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- Bridge significant infrastructure not for Botswana and Zambia only but also Namibia and Zimbabwe.
- Increase in the number of trucks using the border daily from 400 to 1 000 possible.

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President Advocate Duma Boko (left) and his Zambia counterpart, Mr Hakainde Hichilema at the official launch of the Kazungula Bridge Authority yesterday. President Boko announced that the Kazungula One-Stop Border Post would operate 24 hours to improve efficiency and would implement technology aimed at eliminating truck queues. Photo: Ogopoleng Kgomoethata

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BILL PAYMENTS



GCC okays ConCourt establishment

Gontle Merafhe
GABORONE

Gaborone City councillors have welcomed government plans to establish a Constitutional Court, saying the move will strengthen protection of human rights and improve access to justice in Botswana.

Speaking during a council meeting addressed by Minister for State President, Defence and Security, Mr Moeti Mohwasa on Monday, councillors said the proposed court would help safeguard the rights of vulnerable and marginalised groups.

Nominated Councillor, Ms Katlego Morolong said the proposed court would provide protection of rights and strengthen checks and balances within the governance system.

She noted that about 85 countries across five continents, including Zambia, had Constitutional Courts.

"That shows that we are treading the right path and are a progressive nation. We should not depart from this path," she said.

Councillor for Marulamantsi Ward in Bonnington South Constituency, Mr Sergeant Kgosietsile, welcomed ConCourt establishment, saying the move would help safeguard second and third generation human rights and contributed to a progressive constitutional order.

He therefore urged citizens to support its establishment in the



Government intended to protect every citizen's right to life and dignity through the proposed court.

Minister for State President, Defence and Security, Mr Moeti Mohwasa

interest of justice and national development.

Kgosi Arnold Somolekae of Gaborone West Customary Court and an ex-officio member of the council also endorsed the establishment of the Constitutional Court, saying it would handle specialised constitutional matters, including cases that might not be heard by the Court of Appeal.

He said the court would help ensure access to human rights protection, especially for vulnerable citizens, adding that specialised courts were necessary because the High Court of Botswana already handled both civil and criminal matters, often resulting in backlogs.

Kgosi Somolekae cited the landmark housing rights case in South Africa, *Government of the Republic of South Africa vs Grootboom* (2000),

which compelled the state to provide housing for vulnerable communities.

He also reassured residents that the Constitutional Court would not automatically abolish the death penalty, explaining that the court would instead assess cases based on constitutional principles and individual circumstances.

"Justice delayed is justice denied. Constitutional matters that are delayed amount to justice denied," he said, adding that the court would be established through an Act of Parliament specifying how judges would be appointed.

However, Phakalane Ward councillor, Mr Kaisara Sejoe, opposed the proposal, arguing that the minister had not clearly identified gaps within the judiciary that justified the creation of a new court

He also questioned whether

proper constitutional amendment procedures had been followed, saying broader grassroots consultation through the kgotla system was necessary.

Mr Sejoe further raised concerns about the appointment of judges, arguing that vesting such powers in the sitting President could undermine judicial independence.

Addressing councillors, Minister Mohwasa said government intended to protect every citizen's right to life and dignity through the proposed court.

He revealed that following the All-Party Conference of July 4, 2025, government published a notice in the Botswana Gazette regarding the Constitutional Court proposal.

The minister said the Ntlo ya Dikgosi had not rejected the proposal but recommended amendments to some clauses, prompting further consultations, which could take time to conclude.

He noted that constitutional amendments were not new in Botswana and said the proposed court would help restore dignity, improve livelihoods, provide refuge for individuals who lost cases on technicalities, and guide future law reforms.

He added that specialised judicial bodies already existed, such as the Land Tribunal and Industrial Court, and emphasised that the Constitutional Court would similarly focus on constitutional matters while expanding access to justice for ordinary citizens. **BOPA**



Nominated Councillor Katlego Morolong

... the proposed court would provide protection of rights and strengthen checks and balances within the governance system. About 85 countries across five continents, including Zambia, have Constitutional Courts... That shows that we are treading the right path and are a progressive nation.

Residents raise mixed views on Constitutional Court

Thuso Kgakatsi
KANG

Kang residents have expressed mixed reactions to government's proposal to establish a Constitutional Court, with some welcoming the move as a long-overdue step toward equality and access to justice, and others urging authorities to prioritise constitutional reforms and economic recovery.

Residents expressed these sentiments at a Constitutional Court consultative kgotla meeting which was addressed by the Minister of Water and Human Settlement, Mr Onneetse Ramogapi in Kang on Monday.

Those in support said the court could help address long-standing concerns of marginalisation in the Kgalagadi region, where ethnic groups had historically been regarded and treated as minority communities.

They argued that locating the court in Kang would promote equitable distribution of national resources and decentralisation of key institutions, which were largely concentrated in the southern part of the country.

One resident, who supported the establishment of ConCourt

was Mr Kemmone Makatane, who said such a move would strengthen citizens' rights and enable communities to benefit more directly from natural resources in their areas.

"In countries where there is a Constitutional Court, citizens are able to benefit from their natural resources. This could create opportunities for tribes in mining areas to benefit from the mines in their districts, unlike the current situation where government benefits while local communities receive no royalties," he said.

Mr Makatane added that such a court would provide recourse for citizens to hold government accountable for service delivery in sectors such as health, education and development.

Meanwhile, other residents called on government to halt the process and instead focus on amending the Constitution or strengthening the Court of Appeal pending a comprehensive constitutional review.

Mr Mautswe Mabe questioned how the proposed court would deal with sensitive issues such as intermarriages and capital punishment, while Mr Abel Phori challenged the urgency of the proposal in light of the country's



Kang residents during a Constitutional Court consultative kgotla meeting addressed by Minister of Water and Human Settlement, Mr Onneetse Ramogapi on Monday. Some residents welcomed government's proposal to establish a Constitutional Court as a long-overdue step toward equality and access to justice. Photo: Thuso Kgakatsi

economic challenges.

He said the establishment of the court would be costly and could create further financial obligations through judges' remuneration and administrative expenses.

Some residents also called for assurances that the ConCourt's decisions would not conflict with Christian principles, particularly on issues such as same-sex marriage.

Responding to the concerns, Minister Ramogapi, said the proposal was not being rushed and had been the subject of consultations under previous administrations.

He noted that during the presidency of Dr Festus Mogae consultations were conducted to assess the need for a Constitutional

Court, while the Dibotelo Commission established under former president Dr Mokgweetsi Masisi also found that there was a need for such a court, although it was not implemented.

Mr Ramogapi said the ConCourt would be particularly beneficial to communities in Kgalagadi, which he said had experienced marginalisation and discrimination.

He explained that a Constitutional Court would be the highest authority on constitutional matters, with its rulings being final, and its primary role would be to protect human rights and shield citizens from abuse of power.

Mr Ramogapi also mentioned that Botswana currently had no dedicated forum to address

disputes such as alleged irregularities in general elections, a gap the proposed court would fill.

On suggestions to empower the Court of Appeal instead, he said many countries were moving toward establishing Constitutional Courts as specialised institutions for constitutional interpretation.

He dismissed allegations that government had already planned for this proposal, adding that, so far, no land had yet been identified and no funds secured for the project.

Mr Ramogapi noted that its establishment was not currently provided for under the National Development Plan and would only proceed if citizens supported the proposal.

On that note, he implored the residents to vote for the establishment of the ConCourt when the referendum process was undertaken.

For her part, Kgosi Basadi Seipone II expressed optimism that the proposed Constitutional Court would promote peace, unity and equal protection of the law across the country.

She said the timing of the initiative was appropriate, noting that the court would help emancipate many people by strengthening the protection of their constitutional rights.

Kgosi Seipone II emphasised that the Constitution required a specialised body to interpret and safeguard it, adding that the establishment of a Constitutional Court would ensure that dedicated experts were entrusted with handling constitutional matters.

She commended the government for taking the initiative, saying the court would be particularly beneficial to communities that had experienced marginalisation.

BOPA

Kazungula border post to operate round the clock

Portia Keetile
KAZUNGULA

As part of the process to ultimately evolve into a non-stop border post, the Kazungula One Stop Border Post (OSBP) will start to operate on a 24-hour basis.

President Advocate Duma Boko said at the Botswana and Zambia's joint launch of the Kazungula Bridge Authority (KBA) yesterday that the decision to have the border post operate on a round-the-clock basis followed his engagements with his Zambian counterpart, Mr Hakainde Hichilema on the sidelines of the recent 39th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

President Boko said the Botswana Stock Exchange (BSE) would champion the process of

enabling the OSBP transformation into a non-stop border post, an assignment that would require the BSE to engage with its technical partners to conceptualise the technologies that would enable the evolution.

Regarding the Kazungula Bridge Authority, he said its launch cemented the longstanding bilateral relations between Botswana and Zambia, describing the bridge as a template worthy of emulation by others in Africa.

He said other African nations should draw inspiration from the collaboration between Botswana and Zambia and open similar corridors so that the continent would advance as a unit that spoke to the African heritage.

"The Kazungula Bridge is an iconic connection between two countries poised as an exemplifier of what collaboration can achieve and standing as a benchmark for the

rest of Africa," he said, noting how the establishment of the Kazungula Bridge Authority highlighted the extent to which resilient and dynamic partnerships could be of impact to the people.

President Boko said the Authority would create better regional connections, open more corridors of trade and eliminate queueing of goods and travellers.

Zambia President Mr Hichilema reiterated the value of technology advancement, saying it presented many opportunities that would make a non-stop border post a success.

Mr Hichilema stated that there was need to remove bottlenecks created by the processes that travellers had to follow at the border post, observing that doing away with such would lower costs of doing business and stimulate efficiency.

He said the bridge was a

significant infrastructure piece not just for Botswana and Zambia but for Namibia and Zimbabwe who also formed part of the unique quad point.

"The value of this unique asset goes beyond the four countries because there is Democratic Republic Congo, Angola and the rest of Africa who are also players in this bridge while we are just custodians," President Hichilema said.

He indicated that the bridge was an anchor to deepening African trade, saying the potential increase in the number of trucks utilising the border from 400 to 1 000 in a day spoke to how impactful it would be to trade in the region and beyond.

He said the Kazungula Bridge OSBP was a preferred route and a key component of the North-South Corridor, hence it was essential to invest into it so that its premium status could be maintained.

Mr Hichilema stated that the iconic bridge called for innovation to establish floating restaurants on the Chobe-Zambezi confluence in order to broaden the affected countries' tourism product offering.

Kgosi Morgan Makhanga of Kazungula said the bridge connected Botswana and Zambia and stood as a powerful symbol of unity and shared cultural heritage.

Kgosi Makhanga said further to it enhancing trade, the bridge had created employment opportunities, thereby improving the lives of citizens.

He however asked the two Heads of States to review customs charges, road levies and insurance fees charged at the border, alleging that they were higher than those levied on travellers at other border posts.

BOPA

Francistown records 63 per cent drug availability

Thamani Shabani
FRANCISTOWN

Francistown has recorded 63 per cent drug availability at the beginning of the month.

This, according to deputy mayor Mr Uyapo Nyeku, falls short of the national target of 97 per cent.

Addressing the City of Francistown Council full council meeting on Monday, Mr Nyeku said vital drugs stood at 56 per cent while essential and necessary drugs were at 47 and 83 per cent, respectively.

Non-drugs on the one hand were recorded to be at 83 per cent whereas Anti-Retroviral (ARV) drug availability stood at 86.7 per cent, he stated.

Mr Nyeku said apart from the inadequate levels of drugs, the city council was faced with a challenge of structural defects in health facilities inherited from the Ministry of Health, including Gerald Estate Clinic, where the maternity wing was unusable due to structural challenges.

He said maternity services would be temporarily relocated to Donga Clinic from April for maintenance and rehabilitation to be undertaken.

The deputy mayor said Nyangabwe Referral Hospital faced

‘Non-drugs on the one hand were recorded to be at 83 per cent whereas Anti-Retroviral (ARV) drug availability stood at 86.7 per cent.’

a high burden of trauma and injuries, non-communicable diseases and mental health issues; pressures which the hospital's workforce continued to deliver services under as best as was possible.

However, he informed councillors that personnel and drug shortages as well as equipment constraints persisted, putting a strain on the hospital's capacity to render services to the public.

Mr Nyeku highlighted efforts to address these challenges, including stabilising supply chains, repairing equipment, and outsourcing tests.

He explained that the Ministry of Health was supporting staffing and procurement.

On the positives, he said the city's renewable energy initiative

was progressing, with solar energy harness projects underway in schools.

The tourism sector was also being positioned as a catalyst for economic diversification as marked by the recent launch of the City Tourism Initiative and the re-opening of the Francistown Wildlife Educational Park.

He said the city would host the 5th BTC Francistown marathon on April 18, and the inaugural Ghetto Classic athletics event on March 14, promoting sport and community engagement.

The deputy mayor appealed to councillors for advocacy to resolve procurement bottlenecks, support staff wellbeing, and protect frontline teams. **BOPA**



Permanent Secretary to the President Ms Emmah Peloetletse

‘Embracing digitalisation turning point’

Naomi Leepile
TSABONG

Public servants in Tsabong have been called upon to be torchbearers of the new government's vision by embracing digitalisation and demonstrating financial intelligence.

Permanent Secretary to the President (PSP), Ms Emmah Peloetletse, said this during a high-level engagement with the public servants in Tsabong on Monday.

The meeting aimed to brief employees on national policies and gather crucial feedback from the frontline public services.

Under the inspiring theme: The District of Unique Opportunities, Ms Peloetletse urged the public servants to embrace digitalisation of the workforce.

"Let us embrace digitalisation. It should be utilised," she declared, emphasising the critical shift away from outdated practices.

She further highlighted manual processes as inefficient, lacking an audit trail, and consuming valuable time and underscored the government's commitment to modernising service delivery.

She also encouraged employees to find a unique 'niche' within their district and become ambassadors for Tsabong by promoting its potential and showcasing regional success stories.

The Permanent Secretary to the President also touched on issues around national economic policies and updated public servants about the National Development Plan 12 and the Botswana Economic Transformation Programme, along with the status of the national economy.

The dire economic situation, she relayed, demanded that individual workers reinforce individual responsibility in fiscal management.

However, the session was not without candid feedback from the public servants themselves. Several pressing issues, such as staff shortages and overstaying, formed part of the impending issues the workforce was grappling with.

Public servants also pleaded with the government to address the dilapidated accommodation as well as the acute shortage of staff housing to ensure their well-being was taken care of. **BOPA**



Francistown City councillors at the ongoing full council meeting where deputy mayor Mr Uyapo Nyeku apprised them about drug availability.

Photo: Thamani Shabani

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PARLIAMENT 2026



Tshimologo Association for People with Albinism during an awareness activity. Minister for State President, Defence and Security, Mr Moeti Mohwasa told Parliament on Monday that government provided free dermatological and skin care services to persons with albinism through the Ministry of Health.

Govt provides free healthcare to persons with albinism

GABORONE

Government currently provides free dermatological and skin care services to persons with albinism through the Ministry of Health.

This was said Minister for State President, Defence and Security, Mr Moeti Mohwasa in response to a parliamentary question on Monday. Minister Mohwasa said plans to improve such services included strengthening public health systems through capacity building and improved referral systems, gradual expansion of

specialist services, as well as enhancing access to essential sun-protection resources, public health education, early detection and regular skin screening.

He added that the Ministry of Child Welfare and Basic Education promoted inclusive education for children with albinism through provision of spectacles and materials in large fonts, additional time for tests or exams, strategic sitting positions and the use of scribes where necessary as well as diagnostic assessments to ensure informed provision of special education needs and proper placement of

learners.

He further said government supported organisations for persons with albinism through providing subventions, offering psycho-social support and assistive devices for mobility while services were coordinated through the Ministry for State President, Defence and Security, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Child Welfare and Basic Education and Ministry of Local Government and Traditional Affairs.

He told legislators that government had ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which ensured equal human rights for persons with albinism. "This has been domesticated through Persons with Disabilities Act No. 6 of 2024 and the Revised National Disability Policy of 2021," he said.

Member of Parliament for Kgatleng Central, Mr Mpho Morolong had asked the minister to state if government had specific legislation or policies addressing the rights and protection of persons with albinism, and if not, what plans were in place to develop them.

Mr Morolong also wanted to know how the ministry planned to improve access to specialised dermatological care and sun protection resources for persons with albinism. He further to know the steps that were taken to ensure that children with albinism had equal access to education, including provision for visual aid and inclusive learning environment.

The legislator also asked how government collaborates with organisations supporting persons with albinism to provide counselling, mobility assistance and address specific challenges they faced. **BOPA**

Kwapa calls for teacher housing to address staff welfare

GABORONE

Member of Parliament for Jwaneng/Mabutsane, Mr Omphemetse Kwapa, has urged government to prioritise teacher accommodation at Mogale Junior Secondary School, arguing that housing staff within Maokane was essential to improving the school's academic performance.

In a parliamentary question on Monday, Mr Kwapa asked the Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education if there were plans to resolve the housing shortage for teachers.

Responding to the question, Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education, Ms Nono

Kgafela-Mokoka, confirmed that the school currently lacked sufficient facilities to house its entire staff in Maokane.

Ms Kgafela-Mokoka said due to the shortage, 12 teachers were currently residing in ministry housing in Jwaneng.

"These teachers are transported to and from the school daily at the government's expense.

Plans to expand housing at Mogale JSS were originally part of the Development Manager (DM) projects. However, these have been suspended pending the formal separation. **BOPA**

DBS develops new freelance dispensation

GABORONE

Department of Broadcasting Services is currently developing a new freelance dispensation aimed at overhauling their working conditions at the Mass Media Complex.

Answering a question in Parliament on Monday, Minister for State President, Defence and Security, Mr Moeti Mohwasa, said government acknowledged that existing arrangements required urgent reform.

"This new framework is designed to address stagnation in pay and a lack of contractual structure that has persisted for over a decade," Minister Mohwasa said.

He added that the upcoming review was comprehensive and focused on reviewing the long-standing P100 per hour rate, establishing a clear review of role categorisation and grading based on expertise, revising structures to include clearer performance

and deliverable standards and further ensure that all freelance engagements complied with the Employment and Labour Relations Act of 2025.

The minister noted that the current situation, where some individuals had performed core broadcasting functions for over 10 years without formal employment, was an inherited arrangement from the previous government.

"While these freelancers provide specialised services in reporting, production and technical operations, they have remained outside the permanent and pensionable public officer framework. Such arrangements require review and reform."

Tswapong South MP, Dr Kesitegile Gobotswang had sought an appraisal of the conditions of service at the Mass Media Complex and clarity on whether government intended to transition long-term freelancers to permanent and pensionable status. **BOPA**

MPs highlight jobs and infrastructure development as primary needs

Tebagano Ntshole

GABORONE

Member of Parliament for Thamaga/Kumakwane, Mr Palelo Motaosane has called on government to halt the multimillion-pula Constitutional Court establishment, arguing that the funds are better spent on refurbishing the decaying colonial-era schools and addressing persistent drug shortages in the health sector.

Debating the 2026/27 budget on Monday, Mr Motaosane argued that the Ministry of Health should receive a larger share of the budget. He noted that despite reports of improvement, medication shortages continued to plague the country. To address that, he called on government to source medications from India, which he said was a more affordable option compared to the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Regarding social welfare, the MP expressed concern that the new Ikageng Public Works Programme might absorb fewer participants following the increase of monthly allowances to P2 500. Contributing to the debate, MP for Charleshill, Mr Motsamai Motsamai, advocated for affirmative action regarding social protection benefits, arguing that residents in rural areas faced higher costs of living than those in urban centres, making the current P600 monthly allowance insufficient for daily needs.

He further urged government to come up with strategies to assist the informal sector saying they played an important role in the economy.

While he welcomed the transition of temporary teachers

and special constables into permanent and pensionable positions, Mr Motsamai was however concerned about sending underperforming public officers to rural areas.

He stated that such a practice disadvantaged remote communities. On the drug crisis, Mr Motsamai called for thorough investigation into how illegal substances entered the country and who was behind the syndicates.

Nonetheless, he lauded the progress at the Botswana Meat Commission (BMC) and the establishment of the Meat Regulator, noting that farmers had long been disadvantaged by the previous system.

For her part, Kgatleng West MP Dr Unity Dow criticised the new administration for blaming the opposition for lack of solutions, particularly regarding the failed promise of creating 500 000 jobs.

Dr Dow emphasised that the public's primary needs were plots, jobs and infrastructure, rather than a Constitutional Court. She reiterated that the P275 million earmarked for the court be redirected toward more pressing sectors.

"People in the country want plots and Bonno does not offer solutions and neither do they need Constitutional Court to solve their problems," she said.

Additionally, she noted that centralisation of Government Purchase Orders (GPOs) had failed to resolve payment delays, with many local suppliers still owed. She called for restoration of trust in the intelligence sector and oversight institutions, stating that public confidence in such bodies had eroded. **BOPA**

Govt rolls out FMD emergency response plan

GABORONE

Government has activated a P97 million national emergency response to prevent the spread of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) from South Africa and Zimbabwe into Botswana, with intensified border patrols, fence repairs and community mobilisation in high-risk areas such as Bobirwa.

Answering a question in Parliament recently, acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti said the transboundary animal disease posed a serious threat with the potential to escalate into a national disaster, hence the approval of a Presidential Directive to fund immediate and short-term control measures.

Dr Dikoloti said the budget would support logistical operations for agencies involved in disease control, including border surveillance, de-bushing, livestock movement control and the repair of damaged cordon fences.

Regarding maintenance of cordon fence, he said, the ministry had adopted a partnership model

with border communities due to limited resources caused by the economic downturn.

“Whilst this still falls far short of the actual requirement, I am convinced that this is a more sustainable approach compared to the traditional approach where government solely bears the burden,” he said.

He noted that more than 240 personnel had been deployed to FMD outbreak zones 3c and 6b, while surveillance continued in FMD-free zones such as Zone 7 in line with the national disease monitoring plan, adding that the Botswana Police Service had also set up camps along the border to reinforce the ministry’s efforts.

He said following a request by the Member of Parliament for Mmadinare, the ministry had authorised the use of Mmadikgaka veterinary camp for the deployment of additional police officers and mephato to strengthen operations.

“A total of 11 mephato camps are currently working along the border fence from the Mabolwe border to Gobe cattle posts. Plans are underway to establish more

camps to cover the stretch from the Robelela/Dikgatlong area to Motlhabaneng,” he said.

Dr Dikoloti commended communities across the country, including those in Morolong, Kgatleng, Gamalete, Kgalagadi, Serowe, Tonota and the North East, for mobilising mephato to assist with patrols and maintenance of both border and inter-zonal fences.

“The revival of mephato in Bobirwa demonstrated how cultural structures could be harnessed to address modern cross-border security challenges and protect the country’s livestock industry,” he said.

At regional level, he said Botswana was using existing bilateral platforms to strengthen

cooperation on animal disease control.

“Through the Botswana-South Africa Binational Commission, the two countries were working to enhance collaboration on cross-border security, poaching and FMD control,” he said.

Dr Dikoloti further said the Department of Veterinary Services was expected to undertake benchmarking visits with KwaZulu-Natal authorities, while further discussions were planned with North West provincial officials in Mafikeng.

“Botswana is also engaging Zimbabwe through the Joint Permanent Commission on security matters to combat stock theft and control the spread of FMD,” he added.

As part of the regional response, he said, Botswana continued to supply vaccines to its neighbours.

He said the Botswana Vaccine Institute (BVI) provided 4.9 million doses to South Africa and 1.1 million to Zimbabwe last year.

Member of Parliament for Bobirwa, Mr Taolo Lucas, had asked the minister to outline the measures being implemented to prevent the spread of FMD from neighbouring South Africa and Zimbabwe into Botswana.

Mr Lucas also asked the minister to state what the ministry was doing with respect to cordon fences, deployment of personnel and other resources, the work of mephato and engagement with South Africa and Zimbabwe.

BOPA



Acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti said government had activated a P97 million national emergency response to prevent the spread of Foot and Mouth Disease from South Africa and Zimbabwe into Botswana, with intensified border patrols, fence repairs and community mobilisation in high-risk areas.

Land reform to address structural failures

Tebagano Ntshole
GABORONE

The Ministry of Lands and Agriculture will embark on a comprehensive reform of the land administration to shift focus from numbers to the economic viability of land.

This was said by the acting minister, Dr Edwin Dikoloti in Parliament recently, acknowledging that the 100 000 plots campaign had exposed deep-seated structural challenges within the country’s land ecosystem.

“The issue is not just about the number of plots allocated, but about ensuring land is properly surveyed, legally registered, infrastructure-aligned and capable of unlocking enterprise and investment,” Dr Dikoloti said.

He indicated that the campaign faced financial and logistical hurdles with exorbitant costs in areas like Metsimotlhabe, where government spent over P321,000 per plot.

He said total expenditure of P167 million had been spent so far, including P85 million for cadastral surveys, P7, 704, 000 for verification and examination of survey records and P75 million by Land Boards.

On infrastructure deficit, he said of the 100 000 plots allocated, only 318 were serviced, adding that the ministry was currently working to service an additional 5 080 plots at a cost of P1.92 billion.

He further indicated that only 12 586 beneficiaries had received Secure Land Titles, a gap he attributed to systemic constraints in data readiness and digital alignment. Again, he told Parliament that the 100 000 plots were distributed across various

settlement tiers, with the largest share of 45 896 plots allocated in rural villages, followed by 29 007 in peri-urban settlements and 28 203 in urban centres while 8 317 plots were located in remote areas.

However, he said the campaign saw 2 473 plots returned to Land Authorities by the allottees, explaining that such returns occurred primarily because applicants wished to avoid being disqualified from future land allocations in their preferred or respective areas of application.

To address such gaps, he said the ministry operationalised a ‘War Room’ for Secure Land Title (SLT) Production on February 16 this year.

“This task force pools experts from the Deeds Registry, Surveys and Mapping and Town and Country Planning, Geospatial Information Centre, Department of Technical Services, Land Boards, and the Department of Lands to oversee the entire value chain from development planning to registration,” he added.

Furthermore, he said a Land Lab was being developed alongside the Botswana Economic Transformation Programme to diagnose systemic constraints and restore predictable title production in high-pressure areas.

He was responding to questions from MP for Molepolole North, Mr Arafat Khan, who had asked the minister to give a detailed account of the campaign’s expenditure and the status of title deeds.

MP Khan also wanted to understand the statistical relationship between plot locations and the rate at which land was being returned to authorities, as well as the policy adjustments being made to remedy the failures. **BOPA**

Legal Aid Botswana targets rural outreach

GABORONE

Legal Aid Botswana is rolling out a new corporate strategy aimed at improving access to legal services across the country, particularly in remote areas.

Responding to a Parliamentary question by Member of Parliament for Okavango East, Mr Gabatsholwe Disho recently, Assistant Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Mr Augustine Nyatanga said the strategy, titled Re A Ba Latela 2025–2030, sought to bring services closer to the people by ensuring that no citizen was located more than a 150-kilometre radius from a Legal Aid Botswana physical presence.

Mr Nyatanga explained that the initiative was designed to address long-standing challenges faced by residents of rural areas such as Seronga, Shakawe, Gumare, Sehithwa, Hukuntsi, Bobonong and Gudigwa in accessing legal assistance.

He said establishing fully fledged offices in all parts of the country was not financially viable and as a result, the strategy proposed the introduction of smaller service points known as Legal Aid Posts.

“These posts will be manned by paralegals who will provide outreach services and continuous community mobilisation to ensure a sustained Legal Aid Botswana presence and messaging in the targeted areas,” he said.

He added that the officers stationed at the posts would serve not only the host villages but also surrounding settlements, thereby extending the organisation’s reach to more communities.

However, he noted that implementation of the expansion plan had been slowed by limited human and financial resources.

“At present we do not have sufficient staff and other resources, and this has forced us to scale back on some of the planned expansion during the NDP12 process due to budgetary constraints,” he said.

He further acknowledged concerns about the secondment of officers to District Administration Centres and main dikgotla to decentralise services, saying resource limitations remained a key challenge.

Despite the setbacks, he said the ministry remained committed to improving access to justice and ensuring that Legal Aid Botswana services reached underserved communities across the country.

Mr Disho had asked the minister to state strategies to make Legal Aid Botswana accessible across the country including to persons in rural areas especially in district service centres such as Seronga, Shakawe, Gumare, Sehithwa, Hukuntsi, Bobonong and Gudigwa.

He had also asked the minister to state why officers from the ministry could not be seconded to District Administration Centres or main Dikgotla in towns and villages to distribute their services including in rural areas. **BOPA**



Daily Business

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Tanzania seeks to boost economic ties with Singapore

DARES SALAAM

Tanzania is committed to deepening cooperation with Singapore in key growth sectors, including trade, investment, tourism, artificial intelligence, and digital revenue systems. Tanzania Minister of Finance Khamis Mussa Omar made the remarks in Dar es Salaam during talks with Singapore's Ambassador to Tanzania Douglas Foo on Monday. Omar said the two sides discussed strengthening bilateral cooperation in economic, social and diplomatic fields, with a particular focus on fast-tracking agreements on investment protection and the avoidance of double taxation. He underscored the importance of expanding economic ties and invited Singaporean investors to explore opportunities in Tanzania, highlighting the country's strategic position as a gateway to regional markets for its landlocked neighbors. *Xinhua*

Zimbabweans turn to Chinese firms for job opportunities

MARONDERA

As the job market remains competitive for fresh graduates, young Zimbabweans have expressed a growing interest in seeking career opportunities at Chinese firms, which have become a major source of employment in Zimbabwe. "China is advanced in terms of technology, I hope to be exposed to cutting-edge and modern technologies. I believe that will create a good professional path for me as a chemical engineer," said 24-year-old Learnmore Njiri. The young graduate was among many Zimbabwean youths who attended a job fair in Marondera District of Mashonaland East Province, held alongside the National Youth Day, which is marked annually on February 21 to honor the role of young people in Zimbabwe's development. *Xinhua*

Tanzania urges science institution to prioritise innovation

DARES SALAAM

Tanzania Prime Minister Mwigulu Nchemba on Sunday urged the Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology in the Arusha region to evolve into a hub of academic excellence and cutting-edge research focused on solving real-world challenges. Speaking during the foundation stone-laying ceremony for a new student hostel at the Tengeru campus, Nchemba cited home-grown innovations developed at the institution, including fish vaccines, seaweed-based fertilisers and agricultural drones for crop planting, saying such technologies enhance productivity and simplify daily life. *Xinhua*



Residents of Gojwane near Serule maintaining the disease control fence along the Sese and Thalamabele veterinary gates recently. Tonota West Farmers Association public relations officer, Mr Thapelo Olopeng applauded the residents for demonstrating the spirit of self-reliance during the period of economic uncertainty. Photo: Thamani Shabani

Serule farmers unite to maintain veterinary fence

Thamani Shabani
MASENYANE

Community engagement has become a vital strategy in addressing the recent Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak.

The Serule West Farmers Association has taken the lead in rallying local farmers to protect their livestock by undertaking maintenance of the disease control fence along the Sese and Thalamabele veterinary gates. At a time when disease outbreaks threaten both rural incomes

and the national economy, the association's coordinated response demonstrates how collective action can help prevent the spread of animal diseases, particularly in resource-constrained environments.

Farmers have volunteered labour, tools and transport to repair and maintain the disease-control fence stretching from the Sese veterinary gate to the Thalamabele gate near Masenyane cattle post. The maintenance work, divided among four teams, covers about 160 kilometres and is expected to significantly strengthen disease containment.

Speaking during the maintenance exercise, the association's Public Relations Officer, Mr Thapelo Olopeng stressed that community participation was essential during national crises.

"Community engagement in serious challenges like the FMD outbreak in a country such as Botswana, facing financial constraints and limited overtime resources, is very crucial," he said.

He noted that members also contributed P50 each to provide meals during the two-day



operation, illustrating the revival of self-reliance within the farming community.

Mr Olopeng said the association also intended to approach donors to assist in purchasing a patrol vehicle that would help monitor the fence daily and address challenges posed by wildlife, particularly elephants, which often damage the barrier.

He explained that uncontrolled livestock movement between zones around Tonota and Serowe threatens cattle supplies destined for the Botswana Meat Commission, making fence integrity a national economic priority.

Meanwhile, Acting District Agricultural Coordinator, Mr Kenneth Mabote warned that vandalising the disease-control fence was a serious offence punishable by law, adding that offenders may be required to repair damaged sections at their own cost.

Despite the warning, he commended the community for taking responsibility for maintaining the fence using their own resources.

The maintenance follows the outbreak whose epicentre was identified near Jackalas No.1. Local authorities, Tonota and Serowe District Council chairpersons, Messrs Neo Sefhume and Atamelang Thaga said additional measures were underway, with district leadership planning to engage Ipelegeng workers for bush clearing along the fence line.

Government has also committed P97 million towards vaccination and logistics to contain the outbreak in Zone 6b.

The initiative stands as a reminder that when communities unite around a common threat, their shared knowledge, labour and commitment can play a decisive role in protecting both livelihoods and the national cattle industry. *BOPA*

Dikgang

PAMPIRI YA THUTO LE DIKITSISO

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Ba FNB ba ba bula banni matlho

Kefilwe Selotlegeng

MAHALAPYE

Mogolwane kwa bankeng ya Botswana First National Bank (FNB) Rre Chris Molosiwa a re go rutega ka tsa madi go botlhokwa ka go fa motho sebaka sa go tsaya ditshwetso tse di botoka ka tiriso ya madi.

Rre Molosiwa o buile jalo kwa phuthengong ya kgotla ee neng e rulagantswe ke ba banka ya FNB kwa Mahalapye bosheng.

Rre Molosiwa a re tiriso ya madi e tlhoka thuto kana kitso ka gore motho fa ana le yone o ka dira thulaganyo ka na lenaneo la tsa madi.

A re botsogo jwa madi aa senang thulaganyo bo baka dikoloto tse di kgonang go fekeetsa motho mme di felele di baka malwetse a a bakwang ke maikutlo a a sa iketlang.

Rre Molosiwa a re botsogo jwa madi jo bosa iketlang bo kgona go baka kgogontsho mo malwapeng.

A re bontsi jwa Batswana ba tlhalela kitso ka tsa madi ka jaana basa rutwa ka tiriso ya madi.

Rre Molosiwa o boletse fa go na le dikoloto tse di siameng le tse di sa siamang ka jalo a re go botlhokwa gore motho a rulaganye tiriso ya madi gore a lemoge bokete jwa dikoloto tsa gagwe gore a kgone go dilaola sentle.

A re go boloka madi go botlhokwa gotlhe fela go akaretsa go ipeela madi, go beeletsa le go reka diabe.

Rre Molosiwa o boletse gape fa gole botlhokwa gore motho a ipaakanyetse go tlogela tiro a re bangwe ba tlogela tiro ba na le dikoloto. A re bontsi jwa batho ba dira dikgwebo tse di tsenyeng madi ka ntlha ya go tlhoka go boloka, a gakolola gore meraka le masimo e ka nna kgwebo e motho a ka itshetsang ka yone.

A re fa motho a sa dirise tshimo ya gagwe, a ka e firisetsa mongwe gore e mo tsenyetse madi ka na a e adime mongwe mme morago gago rekisa thobo ba kgaogane madi goya kafa ditumalanong.

O ne gape a ba rotloetsa go dira lenaneo la tsa boswa jwa bone go itsa dintwa tsa boswa le masika a a tseelang bana boswa jwa bone.

Motlhotlhomisi wa borukuthi jwa madi go tswa FNB Rre Keaobaka Mogopodi a re methale ya tsietso e mentsi mo malatsing a gompiano.

Ka jalo a re go botlhokwa gore batho ba somarele madi a bone mo dilalomeng.

Rre Mogopodi o ba gakolotse

gore 'go itse moreki' mo go tlwaelesigileng ka 'Know Your Customer (KYC) ga go dirwe ka mogala kana maranyane.

Rre Mogopodi a re gantsi dilalome tse di tsietsang di tsietsa bagodi thata, ka jalo a ba kopa go netefatsa gore fa ba batla ditlamelo tsa banka ba di latela kwa dibankeng.

A re ba tshwanetse ba somarela dikarata tsa bone tsa sephiri ba emisa mogkwa wa go di amogana batho.

Detective Constable Iketleng Malatsi a re dikgang tsa tsietso di dingalo ka dilalome di dira maretshwa a mantsi a a dirang gore bosupi bo tlhalele fa go tlhotlhomisiwa.

Rre Malatsi a re borukuthi jo bo bontsi mo Mahalapye mme bodirwa le ke batho ba ba tswang go sele.

Botsogo jwa madi aa senang thulaganyo bo baka dikoloto tse di kgonang go fekeetsa motho mme di felele di baka malwetse a a bakwang ke maikutlo a a sa iketlang.

O tlhalositse fa ka ngwaga wa 2024 ba gatisitse dikgang tsa borukuthi jwa go tsietsa dile 26, mme ka 2025 dile 17 fa mono ngwaga basetse ba gatisitse dile tlhano (5).

A re bontsi jwa batswasetlhabelo ke bagodi baba tlogetseng tiro.

Rre Malatsi a re batswasetlhabelo ba fa ba sena go tsiediwa, ga ba bue boamaruri jotlhe gore ba thusiwe sentle.

Mongwe wa banni ba Mahalapye Moruti Rojas Simon a re ba tshwengwa ke gore sepe se se amanang le dintlha ka botshelo jwa motho se ka tswa se sa sireletsega ka go lebelega go le motlhofo gore magodu a bone tsoitlhe tseo.

Banni ba ne ba itumelela dithuto ba supa fa ba ithutile gole gontsi,

Modulasitilo wa khansela ya Mahalapye Rre Outule Segolame o ne a leboga ba banka ya FNB go bo ba tsisitse dithuto tse di botlhokwa ko bathong.

Rre Segolame o kopile morafe go gasa molaetsa ko go baba satlang gammogo lego dirisa dithuto tse ba di amuleng mo phuthengong eo. **BOPA**



Mopalamente wa Serowe North, Rre Baratiwa Mathoothe a re mokgatlho wa masupatsela o botlhokwa mo go ageng basha. O tlhalositse jalo kwa bokopanong jwa ba Central Trailblazers Scout Group kwa Paje bosheng.

Mathoothe o galaletsa maiteko a masupatsela

Tshiamiso Moseitlha

PAJE

Mokgatlho wa Central Trailblazers Scout Group o botlhokwa mo go ageng botho jwa basha.

Mopalamente wa Serowe North, Rre Baratiwa Mathoothe o tlhalositse jalo kwa bokopanong jwa mokgatlho oo, wa masupatsela kwa Paje ka Labothano.

A re mokgatlho o, o dira bokgabane ka go tsenya letsogo mo go tlhabololeng matshelo a basha ka mananeo a a farologaneng.

Rre Mathoothe yo gape e leng Mothusi Tona wa lephata la papadi le tlhabololo kgwebo a re mokgatlho o tsepame mo go bopeng botho jo bo eletsegang mo basheng, a tlatsa ka gore o ba ruta boitshwaro le boikarabelo.

“Masupatsela a rutwa mananeo a a ba thusang mo botshelon g ka jalo mokgatlho o thusa go baakanya basha go nna batho ba ba nang le seabe mo lefatsheng la Botswana.”

Rre Mathoothe o tlhalositse fa mokgatlho wa masupatsela o supiwa j a a k a seikokotlelo se se nang le seabe se segolo mo go

godiseng basha.

A re bogologolo. masupatsela, a ne a tseelwa kwa godimo, a supa fa nako e tsile gore mekgatlho e a tsosolosiwe mo dikoleng go ka thusa go laola botlhokatsheba jwa banana ba gompiano.

Rre Mathoothe o rotloeditse gore masupatsela a inakanye le dikoporase.

Mogolwane go tswa kwa Central Trailblazers Group, a tswa mo Serowe Rre Motshegetsisi Gorileng o boletse fa maikaelelo a bone ele go tsosolosa bosupatsela mo dikoleng ebile ba ya go simolola kwa go sese botlana sa Paje.

Rre Gorileng a re ba batla go tsisa diphete go matshelong a batho. Are mokgatlho wa bone o tlhamilwe ka ngwaga wa 2017 kwa Serowe, a supa fa ba tlhoka lefelo le ba ka rutelang banana mo go lone ka bosupatsela.

A re ba ikaeletse go dira dikgwebo tsa go rua dihutshane go tlhamela banana ditiro. **BOPA**



Mopalamente wa Serowe North, Rre Baratiwa Mathoothe

Understanding Bacterial Vaginosis

Lesedi Thatayamodimo
GABORONE

Sitting in a bubble bathtub for a woman, may seem romantic and relaxing, a moment of calm after a long day, surrounded by warm water and fragrant foam. But that soothing foam bath can sometimes disrupt the vagina's natural balance, creating conditions that may lead to bacterial vaginosis.

Bacterial Vaginosis (BV) is one of the most common vaginal conditions affecting women, yet it remains widely misunderstood.

Dr Muzaffar Hussain, a general medical practitioner in Gaborone, warned that everyday habits, hygiene practices and underlying health conditions could quietly disrupt the natural balance of vaginal bacteria, opening the door to infection.

Speaking during a recent interview, Dr Hussain explained that BV was not caused by a single germ, but rather by an imbalance involving multiple organisms.

"Most of the time it is never enough to say it is just bacteria. It is usually a combination of different bacteria, sometimes candida yeast and occasionally other organisms. That is why we call it a syndromic condition," Dr Hussain said.

He said products such as scented soaps, bubble baths and vaginal douches could upset the delicate environment, allowing harmful bacteria to multiply while protective bacteria decline.

"For many women, BV develops quietly," he said, adding that some experienced no symptoms at all, while others noticed a thin grey or white discharge, a strong fish-like odour, often more noticeable after sex, and itching or a burning sensation during urination.

He was quick to say because the signs may be mild and could be confused with other conditions, hence many women delay seeking medical care, and BV frequently

went undiagnosed.

"People tend to associate vaginal infections with pain or intense discomfort but BV does not always present that way, so women may ignore it or self-treat without realising what is going on," said Dr Hussain.

He clarified that BV was not classified as a sexually transmitted disease, but sexual activity could influence its occurrence and recurrence.

"BV is acquired, not sexually transmitted in the strict sense. However, intimate contact can facilitate transfer, especially when one partner has recurrent infections."

Still, BV can affect women who are not sexually active, reinforcing that hygiene habits and product use also play a significant role.

He said that explained why some women experienced repeated episodes even after treatment.

According to Dr Hussain, BV symptoms could range from mild to disruptive.

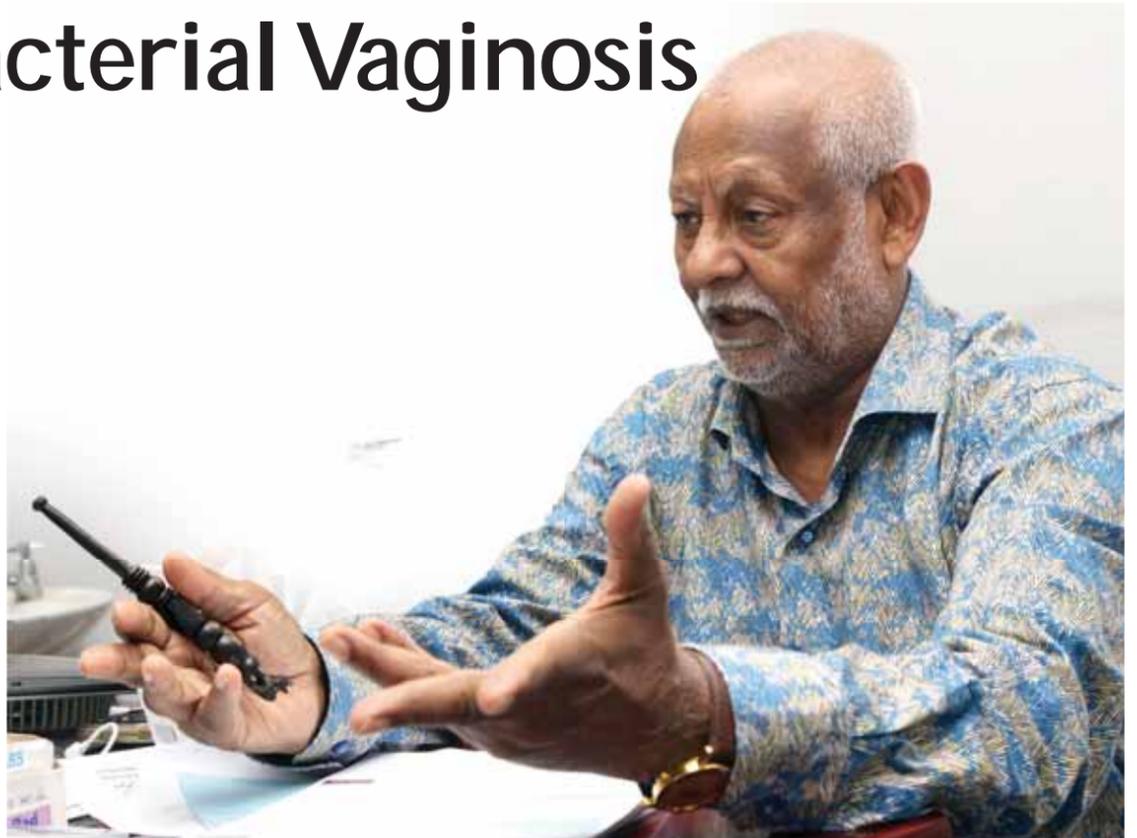
Some women report itching, abnormal discharge, burning during urination, lower abdominal pain, or reduced libido, while others experience no discomfort at all. "In many cases, the only complaint is a strong, unpleasant odour. There may be no itching, no pain, just the smell. The discharge may appear thin and watery or thick and milky, often accompanied by a foul or fishy odour."

Dr Hussain warned that certain lifestyle and hygiene practices could increase the risk of BV. Frequent bubble baths, inadequate genital drying, and tight or minimal underwear, particularly G-strings, can promote bacterial movement from the anal area to the front.

"The distance is very short in women," he explained, adding "G-strings allow bacteria to travel from back to front, increasing the risk of infection."

He advised washing the genital area with warm water, drying thoroughly, and avoiding underwear styles that encouraged bacterial transfer.

Women with poorly controlled diabetes, weakened immunity, advanced age, or chronic illnesses



General medical practitioner, Dr Muzaffar Hussain has warned that everyday habits, hygiene practices and underlying health conditions could quietly disrupt the natural balance of vaginal bacteria, opening the door to infection.

are especially vulnerable. Because BV rarely involves a single organism, treatment often includes a combination of antibiotics, antifungal medication, and anti-inflammatory drugs.

"You cannot always identify just one cause. That is why treatment is usually combined, to address all possibilities and relieve symptoms." Dr Hussain emphasised the need for accurate public education and urged women to seek medical advice early rather than self-treat or ignore symptoms.

"This is not about blame or shame. It is about understanding the body, maintaining hygiene, and getting proper treatment before the condition becomes recurrent or chronic."

Bacterial Vaginosis may not always announce itself loudly, but its impact can be profound.

He said by understanding how everyday habits, from bubble baths to sexual practices, affected vaginal health, women could make informed choices and protect their well-being.

"Open conversations and accurate information remain

essential in bringing this common condition out of the shadows," Dr Hussain said.

Ms Semang Mang, (not real names) said she suffered from bacterial vaginosis (BV) without knowing what it was.

"I initially felt that something was off, subtle discomfort that gradually turned into persistent symptoms I could no longer ignore. Eventually, it began to affect my confidence, my workdays and even my sleep," Ms Mang.

"I felt embarrassed. It was taking over my daily life," Ms Mang admitted.

She explained that she felt ashamed to seek medical care, worried that the foul smell would imply promiscuity or some serious illness.

Because of this fear, she first turned to traditional herbs for help. "I had never encountered anyone with such an awful smell, so I did not want to talk about it," she said. "I carried a water bottle to wash my private parts whenever I used the bathroom, but after some time, the smell would return."

She admitted that she later

resorted to using perfume on her body to mask the odour.

However, the relief was only temporary. "After some time, I could smell myself again and I knew it had come back," she said. Eventually, I gathered the courage to visit a private gynaecologist. Within a week, I was clear, no smell and my confidence was back," she recalled.

Ms Mang called on both men and women to learn more about vaginal health, as understanding that vaginal health was about balance, not sterility, could help women make informed choices.

She also reiterated the importance of avoiding unnecessary douching, practicing safer sex and seeking medical advice as soon as symptoms appear.

"In the end, bacterial vaginosis is not just a medical condition. It is a reminder that everyday health issues can carry significant consequences when ignored. Bringing BV into the spotlight may be one of the simplest ways to improve women's health outcomes, one conversation at a time." **BOPA**



Botswana Defence Force officer, Tonny Mbiganyi, who appeared before Masunga Magistrate Court on Monday, is alleged to have killed his wife in Matobo on February 20. He was denied bail and will appear again on March 10.

Photo: Goweditswe Kome

Court denies murder accused bail

Goweditswe Kome
MASUNGA

Magistrate Tshogofatso Bakgomogi of Masunga Magistrate Court has denied a murder accused, Tonny Mbiganyi bail on the basis that investigations into the February 20 incident are still incomplete.

Ms Bakgomogi said the case, in which Mbiganyi, a Botswana Defence Force officer, was alleged to have murdered his wife, Violet Mbiganyi, was still at the initial stage and that statements from key witnesses were yet to be recorded.

Further, the court noted that the minor children of the accused and the deceased, who were connected to the scene of the alleged offence, had not yet started to receive counselling.

The Investigating Officer, Detective Sergeant Keabaka Balotlegi had earlier told court that investigations into the matter were still ongoing and that statements were still being recorded from all possible witnesses including the children of the deceased and the accused, who were minors aged around 10.

"On that basis, we are opposed to the accused person being granted bail on the basis that we are yet to record statements," adding that post-mortem was also yet to be conducted on the body of the victim.

Detective Sergeant Balotlegi noted that there was also a possibility of the accused interfering with the investigations should he be admitted into bail.

In his plea for bail, Mbiganyi told the court that he needed to go and assist with preparations for his wife's burial as family members had told him of their struggle to cover the costs of the funeral.

He said he had insured the deceased through his work's insurance scheme and that releasing him on bail would enable him to process the insurance claim in order to secure the funds required for his wife's burial.

The accused, aged 50, is alleged to have murdered his 49-year-old wife at their home in Matobo last Friday, contrary to Section 202 (1) of the Penal Code.

He will appear before court again on March 10. **BOPA**

Arts & Culture

BOMU introduces Most Viral Song category



Galaletsang Phutietsile aka GALA Joyful (left) and Nnunu Ramogotsi-Neill at the launch of the 14th Botswana Music Union awards in Gaborone recently.



Events Lab representative Seabelo Modibe said over the years, the awards had developed into an economic hub benefiting creatives and industry enablers.

The Most Viral Song category reflect the growing influence of digital platforms and online music consumption.

Benita Magopane
GABORONE

After a year-long strategic hiatus in 2025, the Botswana Musicians Union (BOMU) Awards return for their 14th edition, scheduled for May on a date yet to be announced.

Speaking at the official launch

recently, BOMU president Papie Rakhudu said the awards had been restructured and reimagined to reflect current trends in an evolving music landscape.

He highlighted the introduction of the Most Viral Song category, saying it reflected the growing influence of digital platforms and online music consumption.

He said digital transformation

had changed the rules of the game in the creative sector, and noted that music now generated revenue through streaming, publishing, live performances, brand partnerships, licensing and digital content creation.

He added that social media platforms, content monetisation and digital distribution had removed traditional barriers.

“Today, a young artist in Gaborone can release a song and reach the world instantly,” he said, stressing that artists must be equipped with digital skills, business knowledge, data literacy and ownership structures that protect their intellectual property.

Rakhudu also emphasised the music industry’s multifaceted nature and its ability to create employment for producers, sound engineers, graphic designers, marketers and event managers, among others, helping to curb unemployment. He called for the creative sector to be recognised as a serious contributor to GDP as Botswana pursues economic diversification.

Events Lab representative Seabelo Modibe said over the years the awards had developed into an economic hub benefiting creatives and industry enablers ranging from administrators to fashion designers. He added that each nominated artist received a nomination fee, representing a financial injection into the industry through prizes alone.

Modibe further advocated for amendments to copyright laws governing the creative sector, the development of proper cultural exchange programmes beyond grants, and the full-scale operation of the night-time economy, which he said would greatly benefit the industry.

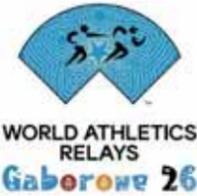
He noted that out of 35 categories, six would be decided by public vote: Best Female, Best Male, Best Duo/Group, Album of the Year, Song of the Year and Best Producer.

BOPA



Artistes at the launch of BOMU awards. Photos: Felicity Male

DailySport



Ticket Prices

CHILDREN UNDER 13
(Preferential)

\$15 (approximately BWP 198)
(Price Remains Unchanged For Both Days)



Botswana's Thanda Mokgabo (right) in an aerial battle for the ball with Zimbabwe's Ethel Chinyerere during the Hollywoodbets COSAFA Womens Championship 2025 at Old Peter Mokaba Stadium in Polokwane yesterday. Zimbabwe won 1-0. Photo: Courtesy of ©Samuel ShivambuBackpagePix



The Mares COSAFA journey ends

Anastacia Sibanda
GABORONE

The senior women's national football team, The Mares have bowed out of the Hollywoodbets COSAFA Women's Championship following a 1-0 defeat to Zimbabwe women's national football team, The Mighty Warriors.

The Mares were drawn in Group B alongside defending champions Zambia, Zimbabwe and eSwatini in a tournament held in South Africa.

In their group matches, Botswana lost 3-0 to Zambia, drew 1-1 with eSwatini and suffered a narrow 1-0 defeat to Zimbabwe in their final group clash yesterday.

The decisive goal came in the 69th minute through Rutendo Makore.

Despite the loss, The Mares showed notable improvement compared to their earlier matches, displaying maturity, teamwork and a more solid midfield performance. They created several scoring opportunities but failed to convert them.

The team travelled to the tournament with a squad assembled at the eleventh hour following the withdrawal of some senior players from the squad.

Nevertheless, the youthful squad demonstrated promise

and showed they could form the foundation of the team's future.

The Mares have always struggled in the COSAFA Women's Championship. Their best performance was in 2020,

when they finished as runners-up after a losing by a solitary goal to South Africa's Banyana Bnayana in the final.

During the 2020 campaign, the Mares made history by defeating

Zambia 2-1 in a thrilling semi-final before falling to South Africa in the final, narrowly missing the chance to lift the regional title for the first time.

From 2021 to 2025, however,

they were eliminated in the group stages, a trend some football analysts attributed to the country's limited structural development of women's football.

BOPA

BFA rewards Zebras and technical team over P5m

Anastacia Sibanda
GABORONE

Botswana Football Association (BFA) and its stakeholders have rewarded senior national football team, the Zebras's players and technical team with over P5 million to share among themselves following their participation in the recent Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) tournament held in Morocco.

Speaking at the appreciation event on Monday, BFA president Tariq Babitseng commended The Zebras for representing Botswana with pride, demonstrating discipline at the tournament. Botswana, drawn in a difficult group alongside eventual champions

Senegal, Democratic Republic of Congo and Benin, did not progress to the next round.

However, Babitseng thanked the Government for adequately preparing the Zebras ahead of the AFCON finals.

He said Botswana had been placed in the toughest group, which produced the African champions, Senegal.

He noted that Democratic Republic of Congo was also a formidable side currently pushing for qualification in the FIFA World Cup.

"That alone shows that the group we were in was tough, but despite not winning, our players did their best," he said. He said players were frustrated that they could not score or secure a

victory for Botswana, but praised them for their determination, especially as the tournament's lowest-ranked side. Babitseng further noted that this was Botswana's second appearance at Africa's showpiece tournament, the first being in 2012, and expressed hope that the team would qualify again for a third appearance as preparations for the 2027 qualifiers begin. He also thanked sponsors who supported their campaign, including the Botswana Tourism Organisation, St Louis, BK Proctor, Choppies, O3 Beverages and Orange Botswana.

Meanwhile, Botswana National Sport Commission Director of Sport Development,

Peaceful Seleka, urged sponsors to continue supporting football, noting that the commission funded 39 sporting codes and football took the largest share of the budget.

He said continued sponsorship support helped ease pressure on his vote, adding that it costs more than P2 million to send the Zebras to a single fixture.

Seleka also stressed the importance of building strong and competitive domestic leagues and capacitating coaches.

He emphasised the importance of having high-quality coaches at club level, so that by the time players were called up to the national team, they were fully prepared and ready to deliver.

BOPA