

# BOTSWANA Daily News

THE PAPER THAT INFORMS AND EDUCATES

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Justice for  
all as Legal  
Aid launches  
Criminal Aid

Bonang Masolotate  
**GABORONE**

Legal Aid Botswana has taken a significant step towards ensuring equal justice for all by launching criminal aid services targeting indigents.

The chapter, which is new to the country's judicial system, ensures criminal representation for the poor, vulnerable, and disadvantaged members of society and their fair trial.

However, Chief Justice, Mr Gaolapelwe Ketlogetswe, who launched the initiative on Tuesday, cautioned that this should not be interpreted as protection of criminals.

He said the Constitution guaranteed that every person charged with a criminal offence had the the right to a fair hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial court.

"Our courts have consistently recognised that fairness in criminal proceedings is not determined solely by procedural formality, but also by whether an accused person is placed in a genuine position to understand the case against them and to properly present a defence," he said.

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## Judiciary tackles case backlog

- **Proposed reforms to allow magistrates preside over a wider range of cases**
- **Establish Commercial Court in February to fast-track cases that currently hinder business operations**

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Manowe Motsaathebe  
**BOBONONG**

Although it is not within their powers to, some Bobirwa District councillors had, through council chairperson, Mr Johannes Gaosikelwe, resolved to reject the establishment of the Constitutional Court during a consultative meeting with the Minister for State President, Defence, and Security on Monday.

While some councillors supported and underscored the need for the establishment of the constitutional court, other councillors expressed their opposition to the envisaged development, arguing that such a move was not a priority under the prevailing dire financial constraints communicated by the government.

Those opposed to the establishment of the constitutional court argued that in the midst of ailing basic human needs, the constitutional court, although necessary, was not urgent.

Bobirwa District Council (BDC) chairperson, Mr Johannes Gaosikelwe who found the constitution to be a bearer of the soul, history and ways of Batswana under a democratic dispensation, cautioned that all the reviews and amendments should be approached with thorough care and with extensive consultations.

He said that grievances by councillors were anchored on the approach the government adopted regarding the constitutional court establishment and constitutional review processes.

"We are not against the broader constitutional review, but the manner in which it is conducted has the ability to dent Botswana's democratic credentials," said Mr Gaosikelwe adding that councillors were concerned chiefly about the 'piecemeal approach' towards

# Bobirwa councillors express divergent views on ConCourt



*Bobirwa District Council chairperson, Mr Johannes Gaosikelwe*

constitutional review.

"The government has promised a comprehensive constitutional review, not what is currently obtaining," he said, adding that councillors were of the view that the review of the constitution should be people-led.

Another councillor who spoke against the establishment of the constitutional court was Mr Jewit Tshetlhana, who argued that although it sounded enticing, the 'top-down approach' on the matter was suspicious.

"The bill sounds perfect and

carefully crafted like a move of a slick man weaving his way to a woman.

He would carefully choose his diction so as to appeal to the woman, although his intentions may not align with his words," said Councilor Tshetlhana.

Mr Tshetlhana argued that although he was yet to lay his hands on the Diboteloo Commission report, he thought it was a good starting point and a perfect tool for reference in determining what is to be repealed or not in the constitution.

He pointed an accusing finger at government, saying it had now shifted 'goalposts' and was now heavily inclined towards the establishment of the constitutional court over the comprehensive review of the constitution.

However, Councillor Mpedzeni Sam-Bandawe advocated the need to set up the constitutional court.

He said that as the apex court, the constitutional court would be the final arbiter that would bear the powers to initiate and preside over constitutional matters to correct any anomaly.

"I long heard about the need for the constitutional court back in 2008 while the Law Society of Botswana advocated for it," said Mr Sam-Bandawe.

Mr Sam-Bandawe also clarified that the constitutional court would become a necessity when the validity of an act or constitutional provision was questioned or silent.

"We will need the constitutional court to intervene where an act or constitutional provision is silent," he said arguing further that the ConCourt will also boast a more specialized and dedicated interpretation of human rights.

While responding to the councillors' contributions, Minister Mohwasa explained that legislation was a function of parliament, and therefore councillors were not empowered to reject the bill that passed through parliament.

However, Minister Mohwasa informed councillors that they still stood a chance to express their views through a referendum that would follow.

Bills were brought to Parliament via private members or the government, he told them.

Mr Mohwasa also informed councillors, against their complaint of lack of consultations, that the notice was placed in the government gazette on July 4, 2025, which allowed them ample time to consult on the matter.

Additionally, Minister Mohwasa, relayed that the government had engaged all the parties through an All Parties Conference at Boipuso Hall, where all parties were represented.

He therefore emphasised the need to establish the constitutional court ahead of the comprehensive constitutional review, saying the panel of judges of the court would then sit and look into the reviewed constitution and contribute their views.

He argued that like the Industrial Court, which specialised in trade disputes, the constitutional court would alleviate workload on other courts which, hitherto, were seized with constitutional matters. **BOPA**

## Kgomokasitwa residents call for road construction

Calviniah Kgauthe  
**KGOMOKASITWA**

At a recent kgotla meeting held on Monday, residents of Kgomokasitwa called for the urgent commencement of the Digawana-Tshweneyagae-Kgomokasitwa-Nthantle road project, a vital 50km road project awarded to Steel Base (PTY) LTD, with an estimated cost of P558 million.

During the meeting, addressed by Moshupa/Manyana Member of Parliament (MP) Mr Karabo Gare, residents expressed concerns about the current 15km gravel road from the A2 road at Tshweneyagae Junction to Kgomokasitwa. They highlighted the inadequacies of this key access route, which has seen poor maintenance, posing significant challenges for the community.

Village Development Committee chairperson, Mr Ephraim Mpolokang, emphasised that the lack of adequate road infrastructure has been a persistent issue and urged the government to take swift action.

In response, MP Gare acknowledged the road network's challenges and confirmed that while the project had been planned



*Mr Karabo Gare*

for some time, its commencement has been delayed due to current financial constraints.

Despite these challenges, Mr Gare reassured residents of the government's commitment to road infrastructure development aimed at enhancing service delivery. He noted that surveyors and Steel Base (PTY) LTD have been engaged for the project, though contract signing has been postponed while consultancy services were evaluated. The MP encouraged the contractor to sign the contract to start mobilising resources, despite ongoing financial limitations.

In addition to road issues, MP Gare addressed the critical

shortage of medications in healthcare facilities, a situation exacerbated by lack of proper road infrastructure. This has hindered residents' ability to obtain medications from nearby towns like Kanye and Lobatse. He urged the community to remain patient as the government works towards improving access to such essential services and stressed the collaborative efforts of legislators across party lines to ensure service delivery to Batswana.

Furthermore, under the National Development Plan 12 (NDP12), government has outlined plans for infrastructure development valued at approximately P377 billion, with some projects earmarked for Kgomokasitwa.

Mr Gare underscored the importance of collective action and self-reliance amid resource constraints and declining diamond revenues, elaborating that agriculture could play a crucial role in boosting the local economy.

As concerns rise about the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak in South Africa, one resident, Mr Marcus Kgosiemang urged the government to implement stringent measures to prevent FMD's entry into Botswana,

warning of potential devastating economic repercussions. He proposed that funds from other government resources be allocated urgently to safeguard the country against the disease.

Additionally, Ms Leapetswe Lekoba suggested that Kgomokasitwa be removed from Moshupa/Manyana constituency, advocating for alignment with the closer Kanye District Council for improved access to civil administration services. **BOPA**



*Kgomokasitwa residents at a kgotla meeting on Monday. Photo: Calviniah Kgauthe*

# Justice for all as Legal Aid launches Criminal Aid

from page 1

He noted that this was not simply possible for indigent accused persons without legal representation.

He further noted that the establishment of legal aid institutions worldwide had its roots in a simple but profound principle that justice must not be a preserve of the wealthy.

Also, he said courts operate on the premises of adversarial fairness, yet that fairness was compromised where one party was legally trained and resourced, while the other was unrepresented due to poverty.

He said the launch of criminal legal aid services marked an essential and long-awaited expansion into an area where the consequences of legal disadvantages were often most severe and irreversible, as consequences may include loss of life, loss of liberty, loss of livelihood, and lasting social stigma.

He said the courts had repeatedly observed that unrepresented accused persons may struggle with procedural rules, evidentiary requirements, and legal argument,

thereby placing them at a severe disadvantage.

Justice Ketlogetswe stated that the risks of absence of legal representation in criminal matters for indigents increase the risk of unfair trials and miscarriage of justice, wrongful convictions, disproportionate sentences, prolonged pre-trial detention, and inability to effectively challenge unlawful arrests or procedural irregularities.

For the judicial system, such risks cause unnecessary delays and inefficiencies in court proceedings, increased likelihood of appeals grounded in procedural unfairness, as well as undermining public confidence in the courts, among others.

However, he cautioned that legal aid for indigents was not protection for accused persons. Legal Aid Chief Executive Officer, Ms Keona Mphethe, noted that the development breached years of failing to provide civil dignity due to constraints.

"We have always known that true access to justice cannot be complete without extending our services to the criminal justice

sphere, where the stakes are higher than the consequences, where one's liberty and or life are curtailed," she said.

Ms Mphethe noted the organisation's corporate strategy directed the phased provision of care with an initial focus on civil legal aid, and ultimately criminal aid, noting that the timing could not have been better with the coming of the human rights-centric government, she said this reflected a belief that every person deserves a fair trial, and indigency should never be a barrier to justice.

"The strategic initiative strengthens criminal law, enhances confidence in the courts, and aligns with international human rights standards," she said.

Legal Aid Board Secretary, Mr Innocent Oteng, said the decision to introduce the criminal unit for indigents followed a pilot project undertaken by Legal Aid Botswana from September 2023 to September 2024, which stressed the need for the service, especially for children in conflict with the law.

He added that children in conflict with the law were at a stage where



Chief Justice, Gaolapelwe Ketlogetswe and Legal aid Botswana Board Chairperson, Advocate Setso Makoti during Legal Aid Botswana new logo launch in Gaborone on Tuesday. Justice Ketlogetswe said justice must not be a preserve of the wealthy, but for all people. Justice Ketlogetswe further said indigent citizens were unable to access legal representation simply because they could not afford it. Photo: Gaseitsiwe Moruakgomo

they could be rehabilitated.

Also, he said prior to the pilot project, there was benchmarking and research, which, among others, highlighted that the country's legal aid started with civil case aid, while

the trend was to shift to criminal aid.

Legal Aid Botswana also launched its in-house created new logo, which reflects the organization's evolving journey. **BOPA**

through the ranks despite humble beginnings.

"Being the first Motswana to hold the rank of General as the Commander of BDF is not because I was born with a silver spoon or having connections, but a true magic of what discipline can produce," he said.

General Mophuting, who grew up in a family of subsistence farmers, recalled memories of herding livestock barefoot, scaring quelea birds from a sorghum field, and walking to school with a plate and firewood in hand.

He stressed the importance of discipline, responsibility and character in achieving success, inspiring learners to strive for excellence regardless of their background.

General Mpho Mophuting, has urged parents to adjust their approach to child-rearing to accommodate the unique characteristics of the current generation, dubbed "Generation C". Speaking at Kgari Sechele II Senior Secondary School's Parenting Workshop, Gen. Mophuting noted that past generations were raised with strict discipline, with the whole community playing a role in child-rearing.

However, he acknowledged that times have changed, and parents must adapt to the contemporary

lifestyle and social media-centric habits of today's children.

"Parents must accept that denying Generation C access to social media platforms is a predicament," he said. Gen. Mophuting categorised generations, explaining that understanding these differences was key to effective parenting.

He cautioned against enforcing outdated disciplinary methods, particularly corporal punishment, which can be abused and become violent. Instead, parents should strive to understand and accommodate the unique traits of the fresher generation.

"These children are completely different from us... Parents should desist from enforcing that fresher generations should behave similarly and be treated the same way we were treated," advised Gen Mophuting.

Gen. Mophuting urged parents to understand how today's children do things, how they look at things and be in a position to have fruitful conversations with them.

He cautioned parents that if they remain in their past and believe that children should behave like they used to do in the old days, the rift will continue to widen, drifting them apart.

He also urged parents to monitor and guide their children in using online media platforms. **BOPA**

would be established in February to fast-track cases that currently hinder business operations.

Despite financial constraints, he said the High Court had managed to attain its ideal complement of 30 judges, which he described as a significant achievement for the administration of justice.

However, he acknowledged that limited funding had contributed to poor record-keeping, resulting in delays in processing appeals. He added that measures were being taken to reduce the backlog.

He said the continued malfunctioning of the digital records system remained a challenge, but the Botswana University of Information Science and Technology (BUIST) had

been engaged to develop a locally managed system.

If funding allows, Justice Ketlogetswe said there was a need to construct a court in Kgalagadi to serve the wider region and reduce the need for litigants to travel as far as Lobatse for court services.

In his closing remarks, Maun High Court Division President, Justice Godfrey Nthomiwa, stressed the importance of transparency and public engagement.

He said reducing case turnaround times was critical, noting that courts deal with sensitive matters such as inheritance, property rights and human rights, which require timely resolution to avoid delays in development. **BOPA**

## BDF Commander motivates Kgari Sechele II learners



Keetile Bontsibokae  
MOLEPOLOLE

Learners at Kgari Sechele II Senior Secondary School were given to a motivational speech by Botswana Defence Force (BDF)

Commander, General Mpho Mophuting, who emphasised that success is not limited to those from affluent backgrounds.

Speaking at the school's

workshop on Saturday themed: Parenting a 2026 Candidate; Partnering for Academic Excellence, General Mophuting shared his personal story of rising

## Judiciary tackles case backlog

Ndingililo Gaoswediwe  
GABORONE

The Judiciary is preparing a major overhaul aimed at improving efficiency and addressing the growing backlog of cases. Chief Justice Gaolapelwe Ketlogetswe said the proposed reforms would streamline the legal system and allow magistrates to preside over a wider range of cases. He was addressing a press briefing in Gaborone on Tuesday, two weeks ahead of the official opening of the new legal year.

He said a detailed proposal outlining the reforms was expected to be submitted in the second quarter of the year.

Justice Ketlogetswe noted that the backlog disproportionately affects vulnerable groups, citing delays in child maintenance cases that negatively impact children's welfare, as well as stock theft cases which have broader economic implications.

On the handling of criminal matters by the High Court, he warned that prolonged proceedings pose serious risks, particularly with regard to human rights, and called for the establishment of specialised courts to address such cases more efficiently.

He also emphasised the need to expedite divorce cases to minimise conflict between divorcing couples.

The Chief Justice further announced that a commercial court



# Fuel price hike sparks public concern in Malawi

LILONGWE

**A sharp increase in fuel prices announced by the Malawi Energy Regulatory Authority, MERA, on Monday has triggered public concern, with many Malawians warning that higher costs will push up prices of basic goods and services.**

Under the new pricing structure, petrol prices rose from the equivalent of US\$2.02 to US\$2.86 dollars per liter, representing an increase of 41.6 per cent, while diesel prices climbed from US\$2.02 to US\$2.85 per liter, up by 41.1 per cent.

MERA Board Chairperson Lucas Kondowe said in a statement that the adjustments followed the reintroduction of the Automatic Pricing Mechanism, which had been suspended for the past three years in favor of a fixed pricing system.

Kondowe described the fixed pricing regime as "commercially unsustainable," citing significant trading losses and an inability to import adequate petroleum products as key challenges.

The fuel price hike has drawn criticism from consumer groups.

John Kapito, executive director of the Consumers Association of Malawi, called the adjustment "economic violence" and urged the government to protect citizens from the shock of rising fuel costs.

Offering a different perspective, Malawian economist Velli Nyirongo told Xinhua in a written response that the fuel price increase represented a market correction rather than a discretionary policy decision.

Nyirongo said that while the adjustment could help stabilise fuel supply, the move risked "entrenching economic fragility" if it was not accompanied by deeper structural reforms to support sustainable growth.

Nevertheless, he cautioned that higher fuel prices would "feed directly into inflation, raising transport, food, and production costs across the economy," disproportionately affecting households and small businesses and increasing poverty risks.

According to the economist, durable solutions required complementary reforms, including short-term mitigation measures to cushion vulnerable households and critical supply chains. **Xinhua**



**BEIJING** - A bullet train at a platform of the Beijing West Railway Station in China. The Beijing West Railway Station marked its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary yesterday. Over the past three decades, this modern transport hub has handled more than 1.96 billion passenger trips, standing as a witness to China's development and the evolution of its railway network. Photo: Xinhua

## Mercosur and EU sign free trade agreement

The Southern Common Market (Mercosur) and the European Union on Saturday signed a free trade agreement in Asuncion, Paraguay marking the conclusion of 25 years of negotiations toward one of the world's largest trade accords.

**ASUNCION** - The Southern Common Market (Mercosur) and the European Union (EU) on Saturday signed a free trade agreement in Asuncion, Paraguay marking the conclusion of 25 years of negotiations toward one of the world's largest trade accords.

The agreement aims to reduce tariffs and expand trade between the two blocs and now awaits approval by the European Parliament, as well as ratification by the legislatures of Mercosur member states Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.

The signing ceremony was attended by senior EU and Mercosur officials, including European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European

Council President Antonio Costa, together with the foreign ministers of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.

Paraguayan President Santiago Pena, whose country holds the Mercosur presidency, thanked leaders from both blocs for their efforts, calling Saturday "a truly historic day."

Von der Leyen said the pact sent a very strong message in favor of fair trade and long-term economic cooperation.

"This agreement is a firm commitment to openness, exchange and cooperation, as opposed to isolationism, unilateralism and the use of trade as a geopolitical weapon," said Costa.

The deal covers a combined

population of more than 700 million people.

According to the European Commission, the EU's largest trade deal to date would eliminate more than €4 billion (US\$4.65 billion) in duties on EU exports each year.

EU exports to Mercosur mainly include machinery, chemical products and transport equipment, while Mercosur exports are largely agricultural goods, minerals and forestry products.

Negotiations on the pact have stretched about 25 years, repeatedly stalling and resuming amid shifting political coalitions, disputes over environmental safeguards in South America, and opposition from parts of Europe's farm sector. **Xinhua**

### BUSINESS BRIEFS

## South Africa mining output down 2.7 per cent

**JOHANNESBURG** - South Africa's mining production declined by 2.7 per cent year on year in November 2025, according to data released by Statistics South Africa on Tuesday. The contraction marked the first decline in mining activity since April 2025, reversing an upwardly revised 6.1 per cent increase in October 2025 and falling short of market expectations of a 3.9 per cent gain. The downturn was driven largely by weaker output in key commodities. Coal production fell 7.9 per cent, iron ore output dropped 7.6 per cent, platinum group metals declined 2.8 per cent, and gold production decreased 6.0 per cent, the agency's data showed. In contrast, manganese ore posted a strong performance, with production expanding 17 per cent, providing support to overall mining activity. **Xinhua**

## Egypt and Namibia eye cooperation in key sectors

**WINDHOEK** - Egypt and Namibia are seeking to expand bilateral cooperation in key sectors including green hydrogen and renewable energy, agriculture and infrastructure development, healthcare, education and value addition, an official said on Tuesday. Namibia's Office of the Prime Minister said in a statement that the commitment was underscored during a courtesy visit by Egypt's Ambassador to Namibia Ramia Shawky to Namibian Prime Minister Elijah Ngurare on Monday. According to the statement, the meeting highlighted the long-standing friendship between Egypt and Namibia, rooted in Egypt's support for Namibia's liberation struggle in the 1960s and formalised through the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1990. **Xinhua**

## Venezuela receives US\$300 million from US sale of its oil

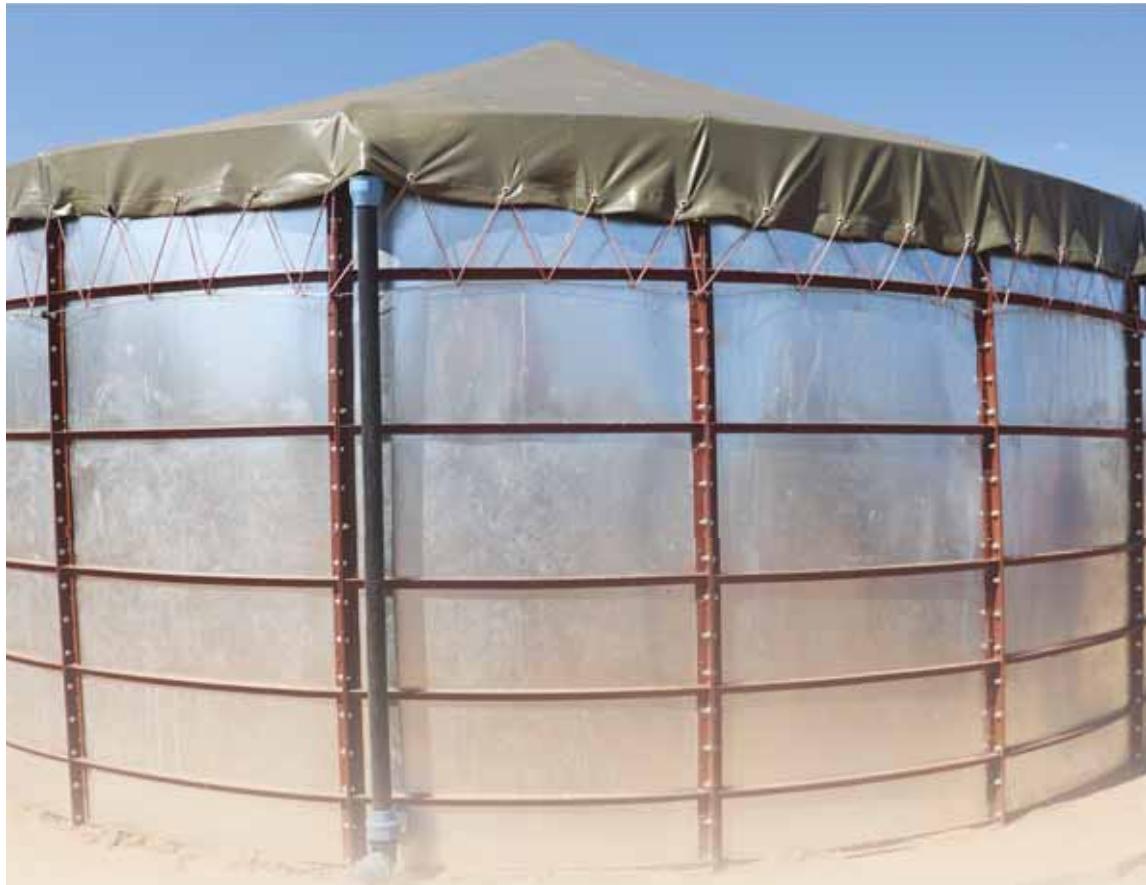
**CARACAS** - Venezuela has received US\$300 million from a US sale of Venezuelan crude, part of an estimated US\$500 million in total revenue and will use the fund to stabilise the foreign exchange market, Acting President Delcy Rodriguez said on Tuesday. US President Donald Trump said separately on Tuesday that his country had taken 50 million barrels of oil out of Venezuela and was selling some of it on the open market, although shipping records show that the volume has not yet been exported. Speaking at an event in Caracas, Rodriguez said the fund would be channeled through public and private banks, in coordination with the Central Bank of Venezuela, to help stabilise the foreign exchange market. **Xinhua**

# Dikgang

PAMPIRI YA THUTO LE DIKTSISO

Ipapatse Fa  
Leletsa

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261 0480 | 241 3402 | 365 3500



*Mopalamente wa kgaolo ya Tswapong North, Rre Prince Maele a re lephata la metsi le setse le kgonne go phepafatsa didiba di le lesome le botlhano tse di tlaa thusang go anamisa metsi mo kgaolong.*

## Didiba di tlaa thusa kanamiso ya metsi mo kgaolong

Omphile Ntakhwana  
**SEOLWANE**

Lephata la metsi le kgonne go tlhatswa didiba di le lesome le botlhano mo kgaolong ya Tswapong North.

Fa a buisa phuthego ya kgotla kwa Seolwane bosheng, Mopalamente wa Tswapong North, Rre Prince Maele a re o ne a kopa lephata la metsi go phepafatsa didiba tseo morago ga go lemoga fa mealo y a

ditshipi tse di anamisang metsi di setse di le dikgololo ka jalo di thubega kgapetsa kgapetsa.

Mo go tse dingwe, o rotloeditse banni ba Seolwane go duela dikoloto tsa metsi ka lephata la metsi le atolositse tuelo ya dikoloto go fitlhella kgwedi ya Tlhakole e ya fiving.

Se a re se direletswe gore botlhе ba ba kolotang metsi ba kgone go duela.

“Dikereke  
I e

mekgatlo e e ikemetseng ka nosi le yone e kgona go akola lenaneo le la go fokotsa dikoloto tsa metsi.”

Fa a tswa la gagwe, Kgosi Baikanedi Ramanjane o kopile mopalamente go ba thusa ka kgang ya kgosi wa Seolwane.

O supile fa leina la kgosi le sale le ntshitswe ke morafe, jaanong ba santse ba letile go itse gore kgang ya go tlhoma kgosi e tsamaya fa kae.

“Tsamaiso ya lekgotla la rona ya re babalela ka gore re ya kwa Lerela kana Maunatlala go kopa dithuso tsa lekgotla,” ga tlhalosa Kgosi Ramanjane. O supile fa banni ba Seolwane ba nyoretswe go etelwa ke matona a mangwe go tla go ba lekola e bile ba its'e ka tsebe tsotlhе tse di ba tshwenyang.

Kgosi Ramanjane o tlhalositse fa lephata kabotlha ditshaba le sale le aba ditsha mo Seolwane bogologolo. Mme a re seemo se, se a tshwenya ka bana ba tlhoka fa ba ka ikagelang teng gore ba sute mo malwapeng a batsadi ba bone. O tladitse ka gore go abela batho ditsha go ka tila kana ga fokotsa dintwua tsa malwapa. **BOPA**



Mopalamente wa Tswapong North,  
Rre Prince Maele

## ‘Kgotla ya molao-motheo e botlhokwa’

Goweditwe Kome  
**MASUNGA**

Molao o o tsamaisang molao-motheo le o o tlaa tsamaisang kgotla e go akantsweng gore e tlhongwe ya molao-motheo e tshwanetse ya kwalwa ka diteme tsa mo gae gore Motswana mongwe le mongwe a kgone go e ipalela.

Mogopolo o o dule ka Kgosi Sibangani Mosojane wa Mosojane fa tona ya tsa perekole le selegae Major General Pius Mokgwane a ne a lekodisa setshaba ka kakanyetso ya go tlhongwa ga kgotla ya molao-motheo kwa Masunga ka Mosupologo.

Kgosi Mosojane a re go kwala melao ka pao ya Sekgowa fela go rontsha Batswana sebaka sa go ka tlhalgarya melao botoka.

Mokhanselara wa Themashanga, Rre Kudzani Tobokwani ene o ne a ngongoregela therisanyo ka go tlhongwa ga kgotla eo, a re morero ga o a fiwa nako e e lekaneng e bile ga o akaretse metse yotlhе.

Rre Tobokwani o supile matshwenyego a gore le ntswa kgotla eo e ya go dirisiwa ke batho botlhе, therisanyo ga e a akaretse maikutlo a dikarolwana tsa setshaba di tshwana le ba-hale-bogole le banana.

Monni, Rre Tshabadira Mosasane ene o tshwaetse ka go supa fa go potlakela go tlhoma kgotla ya molao-motheo go se maleba mo seemong se se sa kgatlhiseng se itsholelo e leng mo go sone, a re boemong jwa seo go tshwanetse ga potlakela go baakanya seemo sa tlhaelo ya melemo mo dikokelong.

Go sale foo, Kgosi Thabo Maruji III wa Masunga o ne ene a kaya fa kgang ya tshekatsheko ya molao-motheo le go tlhongwa ga kgotla ya molao-motheo di tsile ka nako e e maleba ka ditswa kgakala di ntse di umakiwa e bile le dipotso tse di

itebagantseng le tsone di setse di kile tsa bodiwa kwa palamenteng le kwa Ntlo ya Dikgosi.

Kgosi Maruji III a re kgotla ya molao-motheo ke yone e e tlaa bong e letlanya setshaba le go sireletsa dithoto le dikeletso tsa sone, a tlatsa ka gore go tlhongwa ga kgotla ya go nna jalo go tlaa rarabolola dikgang tsa gore go iwa kae fa go setse go sekasekwa molao-motheo wa lefatshe.

O gateletse gore go ka nna molemo fa kgotla eo e ka tla ya tlota le go sireletsu ngwao ya Batswana e e simololang fela kwa lapeng e bo e anama le dikarolo tse dingwe tsa botshelo.

Mo pegong ya gagwe, Tona Mokgwane o ne a tlhalosa fa mogopolo wa go simolodisa kgotla ya molao-motheo o tsile ka ntla ya go lemoga botlhokwa jwa yone mo go tsamaiseng diphetogo tse di tlhokang go diragadiwa jaaka tse di amang molao-motheo.

Tona o boletse fa makgotla a ditsheko e leng kgotla-kgolo ya boikuelo, kgotla-kgolo ya ditsheko le kgotla ya ga mmakaseterata di sa lekana go mekamekana le dikgang tse di amang molao-motheo.

A re dikgotla tse tharo tse di itebagantseng le borukuthi le go itshefa motho a dumela gore ope fela ga a mo direla sentle, mme a supa fa go le dikgato tse diintsi tse motho a tlamegang go di tsamaya go ya go goroga kwa setlhoeng e leng kwa kgotleng-kgolo ya boikuelo.

Rre Mokgwane o supile fa tsamaiso e e le madiadia e bile e lopa baikuedi madi a mantsika e tlhokana le babueledi go ba tsamaisetsa ditsheko. A re lengwe la mabaka a a gwethileng kakanyetso ya go tlhoma kgotla ya molao-motheo ke gore makgotla a a leng teng ga a kgone go tsaya ditshwetsa mo dikgannya di tshwana le tsa dithlopho. **BOPA**



Bangwe ba baagi ba kgaolo ya North East ba ba neng ba tsene phuthego ya therisanyo ya go simolola kgotla ya molao-motheo e e neng e buisiva ke tona wa tsa perekole le tsa selegae, Major General Pius Mokgwane kwa Masunga ka Mosupologo. Rre Mokgwane o tlhalositse fa mogopolo wa go simolodisa kgotla ya molao-motheo o tsile ka ntla ya go lemoga botlhokwa jwa yone mo go tsamaiseng diphetogo tse di tlhokang go diragadiwa.

Senepe: Goweditwe Kome.

# Residents welcome inclusion of key road in NDP12

Thuso Kgakatsi  
**HUKUNTSI**

Residents of Kgalagadi North have welcomed government's decision to include the long-awaited Hukuntsi-Tsabong road in the National Development Plan 12 (NDP 12), describing it as a major milestone that will significantly improve livelihoods in the district.

The residents also expressed appreciation for government's consideration of the Hukuntsi-Ncojane road, which although deferred, is expected to be constructed in the near future.

The views were shared during ongoing kgotla meetings addressed by the Member of Parliament for Kgalagadi North, Mr Reason Lekutlane, which began last week.

Speaking at the meetings, Mr Lekutlane said Kgalagadi North had been allocated two road projects, with the Hukuntsi-Tsabong road expected to bring immediate economic benefits to the area.

He explained that the road would greatly improve access for farmers transporting small stock to the Tsabong multispecies abattoir.

"This road will significantly reduce travelling distances for farmers. Instead of travelling approximately 510 kilometres to Lobatse, farmers will now travel about 200 kilometres to Tsabong," he said, adding that the previous arrangement had been both costly and burdensome for farmers wishing to sell their small stock.

Mr Lekutlane noted that while the Hukuntsi-Ncojane road had been deferred, it remained a priority project.

He said he would continue engaging the relevant ministry to ensure the road was considered in the 2026–2027 NDP planning cycle.

"Our expectation is that this road will be constructed. Although it has been deferred, I will persist in engaging the concerned ministry to ensure it is prioritised," he said.

Addressing concerns raised by residents over the lack of Radio Botswana connectivity in Ncaang, Mr Lekutlane expressed concern that residents were unable to access the national broadcaster.

He said consultations with the responsible ministry revealed that the project had encountered some challenges, but reassured residents that a connectivity project was currently underway.

On electricity provision, Mr Lekutlane said government has made deliberate efforts to electrify Ncaang, Hunhukwe and Inalegolo, but that financial constraints had however delayed implementation.

He added that as a short-term intervention, the Ministry of Minerals and Energy was considering installing solar plants in some villages, with consultations still ongoing on where these would be located.

Mr Lekutlane further commended public servants working in the district for persevering despite challenges such as poor road infrastructure, lack of water, electricity and radio connectivity.

He encouraged them to consider acquiring land in Kgalagadi, noting that inadequate basic services had slowed development and discouraged professionals from settling in the area.



Kgalagadi North Member of Parliament, Mr Reason Lekutlane (third left) during a kgotla meeting in Ncaang recently. With him are Kgosi Gakebafalatse Molefe (centre) of Ncaang and other district leadership. Residents expressed appreciation to government for considering the construction of the long-awaited Hukuntsi-Tsabong Road, which was approved under NDP12. Photo: Thuso Kgakatsi

"The challenge of access roads, coupled with water shortages, must be urgently addressed to unlock development," he said, noting that residents of Ncaang have been raising these concerns for the past 59 years.

He also pointed out that delays in Ikageng programme payments were largely due to poor road conditions and difficult terrain, which made access to Ncaang challenging.

In response to concerns about the inability of some public servants to provide feedback, Mr Lekutlane noted that it was unfortunate that there were still public officers who failed to do so.

He emphasised that it was the right of the community to receive feedback and advised

public officers to always provide responses, regardless of the outcome.

In his welcome remarks, Kgosi Gakebafalatse Molefe of Ncaang highlighted prolonged water shortages and poor road infrastructure as the major challenges hampering development in the village.

He said while the village faces numerous challenges, the condition of the access road from Hukuntsi to Ncaang remained the most serious obstacle affecting service delivery and the wellbeing of residents.

He noted that the community deserved a decent tarred road, which would not only improve mobility but also facilitate the introduction of public

transport and unlock broader socio-economic development opportunities for the village.

"The current state of the road is unacceptable. It undermines the commendable work done by nurses and has even led to the destruction of ambulances," said Kgosi Molefe.

He expressed concern that due to the poor road conditions, the village had been forced to use a double-cab vehicle to ferry patients requiring referral to the hospital in Hukuntsi.

Kgosi Molefe described the situation as undignified, adding that the vehicle was shared with neighbouring villages of Ngwatile, Ukhwi and Monong.

Kgosi Molefe nevertheless welcomed government's

consideration of the Hukuntsi-Ncojane Road, despite its deferment, describing it as a step in the right direction.

He said improved road infrastructure would go a long way in improving access to essential services and accelerating development in the area.

He further urged government to ensure that communities were consulted during the initial planning stages of major infrastructure projects.

Kgosi Molefe said local input was often overlooked, yet it was crucial in ensuring that projects are implemented in a manner that responded to the needs of the people.

"We are rarely consulted during the early stages of these projects, yet our input can add value to how roads and other infrastructure are constructed," he said.

While acknowledging the efforts of the area Member of Parliament, Kgosi Molefe appealed for urgent intervention to address the persistent water shortages in Ncaang.

He described the water situation as a serious crisis that required immediate and sustainable solutions to adequately serve the growing community. **BOPA**

## Court grants Moagi bail over corruption charges

Ndingililo Gaoswediwe  
**GABORONE**

Lefoko Moagi, the former Minister of Minerals and Energy, is scheduled to appear in court again on March 31 for status hearing in respect to the charge of corruption for which he was arraigned on Tuesday.

With the prosecution not in opposition to him being granted bail, Regional Magistrate - South, Mr Mareledi Dipate admitted him to a P5 000 bail and ordered him to provide two Batswana sureties who will bind themselves with the same amount.

Conditions attached to the bail include that Moagi must notify investigating officers before any international travel and must attend all court sessions.

Earlier, the state requested that plea taking be deferred as investigations into the case were still ongoing.

Once investigations are finalised, additional accused individuals may be brought before court.

The charges relate to an incident that occurred on or around April 17, 2024, where it is alleged that Moagi, in his capacity as a government minister, received P4.7m from New Energy Company through Wisecreatives

Investments.

It is alleged that Moagi was provided with a bank card to access the funds from the company and its associated entity, Riders (Pty) Ltd. **BOPA**



Former Minister of Minerals and Energy, Mr Lefoko Moagi is scheduled to appear in court again on March 31 for status hearing in respect to the charge of corruption, which he was arraigned for on Tuesday.

## Trump to miss G7 emergency summit

**WASHINGTON DC**

US President Donald Trump said Tuesday he will not attend an emergency Group of Seven summit proposed by French President Emmanuel Macron.

Ahead of his trip to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Trump spoke at a White House press briefing marking the one-year anniversary of his second term, saying he already has "a lot of meetings" scheduled in Davos, including discussions related to Greenland.

"I have meetings with the people that are directly involved," Trump said amid heightened tensions with European leaders after he threatened extra tariffs on a number of European countries unless a deal is reached for the United States to acquire Greenland.

"He is a friend of mine. He is a nice guy. I like Macron, but he is not going to be there very much longer, as you know," Trump said of the French president, whose term is set to end in 2027.

At the briefing, Trump also questioned whether NATO allies would help defend the United States. "The big fear I have with NATO is we spent tremendous amounts of money with NATO, and I know we'll come to their rescue, but I just really do question whether or not they'll come to ours," he said.

Trump reiterated that the United States needs Greenland for national security. **Xinhua**

# Arts & Culture



Turkish Ambassador Idem Akay (right) and Ministry for International Relations permanent secretary, Thuso Ramodimoosi at a photo exhibition to mark the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Botswana and Türkiye. Ambassador Akay said the two countries' relations had developed significantly since 1981 following the opening of the Turkish Embassy in Gaborone in 2014. Photo: Thompson Keobaletswe

# Türkiye-Botswana exhibition marks 45 years of diplomatic ties

Forty-five years ago, Botswana and Türkiye established diplomatic relations, which focused on trade, investment, education and technical assistance, among others.

Ketshepile More  
**GABORONE**

To commemorate the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary, on Tuesday, Türkiye held a photo exhibition, which summarised key bilateral developments since 1981. The exhibition showcased historic documents and photographs highlighting key milestones in the bilateral relationship. Among the exhibits were a document signed by Botswana's former Permanent Representative to the United Nations, the late Joseph Legwaila, concerning the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Also on display was a congratulatory message to Botswana's third president, Dr Festus Mogae on his re-election; a message commemorating Botswana's 30th independence anniversary as well as a letter of compliments to the late former minister of foreign affairs, Mompatti Merafhe on his assumption of office.

The exhibition also featured historic photographs of former minister of foreign affairs, Phandu Skelemani, images of the current Minister of International Relations, Pheno Butale during his visit to Türkiye. Speaking at the event, Türkiye Ambassador to Botswana, Ahmet Akay said relations between the two countries had developed significantly since 1981, following the opening of the Turkish Embassy in Gaborone in 2014. Prior to that, the Turkish Embassy in Pretoria was accredited to Botswana. Ambassador Akay said Botswana would soon open an embassy in Ankara, Türkiye, a move he said would further strengthen relations between the two nations. He expressed confidence that by the time the two countries celebrated 50 years of diplomatic relations, cooperation would have reached even higher levels. "Potential areas for bilateral cooperation include mining and energy, construction, infrastructure development, education, health, agriculture and tourism," he said. Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of

International Relations, Thuso Ramodimoosi said the two nations had achieved much over the years and that continued dedication and commitment would further promote sustainable development and improve the living standards of their people. He said Türkiye had played a notable role in advancing Botswana's development through human resource development and cultural exchanges. "This partnership is continually broadening and strengthening Botswana-Türkiye relations, ensuring that the exchanges we build today will grow more robust and benefit future generations," Ramodimoosi said. He further reaffirmed government's commitment to fostering a strategic and comprehensive partnership founded on mutual respect and cooperation. "We reaffirm our long-standing partnership and dedication to fostering a democratic and prosperous world where everyone can freely pursue their goals and dreams," he said. **BOPA**



## Turks turn to Tai Chi to ease stress of city life

### ANKARA

A growing number of urban Turks are taking up Tai Chi, with practitioners and instructors citing stress relief and rising interest in Chinese culture as key drivers in Türkiye's major cities.

Once a little-known discipline in the country, the ancient Chinese martial art is increasingly attracting office workers, professionals and young urbanites seeking physical balance, mental calm and a deeper cultural connection, according to a Turkish Tai Chi master with three decades of experience.

"People who already feel close to Chinese culture are naturally more interested and more enthusiastic," said Numan Pekgoz, a Tai Chi master in an interview with Xinhua at his studio in Ankara, where students practice slow, flowing movements in silence.

"Likewise, people who have no prior knowledge of Tai Chi gradually come to know the beauty and elements of Chinese culture more closely over time," he pointed out. As students continue their practice, Pekgoz said their curiosity often expands beyond physical exercise.

"They start watching films related to China, reading books, and becoming more engaged with Chinese elements," he noted.

Interest in Tai Chi has risen noticeably in Türkiye, particularly in large cities such as Ankara and Istanbul, Pekgoz said.

"There has been a visible increase in Türkiye, especially over the last 10 years, and particularly over the last five years," he noted. "It is possible to link this partly to social media. We can clearly say that there is a visible interest."

Social media platforms have made Chinese philosophy, wellness practices and traditional arts more accessible, helping Tai Chi reach audiences who may never have encountered it before.

Pekgoz said the growing interest is not limited to physical well-being but also reflects cultural exchange between the two countries. Tai Chi can definitely serve as a cultural bridge between China and Türkiye, he said. "In the near future, the need has arisen for us to organize a visit to China with our students, and we have plans in that direction," the master said.

Pekgoz said the appeal of Tai Chi in Türkiye is also rooted in historical and philosophical connections between the two civilisations.

"There are very strong ties between China and Türkiye," he said.

"The philosophical interaction between ancient cultures is very significant. Some of the most important roots of our own culture actually originate from Central Asia," Pekgoz emphasised.

For Pekgoz, China is a large country, and its different philosophical traditions can be seen across various regions.

"It is also possible to observe the impact of those currents within our own culture," he pointed out.

In a fast-paced urban environment where instant results are often expected, Pekgoz said Tai Chi appeals to people who value patience and long-term commitment.

"At a time when we are accustomed to obtaining everything very easily, there are people who have begun to enjoy the act of making an effort to achieve something," according to Pekgoz.

Beyond its cultural and philosophical dimensions, Tai Chi is increasingly viewed as a response to the psychological challenges of modern urban life.

As cities grow larger and social structures become more fragmented, Pekgoz said many individuals experience new forms of stress and isolation.

"In city life, our lives are becoming increasingly individualised and as this happens, problems that did not exist before can begin to emerge," he said. **Xinhua**

# DailySport



Township Rollers FC chairperson, Thapelo Pabalinga (third left) and the executive committee at the team's press conference in Gaborone on Monday. Pabalinga informed the media that the committee would revive the team and bring it to the level it used to be. Photo: Felicity Male

“Township Rollers may not currently be at its best, but it would be unjust to define the club by moments of difficulty alone. All is not lost.”

By Anastacia Sibanda  
GABORONE

Newly appointed Township Rollers chairperson, Thapelo Pabalinga, has outlined an ambitious roadmap to restore the club's prestige with focus on three core pillars which include stability, competitiveness and modernisation.

Addressing a press conference on Monday, Pabalinga committed

his executive committee and management to returning Township Rollers, alias Popa, to its rightful place at the summit of Botswana football. To signal a new era of professionalism, Pabalinga announced several key operational upgrades, including securing a technical partner in Umbro with the new kit expected to arrive in the country within four weeks.

On one hand, DC Tours will provide team transportation,

while Emergency Assist has been brought on board to manage the club's medical requirements.

In effort to increase efficiency, the club is in talks with a professional ticketing company.

“The era of selling tickets from car boots must come to an end,” Pabalinga said, emphasising the need for transparency and easy access for supporters.

To prevent a repeat of past issues, Pabalinga announced the opening of a new bank account

to ensure traceable financial management.

The club has also partnered with an external accounting and audit firm to instill discipline and produce audited statements in strict accordance with the Township Rollers Constitution.

Earlier, Pabalinga apologised to stakeholders for the club's failure to honour a fixture last year, saying the incident was an eyesore to the club's reputation.

“The disruption was regrettable and we assure all stakeholders that such an occurrence will never happen again,” he said.

He further apologised to the players, technical staff and their families regarding delayed payments, noting that such financial struggles did not reflect the values of the institution.

Meanwhile, known for trophies and a huge and passionate following, the recent past has been uncharacteristically sombre for Popa.

From missed fixtures to internal financial struggles, the decorated club found itself veering away from the very ideals that built its legend.

While he acknowledged that the club has recently veered away from its founding ideals, Pabalinga paid tribute to past investors, committees and sponsors who built the most decorated club in the country.

“Township Rollers may not currently be at its best, but it would be unjust to define the club by moments of difficulty alone. All is not lost,” Pabalinga said. **BOPA**

## East Africa plans to deliver memorable AFCON 2027

**KAMPALA** - The President of the Federation of Uganda Football Associations (FUFA), Moses Hassim Magogo, has expressed confidence that Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania will successfully co-host the 2027 CAF Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON).

In an interview with Xinhua on Tuesday, Magogo assured football fans that the three East African nations are working closely to ensure a well-organised and memorable AFCON in 2027. “It is the first time we shall be hosting AFCON in the East African region and we want to make it huge and memorable,” Magogo said.

He noted that serious preparations were already under way following the official handover of the Confederation of African Football (CAF) flag to the 2027 co-hosts at the conclusion of the AFCON tournament in

Morocco on Sunday.

“We are not taking the hosting of AFCON 2027 lightly because it is a dream that will come true and we want everyone around the world who loves football to come and enjoy East Africa and the sweet hospitality as well,” he added.

Magogo also said the tournament was expected to strengthen regional cooperation, boost tourism and place East African football talent firmly in the global spotlight.

“We cannot have the same high class facilities like Morocco who hosted the AFCON that ended last Sunday. But we have all it takes as Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania to organise a very successful tournament that many people will love and talk about for years,” he said. According to Magogo, hosting AFCON 2027 would rank among Uganda's

biggest sporting achievements.

“We are still very determined to work hard and try to achieve more,” Magogo added.

At the recently concluded AFCON in Morocco, two

teams from the Council of East and Central Africa Football Associations (CECAFA)

- Sudan and Tanzania
- advanced to the round of 16, while Uganda failed to progress beyond the group stage.

Xinhua



Moses Hassim Magogo