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Botswana, South Africa need to collaborate

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Four envoys present credentials



President Advocate Duma Boko (right) receiving letters of credence from Dominican Republic Ambassador designate, Ms Erika Alvarez at Office of the President yesterday. President Boko said both countries had common vision of having high income economies by 2036 and that the Dominican Republic had established a national digital strategy that ran from 2024 to 2028, a programme of similitude to Botswana's, which included digitising healthcare and finally achieving universal health coverage. Three other envoys; Bangladesh, Venezuela and Denmark also presented.

Photo: Pheny Moalosi

By Thato Mosinyi

GABORONE - President Advocate Duma Boko has received letters of credence from Bangladesh, Denmark, Venezuela and Dominican Republic at the Office of the President yesterday.

In welcoming Bangladesh High Commissioner to Botswana, Mr Shah Ahmed Shafi, President Boko expressed delight over the outstanding bilateral relations that existed between Botswana and Bangladesh.

"The Bangladesh Minister of Labour once visited Botswana and proposed the conclusion of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with a number of issues that had to be followed up, one of them being the visa free movement between the two countries," President Boko said.

He said Bangladesh was a probable strategic partner for Botswana in the agricultural sector particularly in animal husbandry and livestock production.

"Bangladesh has a cattle population of over 24 million while Botswana is eager to get to five million, hence there is a lot that Botswana can learn from Bangladesh in order to reach the five million mark," he said.

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Council, BHC handover Bonno house

By Kelebogile Taolo

FRANCISTOWN - Bonno Housing Programme is on track in realising its mandate of providing affordable and dignified housing to citizens.

Recently, Francistown City Council handed the first turnkey house at Gerald Estate in Francistown West constituency.

Speaking at the event Francistown Deputy Mayor, Uyapo Nyeku expressed gratitude

toward all the stakeholders who were part of the completion of the first Bonno house in the city.

Mr Nyeku said the government housing scheme brought dignity to the people, further congratulating the beneficiary, Ms Thokozani

Tafa for being the first in the constituency to receive the Bonno house.

BHC Project Quality Assurance Officer, Ms Lebogang Gaebolae said the project was delivered well within the stipulated time.

She said construction began in August 2025 and completed in November 2025 which was within the four months of the project time frame.

Ms Gaebolae said the cost of

the house, a turnkey is a Type A was around P234 000 and the beneficiary would pay P90 000.

She noted that they worked well with other stakeholders to ensure the project runs smoothly and was completed on time.

For her part, the beneficiary, Ms Tafa appreciated government for the Bonno Housing Scheme which she said was important for providing affordable and dignified accommodation. **BOPA**



Francistown City Council deputy mayor, Mr Uyapo Nyeku (centre) officiating at the handing-over of a Bonno Housing Scheme bachelor pad at Gerald in Francistown recently. Mr Nyeku said the house, which cost P234 000 was the first one to completed in the district. Photo: Ogopoleng Kgomoethata

Prostate health screening essential - official

By Marvin Motlhabane

LOTLHAKANE EAST - Principal registered nurse at Dilolwe Clinic in Kanye, Mr Matshelo Sethaile, has urged men in Lotlhakane East to undergo prostate examinations.

Mr Sethaile made the appeal during a gender-based violence (GBV) Awareness Day held in

Lotlhakane East on Friday.

He emphasised that regular examinations of the prostate gland could aid in early detection of prostate cancer.

He pointed out that an enlarged prostate could lead to various issues for men, including erectile dysfunction, low self-esteem and depression, which could sometimes contribute to violence against their partners.

He encouraged men to seek prostate examinations, noting that an enlarged prostate may become difficult to treat if not addressed promptly.

In his remarks, chairperson of Kanye Men's Sector, Mr Eddy Kgomotso highlighted that statistics show that women were more frequently affected by gender-based violence than men.

However, he asserted that this does not mean men were immune to abuse, as many choose to remain silent and do not report their cases.

Mr Kgomotso underscored that GBV could manifest in various forms, including economic abuse, which primarily impacted men.

He urged men to speak out and report any instances of abuse they encountered.

Councillor for Lotlhakane West Mr Themba Stimela expressed concern regarding the rising cases of GBV in the Kanye District.

He stated that 236 cases of abuse against young people were reported in the district, alongside 38 cases involving children in conflict with the law.

He also noted 15 reported cases of abuse among children in relationships.

He called on men to take the lead in combating gender-based violence and advocated for amendments to legislation aimed at enhancing the fight against these issues.

In her address, Sergeant Michelle Gaoakanye of the Lotlhakane East police expressed alarm over cases of defilement and rape in the area, reporting three cases of defilement and one case of rape recorded in Lotlhakane East in 2023.

Earlier, in her welcome remarks, Kgosi Naledi Ramotswaiso of Lotlhakane East highlighted the importance of addressing issues regarding men being abused by women, encouraging them to speak up and report any cases of abuse they experience. **BOPA**

MoU strengthens professional development

By Gontle Merafhe

GABORONE - The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Botswana Institute of Chartered Accounts (BICA) and Botswana Institute of Banking and Finance (BIBF) has been described as a leap toward strengthening professional development initiatives within Botswana's financial sector.

BICA Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mr Oaitse Gabadirwe said at the MoU signing ceremony in Gaborone on Friday that the ratification would allow a strategic alliance built on shared vision for a more resilient, ethical and prosperous Botswana.

The agreement will mean the two organs no longer operate in silos but rather as a powerful, collaborative force.

The core of the partnership will be joint development and award of two critical, nationally recognised certifications being; The Certified Anti-Money Laundering Officer (CAMLO) and the Certified Data Protection Officer (CDPO).

Mr Gabadirwe said promoting ethical conduct and regulatory compliance would reinforce the profession.

He said the partnership was a natural and necessary convergence of two pillars of Botswana's financial integrity.

This collaborative effort would elevate the professional standards across both sectors, fostering greater public trust, which is quite important," he said.

He said the true success of the partnership would be measured by its contribution to the economic landscape. Mr Gabadirwe also said the certification would empower the generation of professionals

to protect the valuable economy ensuring Botswana's businesses and public institutions complied with the Data Protection Act.

He further said the initiative they were taking was about creating a robust financial governance framework that attacked rather than repel foreign investment.

Mr Gabadirwe said a secure and well-regulated financial

environment was a cornerstone for sustainable economic growth and diversification.

For his part, BIBF Managing Director (MD), Mr Molaodi Menyatso said the collaboration will include joint workshops, seminars, certification programs that liberated the expertise of both BIBF and BICA. Mr Menyatso said that by pulling resources

and knowledge together, the aim was to create a more competent workforce to meet the demand of the increasingly complex global economy.

He said together they could achieve remarkable outcomes that would contribute to the overall growth of the national economy and cultivate a culture of excellence and innovation. **BOPA**



Botswana Institute of Banking and Finance (BIBF) managing director, Mr Molaodi Menyatso (left) and Botswana Institute of Chartered Accountants(BICA) Chief Executive Officer, Mr Oaitse Gabadirwe during the signing of Memorandum of Understanding in Gaborone recently. Mr Gabadirwe said the ratification would allow a strategic alliance built on shared vision for a more resilient, ethical and prosperous Botswana. Photo: Teko Letsholo

MVA Fund donates wheelchairs to Princess Marina Hospital

By Lesedi Thatayamodimo

GABORONE - Motor Vehicle Accident (MVA) Fund has donated specialised training wheelchairs worth P241 200 to the Spinalis Unit at Princess Marina Hospital to strengthen trauma care and rehabilitation services.

Speaking during the handing-over ceremony on Monday in Gaborone, MVA Fund chief executive officer, Mr Michael Tlhagwane highlighted the fund's continued efforts to restore dignity and hope to survivors of road traffic crashes.

Mr Tlhagwane said the was aimed at improving the quality of lives of injured people, to give them dignity and hope.

He explained that the donation represented more than a financial contribution.

"It is a symbol of compassion and partnership, each designed to empower newly-injured spinal cord patients to regain independence, confidence and dignity.

He said the donation follows closely after the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims, commemorated on Sunday.

While acknowledging the ongoing efforts to promote road safety, Mr Tlhagwane expressed concern over continued preventable road crashes.

"Despite our concerted efforts to educate road users, we still register preventable road crashes, which is regrettable as this leads to loss of lives and serious injuries," he said.

He said Botswana continues to grapple with human cost of road accidents, adding that the latest national statistics indicate that 260 people lost their lives on the roads between January 1 and November 16 this year compared to 270 in the same period in 2024.

"In the week leading up to November 16, four fatalities were recorded, following three fatalities the week prior to the event," he said.

Mr Tlhagwane said annually around 70 per cent of road traffic victims were men.

"Each statistic represents more than a number, it represents lost fathers, mothers, children, friends, workmates," he said, adding that for every survivor, there was a burden to live with physical, emotional and financial that must be helped lighten."

Mr Tlhagwane called for collective action, urging all stakeholders to recommit to the responsibilities of delivering quality care to severely injured road crash survivors, advocate for safer roads and responsible driving as well as working tirelessly to reduce the number of families affected by road tragedies.

He expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Health, Princess Marina Hospital, and the Spinalis Unit for their continued partnership in rehabilitating MVA Fund claimants. "Together, we can make a difference, not only in the lives of our claimants but in the health and safety of our nation," said Mr Tlhagwane. **BOPA**



Princess Marina Hospital acting superintendent, Dr Mosimanegape Nkwane (left) and MVA Fund CEO, Mr Michael Tlhagwane during the handing over of wheelchairs to the Spinalis Unit in Gaborone on Monday. Mr Tlhagwane said the donation aimed to strengthen trauma care and rehabilitation services. Photo: Gothusang Lesego

Govt to unveil profit-driven agric. policy

By Marvin Motlhabane

NTLHANTLHE - The acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture Dr Edwin Dikoloti has warned

that Botswana's farming sector contributes under two percent to GDP, leaving the nation bleeding cash on South African food imports.

Speaking at the Adventist Laymen's Services (ASI) farmers' conference in Ntlhantle recently, Dr Dikoloti declared war on the status quo. "We are drafting a new agriculture policy to flip the script from food security to food sovereignty; sustainable, inclusive, and cut-throat competitive."

Nationwide consultations were already underway, tapping Batswana for battle-tested ideas to revive the sector, he said.

Dr Dikoloti hailed ASI for roping in children. "Start them young, breed the next generation of farmers," he added.

He urged growers to diversify hard, 'graft indigenous giants like moretologa and mothwane, spawn new industries, and cash in.'

Owing to climate and land woes, Dr Dikoloti reiterated that climate chaos remained with creeping non-agricultural land grabs, citing full government backing for the 2025/2026 planting season.

He promised support to farmers with no delays and to plant on schedule.

In her remarks, the president of Adventist Laymen's Services Ms Mercia Nkosi stated that the Adventist Church aims to contribute to the reconstruction of a new Botswana by focusing specifically on farming, as they believe it aligns with biblical principles.

She explained that their mission is to support the Adventist church's global initiatives by empowering members to use their professions as a means to share their faith, guided by the motto: Sharing Christ in the Marketplace **BOPA**

Four envoys present credentials

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President Boko said Botswana once sent a team of farmers on a benchmarking mission to Bangladesh and was hopeful that the mission would fruitful in order for agriculture to raise its contribution to the economy.

He said Bangladesh also produced pharmaceutical at 98 per cent self-sufficiency and was already established international market exporting to 150 countries.

Therefore, said he was optimistic that Bangladesh would come on board to relief Botswana from the current drug shortage.

Receiving letters of credence from Danish High Commissioner, Ms Karin Poulsen, President Boko said the relationship between the two nations was built on shared bonds of commitment to democracy, respect for human rights, peace and security, economic and social development.

He said Botswana had in the past received support and assistance from Denmark and was keen on deepening the relationship as Denmark had previously supported Botswana's beef

industry by providing training on foot and mouth disease detection and the establishment of a meat inspection centre.

Welcoming Venezuela High Commissioner, Ms Magaly Gonzalez, President Boko said Botswana supported the territorial sovereignty of all nations.

He reaffirmed Botswana's commitment to the fundamental principles of international law, sovereignty and respect for integrity of sovereign states, thus extending the country's support to the nation of Venezuela.

Similarly, in welcoming Dominican Republic High Commissioner, Ms Erika Rodriguez, President Boko

indicated that it was worth acknowledging that Botswana and the Dominican Republic had a common vision to have high income economies by 2036.

He said it was important for both nations to cooperate to achieve their vision.

"I am also aware that you have established a national digital health strategy that runs from 2024 to 2028 and we have also embarked on a programme of a similar nature, to digitalise our health care and achieve universal health coverage," he said.

In response, the envoys vowed to execute their roles and further nurture the relations between Botswana and their respective countries. **BOPA**



Bangladesh Ambassador to Botswana, Mr Shah Ahmed Shafi



Venezuela Ambassador, Ms Magaly Gonzalez



Denmark Ambassador, Ms Karin Poulsen

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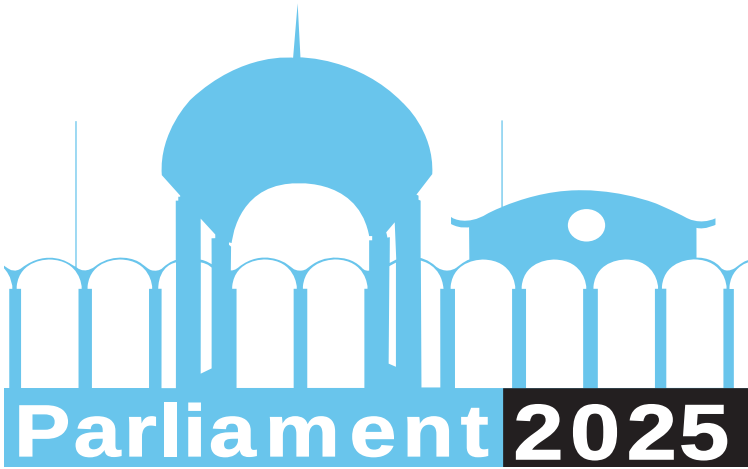
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Plans underway to improve land services

GABORONE - Minister of Water and Human Settlement, Mr Onneetse Ramogapi says government is committed to improving land services by putting in place plans for more efficient service delivery to the people.

Responding to a parliamentary on Monday, Minister Ramogapi said government had commenced to improve land services adding that where it was practical, developments were already being put in place. In order to reach enhanced or optimal status, the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture would require further financial investment, Mr Ramogapi said.

He said in the short term and in seeking to facilitate efficient and a more rapid issuance of secure land titles, the ministry had taken a decision that land delivery processes that were not catered for in the electronic Land Information System (LIS) be carried out manually. Such processes, he noted included conveyancing, registration of land titles, all land uses allocations, land transactions and printing of secure Land Title amongst others.

The minister, who was responding on behalf of acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti, explained that the decision was taken on the background that there were critical process gaps, which were overlooked during the implementation of the LIS development process.

Therefore, he said the problems now manifested as operational challenges that hindered timely customer facilitation.

Furthermore, Mr Ramogapi told Parliament that new forms of land transactions continued to emerge, which carried underlying challenges and in order to deal with them in the short term, both the system and manual processes were used concurrently to ensure seamless service delivery.

He said some legal bottlenecks were being addressed, noting that the review of the Deeds Registry Act was currently at an advanced stage.

One of the key amendments to the Deeds Registry Act, he said, was to remove the requirement for outside figures in the old built up areas on the tribal land. Thus he said once passed, it was expected to unlock Secure Land Titles in the old built up areas.

Mr Ramogapi highlighted that the review was expected to be tabled during the current Parliament sitting. To prepare for this development, he said land boards had been directed to ensure that their Land Administration Committees met at least twice a month, to speed up consents and

land transfers. Additionally, he said the delivery aspect was at times affected by the limited resources, especially where site visits had to be undertaken to produce sketch plans.

The ministry, he noted was currently undertaking an exercise to rationalise staff across the land boards and the ministry at large, adding that the exercise was expected to be completed by February next year.

Molepolole North Member of Parliament, Mr Arafat Khan had asked the minister of Lands and Agriculture whether there were any plans in place to transform and modernise the operations within the ministry, particularly to make it easier and faster for citizens to obtain land related services such as consents, transfers and title deeds.

BOPA

Ministry addresses public health care challenges

GABORONE - The availability of essential medical personnel and specialists remains critical to improving access to Primary Health Care (PHC) services.

Answering a parliamentary question from Boteti West MP, Mr Sam Digwa on Thursday, Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Mr Ketlhalefile Motshegwa said while the ministry continued to experience shortages of key personnel following the relocation of Primary Health Care services in April, measures were under way to rationalise the distribution of existing staff.

Minister Motshegwa said the ministry was also revising its

Act guides board appointment - Mmolotsi

GABORONE - The Botswana Tourism Organisation Act of 2009 is the guiding and governing instrument for the appointment of board members and Section 5 of the act provides for the appointment of nine members who serve as a governing body of the Botswana Tourism Organisation (BTO).

Answering a question from Chobe MP, Mr Simasiku Mapulanga in Parliament on Thursday, Minister of Environment and Tourism, Mr Wynter Mmolotsi said the members who comprised of the chairperson, vice chairperson, a representative of the ministry responsible for tourism and six members drawn from the public and private sector, should had the skills, experience and competencies relevant to the tourism industry.

Mr Mmolotsi said the act did not stipulate that the members appointment should be from major tourism districts but rather, on experience and competencies relevant to the sector.

The criteria for appointment of BTO board members was guided by the BTO Act of 2009 and consultations were done internally within government approved structures, Mr Mmolotsi said, further explaining that the main focus was on people with the skills and knowledge to drive the growth of the tourism sector, as well as ensure that BTO governance structures were in compliance with



Mr Wynter Mmolotsi

international standards of similar organisations.

“This is complaint to the standard practice in government, for appointment of board members to serve in parastatals,” said Mr Mmolotsi.

He therefore, informed Parliament that the ministry was not intending to review the board structure at the moment.

Mr Mapulanga wanted to know why there was no inclusion of representatives from major tourism districts, namely Chobe, Ngamiland, and Okavango in the

new board appointments and the criteria and consultation process that was used in the selection of the members

He further inquired on how the board composition reflected the diverse needs and aspirations of the tourism sector across the country, especially the communities whose livelihoods depended on tourism, and if the minister would consider reviewing the current structure of the board, to ensure balanced regional representation in line with principles of inclusive development and decentralisation. **BOPA**

training plan to address Primary Health Care needs, strengthening public private partnership, human resource development, and exploring international exchange programmes for specialised training.

Recruitment for newly created key positions is in progress, said Minister Motshegwa.

He also said that the ministry continued to capitalise on its proximity to communities to, ensure that health services were brought closer to the people.

Minister Motshegwa said currently, there were 48, 24-hour clinics across the country.

However, these remain inadequate and the ministry is

committed to upgrading five facilities annually, to enhance access, Minister Motshegwa said, adding that the initiative would contribute towards achieving the Universal Health Coverage index target of 75 in the next five years.

He said as the demand for primary health care services increased, the ministry continued to review priorities for establishing health facilities.

He said there were currently 615 primary health care facilities and 1 300 health mobile stops.

While efforts to construct new health facilities continued, he said, the ministry was also strengthening non-institutional health services through the

Community Health Worker Programme under the Integrated Community-Based Health Services approach.

The minister said the revitalisation of primary health care required efficient and responsive emergency health care services, particularly in districts characterised by vast distances, scattered settlements, and difficult terrain that delayed access to care.

The current national ambulance fleet, though operational in some districts, remains inadequate to ensure equitable and timely emergency response across the country, Mr Motshegwa said.

Referral services continue to follow established pathways according to levels of care, he added.

Mr Motshegwa said the ministry had proposed a dedicated budget for the procurement of additional ambulances in the next financial year and that was expected to significantly improve service delivery.

That however, the minister said was subject to approval.

Mr Digwa had asked the minister to apprise the House on the specific measures the ministry was undertaking to improve equitable access to healthcare services in rural and remote areas, availability of essential medical personnel and specialists.

He also wanted to know the provision of 24-hour health care in rural areas and settlements, adequacy of primary healthcare facilities and equipment as well as provision of emergency and referral services for critically ill patients. **BOPA**

‘Land shortage delayed weigh bridge in Ngoma’

GABORONE - Efforts were made in 1998 to construct a weigh bridge in Ngoma, during the construction of Ngoma-Kasane road.

While the weigh scale itself was successfully installed, attempts to secure adequate land for office accommodation and staff housing were not successful since the identified area fell within a wildlife management zone, Minister of Transport and Infrastructure said when responding to a question in Parliament on Monday.

Mr Noah Salakae said the

ministry was advised to apply for alternative land in Muchenje village, located approximately 10km away from the border but due to delays, the project could not be completed as initially planned and in the process, the weighing scale was vandalised, and later repaired and taken to support the upgrading of Kazungula weigh scale.

The minister said they would continue to observe vehicle traffic volumes at Ngoma border post and if the situation changed, construction of a weigh bridge would be considered.

Currently traffic volumes have declined with movements comprising small volumes of second-hand vehicles and a limited range of other goods, Mr Salakae said. He said in the past, the route experienced substantial heavy vehicle traffic, particularly trucks transporting sugar and other products from Zimbabwe to Namibia. Chobe Member of Parliament, Mr Simasiku Mapulanga wanted to know why there was no weigh bridge at Ngoma bridge and when one would be constructed. **BOPA**

Drugs shortage intervention needs concerted efforts

By Bonang Masolotatse

GABORONE - Drugs shortage could have been averted if the government had heeded the call of technocrats in the Ministry of Health, says Ngami legislator, Mr Phillimon Aaron.

The MP made the remarks on Thursday when responding to President Advocate Duma Boko's State-of-the-Nation Address (SONA).

He said the previous government did not act when alerted to the expiry of some critical drugs, and the Umbrella for Democratic Change government also failed to heed the advice, leading the country to a dire drug shortage situation.

As such, he said some deaths and complications of some chronic illnesses could have been avoided. Also, Mr Aaron said areas such as the Okavango were hard hit by the situation as they did not have private pharmaceuticals where patients could buy drugs as medicines were not available in government facilities.

He said the time had come for the country to start producing some drugs, noting that there were trained Batswana in the pharmaceutical space.

Mr Aaron pointed to the shortage of personnel as another reason that contributed to patients not getting treatment and surgeries on time.

On other issues, Mr Aaron said that the Botswana Meat Commission bought cattle for P16 per kilogram in Okavango, while the price was higher elsewhere, a situation that caused disparities between Batswana.

Also, the government should be proactive in helping communities that want to invest in the tourism sector, as this benefits communities, not individuals, Mr Aaron said.

Specially elected MP and

Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education, Ms Nono Kgafela-Mokoka, said the SONA captured the current economic climate and how the government was responding to the challenges it faced. She said government was steadily fulfilling its promises to the people despite having inherited a strained fiscal situation, where employees, suppliers, and farmers were owed.

Ms Kgafela-Mokoka said that increases in the old age pension and TVET students' allowances, water bills amnesty, and reduction of electricity price were some of the achievements of the ruling party. Also, she said while diamonds were not doing well, the government was looking to other sectors, such as the cultivation of industrial hemp, among others.

She said the National Development Plan 12 was the country's roadmap, while

the Botswana Economic Transformation Plan was the blueprint that would lead the country to high-income status.

She stated that amid challenges in the ministry, the new curriculum, which was STEM-driven, had been completed, and targeted children from early childhood until Form 5.

The ministry has secured a loan to address challenges in the sector, such as dilapidated buildings and retooling of teachers, it would also assist in the refurbishment and expansion of schools as well as rollout of digitisation.

Takatokwane MP and Minister of Sport and Arts, Mr Jacob Kelebens said the government was committed to growing sports and the creative industry.

He said the government had set aside P200 million for the creative industry and was working on the laws and regulations for better

management of the sector, while work on the Sport and Recreation Bill is advanced.

Since Botswana will be hosting the World Relays next year, Mr Kelebens said the ministry has devised a hosting strategy, to position the country as a regional events hub.

He said the ministry was reviewing the national incentive policy and partnering with the private sector to enhance sports.

About Steve Harvey's *Family Feud* show, he said the programme was a project of the past government and the current would not be continuing with it. **BOPA**

'Govt on course to improve citizen lives'

By Pako Lebanna

GABORONE - Since assuming the reigns of state power in 2024 the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) government has been working toward improving systems of governance for the benefit of the nation.

This was said by the Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Mmadinare legislator, Mr Ketlhalefile Motshegwa when contributing to the State-of-the-Nation Address (SONA) debate on Monday.

Already, Mr Motshegwa said the government would lead a comprehensive review of the constitution in order to improve the country's legal framework, ensure checks and balances, and that all were offered unalienable rights.

He further said government would also work on legislation to strengthen the role and independence of oversight institutions such as Parliament, Ombudsman and the Directorate on Corruption of Economic Crime in order for them to provide necessary checks and balances.

The government has also been working on the restoration of trust in the judicial system, and in better accountability and proper management of public finances, he said.

Mr Motshegwa further said the government was keen to implement social protection measures, including increasing the old age pension allowance to P1 800, introducing a P300 child grant, as well as the construction of 100 000 affordable housing units through the Bonno National Housing Programme.

He also said a Community Based Natural Resource Management policy was being drafted, as well as a community empowerment programme to improve rural livelihoods.

The minister added that there would also be a review of the destitute policy and the Remote Area Development Programme as well as the reformation of Village Development Committee guidelines to make them more efficient.

Government has mobilised funds to finance investment projects that will create jobs and increase the nation's revenue streams through the Botswana Economic Transformation Programme and National Development Plan (NDP) 12.

For his part, Tonota MP, Mr Gaefele Sedombo, said he was pleased his constituency would

have a new stadium as well as a proposed primary school in Tonota West.

He lamented that Shashe River School was not in a good state and called on education authorities to work on refurbishing it, and for the board of governors structure to be reinstituted in schools to assist in addressing such issues.

Mr Sedombo said Semotswane and Mandunyane also required a new school, which would also ensure better proximity for learners.

While lauding the government for introducing the Bonno National Housing Programme, Mr Sedombo called for the speedy allocation of plots to permit people to qualify.

Mr Sedombo also called for better internal roads, storm water drainage systems and better provision of potable water in the Tonota constituency. He stressed the need for a new primary hospital to be constructed in Tonota.

Major General Pius Mokgware, for his part said, the proposed introduction of a 24-hour government would lead to better service delivery and job creation, which would stimulate the modernisation of Botswana's economy.

Maj. Gen. Mokgware, who is the Minister of Labour and Home Affairs and a specially elected MP, said the proposal pitched to the nation by President Advocate Duma Boko was a progressive measure.

He said the introduction of the 24-hour economy would entail people working the same job on three, eight hour shifts, which would lead to more people being employed, and greater productivity as workers would not be tired of serving long overtime hours.

This would also afford citizens better service delivery, as paying levies, acquiring or renewing licenses and other basic services would be availed timeously at different hours of the day.

Already, he said the Government Accounting and Budgeting System had been operating more consistently and more efficiently.

He also noted that there had been greater civil liberties since the UDC assumed power, saying there was greater freedom of speech since President Boko assumed the presidency.

He however, cautioned that the rise in stock theft posed a national security threat, and the state security organs should work toward addressing the issue and root out the criminal element within society. **BOPA**



Ngami legislator, Mr Phillimon Aaron said drug shortage could have been averted if the government had heeded the call of technocrats in the Ministry of Health.

Routine maintenance in Kgatleng schools priority

GABORONE - Government through the Ministry of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, is committed to executing a high priority and real time intervention concerning maintenance of schools' infrastructures in Kgatleng East constituency.

Local government minister, Mr Ketlhalefile Motshegwa, explained to Parliament that, the ministry was aware of the persistent infestation of bats in classrooms and teachers' quarters in some of the schools found in the constituency.

To address the situation, he said ceilings were being removed in affected facilities for cleaning, disposal and intensive sealing of all bats entry points to prevent immediate recurrences and immediate disinfection.

Mr Motshegwa said the critical works were done in-house using council personnel and Ipelegeng labour to maintain fiscal prudence.

A comprehensive and long-term intervention and rehabilitations will be fully executed once funds permit, he said, adding that the ministry would continue to engage with relevant authorities to establish a joint collaboration.

He said the joint collaboration would not only manage and control bat populations but would also facilitate discussions to determine the need to commission research concerning the risks of zoonotic transmissions from such infestations. Furthermore, he said the discussions would inform the development of safe, sustainable and comprehensive guidelines for long term remedies.

He said the ministry continued to engage with the Kgatleng District Council, to mitigate maintenance issues and achieve a fair state of operational readiness.

"To address these urgent national needs, the ministry has submitted a development maintenance budget proposal for consideration under National Development Plan 12 and Botswana Economic Transformation Programme, across the country," he said.

He promised visible improvements in the learning environment resulting from active short-term interventions designed to ensure facilities are habitable.

Kgatleg East MP, Mr Mabuse Pule had asked the minister whether the ministry was actively addressing the poor infrastructure

and maintenance challenges in schools within Kgatleng East constituency.

He further asked the minister to state whether the ministry was aware of the persistent infestation of bats in classrooms and teachers' quarters in several schools, a situation he said posed serious health, safety and hygiene risks to learners and educators.

The legislator also asked what real time interventions were being actively pursued to eradicate bat infestations and prevent recurrences in affected facilities. In light of global pandemics such as COVID-19 suspected to have zoonotic origins,

Mr Pule wanted to know if the ministry intended to commission research into the risks of such transmissions and also to develop guidelines for safe remediation.

In addition, Mr Pule asked whether the ministry had engaged with Kgatleng District Council to facilitate routine inspections and timely interventions of maintenance in schools and teachers' quarters and when the constituents should expect visible and measurable improvements in their learning centres. **BOPA**

Precision farming challenge to operators

By Relief Lephutshi

LOTLHAKANE EAST - Lack of knowledge on the use of precision farming implements such as the technologically advanced planters by self-taught operators has been identified as one of the primary challenges for local farmers.

Mr Philip Keosentse, a farmer at Mmasenyetse fields shared the concern during the precision planter demonstration to farmers held recently at Go-Moeng fields courtesy of John Deere-Agri Equipment.

Mr Keosentse said many of the local tractor operators were self-trained, riding on their basic vehicle driving experiences, therefore limiting their understanding in operating some pertinent ploughing implements.

He said the challenge affected mostly subsistence farmers as some cannot afford to acquire such training.

“If the tractor dealership could at least partner with farmers in training the owner or the operator within the warranty period it would encourage farmers to welcome the technological developments,” he said.

Mr Keosentse said proper training was highly recommended as operator demonstrations were not enough.

Mr Moarabi Itumeleng, a farmer at Maisane, shared the same sentiments that it will take time to venture into precision farming.

He said he was still hooked to using the usual traditional planter, as it was manually operated and less complex.

Meanwhile, the technical marketer at John Deere agric equipment, Mr Zein Mopati has during the precision planter illustration explained to farmers

that the planter was designed such that it was able to place seeds in the soil at a specific depth spacing and position as compared to the common traditional planters.

Mr Mopati said traditional planters were without much control and that precision planters were technologically advanced with software’s and sensors to ensure optimal seed planting and have high chances of increased yield.

He said the planter could offer adjustable row spacing to suit specific crop types and field conditions.

Mr Mopati further highlighted that the planter’s accuracy in dropping seeds or fertilisers was crucial in maximising crop germination and crop potential.

However, he warned farmers of the use of ungraded seeds and the importance of understanding viable seeds in order to maximise germination. **BOPA**



John Deere Agri Equipment team taking farmers at Lotlhakane East through the demonstration process of how a prescion planter works. Photo: Relief Lephutshi

Botswana, South Africa need to collaborate

By Thandy Tebogo

KANYE - Botswana’s recent decision to reopen its market to South African agricultural produce should be met with reciprocal measures, as both countries stand to benefit from deeper cooperation in agricultural value chains.

This was said by Ministry of Trade and Entrepreneurship’s Chief Negotiator, Mr Phazha Butale who emphasised the importance of sustained engagement between the neighbouring countries to strengthen agriculture and agro-processing industries.

He noted that the two nations

should develop joint mechanisms to address instances of bumper harvests that may leave producers with unsold stock. In such cases, he said, temporary or partial restrictions could be introduced, supported by a clear communication system to ensure traders are not negatively affected. He said that Botswana’s import restrictions were designed to build competitive capacity of local farmers, enabling them to eventually compete on equal footing with foreign producers.

This strategy, he said was complemented by various government initiatives aimed at boosting the agricultural sector.

Mr Butale said that regional

trade works best when it flowed in both directions, as countries must sell what they produce in order to generate revenue to purchase what they do not have. According to him, lifting the import ban had already yielded benefits for consumers by improving supply, lowering prices, and expanding the variety of available vegetables.

He warned, however, that extended protectionism may lead to complacency among producers, resulting in reduced quality and increased prices. While increased imports generally push prices downward, Mr Butale cautioned that excessive price drops could disadvantage local farmers if prices fell below the

cost of production, potentially forcing some out of business.

He said that lifting of the ban could therefore be good for consumers because increase in supply would normally drive prices downward.

CTOC Farms’ Ms Chedza Siwawa said that lifting the ban had benefited both consumers and retailers through improved supply, quality, and affordability.

However, she emphasised that Botswana’s horticulture sector still needed some level of protection, as local producers struggled to compete with the scale, pricing, and quality of South Africa’s large horticultural enterprises. **BOPA**

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Ofisi e tsibogela kopo ya banni

Ka Kelebogile Taolo

FRANCISTOWN - Banni ba Matsitama, Makobo, Jamataka le Mathangwane ba ikopetse go fiwa ditirelo tse di amanang le tiriso ya lefatshe kwa lekgotlaneng la kabo ditsha la Tonota.

Banni ba metse e, ba tsaya ditlamelo tse di amanang le tiriso ya lefatshe kwa lekgotlaneng la kabo ditsha la Marapong le le ka fa tlase ga kgaolo ya Tutume.

Le fa go ntse jalo, metse yotlhe ka bone e wela mo kgaolong ya Tonota.

Fa a bua mo potsolotsong bosheng, molaodi wa kgaolo ya Tonota, Rre Keabetswe Lesiela o tlhalositse fa banni ba ntshitse kopo eo makgetho a le mmalwa mo diphuthegong tsa mapalamente ga mmogo le mo bokopanong jwa badulasetilo ba khansele ka go farologana.

Rre Lesiela o ne a tlhalosa fa metse eo yotlhe, e wela ka fa tlase ga khansele ya Tonota, ka jalo e tsaya ditlamelo tsothle tse di fiwang ke ba khansele koo.

O supile gore se se ba tshwenyang ke gore ba tsaya ditlamelo tsa lefatshe kwa lekgotlaneng la kabo ditsha la Marapong.

Le fa go ntse jalo, Rre Lesiela a re ofisi ya gagwe e ne ya rwala ditlhako go ya go buisana le banni ba metse e o ka

go farologana, maikaelelo e le go tsaya maikutlo a bone, mabapi le keletso ya go thusiwa ke ba Tonota ka ditlamelo tsa lefatshe.

O tlhalosa gore mo bokopanong le banni ba Matsitama, Makobo le Jamataka ba ne ba papamala, ba supa fa ba batla go fiwa ditlamelo tsa lefatshe ke ofisi ya Tonota, ka jaana tsela ya go ya ko Marapong e le matsopodia, e le mogoa moleele, mme go ka nna bonolo go thusiwa ko Tonota.

Le fa go ntse jalo, Rre Lesiela a re ba motse wa Mathangwane bone ba ne ba le makgamu, bangwe ba supa fa go tsaya ditlamelo tsa lefatshe kwa Marapong go siame fela, fa ba bangwe ba supa ba batla go fudusediwa kwa Tonota.

“Mme fa re tsaya e le tshoboko, re ne ra lemoga gore bontsi jwa ba re buileng le bone keletso ya bone ke go tsaya ditlamelo tsa bone tsa merero ya lefatshe kwa lekgotlaneng la kabo ditsha la Tonota,” ga tlhalosa jalo Rre Lesiela.

O ne a tlatsa ka gore e ne yare morago ba kopana le go buisana le baeteledipele ba kabo ya ditsha ba dikgaolo tse pedi tse, maikaelelo e le go ba rolela maikutlo a banni ba metse e.

Rre Lesiela a re ba kabo ditsha ba supa fa matshwenyego a bone a magolo e le



Molaodi wa kgaolo ya Tonota Rre Keabetswe Lesiela

tlhalelo ya ditsompelo ka jalo ba sa kgone go thusa banni ba metse e ka fa ba neng ba leletsa, mme e seng kgang e ka kganelang gore mogopolo o atlege.

Le fa go ntse jalo, Rre Lesiela a re mo nakong ya gompiano ba mo lenaneong la go rolela khansele ya Tonota kgang ya banni ba metse ka bone.

“E tla are khansele ya Tonota e tsena mo bokopanong mo bekeng e tlang, re e belege mogopolo oo go utlwa maikutlo

a bone ka kgang e, mme e tla re go tswa foo re kwalele Tona wa tsa lefatshe le temo thuo gore a re fe taelo go tswa mo ditshekatshekong tsa gagwe”, ga tlhalosa Rre Lesiela. Mo nakong ya gompiano, metse ya Matsitama, Makobo, Jamaka le Mathangwane e wela ka fa tlase ga kgaolo ya Tonota mme ditlamelo tsa kabo lefatshe ba di fiwa ke lekgotlana la kabo ditsha la Marapong, le le welang kwa tlase ga kgaolo ya Tutume. **BOPA**

Puso e rarabolola seemo sa tlhalelo ya metsi

Ka Kefilwe Selotlegeng

SHOSHONG - Motse wa Shoshong o ntse o itemogela tlhalelo ya metsi fa e sale ngogola ka kgwedi ya Phalane ka ntlha ya go senyega ga lefelo la metsi kwa Pallaroad.

Ka jalo, e rile bosheng, tona wa metsi le bonno Rre Onneetse Ramogapi a lekola banni ba motse ka seemo se, mme a tlhalosa fa puso e tlaa leka ka gotlhe go fefosa tlharabolola ya seemo se, ka jaana ba tlhaloganya fa metsi a le bothokwa mo matshelong a setshaba ka kakaretso.

Are mo nakong ya gompiano, ba lekile go tsisa tharabolola ka go refosa metsi le motse ga mmogo le go siela banni ka dibaosara e le tharabolola ya nakwana.

A re tharabolola ya se-nnela ruri e tlaa rarabololwa ke kago ya mafaratlhatlha a a fetlhang metsi e e agiwa kwa Palla Road e go solofetsweng gore e tla wela ka Sedimonthole ngwaga ono, kana Hirikgong ngwaga o o tlang.

Rre Ramogapi o ne gape a rolela banni babeeletsi ba lenaneo la Bonno kwa Shoshong.

Tona o gateletse maikaelelo a lenaneo la Bonno, a re ke go thusa Batswana ka matlo a bonno. Rre Ramogapi o ne a rola babeeletsi bale batlhano ba ba tlaa agang matlo a le 850 kwa Shoshong, a supa fa go na le ba bangwe ba ba supileng kgatlhego

mo kagong ya ditsha tse di 1 000 tse di sikilweng kwa kgotleng ya Phephenyane gone kwa Shoshong.

Banni ba ne ba supa fa seemo sa metsi se sa ba jese diwelang ka jaana se kgoreletsa matshelo a bone a letsatsi le letsatsi.

Ba ne ba supa fa seemo se sele maswe thata kwa kgotleng ya Mahutaganyane ba re ga gona metsi gotlhelele.

Mongwe wa banni, Rre Dipotso Pitlagano a re seemo sa metsi se potlakelwe ka gore le ntse go dirilwe maiteko a go se tsibogela, ga go a lekana. Rre Pitlagano o ne a ntsha moakanya wa gore go epiwe sediba se se ka nosang morafe.

Rre Tladi Lekwapa a re seemo se felela se dira gore banni ba tshela ka go tlhoka boitumelo ka e bile go sena therisano ya bone le babereki ba koporase ya metsi.

Rre Lekwapa a re therisano e bothokwa ka jaana morafe le o ne o ka ntsha megopolo le maano a go hema seemo.

Fa a tswa la gagwe, mopalamente wa kgaolo ya Shoshong Rre Moneedi Bagaisamang are o solofela gore seemo se tlaa rarabololwa ka bonako.

Rre Bagaisamang a re banni ba Shoshong ba sokodisitswe ke seemo sa metsi ka lobaka, a re maiteko a lephata la metsi a tokafaditse seemo. Fa a itebaganya le kgang ya Bonno a re tsholofelo ya gagwe ke gore lenananeo le tlaa akaretsa kgaolo yotlhe ya Shoshong. **BOPA**



Mpuse lens retires as he rests

...Good night, The Godfather!

By Manowe Motsaathebe

BOBONONG - Endowed with relentless wit for pictorial communication, the prolific and multiple awards winner, Godfrey Mpuse has just retired his camera and transitioned to join his ancestors, leaving behind a trail of heavy, broken and harrowed hearts of family, friends, colleagues and fans of his art.

Goddy as Godfrey was affectionately called by colleagues, bore exceptional talent in photography. Unmatched. Many of his awards locally and even beyond the borders of Botswana are testimonials enough.

As this reporter gather strength and put on all his might, it dawns on him that the multiple awards conveyor belt for both the department and himself has suddenly come to a screeching stop. The man whom we got accustomed to greeting each other with a strong shout of “Khuwa khuwa” has reportedly succumbed to his ailments and all I’m left with is the memories we created together.

This is the first photographer I attended an Arts & Culture event with while a newbie at *BOPA*.

I was some days old when Goddy, Mmopi and I were assigned to cover an event at Duma Grounds dubbed Summer Splash sometimes in December of 2008.

We hardly knew each other and because he could really bend his elbows he tested if I were part of the team. I passed with undoubtedly flying colours. So, before the event, on a Saturday evening, we went into some drinking hole and guzzled some holy waters while awaiting the driver to pick us up. Morale booster of some kind. It worked magic for colleagues who barely knew each other.

Fast-forward to midnight when the even started, many artists performed under the drizzling rains. He was hard at work painting memories with his lens. I had my notebook which barely was of any use since my excitement hit sky high.

When Deben Natale and his team of Kalakuta Records hit the stage, Goddy snapped a few pictures before delving into the unexpected. Yes, unexpected by I, the greenhorn. With his gumboots, Goddy stomped the waterlogged grass and led a choir that eventually bunged in numbers as everyone followed suit. At this point he retired his lens and hung his camera on his huge shoulders.

Sometimes I suspect he even surprised himself, too. But we nearly fell into trouble. He was late to submit the photos while I, too, was late to file the article on Sunday morning. It earned us the ire of the then Chief press officer the late Mr. Koziba Batungamile. But owing to Goddy’s experience and abilities to negotiate tough terrains, we prevailed over the fuming CPO. Our then assignment editor, Rebaone Tswiio, immensely backed us up with evidence of the article and photographs. We defeated the CPO and got our overtime claims, my first, authorised albeit with conditions.

The Summer Splash event opened doors to our closeness.



Botswana Press Agency’s celebrated photojournalist, Godfrey Mpuse during the FIFA World Cup 2010 in South Africa.

Goddy would always consult with me on the angle of the story I intended to take so that he could work on pictures that augured well. He loathed a picture and article that we’re seemingly at war.

Since then, Goddy earned my respect. Not just as an experienced photographer, but as a brother.

He knew how to cajole a younger colleague into negotiating for holy waters at events we were invited to, especially when the conveyer belt seemed to have lost power.

At one point, at Gaborone Sun-the now Avani, Goddy played his cards on me. He told me that one

of the waitresses was smiling at me.

I checked her out and indeed she was. And so, Goddy thought I should use the opportunity to divert her attention to our table frequently. To cut a long story short, we had mad fun that night.

Goddy and I have enjoyed a cordial working relationship whenever we found ourselves attending various government activities together.

At some point we covered the launch of Nyeletso Lehuma at Struizendam where he found me to be a nuisance after I bended my elbow a multiple times that

evening. For every mistake, intended or honest, Goddy would call it a “foul,” a term synonymous with sport, especially football. He used this term on everyone who committed a mistake or error of judgement. He would do so in a provocative laughter to ensure that the next person knows about. But when it comes to himself, Goddy would crack in laughter of self-pity.

That night at Struizendam, he was afraid I was going to pull off so many successful ‘fouls’ that him and Thato Mosinyi avoided me greatly. However, I was the lucky guy that night.

Details are withheld.

Then there was Rural Development Council event at Dikhukhung in Borolong. Goddy, Thato and I, graced the occasion together with one Aaron Moreeng. What a night we had under the spell of bonfire and holy waters that flew endlessly. We planned ahead for the nights as that one. Fearing that the then deputy permanent secretary, Mr. Mogomotsi Kaboeamodimo may want to check on us and read our script, Goddy and Thato devised an anti-Kaboeamodimo plan: we put our holy bottles inside a litter bin provided for us at the campsite and laced them with ice.

Water and Kaboeamodimo-tight plan. But the bin ‘sweat profusely’ which nearly got us caught. That night of stories and laughter, Goddy got stung by an insect we called anaconda. He had to hide in his tent and burst in laughter to every hilarious piece from there.

These and many more stories we shared with Goddy, The Godfather of pictorial communication.

This is one guy who would, without a word, inspire one to put effort and be creative in their work so as to garner recognition and awards.

Now that his lens has retired, the shutter of his camera beat him to life, I can only look back and marvel at the towering photo journalist Mr Godfrey Mpuse was. I send my heartfelt condolences to his wife and children, family, relatives, colleagues friends and fans alike. Good night, The Godfather! **BOPA**

Teamwork plays role in effective service delivery

By Esther Mmolai

MAUN - A solid and united team is crucial for productivity, communication, and public trust, North West District Commissioner Mr Thabang Waloka has said.

Addressing employees from departments under the Ministry for State President during a one-day team-building exercise at Mochaba, on the outskirts of Shorobe village, Mr Waloka emphasised that teamwork was the backbone of effective public service delivery. He said a cohesive team enhances

effectiveness, efficiency, and a shared commitment to serving the common good.

He urged employees to fully embrace the activity as its purpose was to build high-performing teams capable of consistently delivering exceptional results.

High-performing teams, he said, drove organisational success by fostering a culture of excellence that positively affects productivity and overall workplace culture.

“We should be seen as a very solid team that will be exemplary to the public service. Collaboration

and team spirit are critical to productivity and ensuring the public receives services as expected,” he said.

Mr Waloka encouraged employees to avoid expending energy on petty issues, instead he said they should focus on positive thinking and delivering services to communities.

He further said that teamwork leads to lasting solutions for emerging challenges in implementing government programmes aimed at improving community livelihoods.

Wellness Committee chairperson, Mr Histo Diwambara, outlined the objectives of the event, explaining that it sought to strengthen relationships, improve communication, and build trust and understanding among employees.

He said shared experiences help participants develop mutual trust and a stronger sense of fellowship, which are essential for effective teamwork. Improved cooperation, he added, motivates employees to strive for excellence and ultimately boosts output in their respective workplaces.

Success in public service, Mr Diwambara stressed, requires teamwork and collaboration. He expressed hope that after the event, participants would uphold the highest standards of diligence and efficiency in serving the nation.

Participants engaged in a variety of enjoyable games and activities designed to ignite positive thinking, enhance communication, foster networking, boost morale, and create a sense of value among employees.

Teams also shared positive stories, experiences, and challenges to foster a supportive atmosphere and reduce stress levels.

Deputy District Commissioner Mr Ramogaupi Gaborekwe thanked the organisers and participants, saying that energised employees enhance productivity because they are more dedicated to their tasks. He expressed hope that participants would take pride in their work, resulting in improved service quality. **BOPA**



Employees from departments under the Ministry for State President during a team building exercise at Mochaba area aimed at enhancing and building high performing teams within the public service.
Photo: Esther Mmolai

“This is a fusion of sounds that are at once global in appeal and deeply rooted in African heritage”



Thuto enters music scene

By Benita Magopane

GABORONE - Musical talent runs in the family as debut artiste, Thuto Rantao, also jazz artiste, Kearoma Rantao’s daughter, has officially made her entrance in the music scene, with debut EP titled, *Baloi*.

The EP, is a collection of three tracks, *Baloi*, *Wena* and *Sdoba*, all weaved with the artiste’s distinctive sound, crafted by blending traditional Southern African rhythms and vocal stylings with contemporary pop, dance, and afro

rhythm production techniques. “This is a fusion of sounds that are at once global in appeal and deeply rooted in African heritage,” explained Thuto in an interview.

The Gaborone-based singer further explained that the EP’s title, which loosely translated to witches or sorcerers, was not meant to be taken literally, but rather as a metaphor for the powerful and unseen forces that shaped an individual’s journey, whether cultural, societal, or self-imposed.

Baloi, is about owning your power, your magic, and challenging the beliefs that hold you back. It is a sonic statement about where I come from and where I am going. I believe this sound is a new chapter for my music,” said Thuto.

The 27-year-old, who rose to prominence after winning the, My African Dream competition in 2021, said her musical journey dated back to her time in the local singing show, My Star Botswana, which ended in her elimination from the show.

The experience hit her hard, she admitted, however, not enough to make her quit on her dreams.

“I have always been surrounded by a strong support system. My mom and The Women of Jazz have been one of my greatest inspiration. Seeing how hard they work has been a nudge to keep reaching high, even through challenging times,” said Thuto.

Even as Kearoma’s daughter, Thuto said she refused to be limited by genre boundaries, stressing that she wanted to demonstrate versatility in her sound, especially because she was passionate about creating music that resonated with a wide and diverse audience.

Baloi, marks the official launch of a promising career, as the rising star shared her plans to make more collaborations in December, adding onto several others she has with artistes like Sal Angel (*Betrayed*), Jungle Yard and Motlha (*Wena*) and none other than her mother, Rantao on track, *Ina Lebe- Ke a roma*. “And as for next year, I plan to drop an album. So keep looking out,” she said. **BOPA**

Thuto Rantao has made her entrance in the music scene, with debut EP titled, *Baloi*. The EP, is a collection of three tracks, *Baloi*, *Wena* and *Sdoba*, all weaved with the artiste’s distinctive sound. Photo: Courtesy of Artiste



Ezra Neethings

Mascom Live Sessions returns

By Ketshepile More

GABORONE - The Mascom Live Sessions returns to Botswana Craft on November 29 after several years of suspension, featuring celebrated local artiste, Ezra Neethings.

Event coordinator, Robbie Rob, confirmed the comeback and said they were expecting a full house,

especially with South Africa’s legend, Ringo Madlingozi joining Ezra Neethings on stage.

“Ringo is no stranger to the Mascom Live Sessions stage, and every time he has performed here, he played to a sold-out show,” said Robbie Rob.

He added that the team was eager to see what Ezra Neethings

had prepared for his fans, noting that the *Merwalela* hitmaker has enjoyed a successful year.

Ezra Neethings’ powerful vocals and strong stage presence are expected to set the tone for a memorable night.

The event will also feature DJ Trax, while RB2’s Petula El-Kindiy will be MC. **BOPA**

Raguin roars on home soil

By Anastacia Sibanda

GABORONE - Botswana's rising tennis star, Ntungamili Raguin will roar on home soil today when he takes on Nithin Padmanabhan of India at the ITF J60 tournament.

Living every athlete's dream of playing on home soil, Raguin will be spurred on by the cheers of his supporters and is determined to give them a game like no other that he has so far played.

Encouraged by his Saturday win at the J100 tournament in Kenya, Raguin a seed two of the tournament, is confident that he will put up a good show against Nithin in a game that will be played on hard court.

At the J100 tournament, he won 3-6, 7-5, and 6-3 against Italy's Mattia Baroni, claiming his ITF World Tennis Tour Junior sixth title.

He revealed in an interview that his goal was to win both the J60 and J100 tournaments at home, hence he would fight bitterly to win his every match.

He said he would ride on the good performance that he displayed in his last tournament in Kenya, adding that he trusts his muscle memory to carry him through.

Furthermore, he said his ultimate goal was to qualify for the Australian Open billed for next year, a goal that he said he could achieve through accumulating more points in tournaments such as the one he was playing in today.

He said despite playing at home, he was not under any pressure but would use the home support as a morale booster.

"Pressuring myself can actually turn into bad energy that will result in me not playing well, but I have been preparing very well. I have been playing on clay court and now I have to adapt to playing on hard court," he said.

Talking about the difference between the two types of courts, he said the clay was slippery and when balls bounced, they slowed down, whereas they move faster on the hard court.

His coach, Killian Sinclair said they had prepared to win the tournament both in singles and doubles.

Sinclair praised both his

player's mental resilience and competitive spirit, saying it was this combination that had propelled him to win his last tournament.

"In Kenya, he was down, but he made a great comeback and went on to win the tournament. That alone demonstrates that his mental strength is sharp," he said. **BOPA**

Jwaneng Galaxy draws near FNB Premiership log summit

By Pako Lebanna

GABORONE - "I fear the white man's liquor more than I fear the assegai of the Matebele," the historic quote by Khama III (1837-1923), could easily have been attributed to Jwaneng Galaxy spokesperson Tankiso Morake after this weekend's round of fixtures.

This sentiment would have reflected the relief of seeing his side withstand an early onslaught from Matebele FC, absorbing wave after wave of attacks, remaining composed despite trailing early, and ultimately emerging the stronger side with a 3-2 triumph over the Kgatleng outfit.

The three vital points reduced the gap at the top of the FNB Premiership log to a single point, with Galaxy now on 25 points one behind leaders, Gaborone United but crucially, with a game in hand.

GU, who were held to a goalless draw by Mochudi Centre Chiefs on Friday night, remain at the summit on 26 points.

The Reds will be eager to claim maximum points in their next two matches, hosting TAFIC next weekend before their midweek top-of-the-table clash away to Galaxy.

In the first match of Sunday's FNB Premiership double-header at the GU Stadium, Galaxy were initially pinned back by a purposeful Matebele side that showed attacking intent from the onset.

Playing fluid, ground-passing football, Reneilwe Letsholonyane's charges denied Galaxy any meaningful attacking rhythm in the opening stages.

Thomas Rasebopela put Matebele ahead in the 18th minute, and 10 minutes later only a goal-line clearance prevented Chris Mwamba from doubling the lead for Kuka Ntsu. Galaxy's early woes were



Jwaneng Galaxy and Matebele FC during a previous game. Galaxy's 3-2 win reduced the gap at the top of the FNB Premiership log with a point against leaders, Gaborone United.

compounded when match officials noted that Onkabetse Makgantai was wearing a jersey that neither bore his name nor matched the number on the match-day sheet. It appeared the Galaxy kit manager had forgotten Makgantai's official jersey in Jwaneng. To satisfy the referee and limit embarrassment, Galaxy substituted Makgantai midway through the first half, introducing Omaatla Kebatho.

Kebatho partnered Thabang Sesinyi in a two-man attack that would later yield dividends.

Matebele continued to dominate beyond the half-hour mark and earned a penalty after Mwamba was pulled down in the box by Tebogo Kopelang. However, Malaise Mokhele squandered the opportunity, striking the crossbar.

A minute before the interval, Sesinyi levelled matters with a low strike inside the box, sending the teams to the break tied at 1-1.

Galaxy struck immediately after the restart, Kebatho firing them ahead in the 46th minute. The visitors then pressed for a third goal, piling pressure on the hosts.

But against the run of play, Matebele equalised in the 56th minute, Yashe Dambe capitalising on a goalkeeping

error by Victor James to make it 2-2.

Dynamo Fredericks restored Galaxy's lead in the 68th minute, a goal that ultimately sealed the 3-2 victory.

In the second match of the double-header, Township Rollers and BDF XI played to a 2-2 draw.

Popa and 'The Real Matebele' contested an evenly balanced match, with BDF XI drawing first blood through Boikobo Rannyena in the 25th minute. On the stroke of halftime, former BDF striker Godfrey Tauyatswala scored against his old club, making it 1-1 at the break.

The second half offered little in terms of goalmouth action until the dying minutes, when late drama unfolded. Tauyatswala appeared to have secured victory for Rollers with three minutes remaining, only for BDF XI to respond almost immediately through Ronald Setshego.

The match ended 2-2, leaving Rollers, who had won their first four matches before losing momentum, on 19 points, seven behind leaders GU. Popa sit sixth on the log, three points ahead of BDF XI, who occupy eighth position with 16 points. **BOPA**



Ntungamili Raguin