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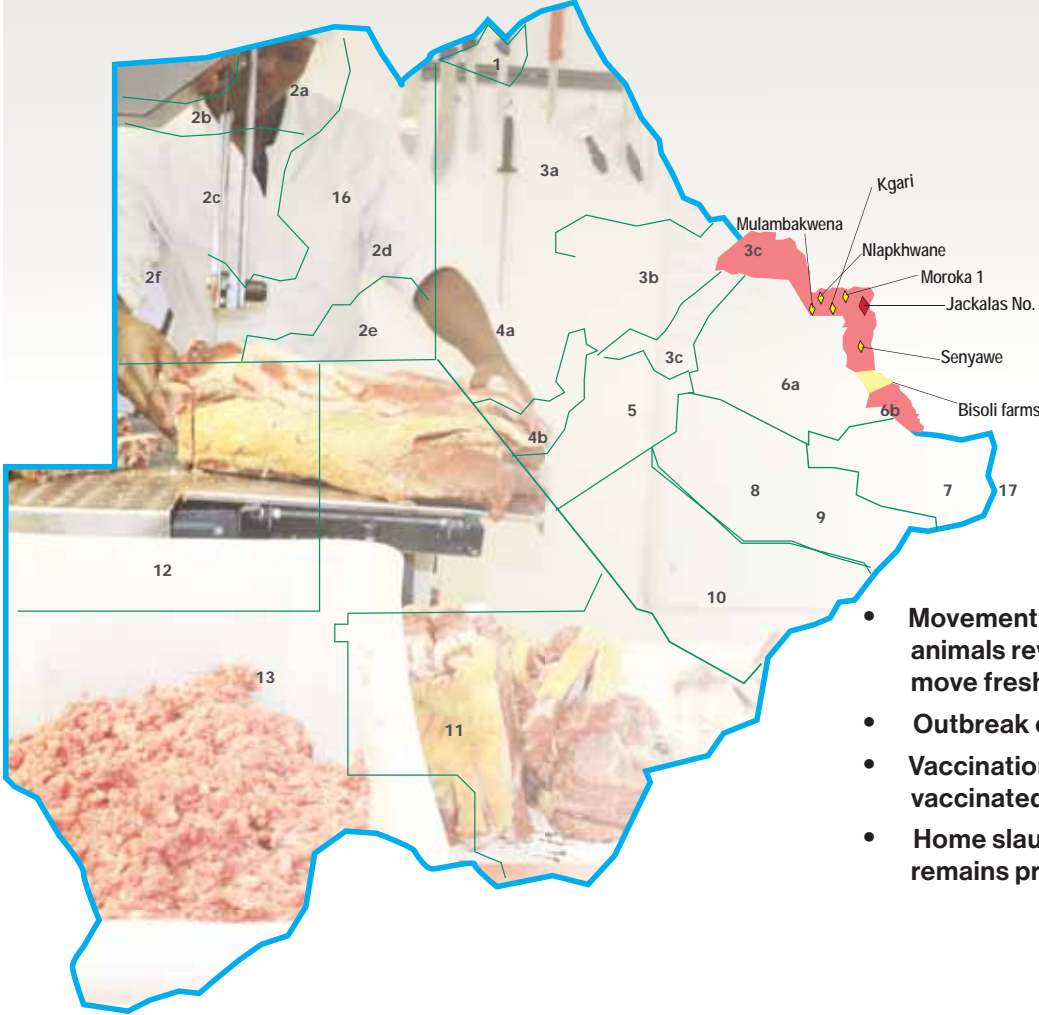
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Tsebe 7

FMD movement restriction eases



- Movement restrictions for live cloven-hoofed animals revised, with some zones allowed to move fresh products like meat and milk.
- Outbreak contained within zones 3c and 6b.
- Vaccination drive underway and 15 305 cattle vaccinated.
- Home slaughter of cloven-hoofed animals remains prohibited.

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Council supports informal sector - Ketshogile

Portia Rapitsenyane
PALAPYE

The chairperson of Palapye District Council Mr Kabo Ketshogile has denied rumours that his council does not support the informal sector.

Mr Ketshogile said over the past few days there had been misinformation circulating within the public suggesting that Palapye District Council was ruthless towards the informal sector.

He said this during the official opening Palapye District full council session on Monday.

Mr Ketshogile explained that there was an ongoing informal sector clean-up campaign along the Palapye main roads carried out by council, saying the campaign was not targeting those lawfully operating and using their structures.

He said the purpose of the exer-

‘Our goal is to maintain cleanliness, order, and safety in our village, not to disrupt legitimate businesses. All informal traders who are actively using their structures for business will not be affected,’

cise was to remove abandoned and unused structures and shelters along Palapye road and had been left unoccupied for many years.

“Our goal is to maintain cleanliness, order, and safety in our village,

not to disrupt legitimate businesses. All informal traders who are actively using their structures for business will not be affected,” he said.

Mr Ketshogile said that the council should support the informal sector while at the same time they must also ensure public safety and compliance to basic regulations.

“We want to sensitise all informal traders that open fire is strictly prohibited along the roadside because they pose a serious fire risk, especially in areas with makeshift structures and high pedestrian movement,” he said.

He said as a community, they were reminded of the unfortunate fire incident involving a cooking container near the Gaborone hiking spot and that incident was a result of failing to adhere safety rules.

He said such accidents not only endanger lives and property but also

threaten the very existence of the informal sector they are working to protect.

Mr Ketshogile, therefore said council had banned cooking food on-site, especially in mobile kitchens or containers along the roadside, due to concerns over fire safety and public health.

He said the move was aimed at protecting lives, businesses and property saying it was no meant to be punitive.

He appealed to traders to cooperate and follow the rules, citing a shortage of fire equipment to deal with outbreaks.

Permanent structures are also not allowed within road reserves, and permission must be sought from the council’s physical planning section, said Mr Ketshogile.

He assured the informal sector traders that the council was working

on a structured plan for the allocation of trading spaces along the major road.

This plan, he said would ensure that informal traders could operate without interfering with traffic flow or pedestrian movement, while also ensuring that the streets remained clean and organised at all times.

He said Palapye District Council supported the informal sector and also recognised the challenging economic times where many families depended on informal trading as their primary source of income.

Mr Ketshogile said as Council, they understand this reality, remain committed to supporting and protecting livelihoods within the community and they believe the informal sector was a vehicle through which unemployment could be addressed and improve the economic status of the populace **BOPA**

Moshupa council faces P36 million funding crunch as grant delays

Marvin Motlhabane
MOSHUPA

Moshupa District Council’s finances remain stable yet severely strained as the 2025/26 financial year draws to a close, with officials calling for rigorous austerity measures.

The most pressing issue is the Ministry of Local Government and Traditional Affairs’ failure to release the Quarter Four Recurrent Subsidy Grant, approximately P36 million still outstanding. During Tuesday’s full council session in Moshupa, Council Chairperson Mr Peter Sethibe did not mince words.

“This is not some abstract deficit. This is money that should have fed the destitute, fueled refuse trucks and ambulances, paid service providers, and kept our programmes running,” he said.

The delay has sharply reduced liquidity, in several instances undermining the council’s capacity to provide essential services to the communities it serves.

Mr Sethibe confirmed he had raised the matter directly with the ministry and continued to engage officials urgently.

Despite the shortfall, he said the council had exercised financial discipline.

Total expenditure currently stands at about P109 million against an adjusted budget of P137 million, reflecting a controlled expenditure rate of 79 per cent.

Revenue collection from own sources reached roughly P1.4 million by February 2026, achieving only 45 percent of the annual target.

Mr Sethibe commended the Revenue Maximisation Committee for its consistent meetings and progress in negotiations with First National Bank and Capital Bank on loan deduction commissions, as well as the use of bulk SMS reminders sent to business owners. He added that once full investment income for the year was captured, the revenue picture would improve, but stressed there could be no excuses.

“We must do better. And we will.”



Moshupa District Council chairperson Mr Peter Sethibe (left) and deputy council chairperson, Motlathosi Kelobang during Tuesday’s full council session. Photo: Marvin Motlhabane

In agriculture, Mr Sethibe said 808 farmers, 373 males and 435 females, have ploughed and planted 929.75 hectares, adding that inputs, including e-vouchers, tillage subsidies and seeds, arrived after the early November rains had already fallen and evaporated.

He said pest surveillance remains active, with no pests of economic significance detected so far, unlike the previous season in parts of Lotlhakane West and Dikhang. “No locusts. No armyworm. No outbreak that would add agricultural catastrophe to meteorological disappointment. This is mercy. And

we receive it with gratitude,” Mr Sethibe said. The e-voucher system has distributed seeds to 4,656 farmers, with verification of redeemed vouchers ongoing.

While the system brings efficiencies, it poses challenges for elderly farmers unfamiliar with digital platforms and for villages with poor network connectivity. These issues had been formally submitted to the Ministry, and the council awaits responsive action, he explained.

Fertiliser distribution has reached 477.2 tons benefiting 2,386 farmers. However, he said delayed rains and staggered input delivery have re-

sulted in late applications, reducing effectiveness.

“When fertiliser is applied to dry soil, its efficacy is severely diminished. This is science. This is also waste,” he explained.

Looking to the next financial year, Mr Sethibe called on the council to advocate strongly for earlier rollout of the Lemang Dijo programme before the rains arrive, not during them, along with reliable transport for extension workers, stricter penalties for defaulting suppliers, and expanded access to irrigation to lessen dependence on increasingly unpredictable rainfall. **BOPA**

Lerala police station project completion April

Omphile Ntakhwana
LERALA

Construction of the new Lerala police station and staff houses is progressing well and due for completion in April.

Speaking at a site visit tour of the project by Botswana Police Services (BPS), the village leadership and other stakeholders, Mr Samson Masvora Clerk of Works at Unik Construction Engineering Pty Ltd said progress stood at 93 per cent.

“The new Lerala Police Station is part of contract scope for the development of 28 new Police Stations and staff houses across the country on turnkey model for BPS,” he said.

Mr Masvora said the station

had successfully transitioned from a civil-heavy phase to a high-level architectural and system-integration phase.

“Works remain aligned with the revised handover schedule and tracking towards a professional completion,” Mr Masvora said.

He further said the physical progress and architectural compliance had been fully achieved, with the office building, community centre and all four (4) staff houses having reached a 100 per cent completion for superstructures and roof coverings.

“The buildings are now fully watertight, secured and painted in the final finish colours,” he said, adding that with external civil works, all major infrastructure such

as roadway paving, refuse bay, main sewer line installation and residential apron slab are complete, with the exception of the conservancy tank currently at 70 per cent complete,” he said.

He further noted that final testing and clearing were being performed to ensure a functional connection.

On mechanical, electrical and turnkey systems, Mr Masvora said residential units had achieved 100 per cent completion for second-fix electrical fit-out and works were now transitioning to the installation of third-fix components and final circuit testing.

“Installation of indoor mid-wall units is 100 per cent complete and ongoing monitoring is in place to ensure internal finishes are

protected as the final mechanical components are secured,” he said.

He said that the radio communication tower was 100 per cent erected and was ready for the final mounting of telecommunications hardware and the equipment room installation was done. On utility services, Mr Masvora said water connection was done and running and all house meters and tap installation was also done.

“Botswana Power Corporation (BPC) reticulation works installation of the transformer, poles and cables is done. We are just waiting for a dry testing on our side, then it is for them to commission the transformer and we get connected,” he said, adding that the backup generator

installation- plinths and foundation is done.

On outstanding works, Mr Masvora said storm water drain laying, installation of external fan grills for mechanical works and dry testing and commissioning is what is outstanding. For her part, Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) officer Ms Goitsemodimo Montsholepelo said since the project started to date, they have not registered any cases of theft, serious medical injuries or serious incidents.

Mr Alphonse Jayachandran, Deputy Manager-Facilities at BPS said the total cost of the project is P34 922 454.21 and to date, P32 477 882.33 has been spent, which translates to the project being within budget. **BOPA**

PSP urges
leaders to be
versatile and
vigilant

Chendzimu Manyepedza
SELEBI PHIKWE

Permanent Secretary to the President, Ms Emmah Peloetletse, has called upon leaders in government departments to be vigilant and versatile.

“Vigilance is not just a trait, it is a necessity for leaders who strive to understand and respond to the needs of their employees. Leaders must remain aware of their surroundings, attuned to the voices of the colleagues they serve with, and ready to act decisively when challenges arise,” Ms Peloetletse said during an engagement with civil servants in Selebi Phikwe on Monday.

She underscored the critical role of leaders in shaping the desired workplace, particularly in an era marked by rapid changes and uncertainties. Ms Peloetletse said versatility allowed leaders to adjust methods and strategies in response to diverse situations.

“In today’s landscape, where issues are complex and multifaceted, a one-size-fits-all approach is outdated. We must be willing to adapt and innovate, drawing from a wealth of perspectives and experiences,” she urged.

She said an effective leader was one who created space for dialogue that prioritised understanding over judgment, in the process addressing the concerns of all and fostering inclusivity.

Ms Peloetletse praised the civil servants who transitioned from the central government to local government roles, highlighting their adaptability and commitment. She noted that this seamless shift not only demonstrated a strong sense of patriotism but also underscored their dedication to serving their communities with diligence and effectiveness. She emphasised the importance of sharing resources among departments, noting that given the current constrained government budget, it is essential to make the most of the limited resources available. One of the civil servants, Mr Modongo Zikhale, from Bobirwa District raised a concern about the slow progression of Social Welfare and Community Development officers, most of whom he said had been stuck on the same scale for a long time now.

Ms Tebogo Maluke, stated that while the government underscored the importance of effective service delivery and exemplary customer care, it was disheartening to note that both external and departmental service delivery continued to pose significant challenges. **BOPA**



Ministry of Higher Education permanent secretary, Prof. Richard Tabulawa (left) and De Beers senior vice president people partnering, Ms Thabile Moipolai (right) at the signing of Memorandum of Understanding between the two entities in Gaborone on Monday. Prof Tabulawa said that the signing of MoU would strengthen collaboration between the education sector and industry to support student development. With them is Ministry of Higher Education legal advisor, Ms Keneilwe Chakalisa. Photo: Felicity Male

Botswana focuses on skills development

Lorato Gaofise
GABORONE

In a room filled with policymakers, industry leaders and educators, the message was simple yet profound - that Botswana’s greatest treasure is no longer just the diamonds beneath its soil, but the skills of its human capital.

As Minister of Higher Education Mr Prince Maele rose to speak at the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between his ministry and the De Beers Group, he spoke not only of policy and partnership, but of possibility.

“Our minerals may open doors, but it is the skills of our people that will keep them open,” he said.

For a country whose development story has long been intertwined with diamonds, Minister Maele said the signing ceremony marked a subtle, but a significant shift in focus from what Botswana extracts from the ground to what it nurtures in its classrooms, workshops and laboratories.

The MoU, signed in Gaborone on Monday, is designed to reinforce the link between education and industry.

It also provides for collaboration on curriculum alignment, research partnerships, educator development and structured industry exposure, ensuring that students graduate not only with qualifications, but with competencies that match the evolving needs of the economy.

Minister Maele described the agreement as more than a formal document, but a deliberate investment in Botswana’s human capital and a cornerstone of the country’s broader transformation agenda anchored on skills development, economic diversification and citizen empowerment.

For decades, he said Botswana’s diamond revenues have financed schools, hospitals, roads and social programmes.

“But, as beneficiation deepens from sorting and valuing to cutting, polishing, jewellery manufacturing and downstream enterprise, the country faces a new challenge, which is building a workforce equipped for increasingly sophisticated roles,” he said.

Engineers, scientists, digital specialists, skilled technicians, researchers and entrepreneurs will be needed in greater numbers, the

minister said.

Success, Minister Maele stressed, will not be measured by the signing of agreements, but by tangible outcomes such as graduates being placed in meaningful jobs, competencies being strengthened and opportunities being created.

“Nations do not transform by chance, they transform by design through deliberate partnerships, disciplined execution and bold ambition,” he added.

For her part, the De Beers Group senior vice president, People Partnering - Diamond Trading, Ms Thabile Moipolai said the moment carried both corporate and personal resonance.

She spoke of a partnership that has matured over decades and continues to evolve with clarity, confidence and shared purpose.

The MoU builds on long-term agreements concluded in 2025 between government and the De Beers Group, providing stability and certainty for sustained investment.

Investment, Ms Moipolai said, must extend beyond infrastructure and operations to the development of people.

“As our partnership with government evolves, our investment in Botswana’s talent must evolve with equal discipline and ambition,” she emphasised.

Ms Moipolai pointed to the sweeping technological changes reshaping industries across the globe, adding that skills requirements are shifting rapidly and the diamond sector is no exception.

As Botswana expands its footprint across the value chain, she said demand is also rising for advanced technical, digital and commercial expertise.

Therefore, she said the future workforce will need data specialists, supply chain professionals, artisans and globally minded leaders, alongside engineers and scientists.

For De Beers, Ms Moipolai explained that nurturing talent aligns with its sustainability framework, Building Forever, which advances livelihoods, climate action and environmental stewardship underpinned by ethical sourcing and transparent diamond provenance.

“Strengthening Botswana’s skills ecosystem is not peripheral to our strategy, it is fundamental to it,” she stressed.

She also highlighted the importance of Technical and Vocational Education and Training, noting that strong applied competencies are indispensable as industrial activity expands.

Economies that invest in vocational capability, she said, demonstrate greater productivity and resilience.

The MoU signing marks a new dawn for young Batswana students

who will enter lecture halls and workshops knowing that clearer pathways now connect their education to industry opportunity.

Together, the minister’s and Ms Moipolai’s remarks reflected a shared conviction that Botswana’s diamond future will be shaped as much in classrooms and training centres as in mines and sorting facilities.

Natural diamonds may be rare, but exceptional talent, both leaders agreed, must be deliberately cultivated.

With the signing of the MoU, Botswana reaffirmed a powerful truth that its most enduring resource is not buried deep underground, but rising is steadily through its education system, ready to shape the nation’s next chapter. **BOPA**

FMD movement
restriction eases

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The Ministry of Lands and Agriculture has revised movement restrictions imposed due to the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak, effective immediately.

Movement of live cloven-hoofed animals is prohibited between and within Zones 4a, 4b, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13, except for direct slaughter at licensed facilities.

The provision also applies to animals intended for slaughter at social events such as funerals and weddings, which must now take place at licensed slaughter facilities.

The release further says movement of live cloven-hoofed animals into and out of Zone 7 remains prohibited, except for direct slaughter within the zone until further notice.

“Similarly, movement into, out of, or within Zones 3b, 3c, 6a and 6b remains prohibited,” states the release.

It states that the movement of fresh products such as meat and fresh milk is permitted between, within and out of Zones 4a, 4b, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13. However, fresh products may not be moved out of Zones 3b, 3c, 6a, 6b and 7.

Transit of such products through these restricted zones is allowed only in sealed containers or trucks under veterinary permit.

Export and transit of cloven-hoofed animals and their fresh products remain prohibited nationwide, except in Zone 2 where export is permitted, says the release.

“Movement of animals and fresh products within and into Zones 1 and 2 is allowed under existing guidelines,” the release adds.

Authorities have also maintained the prohibition on the movement

of livestock feeds, trophies, skins (dikgole) and hooves out of Zones 6b and 3c.

Home slaughter of live cloven-hoofed animals remains strictly prohibited as part of ongoing disease control measures.

The ministry further alerts farmers to an FMD outbreak in the Northern Cape Province, South Africa, which shares a border with Tsoabong District. As a precautionary measure, the importation of grasses, including lucerne, has been suspended.

On the other hand, the ministry has confirmed new cases of FMD in the Disease Control Zone 3c however, assured farmers and stakeholders that the outbreak remains contained within Zones 3c and 6b.

The release states that the disease has been confirmed at Moroka, Kgari, Nlapkhwane and Mulambakwena crushes in Zone 3c. Ongoing surveillance operations have not detected any additional cases outside Zones 3c and 6b.

On the vaccination progress, the release report significant progress in vaccination efforts.

“A total of 15 305 cattle have been vaccinated out of a targeted 17 000 in Zone 6b (north of Bisoli Farm) and Zone 3c (east of Shashe River).”

It further states that a booster vaccination campaign is scheduled to take place 28 days after the initial inoculation to ensure effective immunity among the livestock population.

Farmers, members of the public and other stakeholders are urged to comply with all disease prevention measures, remain vigilant and promptly report any suspected cases of illness in livestock to the nearest Department of Veterinary Services or Botswana Police Service office. **BOPA**

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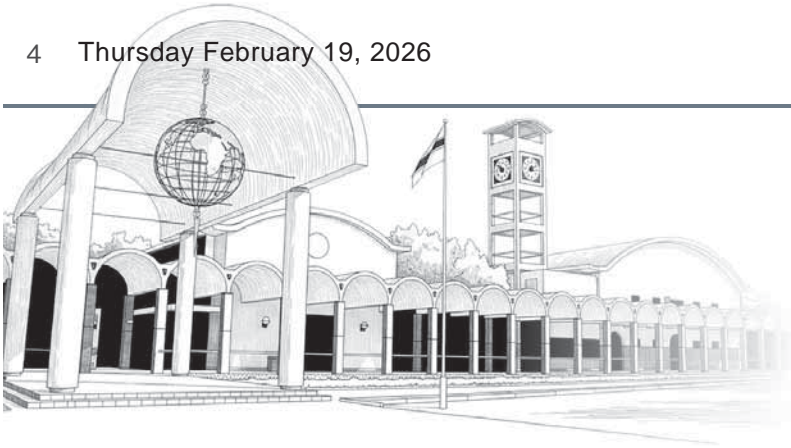
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PARLIAMENT 2026

Ministry reserves land around Molepolole Prisons for civic use

GABORONE

Land surrounding Molepolole Prisons remains reserved for civic and community use, with no immediate plans to repossess it for residential expansion.

This was said by acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti answering a Parliamentary question on Tuesday, in which Molepolole North MP, Mr Arafat Khan had wanted to know if the ministry had considered repossessing unused land around or within Molepolole Prison as well as some of the underutilised plantation areas in Molepolole, with a view to reallocating such land for residential plots to address the growing demand for land among residents.

Dr Dikoloti said the land was currently allocated to the Botswana Prisons Service and the Kweneng Land Board had not taken a decision to reclaim it for village development.

He explained that any move to acquire the land would first be preceded by a comprehensive assessment to determine its suitability for residential purposes. He noted that the assessment, together with a possible acquisition process should the land be found viable, was scheduled for the 2026/27 financial year.

On the long-standing issue of the plantation area, Dr Dikoloti said progress had previously been delayed by a legal dispute between the Bakwena Community Development Trust (BCDT) and the Kweneng Land Board.

“The trust had taken over the land from the former Kweneng Rural Development Association and challenged the Land Board’s intention to repossess the property,” he said.

He noted that while the Land Board had engaged BCDT in consultations to facilitate village expansion, the parties failed to reach an agreement, prompting the trust to approach the Land Tribunal for redress, adding that the tribunal had ultimately ruled in favour of the Land Board.

“Negotiations are currently ongoing to finalise compensation for BCDT, a process expected to conclude once the matter is tabled before the Kweneng Land Board meeting scheduled for February/March 2026,” he said.

Dr Dikoloti further revealed that planning for the area had reached an advanced stage, adding that a layout plan had already been approved by the District Council’s Physical Planning Committee, providing for 1 774 residential plots.

“The Kweneng Land Board survey team completed surveying the land

in December 2025 and is finalising survey records for submission to the Department of Surveys and Mapping for examination and approval by the end of February 2026,” he said.

He noted that once the plans were approved and registered with the Deeds Registry, allocation of the plots would commence.

“Batswana are expected to begin receiving allocations in the second quarter of the 2026/27 financial year. The development is anticipated to ease the growing demand for residential land in Molepolole and surrounding areas,” he said. **BOPA**

Act has no provision for plot application inheritance

GABORONE

The State Land Act, Tribal Land Act of 2018 and the Botswana Land Policy of 2019 do not have provisions regarding the inheritance of plot applications, hence the names of applicants who die while on the waiting list for plot allocations would be taken off the list, acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti has told Parliament, Tuesday.

Dr Dikoloti noted that an offer was transferred to the applicant’s estate for inheritance if a person died after their application had been accepted for offer.

He said prior to the Botswana Land Policy of 2019, the dispensation restricted access to land rights to just one spouse, making it unfavourable to spouses, particularly women.

He said the policy allowed for the surviving spouse to be considered for the same spot on the waiting list and the same approach continued in state land, which had far older waiting lists.

However, he said other family members such as children, siblings

and cousins were not eligible for such practice since their ability to apply for land was not hampered in any way.

Dr Dikoloti said since everyone had equal, just and fair access to land rights under the current policy framework, he did not see the need to modify it.

He said Chapters 71-76 of the same policy provided substantially on affirmative action and land rights protection for vulnerable populations such as widows, orphans and youngsters.

He was responding to a question by Boteti West MP, Mr Sam Digwa, who had requested him to state the policy or legal rationale for not transferring the rights of the plot to the deceased applicant’s immediate family such as their children and siblings, in cases where an individual had applied for a residential or commercial plot but passes away before the allocation was finalised.

MP Digwa had also asked if the minister would consider revising the policy to ensure that families of deceased applicants were not unfairly excluded from benefiting from their relative’s application. **BOPA**

Interdict restricts govt intervention on Modipane-Mabalane road project

GABORONE

Government is constrained to interfere with the Modipane-Mabalane road project, following a temporary court interdict issued on January 9, Parliament heard Tuesday.

Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Mr Noah Salakae,

said the construction of the project, which was implemented under the Development Manager model, was halted by the High Court of Botswana due to a dispute between the Development Manager and its sub-contractor.

Mr Salakae noted that the latter had since appealed the decision to the Court

of Appeal.

He said while the dispute resolution process was ongoing, his ministry was concerned about public safety and acknowledged its duty as the client to ensure that services were provided to the community.

Consequently, he said following the temporary interdict, the ministry initiated engagements with the disputing parties to facilitate timeous resolution. He said the most recent engagement was held on February 16, without prejudice, which formed part of the continuous dispute resolution measures.

However, the minister noted that they were still constrained by the terms of the temporary court interdict, which restrained any party from interfering with or altering the works on site until the dispute was finally determined.

He therefore said direct intervention on the site, beyond facilitating the dispute on the resolution process, was restricted. He said owing to the concern about public safety emanating from the condition of the road, they continued to engage the disputing parties to reach an amicable settlement as expeditiously as possible.

He also indicated that he had visited the project site on numerous occasions prior to the interdict and intended to visit again as soon as it was permissible to assess the current status and condition of the road.

The minister was responding to parliamentary questions from Kgatleng East MP, Mr Mabuse Pule, who wanted to know when and how the minister planned to intervene as a matter of emergency, to protect public safety given the court interdict on the construction of the Modipane-Mabalane road, also noting that the current condition of the road posed serious and potentially fatal risk to road users.

Mr Pule also inquired about the interim measures the ministry would implement while legal disputes were being resolved, as well as specific timelines on the planned interventions.

Additionally, he had asked the minister when he intended to visit the project site to assess first-hand the severity of the road’s condition. **BOPA**



A total of 3 195 cases of causing death by dangerous driving were reported nationwide between 2016 and 2025.

Police record over 3 000 fatal cases due to dangerous driving

GABORONE

The Ministry for State President, Defense and Security is intensifying its efforts to combat road fatalities through a multi-pronged strategy involving stricter enforcement and public education.

Responding to a question in Parliament on Tuesday, on behalf of Minister for State President, Defense and Security, Minister of Communications and Innovation, Mr David Tshere, said government was concerned about the prevalence of road accidents.

To address this, he said the Botswana Police Service, alongside

key stakeholders, had deployed several deterrence strategies, including public education campaigns, setting up of roadblocks and regular road patrols as well as continuous monitoring of accident trends to determine if stiffer penalties were required in the future. He indicated that 3 195 cases of causing death by dangerous driving were reported nationwide between 2016 and 2025, 1 309 drivers of which were charged, 685 prosecuted and 519 convicted.

Of the remaining legal cases, he said 166 resulted in acquittals, while the remaining 574 cases were pending trial.

The minister noted that the average

sentence for those convicted currently stood at five years’ imprisonment or a P10 000 fine.

Under current law, he said offenders faced fines ranging from a minimum of P5 000 to a maximum of P30 000 or imprisonment between six months and five years, in default of payment.

He said he was confident that the current conviction rate had a positive impact.

However, he reiterated that the ministry would continue to monitor whether such statistics indicated a need for more robust investigations or even stronger prosecution measures.

He was responding to questions

from Nkange MP, Mr Motlhaleemang Moalosi, who sought clarification on the number of reported cases of causing death by dangerous driving over the past 10 years, the number of individuals charged, prosecuted and convicted as well as the average sentence imposed on the convicted.

Mr Moalosi also wanted to know the minimum and maximum penalties for the offence, whether the current rates of prosecution and conviction were sufficient to deter drivers from endangering others and whether the statistics indicated a need for stiffer sentences, more robust investigations and stronger prosecution of offenders. **BOPA**

Ministry commits to seamless land administration



Acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture
Dr Edwin Dikoloti

GABORONE

The Ministry of Lands and Agriculture, is committed to take decisive steps to allocate land orderly, transparently and equitably to all citizens, says acting minister, Dr Edwin Dikoloti.

Responding to parliamentary question on the status of residential plot allocation in the Lentsweletau/Lephephe constituency on Tuesday, Dr Dikoloti said in relation to 2022 population and housing census, Lentsweletau had a population of about 6 665 and the current waiting list stood at 10 082.

To date, he said a total of 5 259 plots had been allocated in the village and the last allocation was undertaken in March 2023 for applicants who applied on November 18, 2009.

He added that surveying and demarcation of 674 plots was completed in November 2025.

He said Kopong, inclusive of Sasakwe ward, had a population of 13 823 and a waiting list of 13 564 applicants, reflecting demand that was nearly equivalent to its population size.

He said 5 517 plots had been allocated and the last allocation took place in March 2023 for applicants who applied on June 19, 2007 and surveying and demarcation of 1 117 plots would be scheduled for April 2026.

As for Mmatseta, he said it demonstrated an extreme high demand with a waiting list of 20 843 applicants versus the population size of 2 120.

He said 1 314 plots had been allocated and the last allocation was undertaken on March 2023 for applicants who applied on June 5, 2008.

He explained that a base map was submitted in May 2023 for layout detailing and finalisation of the layout designs remained a prerequisite for

further surveying and allocation.

The minister said with a population size of 3 218 bearing a waiting list of 21 779 applicants, which he said was deemed the most highly pressured village in the district.

He noted that 1 744 plots had been allocated and the last allocation was undertaken in August 2020 from applicants who applied in June 2008, while Ditshukudung had a population size of 270 and a waiting list of 1 249 applicants.

He said 412 plots had been allocated and the last allocation was undertaken in October 2022, reaching applicants who applied on April 14, 2011 and Kgope, with a population of 534, has a waiting list of 5 927 applicants and so far, 533 plots had been allocated.

Dr Dikoloti said the last allocation was carried out in December 2025 reaching applicants who applied on June 16, 2008.

He maintained that allocation across those places was evident that residential land demand significantly exceeded available supply.

He alluded that the main constraints affecting allocation included, limited availability of readily serviced land, delays in layout detailing and approvals, environmental clearance requirements, overlapping land rights and lengthy repossession processes.

He however, said to address such challenges, the ministry had intensified planning, that would accelerate surveying, through an operationalised war room for Secure land Title Production with effect from February 16, 2026.

He explained that the war room pool officers from Deeds Registry, Surveys and Mapping Geospatial Information Centre, Town and Country Planning, Land boards and Department of Lands to oversee the entire Secure land Title value chain from development planning and survey approvals to conveyancing and registration.

“Its mandate is to deliver at least 48 569 secure land titles within three months beginning with priority areas, including, Mogoditshane, Ramotswa, Tlokweng, Palapye Maun and Oodi,” he said.

He further emphasised that the intervention was designed to eliminate bottlenecks, compress processing timelines and strengthen inter-departmental coordination to improve overall land administration performance.

In addition, Dr Dikoloti said the ministry was in the process of establishing a Land lab facilitated by Botswana Economic Transformation Programme (BETP).

The lab, he said was intended to address structural inefficiencies to ensure that land allocation processes became faster, more predictable and more transparent over the long term.

Lentsweletau/Lephephe legislator, Mr Tshenolo Bogatsu had asked the minister to update Parliament on the state of plot allocation in the villages of Gakuto, Mmatseta, Kopong, Sasakwe, Lentsweletau, Kgope and Ditshukudung where there seemed to be discrepancies in land allocations.

Mr Bogatsu had also asked the minister whether there were some systems that he would put in place to ensure seamless plot allocation.

BOPA



Kanye East MP Mr Prince Mosanana

Budget charts clear path to recovery - Motshegwa

Tebagano Ntshole
GABORONE

The 2026/27 National Budget marks a definitive road to economic recovery and growth, built on the foundations of the Botswana Economic Transformation Plan (BETP) and National Development Plan (NDP) 12, says MP for Mmadinare, Mr Ketlhalefile Motshegwa.

Debating the budget speech on Tuesday, Mr Motshegwa, who also serves as Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, stated that the budget spearheaded a transition toward a private-led economy.

He emphasised, however, that State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) continued to play a vital role.

“This budget marks a deliberate transition from diagnosis to delivery, as we advance reforms to restore stability, strengthen institutions, and lay the groundwork for inclusive and sustainable growth,” he said.

Addressing the national debt, Mr Motshegwa argued that the debt-to-GDP ratio cannot remain stagnant and must adapt to prevailing economic, political and social conditions, including the impacts of climate change.

He noted that almost all Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development nations had occasionally exceeded a 60 per cent debt-to-GDP ratio while maintaining positive growth.

He defended government’s move to increase Botswana’s debt ceiling to 60 per cent, citing the need to address poverty and unemployment, low economic diversification, dilapidated physical and social infrastructure as well as digital technology and rural empowerment.

However, he cautioned that deficit funding should be reserved for investment purposes rather than consumption.

He noted that the new administration inherited empty coffers and existing debts to local suppliers, further complicated by global geopolitical threats,

including punitive tariffs introduced by the US President Donald Trump.

Kanye East MP, Mr Prince Mosanana, echoed the sentiment that the budget speech was an honest reflection of the country’s economic recovery.

Mr Mosanana welcomed the decentralisation of primary healthcare to local authorities but stressed that clinics must be equipped with adequate personnel and medication.

Regarding his constituency, Mr Mosanana expressed concern for local farmers.

He noted that while many produced high yields, they struggled to sell in a saturated market.

He disapproved the Botswana Agricultural Marketing Board for its perceived monopoly, which he argued resulted in unfairly low purchase prices for farmers.

Conversely, MP Kagiso Mmusi of Gabane/Mmankgodi expressed alarm over the rising debt levels, noting that the country had already breached the 40 per cent debt-to-GDP ratio.

To mitigate the crisis, Mr Mmusi proposed several radical cost-cutting measures, which included salary reductions by cutting executive salaries and reducing board sitting allowances.

Mr Mmusi also argued that allowances be cancelled including scrapping constituency allowances for the President and Speaker, as well as scarce skills allowances.

He further argued for reallocation by using the resulting savings to provide an annual 10 per cent salary increase for public officers at the D-Scale and below.

He also interrogated the procurement of medications from Dubai, suggesting that India would be a more cost-effective source.

Furthermore, he criticised government’s continued involvement in business sectors despite years of advocating for a private-sector-led economy, noting that the moratorium on Government Purchase Orders (GPOs) had hindered service

This budget marks a deliberate transition from diagnosis to delivery, as we advance reforms to restore stability.

delivery.

Mr Mmusi also called for transparency regarding international loans, particularly those sourced from the Qatari government, insisting that all such loans should pass through Parliament for approval. **BOPA**



Mmadinare MP
Mr Ketlhalefile Motshegwa



DailyBusiness

Morake passionate horticulturalist

Tshiamiso Moseitlha
SEROWE

Horticulture is not only a profitable business, but also a crucial way to contribute to food security while promoting healthy living. It is a necessary part of modern agriculture, providing people with nutritious food, beautiful landscapes and economic opportunities.



Ms Minky Morake, a horticulturalist at Masama lands near Serowe says horticulture plays a vital role in modern agriculture. She plants various vegetables, herbs, cucumber, fruits, decorative plants, peanuts, maize, water melons, green pepper, chilies within a seven hectare chunk of land. Her work is promising and she is determined to take the industry to greater heights. She started her business two years ago, using money from her pocket and her family. Ms Morake only acquired a big shade net from the then Temo-Letlotlo government programme. Born and raised in Serowe, Ms Morake says that greenhouse technology has initiated various interventions aimed at enhancing food and nutrition security and combating starvation in the country. She notes that horticulture is one of the sectors chosen by government as a priority for agricultural diversification and employment creation. The sector, she adds, has also been chosen for value chain development as a means of supporting private sector

development through which more value can be unlocked. She notes that agriculture was customarily perceived to be a primary sector that can help the country's disadvantaged communities to escape the realities of poverty and problems of unemployment. "I fell in love with farming at a young age when our parents always took us along to our cattlepost in Tshoswaane. We looked after livestock and planted as well. We thought they were abusing us, but I eventually loved it," Ms Morake recalls. She adds that research illustrates that spending time in a green space reduces stress, improves mental health and promotes physical activity. Ms Morake sells her produce at SPAR, Choppies Supermarkets and individuals, more especially street vendors and public servants who place orders. She says left overs are dried for future consumption. The budding horticulturalist has a tractor and a borehole in her farm and has so far employed four people apart from casual labourers engaged during harvesting. Ms Morake says she is passionate about her job because it puts food on the table. She is concerned about farmers in her area, who do not pull together resources to achieve great milestones, adding that no man is an island. She says they had formed a horticulture association but has since collapsed. Mr Morake advises the Ministry of Child Welfare and Basic Education to put more effort in agricultural curriculum in schools so that children can learn about its importance at grassroots level. She has undergone many courses at Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, about food and fodder processing, horticulture and meat processing among others. Ms Morake wants to have a big storage facility where supermarkets and shops will come and collect their orders, noting that she produces perishables, which need cool and cold rooms.

I fell in love with farming at a young age when our parents always took us along to our cattlepost in Tshoswaane. We looked after livestock and planted as well. We thought they were abusing us, but I eventually loved it



Ms Minky Morake of Zhunga farms said Horticulture is not only a profitable business but also a crucial way to contribute to food security while promoting healthy living. Photo: Baldwin Nyamande

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Kenya launches 2026 Manufacturing Priority Agenda

NAIROBI

Kenya's industrialists on Tuesday launched the 2026 Manufacturing Priority Agenda (MPA) to boost the country's manufacturing sector. Tobias Alando, chief executive officer of the Kenya Association of Manufacturers, told journalists in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, that the policy document is a practical and time-sensitive roadmap for unlocking the full potential of the manufacturing sector. "The MPA 2026 provides a clear blueprint for industrial transformation by aligning policy, investment, and market access to build a globally competitive manufacturing sector," Alando said. **Xinhua**

South Africa vehicle exports increases by 5.9 per cent in 2025

CAPE TOWN

South Africa's vehicle exports hit a record 414,268 units in 2025, despite tariffs imposed by the United States. The figure represents a 5.9 per cent increase from the 391,128 units exported in 2024, according to the latest quarterly review released Tuesday by the National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa (NAAMSA), known as the Automotive Business Council. Accounting for 70.3 per cent of South Africa's light domestic vehicle production, the 414,268 left and right-hand drive vehicles were exported to 109 countries around the world, said the report. **Xinhua**

Mozambique welcomes China zero-tariff policy for African countries

MAPUTO

Mozambique government on Tuesday welcomed China's decision to grant full tariff exemptions on products imported from 53 African countries that maintain diplomatic relations with China. The measure is a new opportunity to further expand exports to the Chinese market. Speaking at a press conference following the weekly Council of Ministers meeting, government spokesperson Innocencio Impissa said Mozambique received the announcement "with great pleasure." He called on Mozambican businesses to actively seize the opportunities created by the tariff exemption. **Xinhua**

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Tona o kopa banni go ilela dikgang tsa bogosi

Aobakwe Molefhi
MOGOBEWAKGOMO

Tona wa lephata la dikgaolo le tsa ngwao Rre Ketlhalefile

Motshegwa, o kopile banni ba Mogobewakgomo go ela tlhoko dikgang tsa motse wa bone ka di ka ba kgaoganyana.

O buile mafoko a kwa motseng

oo ka Mosupologo, kwa a neng a ile go buisana le banni mabapi le dikgang tsa motse wa bone tsa bogosi.

E ne e rile gole pele a amogela

baeng, Kgosi Lotlaamoreng II wa Barolong, a supa fa Mogobewakgomo osa robalelwa ke ditlhokwa mabapi le kgang tsa bogosi.

O supile fa e rile ka ngwaga wa 2022, Kgosi Kopano Maseng wa motse oo, a tlhokafala mme fa e sale ka nako eo, go ise go nne le thitibalo.

Kgosi Lotlaamoreng II are o ne a kopa morafe gore ba ithulaganya ka leina la moemedi wa bone, kwa pheletsong ba mo fa leina la ga Rre John Sebetlela.

A re o hakgamaditswe ke modumo o o neng wa tsoga morago, le ntswa go ne go dumalanwe.

Kgosi Lotlaamoreng II o boletse Tona gore kgang eo etswa go felela kwa kgotla tshekelo e tla ka taelo ya gore Rre Sebetlela a seegelwe ha thoko mo tirong.

Bangwe ba ne ba supa fa tlhopho ya ga Rre Sebetlela e sa tsamaya sentle mme ka jalo ba sa mo lemoge jaaka moeteledipele wa bone.

Fa atswa la gagwe, Tona Motshegwa o supile fa a tshwenngwa ke dikgang tsa bogosi tse lephata le iphitlhelang le di rarabolola ka bonsti.

A re seo, sea hakgamatsa ka Bogosi Act e supa tsamaiso ya go tlhoma kgosi, a supa gore fa kgosi e se ya matsalo, go na le ditsamaiso tse di salwang morago tsa go tlhopha.

O kopile morafe gore ba tshwanetse go sisela seemo seo, are fa ba sa dire jalo, go na le kgonagalo ya go re morafe o kgaogane.

Tona o kopile Kgosi Kgosi go bitsa phuthego ya botlhe go tla go tlhopha kgosi, mme a re seo, se tshwanetse go direlwa mo kgotleng morafe o le teng.

“Ke kopa gore letswe mo makgamung mme le tlhophe motho yo o tlaa kgonang go kopanya morafe”, ga buwa jalo Rre Motshegwa. **BOPA**



Baagi ba Phitshane Molopo ba kopile puso go tshwaragana le ya South Africa go aga borogo mo molelwaneng wa mafatshe o o mabedi go tokafatsa motsamao ka ba sa kgone go tlola fa dipula dina. Ba kopile se bosheng, fa Mothusa Tautona Rre Ndaba Gaolathe a buisa phuthego ya kgotla kwa motseng oo. Ba supile fa ba na le masika a mantsi kwa South Africa, mme fa gongwe ba kgoreletsega go ya dintshong tsa bone fa go le dipula. Senepe: Felicity Male

DailyNews

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Court remands duo in Makobo murder case

Kelebogile Taolo
FRANCISTOWN

Principal Magistrate Thapelo Buang has further remanded in custody Ruth Fana together with her daughter Onalenna Fana accused of murdering Elicah Fana of Makobo, the mother of Ruth and grandmother of Onalenna.

The duo appeared before the Francistown Magistrates Court for a status-hearing where it was reported the case is awaiting forensic results before it gets committed to the high-court.

Prosecutor, Mr Moatlhodi Macheng told the court that several attempts have been made to get the results, but it had since transpired that there had been a delay at the laboratory.

He therefore asked the court to continue remanding the two accused while waiting for the results, which he stated, formed crucial evidence in the matter at hand.

When asked to comment in court, the second accused, Onalenna Fana, pleaded with

the court to grant them bail while they wait for results, citing that she needed to see her children and help one of them whom she said was not performing well.

The court has thus ordered the two to apply for bail at the high court. Attempt to apply for bail on October 10 last year by the two accused did not see the light of day.

The two who are alleged to have murdered Elicah Fana on June 9, 2025 at or near Makobo village will appear again for status hearing on March 19, 2026.

Meanwhile, the court also arraigned Obakeng Khumoetsile of Borolong village who appeared for one count of murder.

The accused is alleged to have murdered Faith Mbaiwa on February 14 in Tatisiding.

The accused was remanded in custody as little progress has been done for the case is still a fresh matter and the investigations are ongoing. He will appear before court on March 10. **BOPA**



Ruth Fana (right) with her daughter Onalenna Fana during a previous appearance at Francistown Magistrates Court. Principal Magistrate Thapelo Buang has further remanded the duo in custody.

Ditladi Primary School receives support from Furnmart

Thamani Shabani
DITLADI

As part of its outreach efforts, Furnmart has adopted Ditladi Primary School in the north east region.

Speaking during a donation of school bags and stationary in Ditladi on Monday, Furnmart's regional operations manager, Ms Boithamako David said they would provide support to the school to enhance learning.

Ms David said though this was the first donation by Furnmart to the school, the company realised that despite its challenges, the school was performing exceptionally well in its Primary School Leaving Examinations and therefore felt indebted to come on board to soar academic performance.

Ditladi Primary School Head, Ms Lore Lungisani challenged influential media houses like Radio Botswana and Botswana Television to be role models in primary schools.

"The children need role models who can influence a positive life," she said, suggesting that media personnel should visit schools and take students on workplace tours.

Ms Lungisani said they were aiming for an 80 per cent pass rate despite challenges and vowed to deliver on the promise.

Furnmart's national sales

manager, Ms Tsogang Modimakwane said the donation initiative started in 2019 and aimed to support schools across the country to improve academic performance.

"Education is the foundation to life," she said, adding that the company was traversing the country donating learning aids or educational materials.

Ms Modimakwane further encouraged the students to take their learning seriously and commended the school management and parents for playing an active role in the education of their children.

She opined that education was a three-legged pot, which was a metaphor for a successful education system, representing the necessary partnership between teachers, parents and learners.

"If one leg fails to cooperate, the entire structure falls, making it a critical framework for students success, parental involvement and community responsibility."

A student, Lucky Tadubana thanked Furnmart for its generosity, adding that the donation would be put to good use and that it would go a long way in changing the school performance to the better.

The donation by Furnmart of 50 school bags and stationary came at an opportune time following an earlier donation of a digital centre by Botswana Communications Regulatory Authority this year. **BOPA**

Residents seek education on Constitutional Court

Kabo Keaketswe
RAKOPS

There is need for intensified public education on the proposed establishment of the Constitution Court.

Rakops residents said at meeting addressed by the Assistant Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Mr Augustine Nyatanga on Monday that by the look of things so far, Botswana across were sharing same sentiments of the idea of having a Constitutional Court as a welcome development, however being of the view that it was not an urgent matter, hence could wait, given the current state of the economy.

Mr Batsweletse Kgagamedi said government should listen to Botswana on this matter, adding that no one was against the ConCourt, rather many were skeptical about the timing.

He suggested that for now, existing court structures

and laws could be revised to effectively and efficiently deal with matters confined to the ConCourt.

Mr Kgagamedi was also of the view that a holistic approach to the constitutional review must be applied to undertake the exercise, than take the piece meal approach as that would be costly to the government. Ms Bashingi Boingotlo also concurred on the budget aspect, noting that given the country's gloomy economy, the Constitutional Court establishment was going to be a burden.

Another speaker, Mr Justice Tshekiso, highlighted that Constitutional review should have precedence and some of the amendments be made before establishment of the Constitutional Court.

He also noted that there was need for intensified public education on the difference between ConCourt and the Constitution.

Mr Ookeditse Dirang said

this Constitutional Court project seemed rushed, while also suggesting that existing laws be reviewed to cater for any cases of violation of constitutional rights of citizens.

Meanwhile, in his address, Mr Nyatanga, said though many questioned government's priorities particularly on the issue of establishment of the ConCourt, the Umbrella for Democratic Change was still committed to fulfilling items explicitly spelt out in the party's manifesto.

He emphasised the importance of the establishment of a Constitutional Court, saying that in some instances, the government was found to be violating constitutional rights of citizens.

Mr Nyatanga further highlighted that reviewing the constitution could be a lengthy exercise that might find matters or cases for the Constitutional Court in the country lagging behind if not established now. **BOPA**

Arts & Culture

Chinese blockbusters set for release in North America

LOS ANGELES

Multiple Chinese films are set for release in North America during the period of Chinese New Year, also known as the Spring Festival, including two highly-anticipated blockbusters which premiered Tuesday.

Scare Out, a contemporary espionage thriller directed by Zhang Yimou, will be opened by CMC Pictures in nearly 200 select theaters in dozens of cities across the United States and Canada on the first day of the Year of the Horse.

Featuring a star-studded cast including Jackson Yee, Zhu Yilong

and Song Jia, the project marks Zhang's fourth Spring Festival release in five years and fuses a major political theme with a faster-paced, youth-oriented cinematic language.

The first contemporary national security-themed film directed by Zhang centers on a leakage of classified military aviation data and follows a Chinese counterintelligence team as it navigates shifting loyalties and hidden betrayals.

"This film has a tight plot with many twists and turns, making it extremely engaging and captivating," a moviegoer surnamed Long from local Chinese community told Xinhua after watching the film at an AMC theater in Monterey Park, California, on Tuesday night.

"In recent years, Chinese films have made remarkable progress in both production quality and screenplay development. Being able to enjoy latest Chinese blockbuster films simultaneously in North American theaters during the Spring Festival brings

great joy to international Chinese communities," she noted.

The film enjoyed a ¥276 million (US\$39.95 million) debut day in Chinese mainland, according to Maoyan, a Chinese movie-ticketing and film data platform. Another Chinese New Year tentpole, *Blades of the Guardians*, adapted from a cult-favorite comic, is set for release by Well Go USA Entertainment on Tuesday in around 220 select theaters across North America.

Directed by legendary action choreographer Yuen Woo-ping and features a multi-generational lineup of martial arts stars, such as Jet Li and Wu Jing, the film is about a mysterious escort mission escorting

"the most wanted fugitive", to Chang'an, the capital city of several ancient Chinese dynasties.

Blades of the Guardians has garnered over ¥156 million (US\$22.58 million) after opening day at the box office in Chinese mainland, Maoyan data showed.

In addition, several other popular box office hits from China's Spring Festival period will also be released in North America's theaters in succession.

Pegasus 3, the latest installment in Han Han's blockbuster car racing comedy franchise, is set to be released in North America on February 27.

The film stars Shen Teng, one

of China's most bankable comedic actors.

The first two films in the series, released during the 2019 and 2024 Spring Festival seasons, brought in a combined ¥5 billion (US\$723.7 million).

Another sequel film, *Panda Plan: The Magical Tribe*, starring Jackie Chan, is scheduled for a limited release in North America on March 13.

All those Chinese-language films will be released in North America with English subtitles, targeting cities with a large international Chinese population such as Los Angeles and New York. *Xinhua*

Fire damages historic Italian theater

ROME

A fire broke out early Tuesday in the Chiaia district of Naples, southern Italy, severely damaging the historic Teatro Sannazaro and causing several residents to be hospitalised for smoke inhalation, local media reported.

According to local newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, the blaze erupted at dawn and quickly spread through much of the theater, destroying its dome and affecting a nearby residential building. Parts of the historic venue are made of wood, which contributed to the rapid spread of the flames.

Thick smoke was visible from a distance, including along the city's waterfront area. At least four residents were taken to hospital as a precaution after reporting breathing difficulties, and some nearby inhabitants temporarily left their homes as smoke filled the neighborhood. Multiple fire fighting teams were deployed to contain the blaze, while police have launched an investigation into its cause.

Preliminary information from investigative sources suggested a possible electrical short circuit, though authorities are yet to confirm its origin. *Xinhua*



RIO DE JANEIRO - Revellers participating in the carnival parade in Brazil on Saturday. Major samba schools presented performances featuring elaborate floats, thousands of dancers and drum sections. Photo: Xinhua

Brazil kicks off Carnival weekend with street celebrations

RIO DE JANEIRO

Brazil kicked off its most emblematic celebration this weekend as Carnival festivities filled the streets, sambadromes and public squares across the country with music, dance and millions of revellers.

In Rio de Janeiro, the highlight was the Special Group Samba School parades at the Sambadrome, running from Sunday to Tuesday.

Major samba schools presented large-scale performances featuring elaborate floats, thousands of dancers and powerful drum sections, while traditional street parties named blocos filled neighborhoods with music and dance throughout the weekend.

In Sao Paulo, official samba school parades began Friday and continued to Saturday, while Salvador, in the northeast,

offered its unique flavour with sound trucks moving through city circuits to Afro-Brazilian rhythms such as axé and samba-reggae. Recife and Olinda also held major events on Tuesday, featuring giant puppets, frevo and maracatu performances.

Beyond entertainment, the Carnival is a key economic driver, boosting hotels, restaurants and transport.

Local authorities have stepped up security, sanitation, and health services to ensure safe celebrations, with campaigns promoting peaceful coexistence, diversity and responsible conduct. *Xinhua*



GABORONE - Children using chopsticks at an event to celebrate the Chinese Spring Festival on Tuesday. Co-hosted by the Confucius Institute at the University of Botswana and the Legate English Medium School, the event promoted cultural exchange. Photo: Xinhua





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The association's secretary Lebogang Bogopa said they had introduced starting gates as commitment to professionalising the event. Photo: Naomi Leepile

All set for Kokotsha horse derby

Naomi Leepile
KOKOTSHA

The dusty plains of the Kgalagadi District are set to transform into a hive of activity on Saturday as the Kokotsha Community Horse Racing Association (KCHRA) hosts the anticipated annual

horse derby. The Minister of Sport and Arts, Jacob Kelebeg is expected to officially open the event and his presence will underscore government's commitment to diversifying the nation's sporting landscape.

The association's secretary Lebogang Bogopa said this year's event, scheduled for Resting

Place ground distinguished itself from the previous ones, as they have introduced professional starting gates.

This is a technical milestone that reflects concerted efforts to elevate safety and organisational standards to international levels, he said.

He emphasised that the

introduction of a professional infrastructure was expected to provide a fair playing field for jockeys and owners while reducing the risks traditionally associated with manual starts.

Bogopa said the association had positioned the derby as more than just a race, noting that it was a multi-faceted

cultural event designed to drive rural development and livestock appreciation.

By attracting breeders and spectators from across the region, the derby creates an economic ecosystem that supports livelihoods and encourages youth participation in the equine industry. **BOPA**

BFA shifts Malete to player development

Anastacia Sibanda
GABORONE

Botswana Football Association (BFA) has redeployed Alex Malete to his previous position to focus on player development.

Malete was relieved of his duties as the women senior national team, The Mares coach, three days before the team was due to travel to South Africa for the COSAFA Women's Championship.

The squad he had assembled for the tournament was also reshuffled,

with some players sent home and replaced by the Under-20.

In an interview, BFA president Tariq Babitseng said the decision was not made in malice but reflected the association's confidence in Malete's ability to develop young players.

"No doubt, he is one of the intelligent coaches in Botswana, with a very sharp eye to read opponents, and his ability to read the game and make tactical changes is out of this world," he said noting that clarified that Malete still remained an employee of the organisation.

Babitseng explained that The Mares was currently without a substantive head coach, adding that the only national team with a permanent coach was the men's

national side.

Asked why some players who had reported for camp had been dropped, the association's president said the intention was to prioritise youth.

"Remember, COSAFA is where players are developed. In this edition, even if we lose it is still fine, we are not chasing results, but looking at the bigger picture of development," he said.

Babitseng added that the association is not using COSAFA to prepare for any major tournament, as The Mares failed to qualify for the next edition of the Women's Africa Cup of Nations.

The team will be led by interim coaches Gaolethoo Nkutwisang and Bonang Mosetha.

Meanwhile, some of the

dropped players include promising goalkeeper Tlamele Pheresi, midfielders Precious Tlhabi and Atang Busang.

Defenders are Kesegofetse Mochawe, Masego Montsho, Lorato Motlogelwa, Godiraone Gonae and Veronica Mogotsi, while veteran striker Nondi Mahlasela, who was also the team's vice-captain, is the only forward omitted.

Malete is credited for guiding Botswana against stronger nations such as Algeria, Nigeria and Tunisia, although the team did not progress at WAFCON.

BOPA



Alex Malete