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Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr Dithapelo Keorapetse (left) and executive director of 2050 Pathways Platform under European Climate Foundation, Ms Marcela Jaramillo during a courtesy call at National Assembly in Gaborone yesterday. Mr Keorapeste said achieving a green transition required strong political will, adding that the previous Parliament’s contribution to green energy stood at one per cent, with a target set at 30 per cent. Photo: Pheny Moalosi



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‘Collect IDs ahead of by-election’

By Naomi Leepile

TSABONG - The Tsabong District Civil and National Registration office has urged residents to collect their processed Omang cards and

MCE turns 40 years

By Thokozani Matiha

MOLEPOLOLE -Molepolole College of Education (MCE) will today celebrate 40 years of academic excellence.

The secondary teachers training college offering a three-year diploma courses, received its first group of 160 trainers in March 1985.

The Minister of Higher Education, Mr Prince Maele is expected to be the guest of honour at the event. Reflecting on the college milestones and achievements since opening its doors 40 years ago, the organising committee publicity officer, Mr Thapelo Letsebe said for the past 40 years the college had produced remarkable leaders who had a positive impact within the Molepolole community and Botswana as a whole.

Mr Letsebe said the likes of Kgosi Kgari III, Assistant Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education, Mr Justin Hunyepa, veteran scribe Mr Gideon Nkala, as well as football legends such as City Senne, and Brown Gasemotho were some of the alumni of MCE.

As one of the built up activities to the 40th anniversary, MCE honoured one of its most distinguished alumni, Mr Mmala Oefile, an art educator, national art champion and cultural trail blazer.

Mr Oefile graduated from MCE in 2004 with a Diploma in Secondary Education (Art) and rose to prominence in 2017, becoming champion of the President’s Day National Art Competition under the category of ceramic.

In 2019, he took a courageous step, applying for a six-month unpaid leave while he was based in Francistown as a teacher, returning to his home village of Molepolole with an ambitious idea of breaking the Guinness World Record for the largest baked clay pot in the world.

Mr Oefile gathered a team of eight men and together they formed ‘The Big Pot of Africa,’ a monumental clay pot named, Samokgolo, and successfully breaking the Guinness World Record, replacing the previous title holder from Poland. The iconic Samokgolo seats comfortably at Kgosi Sechele I Museum in Molepolole. **BOPA**

renew expired ones as the November 15 Kgalagadi South by-election draws near.

In an interview with *BOPA* recently, Department of Civil and National Registration deputy acting director, Ms Gaone Matakule stressed that the fundamental right to vote was dependent upon possessing a valid national identity (Omang) card.

She expressed concern that as of October 15, a total of 348 processed Omang cards remained uncollected at the Tsabong office. The oldest of these cards has been awaiting collection since its issue date of May 15, 2022.

“The breakdown of the uncollected cards showed 108 belonging to individuals less than 18 years, and 240 are for individuals aged 18 years and above. This crucial group includes 18 first applicants, 176 renewals, and 46 replacements,” she said

Ms Matakule further confirmed that since the by-election announcement, the office had processed 85 identity card applications, comprising 69 renewals and 16 replacements.

In an effort to reach residents, she said the Omang office was employing several communication strategies.

These include the publication of uncollected lists at high-traffic public places such as malls, clinics, schools, and Kgotlas, as well as sending SMS notifications to applicants when their cards were ready, she said.

Ms Matakule further said the office was also conducting public education through Kgotla meetings and actively coordinating its efforts with



Tsabong District Civil and National Registration office has urged residents to collect their processed Omang cards and renew expired ones ahead of the November 15 Kgalagadi South by-election. Department of Civil and National Registration acting deputy director, Ms Gaone Matakule expressed concern that as of October 15, a total of 348 processed Omang cards remained uncollected at the Tsabong office.

the Independent Electoral Commission by participating in their Kgotla meetings.

Despite these efforts, Ms Matakule said the office faced significant challenges, particularly lack of transport and the long distance of villages from the Tsabong office, which hindered collection of cards for residents in areas like Khawa.

Due to current budgetary constraints, she said, the office

would not be undertaking any specific outreach activities or collection/renewal drives. However, the office affirmed it remains open to assist customers.

Ms Matakule further said the current average turnaround time for an Omang renewal application to be processed and available for collection in distant districts like Tsabong was 14 days.

She said the Department was closely monitoring the uptake

of services and would consider extending operating hours should a last-minute surge in applications or collections occur closer to the November 15 polling date.

She appealed to residents who had not renewed their cards to renew them, and for those whose cards were at the office to be encouraged to collect them, because the right to vote depended on a valid Omang card. **BOPA**

Nkange youth demand priority in Ipelegeng

By Goitsemodimo Williams-Madzonga

NKANGE - Young people in Nkange, Tutume District have appealed to government to prioritise Ipelegeng job opportunities for the youth, as they were the most affected by unemployment.

Sharing their views at a kgotla meeting addressed by Assistant Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Mr Ignatius Moswaane recently, they said although they had been previously competing with the elderly for Ipelegeng positions, there need to be a change in how the quota was allocated, as pensioners had already benefited from an increase in their pension to P1,400.

Speaking on behalf of the youth, Mr Gabriel Tshekiso said of recent their Ipelegeng quota was reduced from 159 to 120 due to financial constraints faced by council and they requested for a maximum of 20 positions to be reserved for able-bodied elderly, while the remaining 100 be allocated to young people.

Mr Tshekiso noted that compared to urban areas where there were options, young people

in rural areas solely relied on Ipelegeng for employment.

Earlier in his welcome remarks, Kgosi Toteng Ndzonga of Nkange noted that young people were idling in the village due to lack of jobs.

He urged the government to intensify brigades training, saying they had the capacity to equip students with practical skills that were in demand in the job market.

Commenting on issues raised, Mr Moswaane requested the council secretary and district commissioner to engage with communities and share with them what to expect from the National Development Plan 12 presented before Parliament.

He said every district had a planned project which was expected to generate employment for young people and revive local economies.

He further said he would take up the issue of brigades with the relevant ministry.

On other issues, Mr Moswaane informed residents that their constituency had been allocated 1000 Bonno houses and the expectation was for the land boards to start demarcation of land to make way for the projects to take off. **BOPA**



Assistant Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs Mr Ignatius Moswaane has requested the Tutume District Council secretary and district commissioner to engage with communities and share with them what to expect from the National Development Plan 12 presented before Parliament. He said each district had a planned project which was expected to generate employment for young people and revive local economies.



Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Mr Nelson Ramaotwana (second right) and Commissioner of Botswana Prisons Services, Mr Anthony Mokento (second left) during the official handover of the renovated houses to Botswana Prison Services in Gaborone on Tuesday. Mr Ramaotwana said the use of inmate labour reduced refurbishment costs from an estimated P1.4 million to P590,557, while at the same time promoting rehabilitation and self-sufficiency. Photo: Thompson Keobaletswa

Ramaotwana hails inmate labour as cost-saving

By Bonang Masolotale

GABORONE - The Botswana Prison Service's model of refurbishing its old buildings using inmate labour has proven to be an immensely cost-saving measure and a shining example of active rehabilitation and self-sufficiency.

Speaking at the handover of renovated houses to the Botswana Prisons Service (BPS) on Tuesday, Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Mr Nelson Ramaotwana said the innovative approach transformed the penal system from one of containment to constructive skill-building and national development.

"In a time when our country faces financial constraints, this project serves as a shining model of cost-effective infrastructure development," Mr Ramaotwana said.

He indicated that the prisons service significantly reduced expenditure by leveraging internal resources, given that had the project been outsourced to a private contractor, the costs would have been substantially higher, estimated at P1.4 million.

"By utilising inmate labour,

the actual expenditure for the refurbishment was only P590 557," he said.

Mr Ramaotwana emphasised that by using prison labour, supervised by skilled officers, the service transferred invaluable skills to the inmates.

"This is a win-win strategy for national development," he added.

He said the prisons service planned to replicate the model using other trades. He said the main aim was to achieve self-sufficiency in food production for all prisons through rehabilitative farming. He thus commended the prisons service for embracing the progressive model, stating that using prison labour for meaningful, nation-building projects empowered inmates through mindset change, skills development and personal growth and ultimately prepared them to return to society as productive citizens.

He also commended the Madirelo Training and Testing Centre (MTTC) and the Construction Industry Trust Fund (CITF) for their vital partnership, which included assessing and certifying the inmates' competencies.

For his part, the prisons service

commissioner, Mr Anthony Mokento, confirmed that the renovation was executed by inmates who had been equipped with trades in painting, bricklaying, plumbing, electrical installation, tile fitting and carpentry.

He said about 65 inmates were engaged in the project and 39 were tested for competency while 38 were successful and received certification.

He added that after the handover, the team was set to begin renovating another three houses, part of a larger project involving the redesign of 12 semi-detached houses from six individual units.

On one hand, prisons service deputy commissioner, Ms Keneilwe Mokwenaotsile, said the refurbished houses would not only provide accommodation to employees but also help to stimulate and boost their performance.

Ms Mokwenaotsile added that the renovation would also improve the prison camp's aesthetics and help inmates attain skills.

Meanwhile, the renovation initiative was launched on May 29, 2024 and is expected to be completed in March next year. **BOPA**

Minister unveils project for out of school youth

By Lindi Morwaeng

MMATHUBUDUKWANE - Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education, Ms Nono Kgafela-Mokoka has unveiled project Bula Buka, a transformative government initiative aimed at empowering out-of-school youth through education, skills training, and character development.

The project seeks to absorb young people who did not complete Junior Certificate (JC) or Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE) back to school and give them a second chance to learn and rebuild their future.

The initiative was unveiled recently at Mmathubudukwane with the official national launch also scheduled to take place in the same village on a date yet to be announced. The programme is a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Child Welfare and Basic Education, the Botswana Open University (BOU) College of Open Schooling and the Youth Empowerment Education Trust (YEET).

Minister Kgafela-Mokoka said the project was developed in response to the growing concern over the number of young people who left school prematurely and struggled to reintegrate into the education system or find employment. She revealed that about 40 per cent of learners who sat for JC examinations did not proceed to senior secondary school, while only 25 per cent of BGCSE completers advanced to tertiary institutions.

"The main objective of project Bula Buka is to get our out-of-school youth off the streets and back into learning. We are particularly focusing on those who failed their Junior Certificate because they are still very young and have limited employment opportunities. This project offers them a chance to learn, develop skills and prepare for a productive future," she stated.

The minister said the programme was designed in such a way that it

would be flexible to accommodate students' interests and abilities.

Learners will have the freedom to choose the subjects or skills areas they are passionate about instead of being compelled to take courses they are not interested in. Ms Kgafela-Mokoka stated that inclusivity and dignity would be central to the project's design.

"These learners will not be treated differently from others. They will wear full school uniforms to avoid stigma and they will participate in sports activities once school sports resume in January next year," she said.

Minister Mokoka further stated that the project would initially target out-of-school youth who completed school from 2019 onwards as a starting point for the pilot phase. With resources permitting, she said more young people would be absorbed in subsequent phases.

"We have to start somewhere and with the support of our partners and sponsors we will be able to expand the programme to reach more beneficiaries," she added.

The minister said that the first phase of project Bula Buka was expected to begin in January 2026, focusing primarily on former Form Three students. Later phases would include Form Five school leavers as the programme scales up and additional funding becomes available.

During the unveiling, Kgosi William Balebetse of Mmathubudukwane praised the government for introducing the initiative describing it as a timely intervention that addressed both youth unemployment and social challenges. He however, urged the ministry to review the national curriculum to make it more responsive to learners' interests and aspirations.

"Many students lose interest because they are forced into subjects that do not appeal to them. Revising the curriculum to give learners more choice will motivate them to stay in school," he said.

Community members also commended Minister Kgafela-Mokoka for the initiative saying it would help rebuild young people's character and take them off the streets. They called on the ministry to ensure that children living with disabilities were also catered for in the programme.

Responding to the feedback, Minister Kgafela-Mokoka assured residents that her ministry was already reviewing the curriculum in consultation with various stakeholders to ensure that it aligned with learners' diverse needs and the country's labour market demands.

"We are already working on some of the issues you have raised. The curriculum review is ongoing and is guided by our commitment to inclusivity and quality education for all," she said.

The minister emphasised that project Bula Buka formed part of the government's broader effort to fight poverty, reduce youth idleness and promote social inclusion in line with Botswana's Vision 2036. She said the project would not only bridge educational gaps but also empower young people to live productive and meaningful lives.

"We want to minimise dependency on government relief programmes and empower the youth to run their own lives. **BOPA**

Keorapetse envisions environment conscious Parliament

By Ketshepile More

GABORONE - Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr Dithapelo Keorapetse, has conveyed his vision of an environmentally conscious Parliament that embraces sustainable practices and supports Botswana's green transition.

Speaking during a courtesy call by the Executive Director of the 2050 Pathways Platform, an European Climate Foundation, Ms Marcela Jaramillo, Mr Keorapetse said achieving this goal began with the development of an Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) strategy, which Parliament currently lacked. He said Parliament must decarbonise and go green, adding that achieving such transformation required strong political will.

"The past Parliament's

contribution to green energy was just one per cent, despite a target of 30 per cent," he said.

Mr Keorapetse said that Parliament pledged to elect supportive legislation, scrutinise statutory instruments, and ensure effective budget oversight to shape National Energy Policies.

He further said that Botswana often missed out on green funding and partnerships due to the absence of clear standards, policies, and proper management frameworks.

The Speaker therefore said Botswana needed to move swiftly to put the right structures in place.

The 2050 Pathways Platform, an initiative of the European Climate Foundation in partnership with the African Development Bank, is to support Botswana in developing its Long-Term Emission Strategy

(LTS). Recently, the organisation held a stakeholder engagement workshop to deepen stakeholder participation in shaping Botswana's LTS by reviewing, validating and refining the preliminary outputs and scenario pathways towards achieving net zero emissions by 2050, while maintaining economic diversification and growth.

Ms Jaramillo said the 2050 Pathways Platform, launched in 2016, initially focused on 32 major economies but has since expanded its support to other countries.

She said the LTS strategies were seen initially as how big economies started decarbonising and how they started supporting the objectives of the Paris Agreement.

"Then they started to expand across all countries, because everybody started to realise that

there is no economic planning, socio-planning, or development planning that can be done robustly if there is no considerations of climate impacts," she said adding that many developing countries also came on board and developed the strategies.

Ms Jaramillo said there was a range of options on the table for Botswana to make strong and robust decisions on key activities that would support the country's sustainable development.

"One important thing, and this has happened in several countries that we have supported, but it is specific now in Botswana, is developing the national development plan," Ms Jaramillo said adding that Botswana needed to have a clear plan behind, a clear governance and institutional leadership to be at the forefront of international finance. **BOPA**



Two-year reception class programme on cards

By **Thato Mosinyi**

GABORONE - Government will implement a two-year reception class programme across public schools in an effort to strengthen the foundation of

quality education.

An additional year will be introduced as an add-on to the ongoing one-year reception class programme, which started in 2014.

The two-year reception class programme will be introduced in schools with available space and where necessary, through alternative arrangements with the help of the public private partnership model.

Presenting the education sector of the draft National Development Plan 12 (NDP 12), Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education, Ms Nono Kgafela-Mokoka said it was important to note that access to early childhood education was also being expanded through private providers and civil society initiatives to enhance learner readiness.

“The Ministry of Child Welfare and Basic Education has commenced data collection to assess school readiness for the inclusion of the second year of pre-primary education, as recommended by the Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE),” she said. She stated that the “True North” for the education sector under NDP 12 would be to cultivate globally competitive and innovative human capital by providing an inclusive, high-quality, and future-ready education system.

To drive this true north, Ms Kgafela-Mokoka highlighted that focus would be on increasing national pass rates, access and progression, institutional quality and youth productivity.

Guided by the principle of “education for all,” she highlighted that Botswana continued to

focus on improving quality, accessibility and inclusivity in its schools and institutions.

She said the education system was structured to support learners from primary school through secondary and tertiary levels, with a strong emphasis on literacy, numeracy and skills for the modern workforce.

Minister Kgafela-Mokoka said during the National Development Plan 11 and the Transitional National Development Plan II period, the education sector exhibited a mixed performance across key indicators, including enrolment, pass rates, transition rates and youth engagement.

“Primary education achieved near-universal access, with net enrolment rates reaching approximately 98 per cent.

“However, this strong performance was not mirrored at the secondary level, where net enrolment dropped to about 62–67 per cent, and gross enrolment hovered around 70–72 per cent,” she said.

She noted that the transition rate from junior to senior secondary stood at 59.6 per cent, revealing a significant drop-off in student progression.

In terms of learning outcomes during the plan period, Ms Kgafela-Mokoka indicated that the Primary Leaving School Examination recorded an average national assessment pass rate of 73.4 per cent while the Junior Certificate Examination (JCE) recorded 36 per cent against 60 per cent target and the Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE) realised 22 per cent against 60 per cent target for the financial year 2022/2023.

BOPA

Kgafela-Mokoka sets out education vision

By **Thato Mosinyi**

GABORONE - In its commitment to enhance skills and drive the general education sector in the country, government has modernised the curriculum and assessment through the General Curriculum and Assessment Framework (GECAF).

Presenting the education chapter in the draft National Development Plan 12 (NDP 12) on Tuesday, the Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education, Ms Nono Kgafela-Mokoka said modernisation of the curriculum entailed the adoption of a global competitive value based and developmental education system premised on Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics (STEAM).

She said the streamlined integration of the STEAM driven education transformation fostered a lifelong learning continuum that begins in day care centres and progresses seamlessly through early learning to primary and secondary education.

“The STEAM driven GECAF under Botswana Education Transformative Framework, sets out a strategic vision to align education with the demands of the 21st Century to produce a global competitive knowledge worker,” she said.

Ms Kgafela-Mokoka indicated that GECAF had five interconnected and integrated pedagogical levels focusing on the holistic development of learners and leveraging on STEAM education, early childhood education, primary education, secondary education, out of school education and special needs education.

The pedagogical driving platforms of this reform, she said was centered on the use of digitalisation, e-learning, coding and robotics as well as teacher empowerment. In alignment with the Botswana Economic Transformation Programme’s sector-based approach, sector-specific human resource development, the Minister stated that plans would be created to address both current and future skills needed across the identified prioritised sectors.

“This effort will also involve skills profiling through the development of a national skills and competency framework,

which will enable on-going identification of the skills and competencies required,” she said.

Further, she said the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) would be transformed to enhance skills development through embedding work-integrated learning into TVET curricula.

The initiative, she said would bridge the gap between theory and practice, reduce youth unemployment, and ensure a steady pipeline of skilled graduates who were work-ready and adaptable to Botswana’s evolving economic sectors including mining, tourism, manufacturing, ICT and the green economy.

Moreover, the Minister emphasised government commitment to modernise tertiary education training by upgrading the curriculum from diploma to degree level thus aligning it with current industry and regional standards to improve graduate outcomes.

She noted that government would also strengthen TVET internships and work placement

programmes as a critical pathway for enhancing youth employability and aligning skills with labour market demands.

The strategy, she said would prioritise structured partnerships between TVET institutions, industry and government to ensure that learners gain practical and hands-on experience in real workplace settings.

“A coordinated national framework will be developed to standardise internship quality, improve monitoring and mentorship and incentivise industry participation through recognition schemes and possible fiscal support,” she said.

Minister Kgafela-Mokoka stated that government would further implement an initiative aimed at giving learners that do not proceed to senior secondary and tertiary institutions access to educational opportunities through the Out of School Education and Training (OSET) in an effort empower them academically and help them acquire technical skills they could use in the job market.

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Presenting the education sector of the draft National Development Plan 12, Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education, Ms Nono Kgafela-Mokoka said government would implement a two-year reception class programme across public schools in an effort to strengthen the foundation of quality education.



Members of Parliament after contributing to the chapter on mining and energy sector strategy in the draft National Development Plan 12 on Monday. They underscored the need for government to invest in solar energy to capacitate farmers to produce more. Photo: Gothusang Lesego

MPs want electricity access in production areas

By Kehumile Moekejo

GABORONE - Promoting the use of solar energy to generate electricity in production areas has been identified as a key contributor toward the country’s food security aspirations.

Contributing to the chapter on mining and energy sector strategy in the draft National Development Plan 12 (NDP 12) on Monday, legislators underscored the need for government to invest in solar energy to capacitate farmers to produce more.

Member of Parliament for Okavango West, Mr Kenny Kapinga implored the ministry to facilitate farmers to use solar system to power their boreholes.

He noted that the development would not only reflect on government’s commitment to improving the country’s renewable energy goals, but also contribute toward improving the agricultural sector.

Mr Kapinga also emphasised the need for government to take lead in promoting the transition to clean energy by using if for daily activities and operations.

On vandalism of power equipment, Mr Kapinga said there was need to develop a clear plan to augment what the police were already doing.

“You should come up with a plan that is not spearheaded by

the police but by your ministry, to indeed show your concerns for vandalism,” he said.

Maun West MP, Mr Caterpillar Hikuama also said there was need to connect production areas with electricity in order to improve rural electrification and universal access. He noted that this would boost production and create employment opportunities at the farms. “There is need to connect electricity to production areas as this can also enhance irrigation systems for increased agricultural production,” he said.

For his part, Jwaneng/Mabutsane MP, Mr Omphemetse Kwapa said investing in attaining 100 per cent universal access to electricity would also enhance other essential sectors such as health services in rural areas.

He said health care services were limited in some rural areas, owing to lack of refrigeration services for drugs.

However, Mr Kwapa called for a compensation plan for informers to curb vandalism of cables. “Most culprits are well known in their communities, and we should consider introducing a compensation plan to motivate informers and also create employment in the local communities,” he said.

He also said deploying the use of modern technologies such as drones would go a long way in

complementing police efforts in curbing vandalism.

On other issues, MPs called for interventions to close revenue gaps in the mining industry, as it was one of the key factors in economic transformation.

Mogoditshane East MP, Mr Letlhogonolo Barongwang said government should obtain 15 per cent shareholding in all mining projects as stipulated by the law.

He also said the expenses incurred in the mines which were under care and maintenance should be converted to shareholding. “The amount of expenditure of mines which are under care and maintenance is high and these should be converted to shareholding. We should also recapacitate mines which are under liquidation to get more value from them,” he noted.

MP for Thamaga/Kumakwane, Mr Palelo Motaosane decried illegal sand mining in his area, which he said deprived local communities to benefit from their natural resources.

Consequently, he said village trusts and Village Development Committees should be licensed to generate income for the natural resources in their communities such as sand mining. “Sand mining is a lucrative commodity and we are concerned about its illegal mining which leave our rivers deformed,” he said. **BOPA**

‘Efforts to transform education give renewed hope’

By Thato Mosinyi

GABORONE - The implementation of education reforms is of paramount importance toward enhancing the quality of education and ushering in a new dawn with a renewed hope to transform the education system, says Maun West Member of Parliament, Mr Caterpillar Hikuama.

Debating the chapter on education in the draft National Development Plan 12 (NDP12) in Parliament on Tuesday, Mr Hikuama said the attainment of a diverse economy was dependent on the effectiveness of the country’s investments in education, learning and training, amongst others.

He said government should in its effort to transform the education sector, embark on an ambitious project to broaden the digital and innovation ecosystem.

Such digital transformation, Mr Hikuama said would encompass some curriculum reforms with the aim to enhance the learning process at schools and make education more attractive and appealing to learners.

Mr Hikuama cautioned that a transformed economy demanded the adjustment of the curriculum to fit the desires of the global economy.

He further said Botswana was most faced with glaring education inequalities stating that all too often, children who were born poor or in rural regions, faced extreme disadvantages in education, thus called for the improvement of education facilities in rural areas.

“When all children have an equal chance to obtain quality education, learning drives economic growth, fuels innovation and creates jobs.

It equips countries and people with the skills they need to escape from poverty and build shared prosperity,” he said.

Shoshong MP, Mr Moneedi Bagaisamang expressed optimism for government to turn around the fortunes of the country’s ailing education system stating that Botswana’s

education crisis demanded the urgent attention of political leaders and their aid partners.

He said it was unfortunate that the current ruling party had adopted a failing education system which continued to deteriorate over the years.

For his part, Thamaga/Kumakwane MP, Mr Palelo Motaosane said it was pleasing that the bulk of the draft NDP 12 sector on education was aligned with the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) manifesto with regard to reforming the education system and producing market ready graduates.

He nonetheless pleaded with government to prioritise teachers welfare and the maintenance of schools to improve the working conditions of teachers as well as implement affirmative action for teachers progression across the country.

“It is disappointing that some teachers are stagnant in the same salary scale despite being acknowledged with national awards for hard work and producing better pass rates,” he said.

Contributing to the debate, Mmadinare legislator, Mr Ketlhalefile Motshegwa indicated that government had a task to awaken and transform the country’s education system.

“As government we have a mammoth task to revolutionalise the education system in line with linking it to production as attributed to by Mr Patrick Van Rensburg when he talked of education with production,” he said.

Mr Motshegwa thus said there was need for the promotion of vocational training courses that were designed to prepare individuals for a vocation or a specialised occupation and were directly linked with the nation’s productivity and competitiveness.

He cautioned that vocational training had since its inception struggled to gain the recognition it deserves which has led to the widening gap between the supply and demand for skilled manpower across various industries. **BOPA**

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Border upgrade at Phase 1 stage

By Calviniah Kgautlhe

LOBATSE - The upgrading of the Ramatlabama commercial border post project which started on May 5, is currently at 17 per

cent completion rate. According to Botswana Unified Revenue Services (BURS) acting communications general manager Ms Refilwe Moonwa the project, which would be delivered in two

phases, is currently at Phase I which entails the construction of four stand-alone 3-bedroomed managerial houses, three blocks of two bedroomed houses, with each block comprising of 12 Units (a total of 40 units to be constructed).

Additionally, the Phase I component includes a day care centre, a water treatment plant, as well as external works scheduled to be completed next year.

She said upon completion of Phase I, this would pave way for the commencement of Phase II as staff would occupy the newly built houses while the old houses would be demolished to make room for further developments.

“... the project, which would be delivered in two phases, is currently at Phase I, which entails the construction of four stand-alone 3-bedroomed managerial houses, three blocks of two bedroomed houses, with each block comprising 12 units...”

Juncao Technology to transform agric.

By Lesedi Thatayamodimo

GABORONE - Botswana’s agricultural sector is set for a major boost following the introduction of Juncao technology, a Chinese innovation that promises to improve food security, restore degraded land, and create new income streams for farmers.

Speaking in an interview, the Economic and Commercial Counsellor at the Chinese Embassy in Botswana, Mr Lan Yuqiang, said the innovation aligns with the goals of the Botswana Economic Transformation Programme (BETP), which aims to promote technology-driven growth and entrepreneurship.

Mr Lan said Juncao provided a sustainable, circular solution to challenges in food production, animal husbandry and environmental conservation.

“This simple yet powerful technology is already helping more than 100 developing countries to achieve food security, environmental sustainability and economic growth.”

Developed by Professor Lin Zhanxi of Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University in China, Juncao means ‘fungus grass’, uses fast-growing grass as a substrate for cultivating edible and medicinal mushrooms.

The grass can also serve as animal feed, help rehabilitate degraded land, and even be used for bioenergy production.

“It has multiple uses, including mushroom cultivation, livestock feed, soil conservation and erosion control,” Mr Lan said.

He also added that it was also easy to adopt, especially for smallholder farmers, since it does not require expensive infrastructure.

Mr Lan highlighted that mushrooms grown with Juncao were rich in protein and nutrients, offering an affordable way to improve local diets.

He said by producing mushrooms domestically, farmers could reduce reliance on imports and enhance nutrition diversity.

Feed shortages during dry seasons are a persistent challenge in Botswana. Mr Lan said Juncao grass could help address the problem by serving as a cost-effective and nutritious feed alternative.

“Juncao grass can supplement or replace expensive feeds, improving livestock health and productivity,” he said.

Additionally, he said, Juncao’s deep roots could help bind soil, prevent erosion, and restore degraded areas Botswana continues to face land degradation, overgrazing and erratic rainfall.

Beyond food and environmental benefits, Juncao technology offers new opportunities for entrepreneurship—particularly among young people and rural communities.

The mushroom value chain from cultivation and processing to marketing can stimulate small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

“Because inputs are low-cost and can be sourced locally, Juncao fits well within Botswana’s smallholder farming systems,” Mr Lan said.

Juncao technology has already been introduced in more than 100 countries across Asia, Africa and the Pacific.

The United Nations recognises it as a practical tool for achieving several Sustainable Development Goals, including ending poverty and hunger and taking climate action.

In Botswana, the technology is being piloted through Q&Q Farming Enterprises in Selebi-Phikwe, whose managing director recently received training in China.

Mr Lan said other African countries such as Rwanda and Lesotho had successfully implemented Juncao and saw tangible benefits.

He added that for the technology to succeed locally, Botswana will need strong training and extension support to help farmers learn cultivation, substrate preparation and grass management. **BOPA**

BURS Commissioner General Ms Jeanette Makgolo recently said the BURS was on a transformation journey of improving all commercial borders across the country which include Ramokgwebana, Pioneer, Ramatlabama, Martin’s

Drift, Tlokweng, Mamuno, and Kazungula to bring them to a good standard as some of them operated with limiting infrastructure.

“The benefit of improving borders is one of BURS initiatives aimed at enhancing trade facilitation, to streamline imports and exports thereby stimulating the economy through timely facilitation of raw materials and machinery,” she said during her recent tour of the Pioneer border.

She highlighted that Ramatlabama served as one of the most important gateways for commerce, tourism, and regional trade integration along the Trans Kalahari Corridor, hence the reason it was chosen as one of priority projects.

In addition, she said the BURS found it befitting to re-develop the border facility to ensure efficiencies on facilitation of seamless flow of legitimate trade, management and security of the nation from illicit trade and transactions and maximisation of revenue collection. **BOPA**



Construction workers on site at Ramatlabama Commercial Border Post.



Upgrading of the Ramatlabama commercial border post project which started on May 5, is currently at 17 per cent completion rate. Botswana Unified Revenue Services Commissioner General Ms Jeanette Makgolo, said the benefit of improving borders was one of initiatives aimed at enhancing trade facilitation to streamline imports and exports. Photos: Calviniah Kgautlhe

Thuto ga-e-golelwe pula-madibogo

Ka Keetile Bontsibokae

MORWA - Le fa bontsi bo santse bo le maoto a tshupa go ikamanya le thuto ga-e-golelwe, lenaneo leo le bothokwa thata ka le neela badirisi ba lone lesedi la go itse go bala le go kwala.

Go ya ka mogolwane wa baruta-bagolo yo o okametseng metse ya Bokaa, Morwa le Pilane kwa Kgatleng, Mme Margaret China, lenaneo la thuto ga-e-golelwe le santse le le mosola bogolo jang ka lefatshe le simolotse go ikaega thata ka tiriso ya maranyane.

A re mo godimo ga go ruta go bala le go kwala, le ka nolofaletsa badirisi ba lone go ithuta ka tiriso ya maranyane a tshwana le a megala ya letheke.

Mme China a re thuto ka boyone ke pheko e e fang motho seriti ka jaana motho yo o iteilelweng seatla a kgona go ipalela mme ka jalo a ipolokele le diphiri tsa gagwe ntle le go kopa ope go mmalela melaetsa le dipampiri tsa gagwe tsa bothokwa.

A re lesedi le thuto ga-e-golelwe le ka ba thusa gape go iphemela kgatllhanong le go iphitlhela ba tsene mo ditumalanong tse di ba bayang ka fa mosing.

Fa a ama dipalo tsa baithuti mo kgaolong e a e okametseng, o boletse fa borre ba le babedi, bomme ba le masome a mabedi le borataro mme palo yotlhe e le masome a mabedi le boferabobedi.

Mme China a re dipalo tse di supa fa borre ba santse ba goga dinao go tsenelela lenaneo mme a ikuela mo go bone go le tsaya ka tlhwaafalo.

A re mokgosi wa thuto ga-e-golelwe o sale o tlhabilwe ke tautotna wa ntlha ya lefatshe leno Sir Seretse Khama mme wa ribololwa semmuso ka ngwaga wa 1980.

Se a re se supa fa lefatshe la Botswana le tswa bogologolo le lemoga bothokwa jwa go itse go bala le go kwala segolo jang mo go ba ba tlhokileng lesego la go tsena sekolo.

A re lenaneo leo le amogela ba ba sa itseng go bala le go kwala gotlhelele, ga mmogo ba ba itseng go bala le go kwala mme ba eletsa go kwala ditlathobos tsa lekwalo la bosupa.

A re gape le fa badirisi ba lone sebaka sa go ithuta ditiro tsa diatla tse ba ka itshetsang ka tsone jaaka go roka, go rua dikoko, go apaya borotho le tse dingwe.

Mme China a re lenaneo leo le lebanwe ke dikgwetho di le

mmalwa di akaretsa tlhalelo ya mafelo a go rutelwang mo go one, mme a supa fa dikomiti tsa ditlhabololo tsa metse (VDC) di ba eme nokeng thata ka go thusa go batlela baithuti mafelo a borutelo.

A re fa go le jalo, mo mabakeng mangwe bagolo ba iphitlhela ba rutelwa ka fa tlase ga ditlhare mme se e le sengwe sa tse di itsang bangwe go inaakanya le dithuto.

Mo godimo ga moo, Mme China a re tlhalelo ya didirisiwa le yone e ntsi thata, mme a supa fa ba kgona ka go kopa ditlamelo kwa maphateng a mangwe a puso.

Mme China a re sengwe se se ka dirwang go rotloetsa badirisi ba lenaneo la ga-e-golelwe ke go isa baithuti kwa ditshupong tsa mafatshemafatshe tsa dithuto tsa bagodi gore ba tseye malebela gore kwa mafatsheng a mangwe batho ba rutwa jang le gone gore ba rutwa eng. **BOPA**



Baithuti ba thuto ga-e-golelwe kwa Morwa bosheng. Mogolwane wa barutabagolo yo o okametseng Bokaa, Morwa le Pilane kwa Kgatleng, Mme Margaret China a re dikgwetho tse ba kopanang le tsone kwa thuto ga-e-golelwe ke letlhoko la marutelo a a maleba, mo baithuti ba felelang ba ithutela ka fa tlase ga ditlhare. Senepe: Keetile Bontsibokae

Mogokgo o ikaelela go tokafatsa maduo

Ka Cathrine Simane

TSABONG - Mogokgo yo o magorogo masha wa sekole sa Tsabong Unified Secondary School (TUSS) Mme Zaheja Ndjarakana-Komoki o rotloeditse batsadi go nna le seabe ka go tshwaraganela thuto ya bana ba bone ka seo se ka thusa mo tokafatsong ya maduo a sekole seo, a a tswang kgakala a sa jese diwelang.

Fa a bua ka Labobedi mo phuthegong ya kgotla kwa Tsabong, Mme Komoki o ne a tlhalosa fa sekole se amogetse palo e ntsi ya bana ba le 1 749, go simologa mophato wa ntlha go fitlha kwa go wa bothano. Phuthego e, e ne e biditswe ke boeteledipele jwa sekole go kopana le ba-tsaya karolo botlhe mabapi le seemo sa sekole sa Tsabong Unified.

Mogokgo o ne a supa fa maikaelelo e le go tokafatsa maduo go ya pele go tlhomamisa gore ba fitlhelela le go tlola seelo se ba se ipeetseng.

Mogokgo o ne a supa fa se se swabisang e le maduo a a tlang a le kwa godimo a baithuti bangwe go tswa mo dikoleng tse di potlana mme fa bana bao ba tsena mo sekoleng Tsabong Unified, maduo a ya kwa tlase, seo se supa fa bana ba sa tlhoafalele dithuto tsa bone.

Fa a lekodisa batsena phuthego ka sekole se, o ne a tlhalosa fa seemo sa sone se setse se le makgasa, le tlhalelo ya

barutabana, a supa fa gape ba sa jesiwe diwelang ke baithuti bangwe ba sekole seo ka ba senya dithoto le didirisiwa tsa sekole ka ntlha ya bothoka tsebe.

Mme Komoki o ne a tswela ka go tlhalosa fa mo nakong ya gompiano go sa ntse go phaphaletse mo sekgwameng sa puso, mme seo se tshwanetswe ke go tsibogelwa ka go ipelega ga batsadi le ba-tsaya karolo botlhe go tsenya letsogo mo dipaakanyong tsa matlo a borutelo.

Mogokgo o ne a kgothatsa batsadi go ntsha madi a sekole a ditlhabololo ka e le one a thusang go duela badiri ba nakwana ba ba phepafatsang matlwana a boithomelo le go tlhabolola mo sekoleng seo.

O ne a ngongorega ka baithuti ba ba tlang morago ga nako e e beilweng fa ba tswa malatsing a boitapoloso bogolo jang ba ba nnang kwa sekoleng mme a supa fa a neetse batsadi boikarablo go tlhomamisa gore bana ba tla ka nako go itsa go dia dithuto tsa sekole go tswela ba le mmogo.

Mo phuthegong, mogokgo o ne a baya pele batsadi tebelopele ya gagwe, a tlhalosa fa a neela baithuti tiro ya go tsaya boikarabelo jwa go itebaganya le tiro ya sekole le gone go nna ba le phepa ka nako tsotlhe go thusa go ntsha maduo a a eletsegang, fa barutabana bone tiro ya bone e le go fa baithuti lorato go thiba phatlha e go lemossegileng fa e ntse e le teng fa gare ga bobedi

joo.

Mongwe wa bagolwane mo sekoleng, Rre Benjamin Bailelwang o ne a rolela batsena phuthego megopolo e meraro e akaretsa go farologanya kapari ya sekole ka mophato wa ntlha, wa bobedi le wa boraro gore e tshwane.

A re ba maphato wa bone le bothano le bone kapari e tlaa bo e tshwana ka seo se ka thusa go laola le go farologanya bana go ya ka mephato ya bone e e kwa tlase le kwa godimo.

O ne a supa fa gape ka letsatsi la Laboraro mongwe le mongwe maikaelelo e le gore baithuti ba apare dikipara goya ka ditlhotshwana tse ba kgaogantsweng ka tsone e le tsela ya go tsosolosa mowa wa phadisanyo mo dithutong tsa bone. Mogopolo o mongwe ke wa pulo semmuso ya sekole le leina le leshe le le ka dirisiwang go emisetsa le le ntse le le teng ba lebeletse bagaka ba motse oo.

Barutabana ba ne ba supa fa gareng ga matshwenyego a a di gogang kwa pele mo sekoleng seo e le bogodu, matlhapa, dikiteo, go phoraphora basetsanyana, tshenyo ya didirisiwa mo sekong mme tshoso e rweleng e le baithuti ba mophato wa ntlha, wa bobedi le wa boraro fa go tshwantshwanngwa le mephato ee kwa godimo.

Batsadi ba ba neng ba tsene phuthego ba ne ba amogela ka tsoopedi pharologanyo ya kapari ya sekole gore ee ntseng e

dirisiwa e sale le ba ba kwa tlase mme e bile ba gatelela thata gore ya bathuti ba mephato e e kwa godimo ya bone le wa bothano ee tlaa bong e le ntsha e nne ntle go rotloetsa ba ba kwa tlase go ithuta thata go fitlhelela kwa godimo.

Batsadi ba ne ba dumalana gape ka pulo semmuso ya sekole.

Mookamedi wa thuto mo kgaolong ya Tsabong Mme Margret Koko o ne a gwetlha batsadi go tshwaragana le barutabana, ba-tsaya karolo botlhe le setshaba kakaretso go ema ka dinao go aga le go bopa sesha baithuti mo sekoleng seo go tsholetsa seriti le serodumo sa sone.

Mme Koko o ne amogana le batsadi maitlamo le tebelopele ya lephata la tlamelo ya bana le thuto go tswa kwa moding a re maikaelelo ke go tseela kwa godimo thuto le tshireletsego ya bana go tlhomamisa gore ba ntsha maduo a a nametsang, a tlatsa ka go kopa dikereke ka go farologana go ema nokeng sekole seo ka dithapelo ka nako tsotlhe.

Kgosi David Toto II wa Tsabong o ne a galaletsa batsadi ba ba neng ba tsile ka dipalo tse di kwa godimo go simolola kwa motseng wa Kokotsha go fitlha mo Tsabong ba bana ba bone ba amogetsweng mo sekoleng seo a supa fa go tshwarela phuthego mo kgotleng e le sekao sa tshwaragano ya botsamaisi jwa sekole le marafe go ya pele. **BOPA**

Morupule Coal Mine donates house

By Keamogetse Setilo

PALAPYE - Morupule Coal Mine has built a fully furnished two-bedroom house worth P560,000 to a family of eight in Serorome ward in Palapye.

Handing over the house donation on Friday, Minister of Water and Human Settlement, Mr Onneetse Ramogapi commended the mine for the noble gesture.

He said the gesture of good spirit exhibited by the mine aligned with government’s initiative of Bonno National Housing Programme, which aims to address the country’s housing deficit and promote social equity through various loan and development schemes.

Furthermore, Mr Ramogapi said housing was not just a basic need, but rather also a fundamental human right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He therefore said housing was crucial for dignity, health, and realisation of other rights.

Housing is crucial for social stability and economic advancement and thus will always remain a priority, he added

“We are not just delivering a building today; we are together reinstating dignity, sowing a seed of hope, and strongly reaffirming our united dedication to inclusive growth and nation-building,” he stated.

In addition, he said the house

hand over served as a strong testament to the efficacy of public-private partnerships, exemplifying what could be accomplished when government policies aligned with private sector efforts and authentic community spirit.

Minister Ramogapi lauded Morupule Coal Mine for their continued efforts of empowering and developing communities, noting that they illustrated how ethical leadership and community development can significantly change lives.

“This commendable gesture of kindness stems from Morupule Coal Mine CEO’s cycling challenge of which the funds raised from the 2024 event were directed to build the two-bedroom house, which was finished in just two months,” he said.

For his part, Chief Executive Officer of Morupule Coal Mine, Mr Edwin Elias said they were dedicated to positively impacting the lives of Batswana beyond their mining activities.

He shared that the handover marked a significant step in the right direction towards Morupule Coal Mine’s vision of creating sustainable communities, hence impacting positively on national development.

“We take pride in sharing that the house was built by local contractors. This was due to our goal of empowering our

communities and supporting the overall economic progress and sustainability of our country. Morupule Coal Mine has engaged in partnerships and collaborations that bear fruits for our communities and would continue to step in authority” he said.

Palapye District Council chairperson, Mr Kabo Ketsogile, showered Morupule Coal Mine with praise for their consistent dedication to corporate social

responsibility that focused on economic empowerment and community development, noting it had significantly benefited many.

“On behalf of the Palapye community, we are grateful for your support towards community advancement. The home you constructed as part of the Bonno Housing Programme stands as a symbol of hope and evidence of your commitment to the community you serve; you truly extend beyond coal.

We applaud you for accompanying us on this journey and for genuinely partnering in the development,” he stated.

Appreciating the good gesture, recipient of the house Ms Koketso Keipeile, conveyed her heartfelt gratitude for the life-changing gift.

Teary eyed, she said the house provided not just security and comfort, but also gave hope for a brighter future to her children.

BOPA



Jiujiang City Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference deputy chairperson, Mr Wang Feng Peng (left), Kgosi Khama IV of Bangwato (centre) and Serowe District Council chairperson, Mr Atamelang Thaga, during a recent visit by Jiujiang City officials to Serowe aimed at rekindling partnership to enhance community development. Mr Thaga said the council welcomed the collaboration, which would promote cultural exchange, educational dialogue, technology integration and sharing of indigenous medical knowledge. Photo: Baldwin Nyamande

World Group of Companies gifts Moremogolo pupils

By Kelebogile Taolo

FRANCISTOWN - World Group of Companies has donated blankets, shoes, back packs and balls to Moremogolo Primary School in Francistown.

Speaking at the donation ceremony on Monday, Member of Parliament for Francistown South, Mr Wynter Mmolotsi commended World Group of Companies for the generous gesture and philanthropic efforts.

He said the donations would bring dignity to students, adding that when taken good care of, children tended to focus on their academics and dreamt well.

Mr Mmolotsi said the government wanted to remove every barrier standing between students and education, hence he appreciated the donation from the World Group of Companies, calling on others to emulate their gesture.

He said such donation would serve as motivation for children to perform better in their studies as it brought dignity.

He applauded teachers for their vital role of educating and shaping the future of this generation, adding that their efforts and struggles were being noticed.

However, Mr Mmolotsi warned the students against drinking alcohol and drug abuse, which could ruin their future. He also encouraged students to make wise choices and to avoid friends that indulged in drugs.

As for parents, Mr Mmolotsi emphasised the need to always be

there in their children’s education journey and to also monitor their behaviours.

“Take parenting serious, be the judge of your children’s behaviours, neglecting children is very unfair”, he said.

He therefore commended parents who took good care of their children, pointing that they were raising responsible citizens.

For his part, Acting Director North East Region in the Ministry of Child Welfare and Basic Education, Dr Salini Bafaneli expressed gratitude to World Group of Companies for donating to the school.

He said their act of kindness demonstrated the commitment to giving back to the community and supporting the education of future generations. He added that such contribution would have a positive impact on learners, teachers and the community at large.

“As we give them, we are teaching them in a way, tomorrow they will be givers as well as responsible citizens”, he said.

Dr Salini said the ministry was striving to provide quality education and equipping learners with skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in life, hence the donation by World Group of Companies would go a long way in helping to achieve this goal.

Moremogolo school head, Ms Kgakgamalo Chilume appreciated the donation, noting that it would serve as motivation to students as well as to the staff to do better.

BOPA

Twinning agreement resuscitation pillar to economic growth

By Keamogetse Setilo

SEROWE - Serowe District Council (SDC) has revived its twinning agreement with the city of Jiuiang in China, with the aim of enhancing its income generation. The partnership was initiated in 2012 but faltered few years ago because of COVID-19 and global lockdowns.

The agreement was revived last week when the Chinese delegation paid a courtesy visit to the SDC and discussed the roadmap and further identified key focus areas for the arrangement.

Addressing the delegation, SDC chairperson Mr Atamelang Thaga described the twinning agreement as a significant advancement with the capability to enhance the district’s economy and enable them to access the immense technological wealth of China.

“This agreement is sealed at an opportune time, as we aim for economic diversification and optimisation; it creates an opportunity for investment and skills exchange that we urgently require,” said Mr Thaga.

He said the recent reopening of the council abattoir could be

beneficial, expressing hope that the Chinese would invest in the project and expand it into a larger facility. He was of the view that the move would change the economic landscape of Serowe.

In addition, he expressed a wish for staff exchange between the SDC and Jiujiang City. He said that would facilitate skills transfer and exchange, as well as promote cultural exchange. Furthermore, he said through the agreement, the transfer of technological skills would give Botswana a competitive edge.

The council Secretary, Mr Mogorosi Kokoro said the significant aspects of the twinning agreement were tourism and cultural heritage, agriculture and technology, education, health, urban planning and infrastructure, wildfire management, investment promotion and local economic development, technology transfer, affordable housing, and waste management.

He added that as Botswana confronted the challenge of diversifying the economy from mining, the agreement would serve as a boost to the economy. With enough land for both crop and

livestock production in the district, Mr Kokoro said he the agreement would enable knowledge sharing for the adoption of climate -smart agricultural technologies, as well as opportunities to replicate programs similar to Jiujiang’s smart Farmers Market.

Deputy Chairman of the Jiujiang City Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, Mr Wang Fengpeng expressed optimism that the sharing of practical technology to optimise production would be emphasised under the twinning agreement. He observed that technological advancements enabled many industries to enhance outputs, and sustain profitability.

Furthermore, he said the two nations would benefit from exchanging information on farming techniques, animal breeds, crops, pest management, and water conservation strategies to aid in agricultural modernisation and maximise profits.

He also said the agreement would concentrate on jointly exploring green, low-carbon development pathways that would aid in sustainable economic advancement.

BOPA

Academy celebrates Setswana culture

By Booster Mogapi

MOLEPOLOLE - Dinaletsana Cultural Promotions, a Molepolole-based academy that promotes Setswana culture, will host its inaugural honorary awards ceremony on October 25 at Yalots Guest House in Molepolole.

The event aims to celebrate individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the preservation and promotion of Setswana culture.

Founder of Dinaletsana Cultural Promotions, Lebogang Mogotsi, said in an interview that the awards were the first of

their kind in Botswana and would recognise both emerging and established talents in Setswana literature, music, and arts.

Mogotsi said there has been very little recognition for people who contribute to Setswana culture and therefore the awards appreciate and honour their

efforts.

Mogotsi explained that the ceremony will recognise children with outstanding talents in Setswana cultural expression, as well as legendary authors and poets who have made significant contributions to Setswana literature.

A decorated writer, Mogotsi, who has received multiple accolades in Botswana and across Africa said she felt honoured to be in a position to celebrate others who have done a sterling job in promoting Setswana heritage.

She emphasised that the awards will cater to children from primary school level up to youth aged 35, with 20 awardees already identified.

She clarified that there was no competition involved in the

selection process, as Dinaletsana believes that competition can sometimes narrow opportunities for other talented children. She added that Dinaletsana Cultural Promotions provides a platform for writers and poets to shine and gain recognition for their intellectual work.

The awards ceremony will also feature traditional music, dance, and poetry performances, highlighting Botswana's vibrant cultural identity.

Among those to be honoured are celebrated figures such as Moroka Moreri, MmaDikgomo Babina, and Dr Paula Otukile, whom Mogotsi said they contributed immensely toward literature and cultural preservation. **BOPA**



Botswana's celebrated poet, Moroka Moreri will be among those who will be honoured at the Dinaletsana Cultural Promotions honorary awards ceremony on Saturday in Molepolole. The event aims to celebrate individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the preservation and promotion of Setswana culture.

Chinese festival brings colour to Cairo campus

CAIRO - Badr University in Cairo hosted a Chinese culture festival on Monday, drawing large crowds of students and faculty eager to experience Chinese traditions. With the aim of promoting cultural exchanges and friendship, the event highlighted growing cultural ties between Egypt and China.

The festival featured Chinese calligraphy and paper-cutting workshops, a traditional Chinese Hanfu costume zone, and booths serving traditional snacks such as dumplings and steamed buns. A

tea art corner drew steady visitors with its aroma of freshly brewed tea.

The day's highlight was a Chinese martial arts performance by Egyptian students, which drew loud applause and was followed by an interactive session where spectators tried basic moves on stage. Lu Chunsheng, minister counselor at the Chinese Embassy in Egypt, said the growing popularity of Chinese language studies was helping more young Egyptians "understand, love and study Chinese cultures."

Former Egyptian ambassador to China Magdy Amer said events like the festival serve as "a bridge linking two ancient civilizations" and help deepen mutual understanding. Badr University President Ashraf El-Shihy said cooperation between Egypt and China is expanding in infrastructure, trade, investment, and education under the Belt and Road Initiative.

He added that the two nations are "not just partners but friends moving forward together." **Xinhua**

Hong Kong fosters global dialogue through studies

HONG KONG - About a century ago, numerous cultural relics from Turpan, a vital hub along the ancient Silk Road were taken overseas through exploration and excavation. Today, the historic city is fostering international dialogue and cooperation through Turfan studies, which bridge civilisations.

Located in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Turpan, also known as Turfan, has long been a melting pot where farming, nomadic and oasis cultures converged in the heart of Eurasia.

Its arid climate has preserved a wealth of multilingual documents, cave murals and relics.

Recently, nearly 200 experts and scholars from over 70 universities and research institutes across 16 countries and regions -- including Germany, the United Kingdom (UK), the United States and Japan gathered in Turpan for the Seventh International Symposium of Turfan Studies.

The topics ranged from heritage conservation to the evolution of Silk Road culture.

"Turfan is a wonderful example of the meeting of different ethnic groups and religions in the past, and it remains so today," said Erica Hunter, a scholar from the University of Cambridge in the UK who specializes in relics and Syriac manuscripts excavated from Turpan.

"It is only through meeting

and dialogue that we gain mutual understanding," she added.

Turfan studies emerged as an international academic field in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when explorers and archaeologists from Russia, Germany, Britain and Japan excavated, looted and studied the region's ancient tombs, ruins and artifacts.

Peter Zieme, a professor at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities in Germany, conducted a philological study on a manuscript fragment from Turpan now kept in Berlin.

The fragment contains texts in both Old Uygur language and Chinese. He demonstrated how Uygur monks, scholars, poets and writers made independent and significant contributions to Buddhist thought.

Hong Kong to launch exhibition on ancient Egyptian civilization The Hong Kong Palace Museum announced on Friday that 250 ancient Egyptian treasures have arrived at the museum for the exhibition, "Ancient Egypt Unveiled: Treasures from Egyptian Museums," which will be held from November 20, 2025, to August 31, 2026.

Organised by the Hong Kong Palace Museum in collaboration with the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) of Egypt, the exhibition marks the largest, most comprehensive, and longest-running display of ancient Egyptian treasures in Hong Kong. **Xinhua**



Bantsi said Botswana National Sport Commission was expected to hand over the newly refurbished National Stadium facility to the organisers by the end of the month or beginning of November.

Lefika relays yardstick for Gaborone 26

By Anastacia Sibanda

GABORONE - The World Athletics Relays Gaborone 26 organisers are looking to use the annual Lefika Relays as trials for the prestigious event to be held in Botswana in May next year.

In an interview, the World Athletics Relays Gaborone 26 chief executive officer, Moses Bantsi, said using the Lefika Relays as a crucial dry run would however, depend on the availability of funds.

Bantsi said they were actively seeking a major sponsor to elevate the Lefika Relays into an African Relays event.

“If we could get a sponsor, we would want to give Africa an opportunity to come and compete. The idea is to allow international athletes a chance to have a feel of both the country, our hospitality, and the track,” he said.

He added that they would ideally host the expanded event just before the World Relays qualification deadline to offer athletes a last chance to qualify in Botswana.

“It is therefore important that a sponsor comes early so that we can fully prepare for the Lefika Relays,” he urged.

Bantsi also noted that the annual Grand Prix would play a key role in preparations. He said although recently downgraded to a silver-level event, the organising committee’s intention was to push it back to gold.

He indicated that by hosting the Grand Prix just a few days before the World Relays, they anticipated attracting top athletes competing at the main event.

“Attracting top athletes to the Grand Prix will be advantageous because World Athletics will be monitoring the organisation of the event and once they are satisfied, it will be elevated to gold,” he explained.

He further said with more than 60 countries expected for the World Relays, the local events would be vital to gauge Botswana’s readiness to host the global competition.

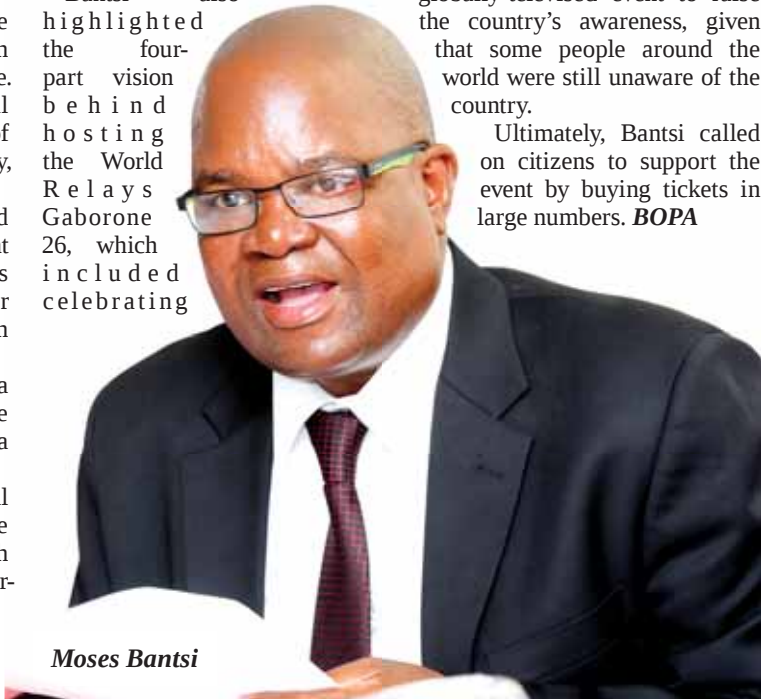
Bantsi also highlighted the four-part vision behind hosting the World Relays Gaborone 26, which included celebrating

Botswana’s 60th anniversary, positioning the event as a core part of the national celebrations and promoting tourism to attract visitors not only during the event but encouraging long-term tourism flow.

He said the vision also included boosting the national profile and provide a global platform for Botswana to market itself and educate the world about its natural diamonds, particularly as the sector faced competition from artificial diamonds.

Bantsi added that the vision would also give Botswana global recognition by using the globally-televised event to raise the country’s awareness, given that some people around the world were still unaware of the country.

Ultimately, Bantsi called on citizens to support the event by buying tickets in large numbers. **BOPA**



Moses Bantsi

By Anastacia Sibanda

GABORONE - The organisers of the World Athletics Relays Gaborone 26 are determined and focused to deliver a memorable event in May next year despite facing limited resources.

With Botswana set to make history as the first African country to host the prestigious event, the Relays chief executive officer, Moses Bantsi said in an interview that the were adamant that financial hurdles would not derail their ambition.

The organisers are still struggling to secure solid sponsors, but Bantsi confirmed that they would not despair.

He indicated that positive progress was being made, having approached members of the business community who were promising to come on board.

“In terms of seeking sponsorships, I think we are there.

There are companies that showed that they were with us and some have committed to give us human resources. We already have Halfway Toyota on board,” Bantsi said.

He highlighted the importance of securing support beyond just capital.

He also indicated that government support provided a strong foundation, explaining that the state could not manage alone, given that refurbishment of the National Stadium and the University of Botswana stadium, to be used as a warm-up track, was costing government P32 million.

“That is a contribution on its own. They have also given us offices where the secretariat is operating. Government has helped us pay the World

Athletics bond fee, which is about US\$500,000 and has paid 50 per cent of the broadcast fee, which is \$650,000,” he said

Bantsi confirmed that preparation was ongoing and they had moved beyond initial planning.

“Now we have passed that stage, we are on the readiness stage. This means looking at how we roll out the plan we had put down,” he said.

He said the readiness stage was seeing immediate action across multiple fronts, including marketing, logistics and venue management while organisers were also looking at how they would advertise and lure people to learn about the World Relays.

He added that the operation plan had moved to action in key areas which included freight and forwarding, where they have already appointed a local company called Andrews to handle logistics.

“This decision was prioritised because World Athletics believes shipping takes a considerable amount of time globally, and the organisers are determined to speed up the delivery of essential equipment,” he explained.

On ticketing, Bantsi said the immediate goal was to appoint the vendor for ticket sales.

Also, he said they planned to test the market by the end of October or early November, pending procurement procedures.

On the venue, Bantsi said the Botswana National Sport Commission (BNSC) was expected to hand over the newly refurbished National Stadium facility to the organisers by the end of this month or beginning of November, keeping the venue preparations on track. **BOPA**