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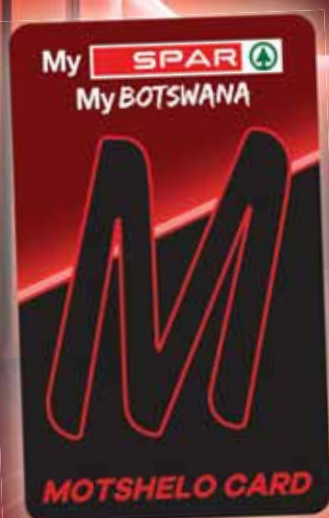
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Botswana, Namibia sign TKR project communique

Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Mr Noah Salakae (left) and Namibia Minister of Works and Transport Mr Veikko Nekundi signed the joint communique during a special Joint Ministerial Committee of the Trans-Kalahari Railway project in Maun on Friday. Mr Salakae said TKR was an ambitious project, primarily focused on linking the two countries, enhancing trade and equally contributing to the envisaged dream of opening up trade in Africa, through the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement.

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TKR to open global markets for region

By Esther Mmolai

MAUN - The minister of Roads and Infrastructure, Mr Noah Salakae has underscored the need to recognise the natural synergies between the proposed project and the existing Trans Kalahari Corridor (TKC), linking South Africa, Botswana and Namibia.

Mr Salakae said both corridors (TKR and TKC) shared a strategic objective of connecting the concerned countries to global markets through fast, efficient and reliable transport.

Speaking at the special joint ministerial meeting in Maun on Friday to appreciate progress on the envisaged TKR, Mr Salakae said aligning the two projects would create a fully integrated multi-modal corridor that combined rail, road and border infrastructure offering traders and investors a seamless logistics platform.

“Merging our planning and governance structures will

avoid duplication, optimise resources and strengthen our case for international financing. Together, the railway and the road can form a single economic spine across Southern Africa, multiplying the benefits for every community along the route,” he added.

Mr Salakae further described the project as an ambitious undertaking that would link Namibia and Botswana, and by extension, connect their economies more firmly into the continental and global trade system.

He said TKR was highly important, therefore potential chances of failure must never see the light of the day.

Mr Salakae said it was more than a railway line, as it promised faster, more efficient trade, new jobs and new skills.

He added that the project promised to advance goals of economic diversification, poverty reduction and inclusive growth.

“The feasibility study must therefore look beyond engineering drawings and cargo forecasts. It must integrate spatial planning, development policy, and investment attraction strategies so that every kilometre of track contributes to the long-term prosperity of our nations,” said Mr Salakae.

Meanwhile, his counterpart, the Minister of Works and Transport from Namibia, Mr Veikko Nekundi also said

the TKR was an initiative of strategic value to both Botswana and Namibia as well as the SADC region.

Mr Nekundi said the two countries were building more than just an infrastructure project but a legacy of cooperation, mutual benefit and regional integration as envisioned by their founding fathers the SADC protocols and the African Continental Free Trade Area.

In appreciating the feasibility

study report, he said, ‘feasibility study, to my understanding, means the evaluation and analysis of the potential of a project which aims at supporting the process of decision-making by objectively and rationally uncovering its strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats, as well as identifying the resources required to carry it through and ultimately its prospects for success.’”**BOPA**

Minister commends public officers

By Naomi Leepile

TSABONG - Public servants in Tsabong District have been commended for dedication and commitment to addressing the region’s challenges.

The Assistant Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Mr Keoagile Atamelang was engaged in a three-day consultation with public servants, in preparation for the drafting the National Development Plan 12 (NDP 12).

Addressing a district staff meeting on Friday in Tsabong, Mr Atamelang acknowledged the hurdles they faced, including a shortage of resources, obsolete equipment, insufficient staff accommodation, all of which impacted productivity.

Despite the obstacles, Mr Atamelang commended their efforts, urging them to maintain dedication, emphasising that hard work was crucial for the country’s development.

Mr Atamelang also called for greater agility and a sense of ownership among the employees, stressing the importance of making timely and informed decisions, particularly concerning construction tenders that often experience prolonged delays.

The assistant minister’s itinerary was focused on key infrastructure projects and staff engagement. He visited the Omaweneno Road Resealing site and the Werda Station, followed by a meeting with staff at Tsabong.

The tour also included a visit to the McCarthy’s Rust Border

to inspect the resealing of the road and to express appreciation to the staff stationed at the borderpost.

Mr Atamelang’s visit underscored government commitment to collaborative governance and to incorporating grassroots ideas into national development strategies.

He encouraged staff to contribute suggestions, saying that their input was invaluable for the country’s progress. **BOPA**



Minister of Works and Transport from Namibia, Mr Veikko Nekundi(left) and Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Mr Noah Salakae during a special Joint Ministerial Meeting in Maun on Friday. The meeting aimed to appreciate progress on the Trans-Kalahari Railway project that linked Botswana and Namibia. Photo courtesy of the ministry of Transport and Infrastructure

Motshegwa consoles Motlhasedi family

By Chendzimu Manyepedza

TOBANE - The Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Mr Ketlhalefile Motshegwa, emphasised the need for unity and collective support within the Motlhasedi family, as well as the broader community of Tobane, following the loss of Kgosi Tlhako Motlhasedi.

Kgosi Motlhasedi died on Monday at Nyagabgwe Referral Hospital, where he was receiving treatment.

Conveying condolences during his visit to the Motlhasedi homestead on Friday, Mr Motshegwa said providing support during the time of grief was important noting that while religious leaders provided words of comfort and guidance, the family and friends should also find concrete supportive ways.

“Losing a loved one is one of the most painful experiences one can endure. During such

difficult times, it is vital to come together and support each other. Offering comfort should not solely rest on our pastors and religious leaders; each of us has a role to play in providing support, comfort, and love for those who are hurting,” he stated.

Kgosi Motlhasedi(62) became Tobane Kgosi in 2020, initially serving as the headman of arbitration.

He was later promoted to the position of Headman of Records in 2023, a title he held until his death.

The family spokesperson, Mr Dinti Motlhasedi, said that Kgosi Motlhasedi would be laid to rest on Saturday.

He indicated that preparations for a memorial service to honour the legacy of the late Kgosi Motlhasedi were underway.

“The passing of Kgosi Motlhasedi is not only the loss of a leader but also the loss of a father figure for all of us.

He embodied the values of unity and kindness, imparting lessons through both his words and actions.

“We are committed to honouring and continuing his teachings as we navigate this difficult time,” he said. **BOPA**



Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs Mr Ketlhalefile Motshegwa offering condolences to the Motlhasedi family following the loss of Kgosi Tlhako Motlhasedi of Tobane. Photo: Chendzimu Manyepedza

Botswana, Namibia sign communique

By Esther Mmolai

MAUN - Botswana and Namibia have signed a joint communique to underscore continued commitment of both countries to the successful implementation of the Trans-Kalahari Railway (TKR) Project.

Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Mr Noah Salakae and his Namibia counterpart, Mr Veikko Nekundi, from the Ministry of Works and Transport signed the joint communique during a special Joint Ministerial Committee of the Trans-Kalahari Railway Project in Maun on Friday.

The occasion was to appreciate progress on the envisaged project undertaken through a bilateral agreement between governments of Namibia and Botswana, which was signed in March 2014.

The two ministers were impressed by the progress that has been achieved since the last sitting in Kasane.

Deliverables achieved between May 23 and August 14, 2025 included the inception report approved June 30, approval of a bench marking exercise scheduled for September 2025 and submission of the needs assessment and solution options report.

Additionally, both ministers further acknowledged that the project was on track and within budget in line with the approved roadmap.

The Trans-Kalahari Railway project is a strategic infrastructure initiative, aimed at enhancing regional connectivity, trade and socio-economic development between Botswana, Namibia, and the wider Southern African region.

Minister Nekundi said he was looking forward for the envisage project to become a reality and benefit both

countries in as far as economic development was concerned.

He acknowledged that the TKR project was more than just a railway project, but a strategic instrument that would unlock regional trade, create jobs, and stimulate investment in Namibia, Botswana and beyond.

On the other hand, Mr Salakae said TKR was an ambitious project, primarily focused on linking the two countries, enhancing trade and equally contributing to the envisaged dream of opening up trade in Africa, through the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).

He said the agreement aimed to create a single market for goods and services as well as deepen economic integration and enhance Africa's competitiveness.

"Africa has gone a step up to say for purposes of facilitating trade especially bulk commodities, how about if we meet, collaborate and build railway lines so that we ease pressure on the roads and this is exactly what we are doing under the TKR project," he added.

Mr Salakae further said the AfCFTA would not only be opening up trade in goods as people, ideas and investments would also move into and unlock parts of the continent that were left behind. **BOPA**



Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr Dithapelo Keorapetse (left), Advisor of the Chairperson of the African Union Committee, Mr Lahcen Kers (centre) and Deputy Ambassador of Botswana in Ethiopia Ms Poppy Mhambi during the Courtesy call in Gaborone on Friday. Mr Keorapetse said while Africans have overwhelmingly rejected alternatives to democratic rule, continental leaders have failed to deliver on its promise. Photo: Teko Letsholo

'Africans support democracy despite leaders failing to deliver'

By Bonang Masolotatse

GABORONE - Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr Dithapelo Keorapetse, says while Africans have overwhelmingly rejected alternatives to democratic rule, continental leaders have failed to deliver on its promise.

He said this at a meeting with an African Union (AU) Commission delegation led by Director of Strategic Planning and Delivery, Ms Botho Bayedi recently.

Mr Keorapetse referenced the Afro-barometer survey of 39

African countries, which showed that citizens favoured democracy and rejected one-party rule, military rule and corruption.

He thus emphasised the crucial role of parliaments in safeguarding democracy and holding the executive accountable.

"Parliament takes its mandate seriously in the broader context of safeguarding democracy and aspires to strengthen its institutional capacity as a member of the Pan-African Parliament and the Southern African Development Community

Parliamentary Forum. It has the power to hold the executive accountable," he said.

Mr Keorapetse also highlighted the importance of dialogue with the AU and other partners on key issues, including the death penalty, corporal punishment, indigenous rights as well as the establishment of a constitutional court.

"As such, the visit is timely as there are ongoing debates on such key issues.

We need the dialogue, assistance and engagement with the African Union Commission," he added.

For her part, Ms Bayedi highlighted the need for Botswana to incorporate the AU's Agenda 2063 into its national development plans.

She indicated that the continent's long-term strategy was not a competitor, but a complementary to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

"Both of them are happening through National Development Plans and sub-national plans. So member states tend to say they are overwhelmed by the reporting on all of them," she said.

She added that in 2018, the UN Secretary General and the former AU chairperson signed the Framework on Joint Implementation, hence the AU was pushing for joint implementation of both agendas.

Ms Bayedi further acknowledged that the AU Commission was ready to assist the Botswana Parliament in aligning its work with both agendas.

Meanwhile, the meeting between the Speaker and the AU delegation underscored a shared commitment to strengthening democracy and promoting development across Africa.

It highlighted the importance of collaborative efforts between national governments and regional bodies to achieve sustainable progress and safeguard democratic values. **BOPA**

Boko delivers maiden speech at SADC Summit

GABORONE - President Advocate Duma Boko yesterday, delivered his maiden speech at the 45th Ordinary Summit of Southern African

Development Community (SADC) Heads of State and Government in Antananarivo, Madagascar.

The summit represented a key opportunity for President Boko to establish his presence on the regional stage and advocate for Botswana's interests within the SADC framework.

His participation is seen as a crucial step in strengthening diplomatic ties and contributing to the collaborative efforts aimed at fostering an integrated and prosperous Southern Africa.

A press

release from the Office of the President says the summit themed: Advancing Industrialisation, Agricultural Transformation and Energy Transition for a Resilient SADC, discussed political, security and socio-economic issues, including an update on the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030.

Other key updates covered the phased withdrawal of the SADC Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (SAMIDRC), the new SADC Humanitarian and Emergency Operations Centre and the SADC Regional Development Fund.

At the summit, the President of Madagascar, Mr Andry Rajoelina took over the chairmanship from Zimbabwe President, Dr Emmerson Mnangagwa.

The release also says the summit was preceded by the Meetings of the SADC Council of Ministers and the SADC Organ Troika Summit.

President Boko returns today. **BOPA**



President Advocate Duma Boko

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MPs vote in favour of VAT Amendment Bill

By Lesedi Thatayamodimo

GABORONE - Parliament has passed the Value Added Tax (Amendment) Bill, marking a significant step in the government's efforts to strengthen public finances in the face of challenging economic conditions.

The Bill, presented by Vice President and Minister of Finance, Mr Ndaba Gaolathe, was adopted without amendments on Thursday.

A total of 27 MPs voted in favour, one voting against and one abstaining. The smooth passage reflected a strong consensus among lawmakers regarding the need for fiscal reform.

Mr Gaolathe expressed gratitude for the support shown by the MPs.

He described the Bill as a strategic fiscal intervention aimed at shoring up government revenue amid tightening economic conditions.

Minister Gaolathe emphasised that the legislation was designed to strengthen the country's revenue base and modernise the tax

framework.

The Amendment Bill with objectives to introducing VAT on remote services, including digital trade and cross-border online transactions, ensuring that businesses operating digitally contributed fairly to the local tax base and mandating electronic invoicing (e-invoicing) across VAT-registered businesses, aimed at improving compliance, enhancing efficiency and reducing tax evasion.

"With the Bill passed, Botswana will join a growing list of countries adapting their tax regimes to meet the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital age," said Mr Gaolathe. He further said the move aligned Botswana with global trends in tax reform, particularly as governments worldwide sought to capture revenue from the expanding digital economy.

Mr Gaolathe further said it also signaled a broader commitment by the Ministry of Finance to adopt technology-driven solutions in public finance management. **BOPA**

Cannabis Bill approval signals new dawn for Botswana

By Lesedi Thatayamodimo

GABORONE - The Cannabis Bill, 2025 passed by Parliament on Thursday, signals a major shift in Botswana's approach to cannabis regulation.

Tabled by the acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti, the Bill was adopted without any amendments from the Committee stage.

It received 25 votes in favour, while five MPs opposed it, and four abstained from voting.

Prior to that, Dr Dikoloti stated that the Bill aimed to tightly regulate the cultivation,

production, storage, distribution, import and export of cannabis, strictly for medicinal, scientific, research and industrial purposes.

He stressed that recreational use remained prohibited under the proposed legal framework.

Introducing the legislation during Tuesday's parliamentary session, Dr Dikoloti underscored the government's intent to establish a structured and secure regulatory framework that aligned with international drug control standards. He added that the Bill also sought to unlock the economic, scientific and industrial potential of cannabis in a controlled and

responsible manner.

"This Bill represents a deliberate policy shift, but one that is carefully balanced with public health, law enforcement and international obligations in mind," Dr Dikoloti said. Supporters of the Bill lauded it as a forward-looking move that could open new opportunities in medical research, pharmaceutical development and industrial production.

Dr Dikoloti said the Bill would help Botswana join a growing number of countries re-evaluating their cannabis laws to accommodate legitimate medical and industrial uses. **BOPA**



The Cannabis Bill passed by Parliament on Thursday, signals a major shift in the country's approach to cannabis regulation. Tabled by the acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti, the Bill was adopted without any amendments from the Committee stage.

Saleshando cautions about potential threats of regression

By Lesedi Thatayamodimo

GABORONE - The Leader of Opposition also Maun North MP, Mr Dumelang Saleshando says the Constitution (Amendment) Bill is a betrayal of democratic ideals and the aspirations of Batswana.

In a statement presented in Parliament on Thursday, he warned that the current government's actions mirrored the very practices it once fought against.

Mr Saleshando reminded fellow lawmakers that the 2024 general election marked a historic turning point, delivering a long-awaited change of government.

He said it was however, not the case as the Botswana the people voted for, one committed to transparency, inclusivity, and meaningful reform, faced the threat of regression.

"Today we stand at a crossroads of democratic betrayal, this Parliament has been invited to betray the high hopes of the nation," said Mr Saleshando.

He said at the heart of Bill was the establishment of a new Constitutional Court, a move the government argued would strengthen Botswana's legal system by centralising the interpretation of constitutional matters.

Mr Saleshando warned that this piecemeal and fraudulent amendment bypassed the necessary inclusive constitutional review process the nation was promised.

He criticised the Bill for adopting the same discredited BDP template of constitutional manipulation that was previously rejected by the public.

He said the proposed court risks becoming a partisan tool as it perpetuated presidential control over judicial appointments.

"This Bill is not just an affront to the people of Botswana, it is a brazen assault on the notion of an inclusive, participatory and transparent, people-centred review process," he said.

Mr Saleshando raised concerns about the continued influence of the

Executive in judicial appointments, arguing that the amendments gave the President excessive power to handpick judicial leaders.

He warned that such appointments, if based on loyalty over merit, risk eroding public trust in the judiciary.

"The UDC behaves as if the courts are personal fiefdoms, tools to advance political interests rather than temples of justice. Judicial leadership must never be appointed on partisan considerations, but on merit," he said.

He called for the establishment of an independent Judicial Service

Commission composed of legal professionals, civil society and independent experts to oversee judicial appointments, saying such a move would align Botswana with international best practices.

Mr Saleshando accused the UDC of mimicking the behaviour of the Botswana Democratic Party.

He expressed solidarity with demands recently voiced by the Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organisations. Mr Saleshando reiterated the need for a truly people-owned constitution and called for a national debate on the review process. He also

suggested public education on the constitution before its review, the withdrawal of the current Bill and convening of an All-Party Conference, including translation of the constitution into local languages to ensure broader participation.

He urged the UDC to honour its campaign promises and respect the sovereign will of the people.

"We do not want a self-serving piecemeal review, we do not want a government-controlled process, this is not a UDC document, it is a document of the people," he said. **BOPA**

Bills aim to accelerate digitalisation journey

By Lorato Gaofise

GABORONE - Parliament has passed the Digital Services Bill, 2025 and Cybersecurity Bill 2025 that were presented before Parliament by the Minister of Communications and Innovation, Mr David Tshere.

Mr Tshere presented both Bills before Parliament under a certificate of urgency on Thursday and said Botswana was in the digitalisation journey, hence the need for Parliament to urgently pass a legislative framework that would enable digitalisation in the country. The objective of the Digital Services Bill, he said, was to accelerate the

country's transformation agenda by addressing challenges in developing a legislative framework that would enable digitalisation.

Minister Tshere said the Bill was also intended to drive the universal access, innovation and economic growth to strengthen security and the trust of online services and customer protection.

Once enacted, he said the Bill would establish the Digital Services Authority and enhance the management and promotion of digital services and processes.

Mr Tshere said the authority would serve as a body responsible for formulation of digital services standards and provide for its

functions to ensure a safer digital space.

Furthermore, when motivating the urgency of the Cybersecurity Bill, the minister said there was need for the creation of a legal framework to deal and tackle the cyber threats that the country was faced with, almost on a daily basis.

"We need to protect our critical information and the critical national infrastructure by establishing the national cyber security structures that will deal with and arrest any of those threats that come to us in line with the national and global standards," he stressed.

Besides being a compliance issue, he said it was critical for Botswana

to have a Cybersecurity Bill, adding that the country had been left behind, making it vulnerable in terms of cyber attacks.

Once enacted, he explained that the Cybersecurity Bill would provide for the establishment of structures to promote cybersecurity and capacity building in the country.

Additionally, Minister Tshere said the Bill would also regulate and promote the development of cybersecurity activities in the country to provide for the identification and declaration of critical information infrastructures and measures to protect critical information infrastructures. **BOPA**

Ministry condemns growing learners misconduct

By Lorato Gaofise

GABORONE - Of a total enrolment of 580 284 learners in 2025, there were 1 958 indiscipline cases, while of 569 450 learners in 2024, there were 2 088 indiscipline cases. Presenting a statement before Parliament on the challenge of learners' indiscipline in the schools, Assistant Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education, Mr Justin Hunyepa said these enrolments were for both primary and secondary schools in public schools.

Mr Hunyepa said therefore condemned the growing challenge of learners misconduct and all forms of disruptive behaviours that threatened the safe and respectful environment in schools. He said learners misconduct included bullying, harassment and abuse of other children. "We have seen some learners recently, especially after pronouncements on the abolition of corporal punishment, going viral on social media platforms, either ruthlessly beating other students or saying expletives and profanities that embarrassed the whole nation. This is unacceptable and action will be taken against wayward learners," he said.

The issue, Mr Hunyepa said, had become a concern to MPs and stroke at the heart of the national education system.

"This week, some MPs expressed serious concern about this particular subject. In fact, this is a small number that is causing all this indiscipline incidents," he said.

Mr Hunyepa said Botswana, as a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was obliged to conform to the provisions of the convention.

"We are also bound by the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, in as far as education and dignity are concerned," said the assistant minister.

He said domestically, the Children's Act of 2009 and Education Act also safeguarded the child's right to education in an environment that was safe and conducive for learning and teaching.

However, Mr Hunyepa cautioned that rights could not exist without responsibility, calling upon all learners to remember that they were not only future leaders, but were current leaders whose behaviour influenced the tone and culture of the schools.

Furthermore, the assistant minister urged parents and guardians to reclaim their central role in raising disciplined, respectful and responsible young citizens.

"Parenting is the first line of discipline. The home is the first school. Parents are the first teachers. If we get it wrong at home, with parenting, we will not get it right at schools with teachers as local parentage," he said. The assistant minister said it was a matter of concern that in some households, parenting rules had weakened drastically.

"Where parenting is weak, this will inevitably reflect in the conduct of children. A child's values, discipline and respect for authority begin at home. If these foundations are not laid firmly, no school system in the world can fully compensate," he added.

Mr Hunyepa expressed concern that serious cases of learners' indiscipline seemed to occur more frequently in public schools than in private ones.

However, he said that was not to say that private schools were free from challenges, but it raised questions about the different learning environments, levels of parental involvement, resource availability and perhaps the expectations and cultures within the systems.

He said learners' misconduct presented a challenge, not only for educators, but also for researchers to study and provide insights that could guide long-term solutions.

A contributing factor to the challenge, he said was the growing concern of drug abuse among learners.

"Drugs erode judgment, fuel aggression and undermine the capacity of students' focus on their studies. We've seen clear links between substance abuse and rising cases of violence, bullying, vulgar language, absenteeism and academic decline," he said. In an effort to address some of the challenges, he said the ministry was working with law enforcement officers, the ministries of Health, Youth and Gender Affairs, Local Government and Traditional Affairs, as well as community leaders and civic society.

The assistant minister emphasised that prevention was key through awareness creation, adding that parents, teachers and learners should be educated about the dangers and legal consequences of drug abuse.

He said addressing this challenge also required a concerted effort by all relevant stakeholders, as the Ministry of Child Welfare and Basic Education could not win the fight alone. "We are all in it, one way or the other, as communities, including; Parents and Teachers Associations, Village Development Committees, Teacher Trade Unions, student leadership bodies, local authorities, Faith-Based Organisation's (FBOs), civic groups, professional counselors,

private sectors and MPs," he added.

Discipline, Mr Hunyepa said, started at home and was reinforced at school and was sustained by the community.

For that reason, he appealed to all stakeholders to pull together to reverse the trend of gross indiscipline.

"This requires a collective responsibility school-based interventions and to strengthen discipline, the ministry will be scaling up guidance and counseling services and revitalising positive student engagement through clubs, such as scripture union, scouts, girl guides, which we now want to resuscitate," he noted.

Furthermore, the assistant minister applauded teachers around the country who had started clubs or leadership structures in schools, including School Representative Councils, prefects and class monitors.

He said Peer Action Counseling Teams are also being resuscitated and empowered sports and cultural activities to channel energy into constructive avenues, since some of this negative youthful exuberance is due to idleness. The interventions, he said, would be supported through inter-ministerial collaboration with other ministries.

Mr Hunyepa also expressed concern that the worsening student indiscipline also led to teachers' low moral, adding that the ministry was in the process of improving the conditions.

He said some criminal matters resulting from student indiscipline had been referred to the social workers and police, adding that teachers, parents and professional counselors also played key roles in managing any signs of indiscipline.

"Every case is taken seriously and we will continue to ensure that schools remain safe learning and teaching spaces. Future interventions, includes National Indiscipline Response Framework for Prevention, early detection and case management and mandatory leadership training for student leaders on rights, responsibilities and peer mentorship," he said.

Mr Hunyepa said other interventions were working with FBOs to promote values in education, integration of life skills in education, such as conflict resolution, emotional intelligence and responsible use of digital media.

He further called upon researchers, academics and policy specialists and the nation at large to join the ministry's efforts and help find long-lasting evidence-based interventions and also commit to making discipline a shared national value. The challenge of student indiscipline, Mr Hunyepa said was not insurmountable, but the solution lied in a united front of homes, schools, communities and government working together.

"Let's work together now with urgency and with commitment to raise a disciplined generation worthy of Botswana's future," he added. **BOPA**



Participants conducting practicals at the three-day fire management and handling workshop, organised by Mabapi Training Institute in collaboration with Botswana Tribal Administration Service Association (BOTASA) in Zutshwa recently. In his remarks, Forestry Superintendent Mr Obonye Matsiara (not in the picture) raised concern over the increasing cases of wildfires in Kgalegadi North, warning that the situation posed a serious threat to both livelihoods and the national economy. Photo: Thuso Kgakatsi

Parliament endorses illicit traffic in narcotic drugs bill

By Lorato Gaofise

AUGUST - Parliament has passed the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Amendment) Bill, 2025 (Bill No. 26 of 2025), which sought to amend the existing Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, passed by the National Assembly in June 2018.

The Assistant Minister for State President, Ms Maipelo Mophuting on Thursday, presented the 13 Clauses Bill, passed with amendments after a majority vote of 32 out of 35 votes.

One MP did not vote and two abstained.

Motivating the urgency of the Bill, prior to being passed, Ms Mophuting said following Parliament's passing of the Cannabis Bill, 2025 (Bill No. 25 of 2025), it was important that the existing legislations were also harmonised towards enabling the implementation of the Cannabis Act.

"It is requested that the Bill

be presented under a certificate of urgency as a means of helping to support government's priority of diversifying the economy through revenue streams," she said.

Currently, the assistant minister said the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act prohibited dealing in any illicit substance or any plant from which any illicit substance could be manufactured and creates offense, thereto.

Furthermore, she said the Act also prohibited the cultivation, manufacture, import, export, possession, distribution or sale of a prohibited substance.

"The amendment of the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 2018 as a consequence of the enactment of and for consistency with the Cannabis Act, will now allow cultivation, production, storage, manufacture, import, export, transportation, distribution and sale of medicinal cannabis and industrial hemp products," she added.

The Bill, the assistant minister said, would mature beyond the current sitting of Parliament and deferring it until November Parliament session would delay immediate preparations and activities for the hemp industry to take off.

She said the country was a signatory to the various conventions and protocols that fundamentally shaped the country's international commitments and obligations.

In particular, she said the United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs 1961 established the legal framework for international drug control and outlined conditions for cannabis cultivation and control. This rigorous legal framework requires that we must align our existing laws to achieve compliance under the convention," she said.

For that reason, Ms Mophuting stressed that it was critical that all pieces of legislation were consolidated, as part of the preparations to start cannabis cultivation for the industrial hemp industry uptake. **BOPA**

Agriculture central to economic transformation

By Baleseng Batlotleng

TLOKWENG - As Botswana faces serious economic headwinds such as volatile food prices and unemployment, Batswana have been urged to put agriculture at the centre of the country’s economic renewal.

This was said by the Acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti at the inaugural Tlokweng Agricultural show hosted at the Stockman’s Choice field in Tlokweng on Saturday.

“Growth is slowing, unemployment especially among youth remains high, and our heavy reliance on mining leaves us vulnerable to global shocks. Food prices have been volatile, and we still import most of what we eat. However, within these challenges lies an extraordinary opportunity, the chance to put agriculture at the centre of our economic renewal,” said Dr Dikoloti.

He said government’s ambition was to modernise the agricultural sector, enhance productivity, unlock economic opportunities and secure food sovereignty for all citizens.

Dr Dikoloti noted that agriculture was more than the growing of crops and the rearing of animals as it offered a platform for creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship.

“With the right ideas and partnerships, we can turn our fields into high-tech production zones through climate-smart and precision farming. We can surely build agro-processing industries that add value and create jobs before products even leave our borders,” he added.

He said the unwavering commitment by President Advocate Duma Boko to agricultural revitalisation was a clear signal of the value government placed on restoring the sector to its rightful position in the economy.

He highlighted that government’s determination to take the agricultural sector to unprecedented heights was evident in the quality of partnerships it continued to build.

“Botswana currently enjoys strong relations with the European Union, and we have quota-free access to this huge and lucrative market. There are also opportunities to expand into new markets in the SADC region and beyond, selling not just raw produce, but premium Botswana brands,” he said.

He said the recent visit by President Boko to Zambia had opened doors to bold opportunities for Botswana to strike deals not only to purchase produce for consumption but for value addition.

Dr Dikoloti said the current importation of agricultural produce from South Africa must be transformed into opportunities for value addition.

He said in order to achieve that there was need for a transdisciplinary approach that brought together people from across sectors to leverage shared resources, skills and knowledge.

“At present, Botswana produces only 37 per cent of its cereals and 60 per cent of its horticultural needs.

The rest is imported leaving us vulnerable to price swings and supply disruptions. Agriculture’s share of GDP has fallen to just two percent. As government we have set ourselves a target to raise this figure to six percent as soon as possible,” he said.

For his part Botswana Oil Chief Executive Officer, Mr Meshack Tshekedi urged the business community to establish deliberate supplier development programmes to support farmers.

He said as part of his company’s corporate social responsibility initiative they had developed programmes with a sustainability element to support the agricultural sector as identified in the national economic transformation plans.

Mr Tshekedi proposed the establishment of bio diesel plants and the production of liquid petroleum gas. **BOPA**



Business Botswana chief executive officer, Mr Norman Moleele (right) and Ministry of Youth and Gender Affairs, permanent secretary, Ms Bridget John during the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in Gaborone on Friday. Mr Moleele said the partnership would strengthen joint commitment to empower the next generation of entrepreneurs and innovators through targeted youth initiatives. Photo: Teko Letsholo

Ministry, Business Botswana join forces

By Ndingililo Gaoswediwe

GABORONE - Business Botswana and the Ministry of Youth and Gender Affairs have formalised a partnership aimed at bridging the gap between policy and opportunity, ensuring that youth and women led businesses thrive and contribute to the economy.

Speaking at the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Gaborone on Friday, Mr

Norman Moleele, chief executive officer (CEO) of Business Botswana, said the organisation mandate was to stimulate growth, competitiveness and sustainability of businesses across all sectors.

Mr Moleele said the partnership would strengthen joint commitment to empower the next generation of entrepreneurs and innovators through targeted youth initiatives. “Business Botswana brings the collective strength of the private sector, including access

to markets, investment networks and advocacy platforms,” he said.

He outlined that the MoU would focus on creating platforms for youth and women-led businesses to expand and access markets, develop skills and capabilities necessary for competitiveness, and promote public-private as well as international partnerships to broaden opportunities.

Additionally, he said the partnership aims to advocate for policies and reforms that lower barriers to enterprise growth.

Supporting the youth, Mr Moleele argued that it would lead to a stronger, more dynamic and inclusive economy. Business Botswana pledged to mobilise its members, networks, and resources to support youth and women led enterprises. The organisation also committed to active participation in the joint implementation committee, which will monitor and evaluate progress.

He called for the establishment of a practical, action-oriented implementation plan to track achievements, address challenges, and ensure that youth and women led businesses not only survived but thrive and made meaningful contributions to the economy.

In her remarks, Ms Bridget John, permanent secretary in the Ministry of Youth and Gender Affairs, affirmed that the partnership aimed to ensure empowerment initiatives were not merely well-intentioned but were practical, sustainable, and directly aligned with the needs of the modern economy. She stressed that the collaboration would focus on issues such as youth and women empowerment, bridging skills gaps, advocacy and policy reform, entrepreneurship, networking, mentoring and promoting women’s leadership. **BOPA**

ABSA upskills entrepreneurs

By Mooketsi Mojalemotho

FRANCISTOWN - Empowering women, especially those in the business space, has been hailed as one of the many solutions to build a resilient economy, particularly in the wake of economic upheavals.

Acting Head of Communications for ABSA Bank, Mr Spencer Moreri, remarked during the bank’s women’s empowerment workshop, which coincided with Women’s Month in Francistown on Thursday, that women had made great strides in shaping the country’s economic landscape for years.

He said women continued to create employment for young people in the various business undertakings and inspire posterity.

The workshop, according to Mr Moreri, was aimed at building on the already established progress, finding solutions to the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs and creating a platform for innovation

to ensure women thrived in their respective businesses.

On compliance, ABSA’s Compliance, Governance, and Risk Manager, Ms Gaongalelwe Rapelang, implored women in business to ensure total compliance with regulations governing their business ventures to keep legal pitfalls at bay.

This, she stated, would be achieved by women taking deliberate steps to inform themselves with existing business laws.

Ms Rapelang said businesses that had a good grasp had better chances of making a profit and reducing litigation, which were often stumbling blocks to business growth. “Complying, for instance, with workplace safety standards through the use of safety equipment, retention, and keeping of records are of paramount importance to avoid having brushes with the law and avoiding workplace accidents,” she said.

Data Protection Act, she relayed, was another piece of legislation that companies’ top brass needed to know and implement at all times. In general, Ms Rapelang advised women entrepreneurs to adopt the notion that ‘the customer is always right’ and ensure ethical behaviour in the workplace.

Commenting, Dr Koziba Malibala of KDM Global Group said the primary hiccup was that individuals who formulate business laws often had little to no knowledge of business operations.

She thus called on ABSA and other interested parties that promoted Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) to extend invitations to regulators to be part of similar engagements in the future to close existing gaps, a thing that Mr Moreri assured would be taken care of.

Additionally, women in business were advised to participate in various policy-making forums to ensure their voices were heard. **BOPA**

Statistics of Batswana asylum seekers unavailable

GABORONE - Even though the Ministry for International Relations is aware that some citizens of Botswana have sought asylum in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland in recent years, the ministry did not possess official or disaggregated statistics regarding the number of such asylum seekers in each of the countries.

Answering a question in Parliament on behalf of the Minister for International Relations on Wednesday, Minister for State President, Mr Moeti Mohwasa said this was due to the fact that asylum matters were handled exclusively by the respective host governments and they had not granted Botswana access to detailed records of asylum applications or outcomes.

He noted that the main reasons noted by asylum seekers from Botswana included gender-based violence, homophobia, discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, fears related to ritual murders and concerns over personal safety and other human rights issues.

Mr Mohwasa said the ministry had established a Steering Committee on External Migration, which comprised of relevant stakeholders that dealt with foreign relations, migration and security issues.

He said the Steering Committee, which was at Permanent Secretary level and chaired by Permanent Secretary of the Ministry for International Relations, comprised of the Ministry of State President, Ministry of International Relations, Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs and Ministry of Justice and Correctional Services.

The minister noted that the committee oversaw a Technical Task Force on External Migration and was made up of experts from the four ministries, while officials from the British High Commission were also invited to the meetings.

He said the Task Force analysed the patterns of external travels, monitored incidents of illegal migration and other activities by Botswana passport holders with a view to consulting with external stakeholders to close the loopholes associated with illegal migration and share insights on effective execution of the strategy.

The minister also said it reported on emerging trends with regards to Botswana external travellers, as well as recommended mitigation strategies.

He noted that addressing the root causes of asylum claims needed a multi-faceted approach with all stakeholders involved.

Mr Mohwasa said the government continued to work toward addressing the root causes that compelled citizens to seek refuge elsewhere, particularly the pressing issue of unemployment among the youth.

Tlokweng MP, Mr Pheny Segokgo had asked the minister if he was aware of any Botswana citizens who had sought asylum in the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom.

Mr Segokgo further asked him to state the reported numbers of such asylum seekers in each country over the past five years, the main reasons they cited for seeking asylum abroad and steps, if any, that the government had taken to address the root causes leading to such asylum claims.

BOPA



Minister for State President, Mr Moeti Mohwasa said 28 police stations constructed across the country, including the ongoing Hukuntsi police station coupled with seven staff houses included, were being delivered under a turnkey model.

‘No police station constructed under DM model’

GABORONE - There are no police stations being constructed under the Development Manager (DM) model.

Rather, a total of 28 police stations constructed across the country, including the ongoing Hukuntsi police station coupled with seven staff houses included, are being delivered under a turnkey model.

This was revealed by Minister for State President, Mr Moeti Mohwasa in Parliament on Wednesday.

He said the project’s components would be delivered in four packages, C&D packages of which were awarded to Unik Construction Engineering at an estimated cost of P972,274,111.75.

Mr Mohwasa said the project commenced on September 13,

2024 and expected for completion in January 26, 2026.

As of July 31, 2025, he said the overall physical progress achieved stood at 39.5 per cent against the planned progress of 43.5 per cent as per the programme requirements.

The minister highlighted that the project components comprised of package C being of Mmadinare, Matsiloje, Sebina, Serowe, Lerala, Marapong, Makaleng and Mosolotshane.

He said package D comprised of Chobokwane, West Hanahai, Hukuntsi, Khawa, Dobe and Eretsha.

He however said the Hukuntsi police project was currently ongoing and progress recorded stood at 29 per cent against the planned 34 per cent.

Minister Mohwasa outlined the number of on-site professional staff, including site manager, 20 years’ experience, site foreman 15 years, clerk of works 10 years, electrician 17 years, brick layer (seven) two-five years’, carpenters, four to 15 years, plumber, six years and safety and health officer one year eight months experiences respectively.

Council. Meanwhile, Mr Mohwasa said considering progress on the site, the ministry was satisfied with the site establishment in place.

He emphasised that unlike the generic projects, with the turnkey projects, contractors had appointed project engineers with relevant qualifications for the duration of the project and other stakeholders were involved during the inception of the project.

On other issues, Minister Mohwasa added that re-construction of police staff houses at Peleng and construction of Special Support Group Francistown workshop and staff houses were approved for implementation under the DM model.

Minister Mohwasa was responding to a question from Kgalagadi North MP, Mr Reason Lekutlane, who had asked the minister to give an update on a number of police stations, being constructed under the DM model.

He also asked for the number of on-site professional staff for both the contractor and the employer, with their qualifications and experiences especially at Hukuntsi police project.

Mr Lekutlane further asked whether the ministry is satisfied with the site establishment in place and whether the District Coordinators under the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure had any input during the construction of these police stations or are they just spectators on the projects they were to inherit upon completion.

BOPA

Permanent employee relations post unjustifiable

GABORONE - Selebi Phikwe Industrial Court has no permanent employee relations officer as the number of cases registered monthly does not justify having an officer stationed there permanently.

Answering a question in Parliament on Wednesday, Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Mr Nelson Ramaotwana said from April 2024 to March 2025, the Assistant Clerk of Court earned P983 in work overtime, P18,000 was spent on meals.

He said overtime for Principal Clerk of Court cost was P2,872 while the Court Bailiff overtime was P4,659, which brought the total amount expenditure to P37,000.

The minister stated that from 2024-2025, there were 36 trips made to Selebi Phikwe from Francistown out of the usual 52 per year for the reason that from the month of December 2024 to March 2025, there were no trips made to Selebi Phikwe, as there was no water in Selebi Phikwe.

Additionally, the minister said at times, the trips failed due to resources constraints, which

included lack of transport.

He highlighted that had they undertaken the 52 trips, the cost to the Industrial Court would have been P46,847.20 on fuel, meals and one hour of overtime travel for two officers.

He said in the past six months from January to July, there was a total of 30 labour related cases registered, adding that it would be decided that once the number of cases registered on a monthly basis increased, the situation be reviewed to determine if having a complete and permanent staff compliment to handle the Selebi Phikwe office was justifiable.

He buttressed that the total expenditure for transport logistics related to the said officer commuting from Francistown to Selebi Phikwe every Tuesday in the past 12 months was P37,092.31.

The minister was responding to a question from Selebi Phikwe West MP, Mr Reuben Kaizer, who wanted to know if the minister was aware that there was no officer designated to handle employee-employer relations at the Selebi

Phikwe Industrial Court.

He also wanted to know the reason for such a shortage in a town, which had about 18 200 labour force and why the vacancy had not been filled as well as the total expenditure for the transport logistics related to the said officer commuting from Francistown to Selebi Phikwe every Tuesday in the past 12 months.

BOPA

Ministry intends to provide decent, safe transport

GABORONE - The Assistant Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education Mr Justin Hunyepa says that the ministry’s long-term goal is to provide decent transport for all learners so they can arrive at school safely and in good condition.

Answering a question in Parliament on Wednesday, Mr Hunyepa acknowledged that the

problem was not only in parts of the Kweneng Region, but also in other areas of the country.

The minister stated that there were 41 learners from Ramankhung who had difficulty travelling to and from school due to long distances and lack of reliable transportation.

In an effort to help, Mr Hunyepa said the council had provided three

donkey carts to transport pupils to school and back home.

He was responding to a question from MP for Lentsweletau/Lephephe, Mr Tshenolo Bogatsu who had asked the minister to state the plans to assist learners from Dikgatlong who travelled about 10 kilometres to access education in Ramankhung.

BOPA

Male death on road accidents worrisome

By Kelebogile Taolo

FRANCISTOWN – A staggering number of men are involved in road accidents, some of which result in fatalities and serious injuries, a trend that the Motor Vehicle Accident (MVA) Fund has labelled a serious national concern.

Speaking at the MVA Men’s Road Safety Pitso in Francistown recently, MVA Fund chief executive officer, Mr Michael Tlhagwane revealed that 271 out of 346 road accident deaths registered in 2024, were men, which represented 78 per cent.

Mr Tlhagwane added that more men’s lives were lost every year, a problem that had prompted the MVA to start the Men’s Road Safety Pitso initiative, which aimed to bring men together to discuss and develop strategies to combat the issue.

The initiative, launched in Gaborone in October last year, had since visited Kanye and Maun with the goal to encourage men to change their behaviour and be more mindful on the roads.

“We are here again in Francistown to plead with you gentlemen to sensitise you and raise awareness about our mandate, which is to promote road safety,” Mr Tlhagwane said.

The pitso themed: Borra! Imagine a Life Without You, carries a powerful message that the absence of men in society brought dire consequences, such as leaving children orphaned and leading to poverty.

“We lose our dear brothers, husbands, fathers, uncles, community leaders and even employees in different work environments, as there are more men in workplaces,” he said.

He further said a 2014 Risk Awareness Survey, which assessed road users’ knowledge and obedience of road signs,

showed that men often failed to obey road signs or exhibited risky behaviour.

“This risk-taking behaviour includes driving under the influence of alcohol, speeding, using cellphones while driving, reckless overtaking and not using seat belts,” he added, thus urged men to change their approach to driving to help preserve lives.

For his part, Assistant Commissioner of Police and Divisional Traffic Officer, Mr Modisaotsile Solomon, commended the MVA Fund for hosting the event, stating that the police were also concerned about the rising numbers of road accident deaths.

Mr Solomon noted that since Botswana’s population had fewer men than women, it was particularly disheartening that more men were dying at a higher rate.

He said statistics from the North region showed that from January to August, 29 people died in road accidents, 23 of whom were men and six were women.

“This mirrors the 2024 data for the same period, where 36 of the 44 people who died were men,” he added.

Furthermore, he said statistics on injuries showed a similar pattern, where in 2024, 75 men suffered serious injuries compared to 19 women while from January to August 15 this year, 51 men suffered serious injuries while 30 women did.

He said in 2024, 271 men and 71 women suffered minor injuries while this year, 147 men and 38 women suffered minor injuries.

“This shows that it is important for men to come and introspect. Men still need education on how to avoid such statistics. We still need behavioural change regarding road safety,” he said.

He emphasised that men played a significant role in their families and communities and therefore urged them

to take responsibility for their actions on the roads by adhering to speed limits and obeying road signs.

City of Francistown mayor, Mr Gaone Majere also applauded the MVA Fund for the initiative.

However, he regretted that road accidents often took away breadwinners and family leaders, whose absence left lasting wounds on families.

He thus encouraged men to heed the pitso’s deliberations and find solutions to avoid road accidents and preserve lives. Meanwhile, the MVA Men’s Road Safety Pitso was held to sensitise men about road safety and encourage initiatives to avoid accidents.

Ultimately, with the statistics painting a grim picture and men being disproportionately affected by fatal road accidents, the MVA Fund Men’s Road Safety Pitso remains a critical step in addressing the national crisis.

The initiative, alongside collaboration with law enforcement and community leaders, aims to empower men to become more responsible drivers and in turn, protect their lives as well as the well-being of their families and communities.

The call for behavioural change by men on the roads was not just about adhering to traffic laws, but also preserving the valuable role they played in the society.

BOPA



A staggering number of men are involved in road accidents, some of which result in fatalities and serious injuries, a trend that the Motor Vehicle Accident Fund has labelled a serious national concern.

Court sentences man to 15 years for raping daughter

By Bonang Masolotatse

GABORONE - Magistrate Jobbie Moilatshimo of Broadhurst Magistrate Court has sentenced a 42-year-old man to 15 years in prison for raping his own daughter.

The man, whose name cannot be revealed to protect the child’s identity, was sentenced on Thursday. In passing the sentence, Magistrate Moilatshimo said the convict did not present any extenuating circumstances to warrant a lesser sentence below the minimum mandatory sentence, adding that offense was eligible for a minimum sentence of 10 years and a maximum of life imprisonment.

She noted that the convict, as the biological father of the victim, had maintained his innocence despite overwhelming evidence leading to his conviction.

“There is no doubt in my mind that the convict in this matter lacks any remorse or contrition,” she said, adding that he had remained nonchalant and distanced himself from the information of the offence.

She said convict raised the children as a single parent, playing a fatherly role, adding that the good he played was taken

away by the incident.

The magistrate further emphasised that courts were mandated to protect women and children from violence.

She said the trauma experienced by the victim would forever scar her, having been sexually assaulted by a trusted figure for an extended period.

Therefore, she said the sentence reflected the severity of the convict’s actions, which had destroyed the victim’s world.

“I am minded to pass a sentence that is aimed at deterrence,” she added, noting the need to rehabilitate the convict and provide closure for the victim.

She further said she noted all what the convict had said in his mitigation, that he was single parent, never raised a voice to his children and took them in order to afford them an opportunity to go to school and have a better life.

However, he noted that the commission of this offence was aggravated by the relationship between the convict and the victim, hence she sentenced him to imprisonment for a period of 15 years.

She further advised him of his right to appeal to the High Court within 14 days if aggrieved by the sentence. **BOPA**

PUBLIC NOTICE

- The Agency wishes to inform all interested stakeholders that it has resolved to cancel the below mentioned insurance tenders;
 - CEDA 003 / 2025-2026** Invitation to Tender for Provision of Underwriting Services for Group Life Assurance for CEDA Staff
 - CEDA 004 / 2025-2026** Invitation to Tender for Provision of Underwriting Services for Group Funeral for CEDA Staff
 - CEDA 005 / 2025-2026** Invitation to Tender for Provision of Underwriting Services for Short Term Corporate Cover for CEDA Assets
 - CEDA 006 / 2025-2026** Invitation to Tender for Provision of Underwriting Services for CEDA Miscellaneous Single Line Business Scheme (Grants) – Multi Peril Policies
 - CEDA 007 / 2025-2026** Invitation to Tender for Provision of Underwriting Services for CEDA Staff Schemes – Motor, Homeowners, House Contents & All Risk Insurance
- This decision was made in line with section 66 (4) (c) of the Public Procurement regulations. Bidders who have purchased any of the tender document(s) will be refunded the paid amount accordingly and should send their request for refund to procurement@ceda.co.bw with proof of payment(s). The Agency apologizes for any inconvenience this may cause.
- For further inquiries or clarification regarding the cancellation of this tender, please contact our Procurement Unit at (procurement@ceda.co.bw or **3170895**).

Mowana imparts life skills

By Victoria Kesimolotse

MAHALAPYE - Mowana Junior Secondary School in Mahalapye hosted a career fair for form twos and threes to equip them with life skills.

Speaking during the career fair themed: Exploring the World of Work: Dream Big Go Global recently, the school head, Mr Kenneth Maungwa advised learners to expose themselves to the world of work.

He said given the chance to explore and exploit career paths, they were spoiled for choice and therefore it was imperative to know which subjects were needed in order to achieve their dreams.

He said the event presented an opportunity for awareness and also created a platform for asking questions that would assist them make better choices or decisions pertaining to their career paths.

Moreover, he said it was an opportunity to interact with different organisations and acquire as much information as possible on what they offer.

In addition, Mr Maungwa said the event was an investment opportunity to their future plans and get as much contacts as possible that would benefit them in the future.

For his part, Mahalapye Prisons Assistant Superintendent, Ms Mpoloka Maseko said it was critical for learners to attend such career fairs to expose themselves to the world of work.

“The whole purpose of us being here is to equip you with life skills and knowledge to be able to face threats, strengths, opportunities, realities and weaknesses as well as for self-consciousness,” she said.

Furthermore, Ms Maseko said career fair gave pupils information pertaining to their future.

“Confidence to tackle issues head on was also enhanced due to career fairs as they point to the direction to take and usually lead to better decisions and choices,” said Ms Maseko.

She said career fairs created a platform for learners to explore employment and career opportunities that they would otherwise never had.

Ms Maseko said a tree was tamed while still young, pointing such would give learners a better chance to make informed decisions at a tender age that would make them the best version of themselves.

Ms Rachel Molapisi, an entrepreneur owning textile and milling businesses, said not all would be absorbed by tertiary institutions and therefore advised them to seize the opportunity to acquire applicable information on the business model they wished to undertake to create jobs for themselves and others. **BOPA**



Some women of Shashe Ward in Maun undergoing training on basket weaving courtesy of Botswana Quality Basket Company. The two-week training aims to empower women so that they become financially independent and contribute to their households. Photo: Esther Mmolai

Women key in poverty eradication

By Esther Mmolai

MAUN - Basket weaving is one area that women can explore to eradicate poverty, says Kgosi Princeloo Shashe of Shashe ward in Maun.

Speaking during the launch of a group of 20 women undergoing a two-week training on basket weaving, he said the training would contribute to improving their living conditions, reducing poverty, among others.

The training is organised by founder of Botswana Quality Baskets in collaboration with Shashe Ward Development Committee to foster economic empowerment among women and youth. He acknowledged that the training organiser, Ms Thitaku Kushonya, a renowned master basket weaver, had penetrated the international market had promised to support participants by buying their baskets. “Since the market is already accessible, this will motivate women to increase production and make better profits,” he added and believed other women would come on board and realise the importance of handicraft work.

An elderly, Mr Fanabe Karume also showered the training organiser for a visionary leadership and advocating economic opportunities for women. He noted that women played a huge role in alleviating poverty in households because they were often their family main providers.

He appreciated that Ms Kushonya was reviving the spirit of self-reliance among the community as she recognised the need and took steps to address it and motivated participants to work hard and produce more crafts.

Women empowerment, he said was critical strategy for poverty reduction and sustainable development. “Empowering women with technical skills and business acumen to turn their craft into sustainable livelihoods

was a welcome development and we hopeful that they will not disappoint but rather take the teachings seriously and better their living conditions,” he said.

Ward Development Committee chairperson, Ms Bahentse Rena appreciated Ms Kushonya’s gesture to empower women so that they have independent sources of income. Majority of women, she said were economically challenged and yet had family commitments and believed acquiring the knowledge and skills in basket weaving would help lift them out of poverty.

“For some women, this training has not only provided a valuable learning opportunity to enhance

their basket skills but has also brought a positive change to their daily routines”.

Master weaver, Ms Kushonya also commended women for showing interest to learn the artistry, saying that was an indication that they want to secure additional income to better their life. During difficult times as the country faced financial constraints, she said it was crucial for communities to seek other alternatives to generate income to sustain themselves adding that basket weaving industry had a large market as baskets were used for different purposes such as decoration, storage and jewellery holders among others.

Ms Kushonya, who operates a vibrant basketry shop at Matlapana, which sells quality locally made baskets, noted that majority of tourists transiting to Okavango Delta also desired to take home a piece of craftsmanship making basket weaving a significant economic lifeline for communities.

She said it was her intention to traverse Ngamiland region, form groups of women, and pass to them the skill to aid them exploit the market of basket weaving, earn income and eventually contribute to their households.

She however, encouraged women to produce quality baskets of international standards. **BOPA**

‘Embrace farmers associations to improve food security’

By Kedirebofe Pelontle

GUMARE - A Mohembo-based horticulture farmer in the Okavango, Ms Kemo Begani has underscored the importance of associations in farming to feed the nation.

Ms Begani, who is the secretary of Botswana Horticulture Council (BoHoCo), recently participated in the Bangladeshi visit courtesy of the council and Office of the President. Ms Begani was among 16 representatives from all districts and experts from institutions such as Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

She said in an interview that Bangladeshi farmers thrived because of associations; hence, Botswana farmers should take a leaf from that.

“Bangladeshi is a smaller country in size as compared to Botswana, but it is self-sufficient since farmers were empowered to produce more in groups,” she said.

She observed that associations helped farmers to be united and speak in one voice.

Some Batswana, she said were still reluctant to join associations thinking they may succeed as individuals, which worked against the country’s efforts to be self-sufficient.

Ms Begani said joining BoHoCo and Okavango Horticulture Farmers Association came in handy for her, hence encouraged fellow farmers to join associations.

Ms Begani, who is the founder of Spring Blossom, said through the visit, she learnt the importance of having a speciality farming, which helped one to have expertise on how to manage and overcome challenges.

“For instance for horticultural farmers, one would learn the type of vegetable crop, the kind of weeds, pests and diseases that affect it which will make one to be an expert in that area,” she said.

She said the Bangladeshi

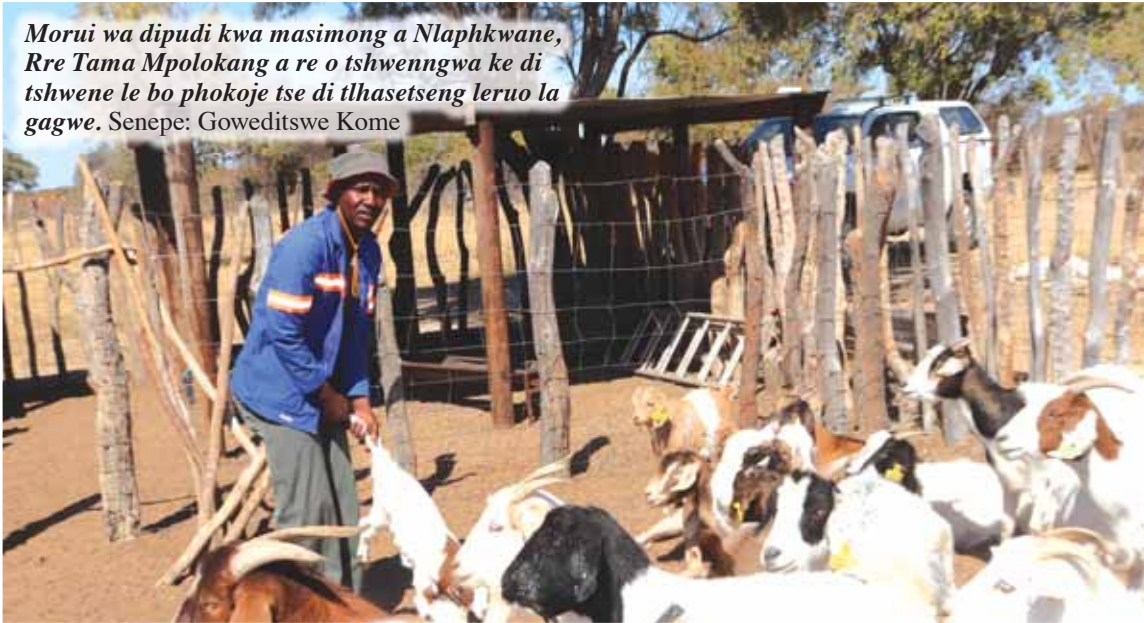
developed their rice farming, which was something that Batswana could emulate by improving on staple crops such as sorghum and millet including their value additions.

She observed that Bangladeshi farmers were advanced in using technology such as drones to expedite produce, to detect diseases and pests hence she encouraged Botswana to explore the use of technology to maximise produce.

Ms Begani also highlighted the need to engage experts and researchers in farming as it was realised as one of the best practices in Bangladeshi.

She said as a farmer who joined the industry without relevant skills in 2020 after leaving her formal work, she appreciated capacity building platforms since passion on its own was not adequate for one to run a successful farming business.

She said post the visit; the group had compiled a report on findings and submitted to the Office of the President. **BOPA**



Morui wa dipudi kwa masimong a Nlaphkwane, Rre Tama Mpolokang a re o tshwenngwa ke di tshwene le bo phokoje tse di tlhasetseng leruo la gagwe. Senepe: Goweditswe Kome

Safflower ke teemane ya temo

Ka Omphile Ntakhwana

BOROTSI - Sejwalo sa Safflower se ka tlhabolola le go atolosa mohama wa temo-thuo ka se le bogadi bogaufi.

Fa a bua kwa moletlong wa go ipelela thobo kwa masimong a Borotsi/Sekote, Mme Sarah Mosarwa o supile fa ele molemi wa Safflower kwa dipolaseng tsa Pandamatenga.

Moletlo oo, o ne o rulagantswe ke setlhopa sa balemi sa Mabocha, mme ba ne ba laleditse Mme Mosarwa go tla go amogana le bone maitemogelo a gagwe mo temong.

Mme Mosarwa a re Safflower ke teemane mo temong, e bile e dira sentle mo sekakeng.

Mme Mosarwa a re o simolotse go lema Safflower ka 2022 kwa Pandamatenga.

“Sejwalo se, se dira fela sentle mo sekakeng e bile se kgona le go iphemela mo dijing tsa dijawalo,” Mme Mosarwa a tlhalosa.

Mme Mosarwa a re o temo bogolo jang fa e le kgwebo, e tshwanetse ya tsewa ka tlhoafalo, a supa fa go le botlhokwa go baakanya lefatshe pele ba ka lema.

A re mo bo gompienong, lithara ya mahura a Safflower e rekisiwa P350 mme ga se mahura fela.

“Morago ga dibeke tse tlhano kana borataro, o kgetlha morogo mo go sone wa rekisa. Dithunya tsone di tswa morago ga kgwedi tse pedi, mme le tsone di a rekisa ka o kgona go taka dijo ka tsone gape dithunya tsa teng ke molemo wa malwetsi a tshwana a sukiri, madi a matona, ramatiki le kholeseterole,” ga bua Mme Mosarwa.

O supile fa sejwalo se, go se na sepe se se latlhiwang mo go sone, se dirisa go tswa meding go ya kwa peong.

Fa a bua ka loeto la gagwe la temo, Mme Mosarwa a re o tsene mo temong ka 2018, morago ga go tlogela tiro .

A re o simolotse ka go lema merogo kwa Metsimotlhabe, mme ebile, ‘fa ole molemi, o tshwanetse go itse gore ke wena o tsogang pele e bile o robala morago ga botlhe.’

A re gole gantsi, fa go buiwa ka maranyane(technology), batho bangwe ba tseela gore go buiwa ka ditshipi tse di tona tona kana dilo fela tse di thata, mme ga go a nna jalo.“Tiriso ya maranyane e raa fela gore a re diriseng dikitso le didirisiwa ka tsela e faphegileng go ntsifatsa

thobo”, Mme Mosarwa a tlhalosa.

Fa a tswa la gagwe, molemisi wa pele wa kgaolo ya Borotsi, Matlhako le Chadibe, Mme Masego Mhaladi a re setlhopa sa balemi sa Mabocha se tlhamilwe morago ga gore ba itemogele gore ga ba kake ba kgona go bereka le balemi ba ikemetse ka bonosi ka ba le bantsi.

Mme Mhaladi a re go ne go se bonolo go simolodisa setlhopa se, mme ba feletse ba kgonne.

“Temo e botlhokwa betsho a re itsoseng, re eme ka dinao re leme, re rue”, a fetsa a rialo Mme Mhaladi. **BOPA**

Kwelo-tlase ya itsholelo e tlhoka botlhe go tsosolosiwa

Ka Kehumile Moekejo

MABUTSANE - Molaodi wa Mabutsane, Rre Dick Kalantle o kgothaditse Batswana ka kakaretso go tswa ka megopolo e e ka tlhamang ditiro le gone go tsosa itsholelo ya lefatshe.

Fa a bua kwa phuthegong ya khansele kwa Mabutsane ka Labone, o ne a re go botlhokwa gore mongwe le mongwe a tseye lenaneo la puso la Botswana Economic Transformation Plan ka tlhwaafalo ba bo ba nne le seabe se se ka fetolang seemo sa itsholelo.

A re kwelo-tlase ya itsholelo e tsisitse dikgwetlho tse di tshwanetseng tsa tshwaraganelwa go di fenya.

O ne gape a tlhalosa gore megopolo e seka ya itebaganya fela le lenaneo la ditlhabololo le le setseng le dirilwe, a tlatsa ka gore banni ba kgaolo eo

ba gololesegile go tswa ka e mengwe e e tlaleletsang mo ditogamaanong. A re go dira jalo go tlaa fefosa go fetola seemo sa itsholelo ya kgaolo ya Mabutsane le lefatshe ka bophara.

Modulasetilo wa khansele eo, Rre Tuelo Zulu o ne a gwetlha makhanselara go nna le seabe mo thulaganyong e ntsha eo ya puso, ka go ntsha megopolo le gone go rotloetsa morafe go tsaya karolo ka botlalo.

A re se, se ka dira gore thulaganyo eo e ba solegele molemo ele beng ba kgaolo, ka jaana megopolo e e ka tlhamang ditiro e ka tokafatsa matshelo a batho.

Rre Zulu gape o ne a tsewela a ba rotloetsa gore ba batlisise thata mo go tseneletseng ka fa lenaneo leo le berekang ka teng gore ba tswe ka megopolo e e nonofileng e e ka thusang

lefatshe.

E ne e rile a ba rolela lenaneo leo, mogolwane wa ditogamaano tsa itsholelo wa kgaolo ya Mabutsane, Rre Tumelo Setshogo a tlhalosa fa puso e tsere tshwetso ya go tla ka lenaneo le lesa leo ka maikaelelo a go rarabolola dikgwetlho tse di bakilweng ke kwelotlase ya itsholelo.

A re e re ka jaana itsholelo ya lefatshe leno e ikaegile ka diteemane, go tlhoka go rekwa ga tsone go amile itsholelo ga ba ga baka ditlamorago tse di amang matshelo a Batswana.

A re lenaneo le lesa leo, le le tshwaraganetsweng ke puso ya Botswana le ba PEMANDU, le kailwe le setse le kile la bereka kwa mafatsheng a a farologanyeng, mme ebile le thusitse go tokafatsa itsholelo ya mafatshe a le dirisitsweng kwa go one. **BOPA**

Banni ba lela ka borukutlhi le letlhoko la ditsela

Ka Lindi Morwaeng

MOLEPOLOLE - Banni ba kgaolwana ya Ralesuma kwa Molepolole Bokone ba re ga ba jesiwe di welang ke letlhoko la ditsela, lefifi le borukutlhi tse di apesitseng kgaolo ya bone kobo ka letshoba.

Banni ba ntshitse matshwenyego kwa phuthegong ya kgotla bosheng e e neng e buisiwa ke mopalamente Rre Arafat Khan.

Ba ne ba lela ka ditsela ka ba dikile ba ratile go bolawa ke merwalela mo pakeng ya dipula e e sa tswang go feta.

Mme Segomotso Gabafiwe mongwe wa banni le ene o iteetse mafoko ao kobo moroko a supa fa ba se na ditsela gotlhelele a tlatsa ka gore ba itemogetse seemo se bogolo jang ka nako ya dipula.

Banni ba ikuetse mo go mopalamente go tsibogela kgang ya borukutlhi ka jaana e ba apesitse kobo ka letshoba.

Ba boletse mopalamente gore ba dirile maiteko a go tlhama komiti ya ntebele ke go lebele e e berekang ka natla mme sebe sa phiri e le gore maiteko otlhe a komiti e a dirang go lwantsha borukutlhi le go thusa mapodisi ka go tshwara dirukutlhi a sa atlege. Banni ba supile fa ba na le kgetsi ya bogodu jwa leruo e e fa pele ga lekgotla e bangwe ba bone ba bonweng molato morago ga go tshwara legodu le

le fitlhetsweng ka merwalo mme morago molato wa wela bone.

Bare fa e sa le tiragalo eo morafe o kgobegile marapo e bile ba tshaba go lwantsha borukutlhi ka jaana tirigalo eo e ba baketse ditshenyegelo tse di ntsi thata tsa go golola bangwe ka bone ka bail out ka madi a mantsi thata.

Ka jalo ba re ba kopa gore go dirwe molao o o neelang dikomiti tsa ntebele ke go lebele dithata gore di bereke le mapodisi.

Kgang e nngwe e nnile ya go fa balatofadiwa ba melato ya polao go letela molato ba le kwa ntle ga kgolegelo.

Ba kopile mopalamente gore go tliwe ka molao o o tlaa kganelang balotafadiwa go letela tsheko kwa ntle.

Rre Majwana Ketshabathupa a re kgang ya bailout ya di oura tse 48 e dirisiwa bohahalele ke dirukutlhi le babolai, ka jalo a re ‘a molao o hetolwe motho a tswe mo toronkong a sekile. Dirukutlhi di seka tsa fiwa bail.”

Mo go tse dingwe banni ba ne ba lela ka go gokelwa ga metsi kwa malapeng ba supa fa bontsi jwa batho ba bolelelwa fa ba seo mo mmepeng mme ba kaa fa letlhoko la metsi mo kgaolong ya bone e le seipato ka go supafala fa metsi a le teng, ka jalo ba kopile Rre Khan go thusa, a ba kope koporase ya metsi e ba tsenyetse diphaepe le fa go tlhokafala gore ba tsenye lentswana ha godimo ba tlaa dira jalo.

Bangwe banni ba ne supa fa ba utlwalela magatwe a gore Ipelegeng ya emisiwa mme ba tlhalosa fa kgang eo e ba tsents tsebetsebe ka ba itshetsa ka Ipelegeng ka ntlha ya letlhoko la ditiro.

Fa a tsibogela dilelo tsa bone mopalamente Khan a tlhalosa fa kgang ya metsi a tla e sala morago ka go lebega metsi a le teng mo kgaolong.

A re ditsela le dipone o kopile mokhanselara gore a kope khansele e tle go gopa ditsela e bile gape a kope le dipone.

Kgang ya bogodu jwa megala ya motakase a re o belaela gore bothata e le dikgwebo tsa scrap yard. Ka jalo a re go batla ba simolola ka go dira molao o o kganelang gore megala ya motlakase e seka ya rekisiwa kwa di scrap yard.

Le fa go ntse jalo o tlhalositse fa Ipelegeng e sa emisiwe mme kgang e santse e le tlhaelo ya madi.

A re fa itsholelo e dira botoka puso e itlama go tokafatsa Ipelegeng le go oketsa dikatso tsa yone. Rre Khan a re kgang ya ntebele ke go lebele le tse dingwe o tlaa di sala morago. **BOPA**



LUSAKA - Zambia vice president Mutale Nalumango (left) has called for enhanced collaboration and commitment by member countries of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa to advance strategies that improve access to quality healthcare for all. Photo: Xinhua

Official calls for strengthened health systems

LUSAKA - The Vice President of Zambia, Mutale Nalumango has called for enhanced collaboration and commitment by member countries of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) to advance strategies that improve access to quality healthcare for all.

Speaking at the opening of the second meeting of COMESA Ministers of Health on Thursday, Nalumango emphasised the need for regional health systems to be better prepared to respond decisively to future threats.

She noted that the COVID-19 pandemic not only disrupted

medical supply chains but also exposed critical gaps in emergency preparedness and the resilience of health systems across the region, urging countries to scale up local pharmaceutical manufacturing, strengthen disease surveillance and early warning systems, and ensure resilient supply chains during crises.

"This moment is also a call to invest in evidence-based policymaking, grounded in research and innovation.

Let us reaffirm that science and solidarity must always guide our way forward," she said.

Nalumango cited the ongoing mpox outbreak and increasing climate-related health emergencies as reminders that health security was directly linked to economic security.

She called on the ministers to adopt strong resolutions and renew practical commitments, adding that health was the foundation of any country's development.

COMESA Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe echoed Nalumango's remarks, saying that health was central to the organisation's regional agenda.

She said COMESA had established a Health Desk to coordinate regional health initiatives, mobilise resources, and build member states' capacities to respond to current and future challenges in collaboration with technical and development partners.

"Strong health systems are not optional, they are economic enablers and require increased investment. Investing in health is not a cost; it is a strategic investment in regional stability, productivity, and prosperity," Kapwepwe said. *Xinhua*

Experts hail China ecological conservation

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopian experts have lauded China's extraordinary achievement in transforming from ecological fragility to environmental leadership, calling it a practical model for addressing climate change and land degradation.

They argue that China's experience, coupled with deepening Sino-Ethiopian cooperation in ecological conservation, offered valuable lessons for Ethiopia as it pursued ambitious environmental goals amid mounting climate challenges. Aberu Tena, chief executive officer of Green Legacy and Plantation Forest under Ethiopian Forestry Development, told Xinhua that the two countries' ecological cooperation had matured into a robust and highly effective South-South partnership, "successfully transitioning from high-level agreements to tangible ground-level projects."

Tena identified technology transfer as a cornerstone of the collaboration, with Ethiopia benefiting from Chinese expertise in combating environmental challenges, particularly desertification.

He cited satellite remote sensing for monitoring land

degradation, advanced water-saving irrigation methods, and dune stabilisation techniques as transformative technologies now in active use. According to Tena, Chinese experts had conducted training workshops for Ethiopian officials, technicians, and researchers, focusing on building local capacity in sustainable land management.

Pilot zones have also been established to adapt China's successful ecological restoration schemes, such as the Kubuqi model, to Ethiopia's diverse highland and lowland conditions. Tena stressed that the ecological cooperation extended beyond desertification control, forming an integral part of a broader green development relationship with "tangible and transformative outcomes" across sectors vital to Ethiopia's sustainable future. Renewable energy is another major success, complementing Ethiopia's climate-resilient green economy strategy and its goal of carbon-neutral growth.

"Chinese financing and technology have been instrumental in developing Ethiopia's vast renewable energy potential, particularly in hydropower and wind energy," Tena said. He also highlighted the flagship

Chinese-built Ethiopia-Djibouti Railway as a "green transport corridor" that significantly cuts carbon emissions compared to road freight, demonstrating how economic development and environmental sustainability can advance hand in hand.

Reflecting on China's "remarkable reversal of desertification" achieved through decades of unwavering, state-led policy, Tena said the experience underscored the importance of sustained political commitment beyond short-term cycles.

He also praised the "well-coordinated and integrated" nature of China's reforestation and rehabilitation efforts, which "align seamlessly with broader national objectives and are supported by targeted scientific research and interventions."

Bitew Shibabaw Abate, chief executive officer of Forest Products Utilization and Law Compliance under Ethiopian Forestry Development, described China's approach as "unique and globally exemplary," crediting its success to the seamless integration of science, policy, and mass mobilisation.

He emphasised the country's strong reliance on scientific research to develop plant species

adapted to local environments and praised Chinese experts for their dedication and openness.

"The enthusiasm of the Chinese researchers, scientists, and experts stationed at different sites, who were eager to share their experiences and practical insights with us, was remarkable," Shibabaw said. The expert called for more concrete strategies to elevate the China-Ethiopia ecological partnership, particularly in policy-making, financing, innovation, and environmental governance. Noting the ecological diversity shared by the two countries, Shibabaw said Ethiopia's varied landscapes provide fertile ground for applying China's proven conservation, rehabilitation, and reforestation strategies. "This shared ecological diversity creates a natural laboratory for collaborative problem-solving," he said. *Xinhua*

Blocs merge initiatives to steer DRC peace talks

NAIROBI - Kenya president William Ruto and Zimbabwe president Emmerson Mnangagwa have announced a decision to merge two initiatives to advance peace efforts in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Ruto and Mnangagwa, co-chairing a virtual extraordinary joint summit on Wednesday of the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), endorsed merging their respective Nairobi and Luanda peace processes into a single African-led mediation framework supported by the African Union to improve coordination.

"They also approved key operational documents and a resource mobilisation plan to sustain the initiative," the Kenyan presidency said in a statement released on Thursday.

During the summit, Ruto advocated a united African-led approach, calling it "the surest

path" to durable peace in the eastern DRC, it said.

The joint summit endorsed appointing former Botswana President Mokgweetsi Masisi to join the five-member Panel of facilitators mandated to steer inclusive dialogue on the eastern DRC.

The other four panel members are former presidents Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya, Catherine Samba-Panza of the Central African Republic, and Sahle-Work Zewde of Ethiopia.

The summit welcomed progress from U.S. and Qatari diplomatic initiatives and commended Rwandan President Paul Kagame and DRC President Felix Tshisekedi for embracing dialogue.

The EAC-SADC initiative, an Africa-led process, aims to restore peace in the DRC and complements ongoing U.S. and Qatari mediation, the statement said. *Xinhua*



ADDIS ABABA - Pedestrians in the Friendship Square in Ethiopia. Ethiopia experts have lauded China's extraordinary achievement in transforming from ecological fragility to environmental leadership, calling it a practical model for addressing climate change and land degradation. Photo: Xinhua

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Name of Deceased Person	Estate Number	Date of Meeting	Time	Master
OBITSENG MOLATI MAFOKATE	ESHFT-000440-25	20/08/2025	09H00	DRM

DATED AT FRANCISTOWN THIS 08TH DAY OF MAY 2025

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Kang community reclaim culture

By Thuso Kgakatsi

KANG - The community of Kang came together to celebrate their heritage during the inaugural Swaabe Cultural Day on Saturday.

The event was marked by display of traditional cuisine and song with women dressed in their finest Leteisi attire.

Speaking at the occasion, Hukuntsi District Commissioner, Veronica Rabakane, commended Kang community for recognising the importance of celebrating and reviving their culture.

“As a nation, we need to uphold and safeguard our culture as it is our source of pride,” she said.

Rabakane said it was through culture that people unite during both happy and sad times.

She warned that Botswana’s cultural identity could gradually erode if communities do not actively preserve it.

Rabakane expressed concern that many children lacked knowledge of Setswana culture.

“As we copy other cultures, we must hold tightly to our own. Nigerians, Americans, and others may learn our language, but they never abandon theirs. We should do the same,” she said.

Held under the theme: Culture: A Cornerstone for Unity and Economy, the celebration also highlighted the economic potential of cultural heritage.

The District Commissioner therefore, noted that Botswana’s cultural assets, music, dance, and oral traditions could be marketed internationally, citing the example of KTM Choir, which had at one point graced the international stage.

She further underscored the need to document cultural practices in libraries to ensure preservation for present and future generations.

Rabakane noted that traditional games as well as oral traditions should also be preserved, adding that they should be taught to children to enrich play and heritage.

She further emphasised the importance of reviving Setswana customs which guided children on moral conduct and respect.

She hailed the community for the maiden Swaabe Cultural Day and called for action for the community to reclaim, preserve, and pass on their heritage to future generations.

Sharing the historical background, she said the people of Kang, called Bashaga ba Batlhaping, were originally Batlhaping from Taung in South Africa.

She indicated that, they settled in the area under Kgosi Kathu

during the Mfecane wars. The name Kang emerged from the tribe’s struggles to defend the land from the Bakwena, who sought its rich wildlife resources.

Kgosi Kathu, she noted, was the first Motlhaping to be buried in Kang after being fatally attacked by Bakwena for refusing to sign a hut tax.

“His sons Seipone and Phori later led the tribe, with Batlhaping-ba-ga-Phuduhudu and ba-ga-Phuduhutswana intermarrying to strengthen their community,” she said.

For her part, Kgosi Basadi Seipone III of Kang said the objective of the Swaabe Cultural Day was to showcase practices of the past and retain those that continued to serve the community well.

Kgosi Seipone noted that Setswana culture was rooted in peace and harmony, stressing

that preserving cultural values was key to ensuring that peace continued to prevail.

She reflected on traditional practices, recalling that in the past, the Kgosi had full authority over the village.

“During the ploughing season, farmers would plough first for the Kgosi as a token of respect. Such customs instilled discipline and encouraged mutual respect within the community,” she said.

Explaining how her tribe came to be called Bashaga, she revealed that the name was adopted after they defeated the Bakwena, who had attempted to take over Kang.

Kgosi Seipone explained that it was through the merging of some tribes who resisted and overcame the Bakwena, after which the latter nicknamed them Bashaga, likening them to the sharp and aggressive edge of a saw. **BOPA**



Kang community during the inaugural Swaabe Cultural Day on Saturday. Hukuntsi District Commissioner Veronica Rabakane commended the community for celebrating and reviving their culture. Photo: Thuso Kgakatsi

Miss Seepapitso second edition Wednesday ...pageant aims to empower girl-child

By Banyatsi Banyatsi

KANYE - The second edition of Miss Seepapitso is set for Seepapitso Senior Secondary School Multi-purpose Hall on Wednesday.

Under the uplifting theme: Improving Academic Excellence Through Beauty, the pageant aims to blend elegance with education, empowering young women to showcase their confidence and intelligence.

“This pageant is more than beauty. It is about empowering the youth of Kanye,” said event co-organiser also fashion designer Obonetse Dibeela.

Biology teacher Dikabelo Mokgalagadi, said the initiative was about empowering the

girl-child.

“It is important to show that academic excellence and beauty can go hand in hand. Look at Lesego Chombo, the Minister of Youth and Gender Affairs , she emerged from the world of pageantry.”

“We want to inspire confidence in our students, to let them know they can be beautiful, intelligent, and successful, he said.

This year’s pageant has drawn support from various local businesses and organisations.

Council chairperson Morapedi Kgosithebe is expected to deliver the keynote address and the entry fee is P10 for students and P20 adults. **BOPA**



Event director, Dikabelo Mokgalagadi said Lesego Chombo was an example of how academic excellence and beauty could go hand in hand.

Sua Flamingoes welcome Black Lion to elite league

By Anastacia Sibanda

GABORONE - FNB Premiership newbie, Black Lions started their journey in a match against Sua Flamingoes and suffered a 2-0 defeat at Royal Aria in Tlokweng on Saturday.

Bafana Ba Letswai as Sua Flamingoes is affectionately known made their intentions clear, getting an early goal through Botshelo Mafoko in the ninth minute.

Black Lions squandered a chance for an equaliser when midfielder Collen Mateu missed golden opportunity midway through the first half.

The two teams went for a half time break with Flamingoes holding a narrow lead. However, their dominance continued in the second half and Lion's goalkeeper Maikano Tladinyana came to his team rescue, saving a well taken free-kick from Segolame Boy in the 60th minute.

Eventually victory for Sua Flamingoes was sealed when Segolame Boy scored in the 74th minute, following his high profile move from Township Rollers.

The victory marked a positive start for coach Nikola Kavazovic's men, who are looking to do better than their third place finish last season.

Black Lions assistant coach, Aasif Bhamjee said they were on a new project and it was their first competitive game.

"We take some positives from it, but there is a lot to work on, the season is still long, we will work hard at training and we move forward," he said.

Furthermore, Bhamjee said but what was important for them was to trust the process.

In other FNB Premiership encounters played on Saturday, Nico United started the league

on a positive note, defeating Extension Gunners 2-1 at Sam Sono Stadium in Selebi Phikwe. Moabi Phuthago and Pako Gaofose scored for Majombolo, while Gunners goal was scored by Senatla Molefhe.

Galaxy made their intentions clear winning 3-0 against Morupule Wanderers at homeground, in Jwaneng.

At the National Stadium, Lehlohonolo Fothoane and Omphile Vissage secured three valuable points for Township Rollers in a 2-0 win against Matebele FC.

League defenders Gaborone United presented Calendars Stars with a rowdy welcome to the elite league defeating them with a solitary goal courtesy of Thatayaone Kgamanyane at Obed Itani Stadium in Francistown.

On Friday evening, Mochudi Centre Chiefs and BDF XI settled for a goalless at the National Stadium in Gaborone. **BOPA**



Sua Flamingoes' Mcebisi Moyo (left) and Black Lions' Dumisani Kubane going for the ball during the FNB Premiership encounter in Tlokweng on Saturday. Sua Flamingoes won 2-0.
Photo: Gaseitsiwe Moruakomo

BNSC capacitates administrators

By Anastacia Sibanda

GABORONE - The Advanced Sports Management Course (ASMC) remains one of the flagship programmes adopted by the Botswana National Sport Commission (BNSC) to empower sport administrators.

Speaking at the ASMC class of 2024-25 graduation and 2025-26 opening in Gaborone on Saturday, BNSC chairperson Marumo Morule said administrators were partners in delivering the National Sport and Recreation Policy objectives as well as strengthening high-performance pathway. He thus noted the importance of strengthening compliance

frameworks and governance standards through training.

Morule said the graduates' work aligned directly with BNSC mandate that ensured that sport in Botswana was managed ethically, efficiently, and sustainably.

He reminded them of their task which include facilitating partnerships with government, private sector, and international bodies for funding, technical assistance, and knowledge exchange. He also challenged them to promote digital transformation in sport management, from registration systems to performance analytics and encourage initiatives that linked sport with national

development priorities, such as health, education and community cohesion. Botswana National Olympic Committee (BNOC) president Botsang Tshenyego said ASMC was one of the flagship initiatives supported by Olympic Solidarity, the development arm of the IOC mandated under Rule 5 of the Olympic Charter.

At its core, he said was capacity building, ensuring that the people who lead, govern, and develop sport had the skills, integrity, and vision to make a lasting impact.

Tshenyego said the 2025-2028 Quadrennial Olympic Solidarity Plan reinforced this priority with increased resources and a focus on gender parity, athlete support,

and inclusion.

"These are not just buzz international goals, they are essential for building a resilient and inclusive sport system here in Botswana," he said.

Furthermore, he said National Olympic Committees were incentivised to provide equal access to the training opportunities, striving for a minimum of 40 per cent women participation. "As members of the sport fraternity, we must remember that our legacy should be more than medals, but also about stronger institutions, empowered communities, and a healthier environment for future generations," he said. **BOPA**

Athletes showcase excellence at Big League Meet

By Kelebogile Taolo

FRANCISTOWN

Francistown's Obed Itani Chilume Stadium was the epicentre of athletic excellence on Saturday as the country's top track and field athletes delivered a series of impressive performance at the Big League meet.

The event, held in collaboration with the Botswana Athletics Association (BAA), not only

showcased remarkable talent but also served as a crucial stepping-stone for athletes aiming for the global stage. Several competitors achieved personal bests and secured qualifying spots for the highly anticipated World Championships in Tokyo scheduled for September 13.

In an interview, BAA sport development officer, Laron Koosimile said the meet was timely and the performances in

Francistown served as a powerful testament to their dedication and readiness. "As athletes now turn their focus to the upcoming World Championships and Diamond League circuits, we are happy to see growing strength of the local athletics programme and its ability to produce world-class talent," Koosimile said.

Big League managing director, Shadreck Mokento said with the Youth Diamond League activation

on the horizon, the future of Botswana's track and field looks brighter than ever, promising more record-breaking moments and international triumphs.

He was also happy with number of participants, having had a turnout of more than 300 athletes competing in various events.

Top results included the men's 400m, where Lee Eppie finished first with a personal-best 44.40, a time that also qualified him for

the Tokyo World Championships. Bayapo Ndori was second in 44.69 and Zibane Ngozi took third in 45.01.

In the men's 100m, Letsile Tebogo won in 10.08, followed by Mojela Koneshe in 10.25 and Karabo Mothibi in 10.33.

In the women's 100m, Lone Madzimule won in 12.34, with Kesego Kgari second in 12.44 and Winnie Serefo third in 12.67. **BOPA**

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Tennis stars return for redemption

By Anastacia Sibanda

GABORONE - Botswana tennis players will get a second shot at glory in the International Tennis Federation (ITF) World Tennis Tour Juniors tournament, which kicks off its second leg today.

After a disappointing first stage where most players were eliminated early, the young athletes are back on the court, hoping to capitalise on their home-court advantage.

In the singles, rising star Malak Macheng suffered a 6-0, 6-0 defeat to Catarina Braun of Portugal.

Angela Chakanyuka lost 7-6, 6-2 to South Africa's Nina Pieterse, while Bashali Phatswane also lost to South Africa's Lyndsey Phillips 6-2, 6-3.

Katlego Regoeng lost 6-2, 6-1 to Tshepang Maisela of South Africa while Martin Seetso was knocked out in the second round. Seabo Saleshando finished in the quarterfinals in the singles and doubles.

However, in the second leg, the local players are expected to enjoy the home-ground advantage and produce good results.

Botswana Tennis Association (BTA) vice president, Nonofu Othusitse said despite the players not doing well, they had positives from the first leg.

Othusitse said they had seven boys and five girls in the main draw, adding that what motivated them was the fact that most of the players were as young as 13-years-old.

He also said they witnessed some promising performances from the likes of Chakanyuka and Seetso. Othusitse highlighted that not only did Seetso display a brave performance, but he also earned his first ITF Junior ranking points.

Furthermore, he said for Saleshando to reach the quarterfinals in the boys' singles and semifinals in the doubles was a commendable

‘Owing to the valuable experience gained from the first leg, the players are poised to demonstrate their full potential’



Malak Macheng

feat. “We are therefore expecting these performances to improve in the next leg. All in all, we expect to see improvements in our players’ rankings at the end of the two weeks,” he said.

Meanwhile, as the second leg gets underway, the spotlight would be on the young athletes to see if they would be able to turn their fortunes around.

Owing to the valuable experience gained from the first leg and the unwavering support of their home crowd, the players are poised to demonstrate their full potential.

All eyes would be on the court as they strive to achieve better results, improve their rankings and make their mark on the international stage. **BOPA**



Seabo Saleshando



Martin Seetso