played a crucial role in reducing severe illness, hospitalisation and deaths.

SmartSwitch offered lowest bid-Moswane

GABORONE

The SmartSwitch Botswana tender was awarded and signed on August 28, 2008 as a three year-contract amounting to almost P15 million, following an open and competitive procurement process in accordance with the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets regulations.

The tender was extended multiple times primarily to ensure uninterrupted payments to vulnerable beneficiaries who rely on monthly assistance for their livelihoods.

Assistant Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Mr Ignatius Moswaane, informed Parliament.

He explained that the ministry made the extensions to largely because other companies were not competitive; the bidders quoted significantly higher charges compared to SmartSwitch Botswana who quoted a lower charge.

The ministry acknowledges that other companies could offer similar services, but past procurement evaluations exposed major shortcomings, Mr Moswaane said, adding that in 2014, an open tender was advertised and three bidders submitted.

He said some failed to meet essential technical requirements because their quotes were significantly higher, and lacked the nationwide coverage needed to reliably reach beneficiaries in remote areas.

Since the inception of the contract in August 2008, Minister Moswaane said the ministry had

spent a total of approximately P75.4 million on services provided by SmartSwitch Botswana.

The payment supports the end-to-end enablement of the smart card ecosystem, including beneficiary onboarding, transaction infrastructure deployment, and capacity building for retail partners to ensure seamless and secure benefit delivery.

Mr Moswaane pointed out that the ministry had extended the contract to end of the financial year 2025/26, to avoid service disruptions for vulnerable groups and that there are plans to decentralise social protection procurement while upholding transparency and competition.

He further stated the ministry was reviewing the payment system, including a proposed shift from in-kind support to cash-based transfers to improve efficiency, dignity, and impact as the human-rights-based transition would increase beneficiary choice and ensure a smooth, uninterrupted handover to any new service provider.

Tonota MP, Mr Gaefele Sedombo, wanted the minister to give an update on the Smartswitch company tender, which feeds beneficiaries in the Department of Social and Community Development, the period the tender was awarded and reasons for extensions over the years.

He also wanted to know if there were no other companies that qualified for the same, amount spent on Smartswitch and the ministry's plan regarding the tender. **BOPA**

‘Through vaccination and adherence to health guidelines we can safeguard our nation’s health.’

Out of this total number of doses administered, he said the country recorded eight confirmed vaccine related serious adverse events following immunisation (SAEFIs).

He said this reflected that a proportionally higher population had either mild reactions or no reactions while severe adverse effects identified included blood clotting disorders, severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis), sudden weakness of the lower limbs, severe body pains and stroke.

The minister said there was one confirmed death due to vaccine reaction. There is an established Botswana national pharmacovigilance programme to monitor and manage safety of medicines and vaccines, the components of which are existence of adverse drug reaction monitoring centers in different hospitals across the country, continued training for health care workers on timely AEFI detection and reporting, continued capacity-building for district AEFI investigation teams, monitoring and communication on vaccine safety, Dr Modise said.

The programme also includes risk communication and community engagement and assurance, as the safety signal detection through routine data analysis as well as availing standardised tools for reporting to both the public and health professionals, he added.

Minister Modise reassured the public that the COVID-19 vaccines were safe for the public and remained useful even to date.

He said while their primary

focus during the pandemic was preventing direct loss of life, they were fully aware that there might be health consequences that were substantial.

Dr Modise said the ministry was committed to monitoring these effects closely and led government efforts in restoring and improving public health even in the years to come.

“Through vaccination and adherence to health guidelines we

can safeguard our nation’s health,” he said.

Kgatlong Central MP, Mr Mpho Morolong asked the minister if COVID-19 vaccinations had significant adverse effects on the health status of the nation in general, and if any, what the noticeable effects were, and if lives were lost as a result of the vaccinations as well as plans in place to help address the challenge.

BOPA

DRTS introduces online payment platform

GABORONE

The Department of Road Transport Services (DRTS) has no plans to establish vehicle registration and licensing office at Letlhakeng due to lack of resources.

This was said by Assistant Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Mr Keoagile Atamelang, when responding to a question in Parliament that despite lack of DRTS office in Letlhakeng, the service to renew licenses was rendered through Botswana Post office in the village. In addition and in pursuit of customer convenience, the department has introduced an online platform *174# which customers can use to pay for the renewal of road licenses.

Mr Atamelang said the ministry recognised the contribution of farmers to the country’s food security. In that regard, Mr Atamelang said some incentives already extended to farmers by government was that tractors

imported into the country were zero rated and not required to pay Value Added Tax at the ports of entry.

“On a similar case, government has exempted tractor drivers from holding tractor driving license in the farm or any other road other than public road. These are among others, the efforts of government to assist farmers to produce food,” he said.

MP for Letlhakeng, Brig. Domcaza Mokgwathi had wanted to know if the ministry was aware of the difficulties of Letlhakeng residents when there was need to pay road tax for their mobile equipment.

He wanted to know the plans in place to establish DRTS office in Letlhakeng District as well as understand if it would not be in the interest of the ministry to exempt farming equipment and implements from the payment of annual road tax as an incentive to farmers who contributed to food security. **BOPA**

CSR regulations at drafting stage

Bonang Masolotatse
GABORONE

Companies with an annual turnover of over P500 million will be required to have Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, under new regulations, which are at drafting stage.

Assistant Minister of Trade and Entrepreneurship, Mr Baratiwa Mathoothe, said in Parliament on Friday that draft regulations formulation followed the passing of the Economic Inclusion Act in 2021.

Thus, he said the government could not adopt a motion by Tswapong South MP, Dr Kesitegile Gobotswang, which called on the government to introduce a law setting mandatory CSR for specified proportions of profits before tax for companies operating in Botswana.

He said the ministry was working on introducing such a requirement for companies doing business in Botswana.

Mr Mathoothe said such would target companies making an annual turnover of more than P500 million, to have CSR initiatives.

The assistant minister, who is also the MP for Serowe North, said the new administration fast-tracked the regulations after realising that there was delay in drafting of the regulations.

He said the motion requirement was addressed under the Economic Inclusion Act of 2021, adding that the regulations were at an advanced stage to be completed.

The modalities for implementation of the requirement are defined in the draft regulations, which are yet to be approved and therefore, Mr Mathoothe said it was worth noting that the CSR requirements, as stipulated in the draft regulations, related to setting up a Corporate Social Investment office to capacitate Informal, Small, Micro, and Medium Enterprises, to enable them to participate in the company’s supply chain, delivering goods, works, and services of acceptable quality and standards.

He added that the government would continue to be assessed from time to time and review the regulations pertaining to CSR, in line with global developments.

Mr Mathoothe was not in a position to state when the regulations would be ready, since the Attorney General’s Chambers was to work on finalisation of the draft.

Dr Gobotswang, during presentation, said the motion was previously rejected by Parliament, as it only targeted the mining sector but had broadened its scope.

Also, he said there were concerns that the arrangement could scare away foreigners interested in

investing in the country but his research had shown that such was not possible.

He said the other reason raised was that the motion requirement was covered by the economic inclusion law, adding that, however, it would not address the motion requisite.

Dr Gobotswang regarded the motion necessary since it provided a source of funds to poor communities affected by big companies doing business in their communities, some which enjoyed big profits but failed to invest or contribute to the host communities.

The situation is worse in mining towns, which after operations remain with old mining pits, therefore, the motion seeks to enforce fairness by ensuring that companies invest in the affected communities, Dr Gobotswang said.

Ngami MP, Mr Phillimon Aaron, supported the motion, noting that in his constituency, not all companies were giving back to the community despite doing business among them.

He said policies and regulations would not enforce companies to invest in CSR, hence the lack of effect and that what was needed was an act of Parliament, which the motion sought to introduce eventually. **BOPA**



Gaolathe pleads for common ground on eviction talks

Thato Mosinyi
GABORONE

A season that usually brings profit has turned bleak for traders operating at the Gaborone bus rank market stalls, following a recent court order directing them to vacate the area by December 31.

The traders have been ordered to pave way for a private investor contracted to refurbish the market stalls and upgrade infrastructure around the Gaborone bus rank precinct.

The directive, intended to enhance safety, efficiency, public transport vibrancy and address health and safety concerns, has sparked widespread controversy and anxiety among vendors whose livelihoods depend on informal trading.

While authorities say the move will bring order and modernisation to the urban transport hub, vendor organisations have strongly criticised the decision, arguing that it threatens the survival of hundreds of families particularly women, who make up a significant portion of the trader population.

For many vendors, trading at the bus rank is not a matter of choice but necessity, especially in a country grappling with high unemployment and economic hardship.

“The bus rank has been my source of livelihood for all these years. Where will I go after the looming eviction is implemented,” lamented long-time vendor Mr Patrick Moatshe.

Mr Moatshe, who is visually impaired, accused government of reneging on its promises to protect vulnerable groups.

Similarly distressed is Ms Otsile Tsiakokwe, who has traded at the

bus rank for over 15 years.

She said the proposed relocation would have a devastating impact on her family, particularly as she prepared for next year’s school expenses.

“My children’s school fees, monthly rent and groceries depend on this,” she said.

Ms Tsiakokwe said the relocation was ill-timed, coming at a period when family and social obligations peak due to the festive season.

She further highlighted that desperation was driving many into informal trading.

“With high unemployment and limited access to formal jobs, vending becomes a vital means of survival for many families,” she said.

Chairperson of the Gaborone bus rank traders’ association, Mr Batsweletse Mogabala, also expressed dissatisfaction, warning of dire consequences if the matter

was not urgently addressed.

He appealed to Gaborone City Council to clearly communicate where vendors would be temporarily relocated during the face-lift of the bus rank.

Mr Mogabala said displacing traders without viable income alternatives would not only disrupt livelihoods but also worsen poverty levels. “While the local authority raises legitimate concerns about the renovation, it is crucial to consider the broader socio-economic context,” he said.

Responding to the vendors’ concerns during his recent interaction with them, Vice President and Minister of Finance, Mr Ndaba Gaolathe urged both local authorities and traders to find common ground and reach an amicable solution. He acknowledged the significant contribution of the informal sector to the economy

and reaffirmed government’s commitment to its growth.

The vice president, who is also Member of Parliament for Gaborone Bonnington South, encouraged vendors to unite and form cooperatives to strengthen their bargaining power.

Meanwhile, Gaborone City Council Mayor, Mr Oarabile Motlaleng acknowledged the difficult situation facing the vendors but said the council was bound to implement the court order.

He explained that the renovation tender was awarded through a lawful expression-of-interest process. The mayor added that temporary displacement of traders was unavoidable to allow construction of a new, modern multi-level terminal, which would be implemented in three phases, with the first phase expected to be completed by the end of 2026. **BOPA**



Vendors operating at the Gaborone bus rank market stalls were recently given a court order directing them to vacate the area by December 31 to pave way for upgrading of infrastructure.

Kgwakgwe manganese oxide project takes shape

Thandy Tebogo
KANYE

The development of a commercial manganese oxide production plant near Kgwakgwe hill in Kanye is expected to begin next year.

Briefing Kanye District full council meeting recently, Giyani Metals country manager Ms Elisa Modikwa said offtake, financing agreements and project funding would take place in 2026.

“In the event that everything aligns, the construction of the commercial plant will follow and thereafter the ramping up to production in 2028 with full production in 2029 to 2030.”

Giyani Metals will produce two products; High Grade Kgwakgwe Hill Manganese Oxide and High Purity Manganese Sulphate Monohydrate used in EV batteries.

Currently in parallel with the work that they are doing in Botswana, their technical team is also doing a definitive feasibility study earmarked to be completed

in quarter one of 2026.

Ms Modikwa said the study would give the final capex of the project which was what a lot of investors were waiting for in order for them to see where they could participate and make final investment decision.

In supporting the definitive feasibility study, the team, she said, had been supporting site visits through engineering, environmental and geotechnical companies, which was to update the costs to the current market.

“As the project transition towards commercial development, the focus will be project financing which will come after conclusion of the study in 2026.”

The company has been granted a mining licence for a period of 15 years in 2024 and Environmental and Social Impact Assessment was granted in 2023.

The K-Hill ore and K-Hill project which is an open pit mine supports a 57-year-old mine life. The company has started procurement for fencing and beaconing and have identified two successful local bidders, one

bidder will be doing construction of the fence and the other beaconing.

However, Ms Modikwa further said the preliminary design of the mine’s water project was completed, waiting approval by Water Utilities Corporation, citing that they also engaged Botswana Power Corporation, finalising the route, power line submission and all the engineering designs.

One of the key component for the success of their project, she said, was the construction of the demonstration plant in Johannesburg, South Africa which its objective was to de-risk the project by providing confidence to the off-takers. Ms Modikwa said they had successfully produced the two products HPMO and HPMSM and sent them out to market for testing.

The EV battery market she noted, was very sensitive. Ms Modikwa said the off-takers wanted to take the products through rigorous qualification processes before any agreements could be signed.

She said Giyani Metals was also

conducting needs assessment survey through consultations with the Village Development Committees’ and leadership.

“The aim is to enquire about the projects that can sustain the community in Kanye and support existing projects.”

Ms Modikwa acknowledged that the project faced some site challenges and the company was working on addressing them, indicating that procurement for installation of warning and information signage’s was already under way.

Councillor Oagile Keagile of Kgwakgwe ward expressed concern about the company’s position on local procurement and empowerment as well as relocation of farmers in the area.

Councillor Tebogo Thebeyame of Lodubeng was of the view that the demo plant in Johannesburg had economic benefit to South Africans. He requested Ms Modikwa to explain how they accounted for the value of material they extracted at Kgwakgwe Hill in Kanye, urging them to uphold transparency. **BOPA**

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Molepolole TRANS Retail Store opens doors

MOLEPOLOLE-TRANS Retail Store has opened a new outlet in Molepolole. Speaking at the official opening of the store on Friday, Molepolole North MP said the move was the kind of development the village needed as it brought services to Bakwena while at the same time creating employment. He said the lives of 78 people employed by TRANS would improve. Kgosi Kgari III of Bakwena said the choice of investing in Molepolole would not only benefit the business owners but equally offer Bakwena ease of access to the goods and services offered by TRANS. TRANS Chairperson, Mr Manhar Mooney said TRANS Molepolole Store was the company’s 28th branch in the country. He said the development was a significant milestone for the TRANS family. **BOPA**

Russia and US officials meet on potential trade revival

MOSCOW - Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov met with representatives of the American Chamber of Commerce in Russia (AmCham Russia) on Monday, exchanging views on prospects for the resumption of trade and investment ties between the two countries, the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement. It was a productive exchange of views on a range of current issues, with an emphasis on the constructive role that the business community can play in giving impetus to the restoration of Russia-US trade and investment ties, the ministry stated. Later, Robert Agee, president and CEO of AmCham Russia, told the media that US exports to Russia rose by 15 per cent in 2025, while Russian exports to the United States increased by 35 per cent. **Xinhua**

China railway passenger trips hit new record in first 11 months

BEIJING - China’s railway network handled a record-high number of passenger trips during the first 11 months of 2025, data from the country’s railway operator showed Tuesday. In the January to November period, the number of railway passenger trips reached 4.28 billion across the country, up 6.6 per cent from the same period last year, according to China State Railway Group. An average of 11 258 passenger trains operated daily during the period, up 7.1 per cent year on year, the railway company said. To boost service consumption, customised train services were launched to meet the travel demand sparked by local events such as sports competitions, exhibitions and performances, according to the company. **Xinhua**

Sepodisi se eme sejaro kwa Tsabong

Cathrine Simane
TSABONG

Banni ba kgaolo ya Tsabong ba kgothaditswe go tsaya boikarabelo ka go tshwaragana le mapodisi go tihomamisa gore malatsi a boitapologo a ketekwa ka kagiso le thokgamo, setshaba se babalesegile ga mmogo le dithoto tsa bone.

Mookamela mapodisi a pharakano mo Tsabong Assistant Superintendent Johnson Gaolalolwe o buile se bosheng kwa Tsabong jaaka a ne a rola molaetsa wa letsholo la Pabalesego II, le le neng la simolodisiwa semmuso ke Tautona Advocate Duma Boko kgwedi e e fetileng e le lesome le bone, mme e wela kgwedi ya Hirikgong e le malatsi a le marataro.

Ass. Sup. Gaolalolwe o ne a tlhalosa fa maikaelelo a letsholo la Pabalesego II, e le go fedisa borukutlhi mo lefatsheng leno ka tshwaragano ya maphata a itshireletso, ka jaana kgetsi ya tsie e kgonwa ke go tshwaraganelwa.

O boletse fa go na le tse di

tshwenyang thata mo kgaolong ya gagwe go akarediwa majalwa a a titeelwang mo malwapeng. Ka jalo a re ba tlaa bo ba etse tlhoko le go sekaseka gore a majalwa ao, a siametse go ka nowa le gone gore baapei ba bojalwa ba sala ditsamaiso morago tsa majalwa a setso a a omelwang mo malwapeng.

Ass. Sup. Gaolalolwe o ne a supa fa go setse go na le dintsho tse di diragetseng mo kgaolong eo morago ga gore batho ba nwe majalwa a a titeelwang mo malwapeng mme go belaesega fa go ne go tsentswe metswako e e borai mo teng e le tsela nngwe ya go oka bareki.

Mookamela mapodisi o ne a kopa gore jaaka dikole di tswetswe, batsadi ba tshwanetse go tsaya boikarabelo jwa go tlhokomela bana ka go itse metsamao ya bone ka nako tsotlhe go ba itsa go inaakanya le nnotagi le tsa marato, dipetelelo le tlhakanelo dikobo ba sa ntse ba le bannye, ka seo se ka felela se ba senyetse bokamoso mo isagong.

A re maitemogelo a bone e

le mapodisi ka tshwaragano le barutabana ke gore baithuti ba ima fa dikole di tswetswe mme boimana bo itshupe morago ga dikole di sena go bulwa.

O ne a rotloetsa barui go tlhola leruo la bone kgapetsakgapetsa go na le go baa tsotlhe mo badiseng, ka seo gape se ba fa sebaka sa go dira borukutlhi mme e re morago ba thanye lo lo tsebeng naga e setse e le kgologolo. O ba kopile gape go atametsa meraka le malwapa e le tsela nngwe ya go fokotsa borukutlhi.

Ass. Sup. Gaolalolwe o ne a kopa banni ba kgaolo ya Tsabong go dirisa lenaneo la ntebele ke go lebele ka le na le madu. O gakolotse bakgweetsi go obamela matshwao a tsela ka nako tsotlhe, e le tsela nngwe ya go ipabalela le ba bangwe.

Fa ba bua maikaelelo a letsatsi, modulasetilo wa lekgotla la baruti mo kgaolong ya Tsabong, Moruti Ruben Mosimenyane o ne a tlhalosa fa bokopano bo itebagantse gape le go tswala merapelo.

Ka jalo, o ne a rotloetsa botlhe ba ba tshelang ka mogare wa HIV go tswela ba tsaya ka tlhwaafalo dipilisi tsa ARV go thusa go lelefatsa malatsi a bone a botshelo.

Mogolwane go tswa kwa BOSASNET mo Tsabong, Mme Malebogo Letang o ne a tlhalosa fa mokgatlho wa bone o itebagantse le go thusa ka tshidilo maikutlo ba ba iphitlhelang ba tshwaragane le bothata jwa go tshela ka tiriso ya bojalwa le motsoko.

Mme Letang o ne a gwetlha bogolo jang banana jaaka malatsi a boitapologo a atamela go ikgapa mo go itonteleng dinotagi le kgokgontsho a supa fa ditiragalo tseo di le kwa godimo thata mo kgaolong ya Tsabong.

Mogolwane go tswa mo lephateng la Bong mo Tsabong, Rre Calvin Sefako o ne a supa fa ba itemogetse kgokgontsho e ntsi mo kgaolong eo mme sebe sa phiri e le “phithhela kgomo ya serotswana” ka gantsi batsadi ba bipa mpa ka mabele.

Are dikgang tsa petelelo le tlhakanelo dikobo le bana ba basetsanyana ba ba kwa tlase ga dingwaga tse di lesome le boferabobedi ga se gansti di begiwa.

Rre Sefako o boletse fa dikgang tseo di diragalela bana ba dikhutsana mme a kgothatsa banni le setshaba ka karetsa ga mmogo le boeteledipele go tsaya boikarabelo ka go emela ditshwanelo tsa bana ka dinao.

Fa a leboga, kgosana Piet Kaartzee o ne a supa fa maikaelelo e le go tsibogela dikgang tsedi ba tshwenyang segolo jang tsa majalwa a a titeelwang mo malwapeng ka ba lemogile fa a sa siamela botsogo. **BOPA**

Makhanselara a kopa Xuoxau go lemogiwa

Go tlhatlosa motsana oo, go ka atumetsa ditlamelo kwa bathong ba metsana e e mabapi jaaka Daunara le Xharaxao

Esther Mmolai
MAUN

Ere ka puso e rotloetsa gore Batswana ba tshwanetse ba akola ditlamelo ka tekatekano go sena kgethololo, makhanselara mangwe a kgaolo ya bokone bophirima a kopile gore Xuoxau a lemogiwe ka fa molaong jaaka motse.

Motsana o, o fitlhelwa mo makgobokgobong a Okavango mme o wela mo kgaolwaneng ya bokhanselara ya Bojanala e e okametseng metsana yotlhe e e sa lemogiwang mme seo se rontsha banni go akola ditlamelo tse di maleba jaaka Batswana ba bangwe.

Fa ba akgela mo pegong ya modulasetilo wa khansela mo phuthegong e e tswetseng ya khansela, bangwe ba makhanselara ba ne ba dumalana gore motsana wa Xuoxau bogolo o lemogiwe gore banni ba metsana e mengwe ba kgone go akola ditlamelo bogaufi.

Ba re maiteko a, ga se a ntlha ka gore ka ngwaga wa 2017 ba ne ba kopela motsana wa Ditshiping go lemogiwa, mme ba seka ba tswa tema.

Bogogi bo bone go tshwanela gore bogolo ba lekele motsana wa Xuoxau ka jaana o le gaufi le Maun. Mokhanselara wa kgaolwana eo, Rre Monopane Monamanga a re go ka nna motlhofo gore Xuoxau a lemogiwe ka jaana motsana oo o na le kgosana ya tetlanyo e e duelwang ke puso.

Go tlhatlosa motsana oo, a re go ka atumetsa ditlamelo kwa bathong ba metsana e e mabapi jaaka Daunara le Xharaxao.

A re fa kopo e ka atlega e tlaabo e le kgatelo pele e tona ka jaana metse yotlhe e a e emetseng go

sena ope yo o lemogiwang jaaka motse.

O ne gape a lebogela maiteko a go lwantsha setlhatshana sa Mochimambo se se anameng mo makgobokgobong e bile se kgoreletsa le motsamao wa metsi.

A re go a itumedisa go bona dikompone di tsaya karolo mo go lwantsheng setlhatshana seo go fokotsa manokonoko a sone.

Mokhanselara wa kgaolwana ya Botshabelo/Shashe, Rre Keakgoletse Bokhutlo ene o ne a lebogela maiteko a khansela a go itsalanya le mafatshe a mangwe jaaka China a re lefatshe leo ke lengwe le ba ka anyang go le gontsi mo go lone bogolo jang mo mohameng wa tsa thuto le bojanala.

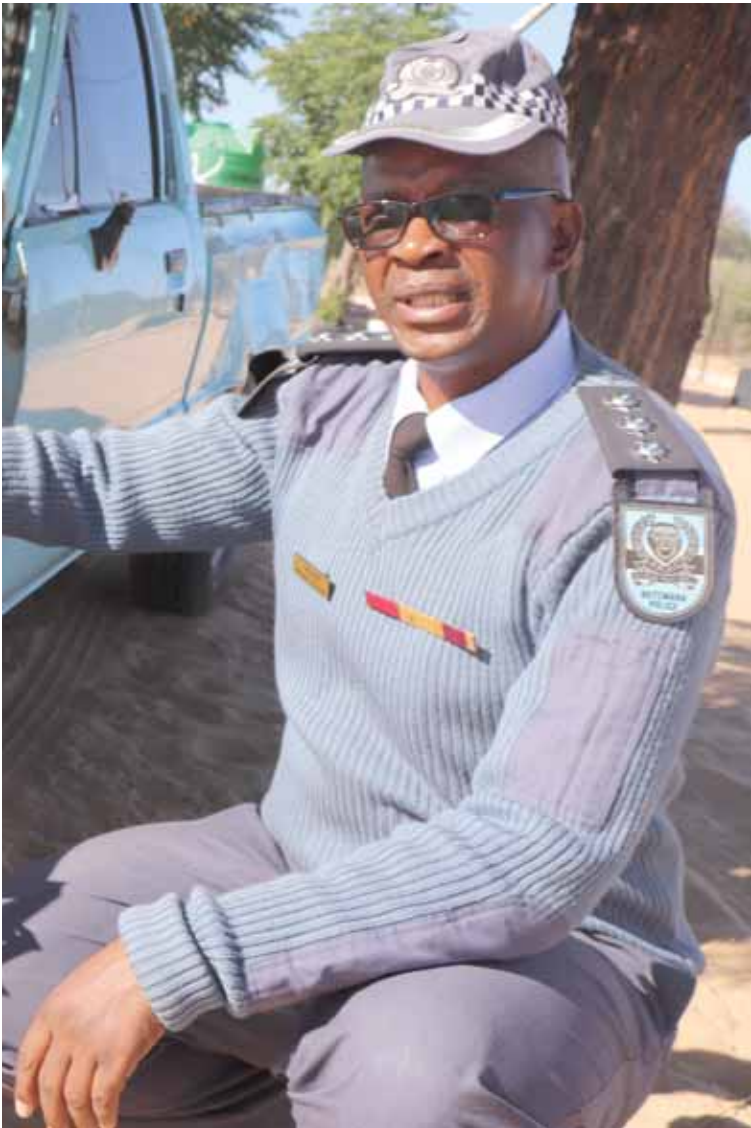
Le fa go ntse jalo, o ne a kopa ba ba maleba go tsibogela seemo kwa kgaolwaneng ya Botshabelo kwa banni bangwe batlaa fudusetswang teng a supa fa lefatshe leo le tshabelelwa ke morwalela.

E re ka dipula di tswetsetse ka go tshologa mo kgaolong, Rre Bokhutlo o kaile fa malwapa mangwe a setse a apesitswe ke metsi e bile metsamao ya banni e kgoreletsega.

“Seemo se se batla go tsibogelwa ka bofefo pele ga se bifela pele. Tota lefatshe le lesikileng go fudusetsa banni ga le a babalesega ka jalo ke kopa ba ba maleba go tsaya kgato go ise go nne le tshenyo e tona,” a tlatsa jalo.

Mokhanselara wa Toteng, Rre Petrus Mbaeva o ne a kopa ba sepodisi go bula ofisi kwa Toteng a supa fa motse o godile e bile o aparetswe ke bogodu.

A re fa ofisi e le gaufi, o dumela gore seemo se ka tokafala ka jaana banni ba tlaa bona ditlamelo gaufi. **BOPA**



Mookamela mapodisi a pharakano mo Tsabong, Assistant Superintendent Johnson Gaolalolwe o kgothaditse banni go tsaya boikarabelo ka go tshwaragana le mapodisi go tihomamisa gore malatsi a boitapologo a ketekwa ka kagiso le thokgamo.



Serowe Council chairperson, Mr Atang Tlhaga (centre) during a consultative meeting on National Health Insurance by the health ministry in Serowe on Tuesday. Mr Tlhaga said consultation was the best way to give Batswana a voice in policy making. Photo: Baldwin Nyamande

Resilient systems crucial for National Health Insurance

Keamogetse Setilo
SEROWE

Serowe residents have proposed enactment of National Health Insurance only after the public health sector has been revitalised.

This was brought to the fore during a consultative kgotla meeting on National Health Insurance in Serowe on Tuesday.

A resident, Mr Moses Monthe said public health was at its lowest, plagued by medicine shortages for both prevention and treatment, long delays in booking specialists, and lack of manpower, along with increasing incidents of cancer diagnosis.

Furthermore, Mr Monthe proposed that the health insurance policy should encompass all citizens and not separate individuals by class.

He was worried that classification would lead to the elites gaining more advantages while the disadvantaged received little support.

Mr Monthe suggested that funds from the plastic levy be directed to the National Health Insurance, as it produced significant revenue that could help in supporting citizens.

For his part, Serowe District Council chairperson, Mr Atamelang Thaga recommended that the health insurance policy should allocate specific funds for cancer therapies.

He suggested that to meet the required number of doctors and specialists, government ought to evaluate the return on investment for students they had funded to undertake medical degrees.

Moreover, he proposed that the government should create a

watertight formal agreement with those receiving sponsorships to enhance the return on investment.

A resident who preferred anonymity emphasised the importance of resolving all issues bedeviling the ministry prior to starting the implementation of the National Health Insurance policy.

Furthermore, suggestions were made that efforts should focus on research and partnerships related to indigenous knowledge and medicine, potentially resulting in the development of treatments for different ailments.

Earlier on, Dr Keatlaretse Siamisang from the Ministry of Health had challenged residents to express their views on potential improvements in the ministry, their preferences for health insurance development, anticipated benefits, and implementation strategies.

BOPA

Molepolole bus rank ready for use

Thokozeni Matihla
MOLEPOLOLE

The Molepolole bus and taxi rank facility is expected to foster economic growth and improve efficiency of the transport system.

In a statement to mark its operationalisation, the Assistant Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Mr Ignatius Moswaane said the facility, situated at Borakalalo Ward was part of ongoing efforts to upgrade the village transport network.

He said the facility that was completed in 2017, and remained unused, was not because it lacked infrastructure but lacked collective acceptance.

“We must be honest enough to say that the community had concerns, taxi and bus operators had their reservations as well. Agreeing to what happened in the past is not weakness but leadership, and that is what gives power to change the situation,” he said.

The assistant minister noted that while the facility location was a point of contention, the residents should appreciate the economic boost that comes with the infrastructure.

Mr Moswaane said by leaving the bus rank to turn into a white elephant, government would be depriving the community opportunities that would benefit local businesses.

He said bus and taxi operators



Assistant Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Mr Ignatius Moswaane

We must be honest enough to say that the community had concerns, taxi and bus operators had their reservations as well. Agreeing to what happened in the past is not weakness but leadership, and that is what gives power to change the situation

including commuters were not merely users of the bus rank but partners, noting that the lifespan of the facility was dependent on their cooperation.

Welcoming guests, Kgosi Kgari III acknowledged that there had been disagreements in the past on the bus rank location. Nonetheless, he said commuters and stakeholders should come together and put it to good use as government resources were used to build the infrastructure.

Giving an overview roadmap, the Kweneng District Council chairperson, Mr Ontefetse Rankhibidu said the facility would benefit Bakwena by also creating employment through the 117 stalls.

Mr Rankhibidu pointed out that the project was part of his chairperson’s strategic roadmap for 2025-2030 themed: Your Ride, Your Bus Rank, Your Future.

He further said the council had set aside budget of P4.5 million dedicated to fixing and making improvements on the rank.

He applauded the Molepolole business community for funding and making the event a success.

Bakwena Taxi Association representative, Mr Mosamare Gasefetoge urged all to keep the facility to standard. He also requested that the rank be equipped with a luggage room for safe keeping of customers’ belongings that might have been misplaced. **BOPA**

Hunyepa commends Tafa Foundation

Kelebogile Taolo
FRANCISTOWN

Assistant Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education, Mr Justin Hunyepa has commended Tafa Foundation for its initiative of taking children to scout camps for character building.

Speaking at a Character Building Workshop organised by the foundation in Francistown on Monday, Mr Hunyepa said the scout camps were an investment in the future as they instilled discipline and positive values in children.

“Society needs children who are disciplined, responsible and respectful, who can contribute positively to the nation. What you are doing is very much appreciated,” he said.

Mr Hunyepa noted that through its leadership in promoting and sustaining the

scout movement in Botswana, Tafa Foundation demonstrated a patriotic commitment to the holistic development of children.

In reference to the theme: Nurturing the Whole Child: Body, Mind and Attitude, Mr Hunyepa said it reflected the kind of Botswana the nation aspired to build, one that nurtured children’s attitudes, mindsets and behaviour.

He emphasised that the scout movement played a critical role in shaping children into disciplined, responsible, caring and patriotic citizens, teaching values such as teamwork, respect and leadership that could not be learned in the classrooms alone.

However, he stressed that discipline and child upbringing began at home.

“If we get it right at home, we will get it right at school.

Teachers, as loco parents, are not replacing parents; they are

completing what parents start at home,” he said, adding that schools should be centres of learning rather than punishment.

Mr Hunyepa urged parents to raise children well at home and encouraged young participants to reject indiscipline.

“If you follow what you are taught here, you will become successful leaders of tomorrow,” he said.

Meanwhile, the founder of Tafa Foundation, Mr Godknows Tafa, said the non-profit organisation was mandated to nurture children through character-building camps and academic excellence programmes.

He said the foundation believed discipline was the cornerstone of success, noting that socialisation and meaningful connections were impossible without discipline. About 40 children are part of the scout camp, scheduled to run from December 15 to 22. **BOPA**



Assistant Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education, Mr Justin Hunyepa (left) addressing children ahead of a boot camp facilitated by Tafa Foundation in Francistown on Monday. Mr Hunyepa said by teaching children respect, responsibility and self-control at home, schools become centres of learning and not centres of punishment.

Photo: Ogopoleng Kgomoethata



Music festivals test fans loyalty



Ketshepile More
GABORONE

The Christmas and New Year's Day festivities have kicked in and across the country, a familiar sound is dominating the airwaves, the booming bass of South African and local hits played on repeat. This year, however, the festive cheer comes with a twist of high-stakes competition. Forget the usual holiday rush, the real battleground is the music scene.

With three massive festivals, Born and Raised in Serowe, Kanye Festive Xplosion (K.F.X) in Kanye and the newcomer Pacers Live in Thamaga, all scheduled for the same night on December 20, music lovers must now make a difficult choice. Will they follow the headlining acts or stick with brands they have been loyal to?

One Berthold Auerbach says, "Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life," and its universal, emotional depth is often emphasised during this season of festivities.

Some say without music, life would be lifeless, for life comes and goes, but music comes and stays. It is the sound of the heart that stirs when the beat of music is played.

While music is enjoyed all year round, with new songs now blasting the airwaves, it somehow feels different during the Christmas holiday: as if hit songs are only produced in December, or that songs resonate in a particular way this time of year.

This season is synonymous with loud music, with what are perceived as hit songs on repeat. One can hear them playing from loud car radios, shopping malls, and households.

Now, although three shows are

held on the same date in different places, which would under normal circumstances mean a good thing for revellers, perhaps reducing travel congestion and crowding at the mentioned events, the question remains - How will the turnout at these events be? Will it be determined by loyalty or by headline acts?

One thing about Batswana is their loyalty to a brand, especially one that has been consistent. Born and Raised has its prints on Batswana's hearts, and its patrons, especially those from the Central District, have not been shaken; they even buy the merchandise year in, year out. It is the same with K.F.X, it is the patrons from the Southern part of Botswana who flock to Kanye for this event. The event has proved to be a great experience for its patrons over the years, slowly building a brand that is now on everyone's lips come this season.

However, because of the magnitude of these events, loyal revellers from both sides of the country have always attended both events, especially since they have not always had the same date for their events.

On one hand, Pacers Live comes in as a new baby, bringing luxury and a whole A-List lineup of favourite trending acts from South Africa with hit songs 'perfect for the festive season.'

B u t

luxury does not come cheap and while patrons welcomed the refreshing aspect of entertainment that Pacers Live is bringing, others have qualms about the ticket price, as well as the risk that

With three massive festivals, Born and Raised in Serowe, Kanye Festive Xplosion (K.F.X) in Kanye and the newcomer Pacers Live in Thamaga, all scheduled for the same night on December 20, music lovers must now make a difficult choice.



Scavenja

almost all of the trending acts from South Africa may not honour the show and perform.

After all, Batswana have experienced on many occasions a no-show from their favourite artists at music festivals, with reasons ranging from missing flights, double bookings in Botswana and sometimes both in Botswana and elsewhere.

Now, loyalty will be tested this year, especially for K.F.X and Pacers Live, as they are both in the Southern part of Botswana with a proximity of approximately 40km. Herein comes the issue of safety on the roads, as speed, substance use and careless driving come into play, as revellers tend to be over-excited during the festive season.

As much as the two are not so distant apart from each other, perhaps patrons should in this instance make a definite decision on which event they are supporting. After all, some of the artistes are double-booked at both shows and even at Born and Raised. Scott Maphuma and Culture Spears are both booked at Born and Raised and Pacers Live, while Young Stunna has a double booking for Pacers Live and K.F.X and Charma Gal is booked at both K.F.X and Born and Raised.

K.F.X ticketing is simple and affordable for the average patron, to spoil themselves with a VIP ticket. A general ticket is P200 and P250 at the gate, with P600 as VIP, which includes secured parking, private

restrooms, security, a cash bar and a food stall.

While the general ticket for Born and Raised is the same as K.F.X at P200, they went a little pricey in their VIP themed packages. The #barelogelle package is P1 300 inclusive of one tag, a welcome drink, cash bar, seating and parking.

The #tiroentsikopele VIP package goes for P5 000 and admits two people, with two spirit beverage bottles and six mixers, VIP seating and parking, a dedicated waiter, security, as well as finger foods. The ultimate P10 000 package, the #retsamelagonekoo, is inclusive of four tags, three spirit beverage bottles and six mixers, VIP seating and parking, finger foods, as well as dedicated security and a waiter.

Although their general ticket is also affordable at P200 single and P380 double, Pacers Live is definitely giving luxury with their VIP packages.

Their single VIP is P600 and double VIP is priced at P1 000. And, the luxury is in their gold packages, with a P10 000 package admitting five people with a bar tab of P5 000.

Another package of P15 000 admits seven people and comes with a bar tab of P8 000, while the P20 000 package admits 10 people and offers a bar tab of P12 000. All these gold packages include VVIP tags, a food platter, hubbly (hookah/shisha), a dedicated waiter, as well as a Pacers Live T-shirt and cup.

As you decide which event to attend and relax after a hectic year, remember there is normalcy that will follow in the new season of 2026. Schools' expenses in January and more bills to think about as the year starts. Spend with care and caution. Happy holidays! **BOPA**

Lodubeng Village Park to host picnic December 27

Banyatsi Banyatsi
KANYE

Lodubeng Village Park in Kanye is gearing up to host a family picnic on December 27.

The festivities are expected to kick off at midnight and run into the following day.

Babina Kwena Picnic organiaer, Amantle Goitsemodimo described the outing as a fit for all event.

"The picnic is organised by a youth, and as an upcoming Hip-Hop and RnB artist and DJ, I'm excited to bring people together. I hope Batswana will support us and attend in large numbers. Part

of the proceeds will be donated to the less privileged children," said Goitsemodimo. T.H.A.BO, Veveveh, DJ Bunny, BJB, DJ Bistar, Flashkid, Tinerman Kwaito, Mr Zaski, Lefredo, are

among entertainers who will perform at the event. This is a platform that aims to promote emerging artists, by giving them an opportunity to showcase their talent, Goitsemodimo said. **BOPA**



Silver Sky wins premier cup grand race

Esther Mmolai
SAMEDUPI

TT Horse Racing Events staged a thrilling and exciting eighth edition of the Premier Champion Cup horse racing at Masa Racing Park in Samedupi, a few kilometres from Maun.

The event marked the first time the race was held in the North West district since its inception in 2018. The activity attracted quality top horses from Botswana, Namibia and South Africa to battle it out for the prize money.

The spectacular event also brought together thousands of spectators from all walks of life to experience and witness the excitement that comes with the competition, as well as the beauty of the fast-paced and majestic animals. Some fans took part in betting on the races, which added another layer of excitement and anticipation.

All eyes were on the famous thoroughbred horse, ‘Western Bypass’,

which had achieved multiple victories in high-profile races this year, but it did not compete due to an injury.

Owned by Tymon Kelebeng from Motokwe, Western Bypass had consistently performed well in several races, including winning the grand race of 2 400 metres. It was crowned the champion of the second edition of the Masa Horse race as well as the Makgadikgadi Salt Pan Challenge this year, pocketing P30 000 in each race. The absence of the horse from the race left its fans disappointed.

However, Silver Sky, owned by Gotlhophemang Alone from Takatokwane, became the champion of the Premier Champion Cup grand race and walked away P32 000 richer. Super Jet and Aftershock horses, owned by Kelebeng and Piet Bruwer respectively, both from Motokwe, settled for position two and three and pocketed P20 000 and P10 000 respectively.

The speedy Silver Sky, also stole the show in a competitive opening race of the 1 600-metre category, claiming first position and a reward of P10 000, followed by Aftershock and Forever Young in second and third place, whose

owners walked away with P7 000 and P5 000 respectively. Namibian horses also took turns dominating some of the races.

The event featured two categories: Tswana and Thoroughbreds, with races ranging from 1 000 to 2 400 metres.

In an interview, the joyful Alone thanked his fans, saying their support always motivated him, the horse trainer and the jockey to do their best in preparing the horse, hence its continued excellence in several races. Silver Sky also outclassed other horses in the just-ended Charles Hill Racing Cup.

“I deserved to win because I prepared my horses very well for the race with the aim of becoming champs in all races,” he added.

He encouraged fellow horse owners to exercise patience and take care of their horses despite the high maintenance, citing that if horses were in good condition, they could bring good results.

The event organiser, also the Botswana Horse Racing Association president, Kelebeng, commended horse owners for their commitment in taking care of the horses and ensuring that they participated in the race.

He said horse racing was a big industry

that could diversify the economy, creating employment opportunities for young people, as most jockeys were youth from rural areas. He urged government and potential sponsors to continue supporting the sector to ensure development and growth.

“The majority of our jockeys are from disadvantaged families and through horse racing, we are trying to uplift their living conditions through the monies they win from various races. Horse racing is part of the local culture and also an economic opportunity,” he added.

To see the sector growing, Kelebeng said, was a strong indication that the sport was loved by many people and was here to stay, noting that the sport could also be seen as a way to bring people together from different backgrounds and cultures who shared a common interest in the sport.

While he appreciated that horse racing had become an important source of income for many people involved in the industry, from jockeys to trainers to owners, Kelebeng revealed that it also stimulated the local economy as small businesses bought stalls to earn better profits. **BOPA**



TT Horsing Racing Events staged an exciting eighth edition of the Premier Champion Cup horse racing at Masa Racing Park in Samedupi, a few kilometres from Maun. The event, which attracted top horses from Botswana, Namibia and South Africa saw Silver Sky, owned by Gotlhophemang Alone from Takatokwane, being crowned the champion of the race, winning P32,000. Photo: Esther Mmolai