

BOTSWANA Daily News

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Manowe Motsaathebe
BOBONONG

Bobirwa farmers and members of mephato (traditional Bregiments), have been urged to continue taking precautionary measures and remain vigilant against any trace of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD).

Speaking during a meeting with mephato and stakeholders on Monday, the Minister for International Relations, Dr Phenyo Butale cautioned farmers that Zimbabwe had, from December last year up to now, recorded 833 suspected cases of FMD in Matebeleland South, which borders Botswana (Bobirwa side) and South Africa. It is against this backdrop that Dr Butale encouraged farmers and mephato to consistently guard the borders and maintain the cordon fence as they had committed to doing to keep their zone in the green.

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Water project brings relief to Boteti East

Kabo Keaketswe
LETLHAKANE

Completion of the Makgaba borehole under the Debswana Cut 3 Boteti East water project has significantly improved water supply in villages such as Mosu, Makgaba, Mokubilo and Mmea.

Boteti District council chairperson, Mr Onkhuparetse Monnaatsie, stated during the opening of a full council session, where he also said that construction of the reverse osmosis plant to

treat water from Lucara mine was also expected to be completed in May 2026.

Still under water supply, the chairperson said upgrading of the Letlhakane booster pump station was completed and had improved water distribution within the village.

In his address, Mr Monnaatsie commended stakeholders such as Debswana and Lucara Botswana for their continued support towards community development in the district.

"These initiatives demonstrate

the strong partnerships and commitment between government, parastatals and the private sector in addressing critical challenges within our district," he said.

On a different matter, the chairperson noted that the public health sector in the district continued to face challenges such as shortage of skilled manpower, transport and medical supplies among others.

Despite the challenges, Mr Monnaatsie said key health

programmes were ongoing, such as implementation of Malaria control measures, where only five cases were recorded and no deaths so far.

Still on health issues, he said over 10 000 patients within the district remained on HIV treatment. On another issue, councillors have been informed that between 2023 and 2025, Boteti district received over P17 million under the Road Levy Fund, enabling the implementation of several impactful projects.

The projects, Mr Monnaatsie said include installation of 30 solar street lights along SS Timbers road in Letlhakane, bush clearing along the bus rank to Mmatshumo road covering approximately 8.7 kilometres and paving of internal roads in Letlhakane and Khumaga.

He said other projects were construction of storm water drainage system in Mokoboxane, Rakops, Xhumo, Mokubilo and Mmea, as well as gravelling and spot improvements of internal roads in Letlhakane. **BOPA**

Komane apprises council on district health status

Keetile Bontsibokae
MOCHUDI

The campaign on cervical cancer screening has been viewed as a positive drive toward early detection and successful treatment.

Addressing a full council meeting recently, Kgatleng District Council chairperson, Mr Thabo Komane said a landmark achievement for the current quarter was on the Women's Cancer Screening Campaign, conducted from January 29 to February 12, in which 1 002 women across the district were screened for cervical cancer.

"Early detection saves lives, and this campaign is a statement of our commitment to women's health," he said.

Mr Komane also said they were monitoring polio preparedness following warnings from the Ministry of Health regarding outbreaks in neighbouring Namibia and Zambia.

He said a national supplementary immunisation exercise was being planned, and the district was already conducting support and mentorship visits to all health facilities.

Mr Komane added that the situation on health services

still remained fragile, though availability of pharmaceutical items had noticeably improved.

He said Deborah Retief Memorial (DRM) Hospital had received a main supply order from Central Medical Stores (CMS) on February 19, containing lifesaving drugs and medicines which included but not limited to non-drugs, stitches, antipsychotics, and IV antibiotics.

"DRM Hospital is relatively stable in oral medications for chronic and infectious diseases, including ARVs, malaria, and vaccines. While availability fluctuates, our pharmacy team is proactively buffering stock within the district as well as bartering with neighbouring districts," said Mr Komane.

However, he said the situation of primary healthcare services in the district was a concern as at January 31, 2026 availability of drugs and non-drugs items in the district stood at 52 per cent, far below the national target of 90 per cent.

"This situation is concerning. Continued gaps in supply puts our services at risk and lower the quality of care we give. That is why we must watch supplies closely and have strong backup plans to protect our people. Our mobile clinic coverage now stands at 75 per cent

"DRM Hospital is relatively stable in oral medications for chronic and infectious diseases, including ARVs, malaria, and vaccines. While availability fluctuates, our pharmacy team is proactively buffering stock within the district as well as bartering with neighbouring districts."

Chairperson of Kgatleng District Council Mr Thabo Komane



for the period April to December 2025, following the allocation of a dedicated vehicle. Every medical area now has its own dedicated medical officer, ensuring continuity of care. The Men's Clinic at Boseja 2, launched on November 21 2025, is already bearing fruit through early detection of men's health issues," added Mr Komane.

On social and community development, Mr Komane said a total of 4 576 individuals were registered, from which 1 970 were destitute persons, 1 708 needy students, 558 orphans, 20 persons in Community Home Based Care and 320 children in need of protection.

He added that child protection issues demanded urgency. Mr Komane said the quarter has seen 146 cases of defilement, 64 cases of rape, 34 cases of child ill-treatment and 378 family welfare cases, from

which 275 affecting females and 103 males. He said the statistics were not just numbers, as they demonstrated children who were affected. "Our caseworkers will be trained on an evidence-based model of child abuse therapy that targets behavioural change in perpetrators and provides therapeutic support for affected children," he said.

Mr Komane said through stakeholders' engagement, vulnerable families not enrolled in formal programmes had received in kind and cash donations from private partners. He said through such collaborations, FNBB supported Khurutshe Primary School by providing hostel equipment and supplies worth P97 000. Additionally, he said the Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (BUAN) has deepened its partnership with Oliphant Drift community

through Adopted Village Extension Programme (AVEP).

He said AVEP was a flagship initiative of the BUAN Extension Strategy Framework, designed to strengthen the linkages between BUAN, the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture and local communities.

"It aims to translate agricultural research and innovations into practical solutions for farmers while providing BUAN students with field-based learning experiences. They recently conducted research and met Kgatleng leadership and Oliphant Drift community in February 2026 to share their baseline research findings and allow meaningful engagement and contributions to the projects decision making process. This provides an opportunity to inform and guide future project decisions and planning process," said Mr Komane. **BOPA**

Ntlhantlhe hosts International Day of Forests



Moshupa District Commissioner
Ms Kolobetso Sejakgomo

Relief Lephutshi
KANYE

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism, through the Department of Forestry and Range Resources will today commemorate International Day of Forests at Ntlhantlhe in Moshupa district.

The event, expected to be officially opened by the Minister of Environment and Tourism, Mr Wynter Mmolotsi, will be marked by a community service day, featuring tree planting at Ntlhantlhe Primary School as the main activity, followed by educational and awareness sessions on the importance of forests.

Speaking in an interview with BOPA, Moshupa District Commissioner, Ms Kolobetso Sejakgomo said Ntlhantlhe was well-matched to host the forest day commemoration as it was naturally a rocky environment and had less tree population.

Furthermore, she said besides tree planting at the village primary school, the Department of Forestry and Range Resources officials would hand over about 50 trees.

The District Commissioner said she was grateful for the educational awareness which would be given to the young generation at the school saying that it would be a

good move to equip them for the future.

She further urged the community of Ntlhantlhe to embrace the opportunity and equip themselves with tree planting skills to enhance their lives.

She said planting trees could be beneficial in homes and communities as they served as herbal remedies for health, ornamentals for decorating homes and public institutions, shades and provision of fruits which were also a necessity for good health, adding that trees could be economical in sustaining livelihoods.

Ms Sejakgomo said Sesung, amongst villages in the Moshupa

district, had some economical veld products such as Motlopi coffee, emphasising that it was vital for communities to learn about forests in relation to bio-diversity, eco-systems as they regulated aspects of human lives, sustaining livelihoods among others.

This year's theme: Forests and Economies, underscores the essential role played by forests in driving economic prosperity. Forests have long played a role that extends beyond providing direct employment in the forestry sector, contributing to trade in forest products for food and materials, while supporting agricultural systems. **BOPA**

Govt backs Stanbic housing loan initiative

Benita Magopane
Gaborone

In a strategic bid to address housing demand in Botswana, Stanbic Bank Botswana has unveiled Legae Home Loan, an initiative aimed at making home ownership a possibility for Batswana.

The home loan scheme is a well conceived initiative that aligns with the Bonno National Housing Programme's mandate to expand access to decent housing for Batswana.

Through the Legae Home Loan, clients can access financing of up to P650 000, supported by a 10-year repayment term and a 100 per cent funding of construction costs, including planning and project management. The model also introduces three sustainable housing plans from a one to three-bedroom plan, expanded geographic coverage beyond traditional mortgage financing footprints, and the removal of bond registration, legal and valuation fees, enhancing predictability and completion certainty.

Minister of Water and Human

Settlement, Mr Onneetse Ramogapi, highlighted the critical role of coordinated public-private collaboration in accelerating housing progress in Botswana.

Mr Ramogapi said the housing challenges many households faced such as crisis of affordability, informal incomes, and lack of collateral made access to traditional housing loans difficult, consequently resulting in rental dependency, overcrowding and in some cases, unsafe housing conditions.

"Recent fiscal constraints have also limited Government's ability to cushion households, creating an urgent need for private sector participation and innovative financial solutions," he added.

The minister underscored the 12th National Development Plan as a critical framework for enhancing service delivery, strengthening accountability, and increasing private sector participation across infrastructure, housing, and financial services.

He further emphasised the significance of the Botswana Economic Transformation



Minister of Water and Human Settlements, Mr Onneetse Ramogapi (left) and Stanbic Bank Botswana Chief Executive Officer Mr Chose Modise during the launch of Legae Home Loan scheme in Gaborone Tuesday. The minister said the initiative aligned well with the National Development Plan and Bonno Housing Project. Photo: Washa Bofelwang.

Programme (BETP), noting that its mandate to advance housing and urban development was central to driving economic growth, as it integrated key sectors such as construction, services, and materials, while creating jobs and fostering long-term household wealth creation.

Stanbic Bank Botswana, CEO, Mr Chose Modise, spoke of sustainable homeownership being as much of a social imperative as it was an economic catalyst.

He underscored that the

Legae Home Loan represented a shift from fragmented housing interventions to an integrated delivery approach that enables Batswana to translate land ownership into completed, resilient homes.

"By reducing structural barriers and strengthening delivery certainty, we are supporting both individual asset creation and broader economic activation across the housing value chain," he said.

Through the Legae Home Loan,

clients can access financing of up to P650 000, supported by a 10-year repayment term and a 100 per cent funding of construction costs, including planning and project management. The model also introduces three sustainable housing plans from a one to three-bedroom plan, expanded geographic coverage beyond traditional mortgage financing footprints, and the removal of bond registration, legal and valuation fees, enhancing predictability and completion certainty. **BOPA**

Butale encourages mephato to soldier on

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Notwithstanding the suspected cases, the minister informed the gathering that government of Zimbabwe had taken steps to restrict livestock movement in the affected areas like Gwanda.

Also, there are roadblocks to ensure that such restrictions were adhered to, the minister said. The restrictions, he said, were a product of benchmarking from Botswana on how best to combat and prevent FMD spread across the country, although Zimbabwe, unlike Botswana, does not have zones that are pivotal in restricting livestock movements. Additionally, Dr Butale reported that Zimbabwe had also banned meat sales in the affected areas.

He commended dikgosi for their vast knowledge of international relations as demonstrated through combating cross-border livestock

rustling and FMD.

Furthermore, Minister Butale reminded Batswana whose villages lie along the border with South Africa to exercise caution since cases of FMD had also been detected in Southern Africa's biggest economy.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Mr Nelson Ramaotwana informed the gathering that the Bail Act and the Magistrates Act would be amended to address the rising cases of livestock theft.

He stated that his ministry was aware of public concerns regarding the ease with which courts granted bail to accused persons, including repeat offenders, in livestock cases.

To address public concerns, Minister Ramaotwana stated that the Bail Act of 2024 was under review and considerations were currently on the table to

install tracking bracelets for individuals on bail to monitor their movements and curb repeat offending.

"If they send conspirators to steal livestock on their behalf, such conspirators will also be fitted with bracelets until there is no one of them left," Minister Ramaotwana said. Also, Mr Ramaotwana said that the Magistrates Act would be reviewed to allow for expedited trials of accused persons in livestock theft, saying the law in its current position prohibited holding accused persons behind bars for an extended period before sentence.

The amendment would ensure that magistrates were placed strategically in their grades to avoid delays in disposing cases.

BOPA

Minister for International Relations, Dr Phenyo Butale reminded Batswana, whose villages lie along the border with South Africa, to exercise caution since cases of FMD had been detected in that country.



From dependency to dignity: New path for Batswana

Lorato Gaofise
GABORONE

For many Batswana, government assistance has long been a lifeline in times of hardship. Now, a new national push is seeking to transform that lifeline into a launchpad that helps citizens build sustainable livelihoods and regain economic independence.

At the centre of this shift is the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA), a people-centred model that government says will empower communities to move beyond welfare support and into self-reliance.

Welcoming dignitaries during the National Dialogue on Sustainable Livelihoods Approach in Gaborone, on Tuesday, the Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Mr Kethhalefile Motshegwa described the approach as more than just policy, but about restoring dignity and unlocking potential.

"Communities must not only survive, they must thrive," he said, emphasising the need to equip citizens with practical skills, opportunities and support systems that enable them to stand on their own. The dialogue brought together voices from across Botswana, including government officials, development partners and community representatives from all 31 districts, each carrying stories of both struggle and resilience.

For many, the gathering was not just about policy discussions, but about finding real solutions to everyday challenges faced by ordinary people. From rural villages to urban centres, unemployment,

poverty and inequality continue to shape lives. The new approach, Minister Motshegwa said sought to change that narrative, by focusing on what people already had and building from there, being the skills, knowledge and local resources.

Under the SLA, he said communities would be supported to identify opportunities for income generation, strengthen local economies and reduce vulnerability to shocks such as droughts or economic downturns.

"It is a shift from short-term relief to long-term empowerment," he said. Already, the minister said 106 Trainers of Trainers had been prepared to take the vision into communities, 'working directly with families and local structures to turn ideas into action'.

Government, Mr Motshegwa said was also reforming village and ward development committees to ensure that developments were driven from the ground up.

Programmes like Ikageng, which have traditionally provided temporary relief, he said were now being aligned with the broader vision - offering not just work, but pathways to sustainable income and growth. The future of development in Botswana, the minister said lies in partnership, participation and possibility.

He, therefore, called on all stakeholders to work together to ensure the success of the initiative, urging participants to focus on practical solutions that would make a difference in people's lives.

"This is about giving people the tools to change their own stories," he added. **BOPA**

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Boarding schools expansion priority

Ministry of Child Welfare and Basic Education has started prioritising the expansion of oversubscribed schools through the construction of additional hostel blocks to alleviate congestion. This was said by Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education, Ms Nono Kgafela-Mokoka when responding to a parliamentary question on Tuesday. She indicated that several schools, including Chamabona, Nkange, Gumare and Motswakhumo had already benefited from the expansion initiative. Therefore, she said schools within the Boteti West Constituency were slated to be addressed under the same programme. Minister Kgafela-Mokoka further acknowledged that enrollment at several schools had surpassed intended limits, leading to significant overcrowding in learners' housing. She said boarding hostels had exceeded their carrying capacity, not only at Boteti West Junior Secondary School, but across several other junior secondary schools nationwide. The minister explained that the standard design for such facilities was intended to accommodate 96 pupils per hostel. However, she conceded that the current situation was a far cry from the standards the ministry strived to maintain. Member of Parliament for Boteti West, Mr Sam Digwa had asked the minister to update Parliament on the state of hostels at Boteti West JSS, arguing that the facility had exceeded its intended capacity by over 150 per cent. Mr Digwa challenged the ministry whether such conditions were considered acceptable and state steps that were being taken to arrest the dire situation.

Negotiations on zero tariff ongoing

Negotiations between Botswana and the United States remain ongoing as government seeks to secure a zero-tariff agreement on diamond exports. Answering a parliamentary question on behalf of the Minister of Minerals and Energy on Tuesday, Minister of Communications and Innovation, Mr David Tshere, confirmed that while a final deal had not yet been reached, Botswana had submitted its offer and requests and was currently awaiting a response. Minister Tshere further said the trade dispute from a Reciprocal Tariff Policy were introduced by the US in April 2025 and targeted countries perceived to maintain high trade imbalances. Initially, he said, Botswana was hit with a 37 per cent export tariff, adding that however, following interventions led by the President, that rate was successfully negotiated down to the current 15 per cent in August last year. "The current tariff remains at 15 per cent, while the negotiations with the US continue," he said. Member of Parliament for Kgatleng West, Dr Unity Dow had asked whether a zero-tariff agreement on rough diamonds had ever been reached with the United States of America, and if not, what the current tariff was.

Job data delayed until June

Minister of Labour and Home Affairs, Major General Pius Mokgware, has informed Parliament that specific statistics regarding job creation and potential losses since January 2025 are currently unavailable. Responding to a parliamentary question from Thamaga-Kumakwane Member of Parliament, Mr Palelo Motaosane, on Tuesday, Minister Mokgware however confirmed that government expected the detailed breakdown to be available by June. He explained that official employment data was provided at 12-month intervals by Statistics Botswana. "These figures are derived from the Botswana Multi-Topic Household Survey, which requires extensive processing before being released to the public," he said. He added that Statistics Botswana was currently in the process of analysing data collected from the survey conducted between November 2024 and November 2025. "Once this analysis is complete, the data must be disaggregated to provide a clear picture of employment trends across different sectors of the economy," he explained. Mr Motaosane had sought to establish the exact number of jobs created by government since the start of 2025 and to confirm whether the country had seen any job losses during the same period.

Ministry allocates P16m to support civil societies

Marvin Motlhabane
GABORONE

Ministry of Youth and Gender Affairs has, for the first time, allocated direct funding to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) that have long relied solely on external donors. The ministry, which has traditionally funded gender-based violence (GBV) shelters across the country, had now recognised the need to extend meaningful support to broader Civil Society Organisations working in gender and youth development. Presenting the ministry's budget estimates for the 2026/27 financial year recently, Minister Lesego Chombo said out of the proposed P686,649,970 recurrent budget and P5 million for the development budget, the ministry had earmarked P16,050,000 specifically for women's voluntary organisations.

Ms Chombo emphasised that the ministry had re-energised grassroots engagement, working closely with communities to foster a sense of responsibility, build local capacity and co-create sustainable solutions to eliminate GBV in all its forms.

"We continue to collaborate with local authorities, Dikgosi, the religious community and CSOs to transform harmful social norms that perpetuate violence," she said. The minister reiterated government's commitment to building a just, equitable and prosperous society where gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls served as foundational drivers of sustainable development, economic growth and national stability.

She noted that the gender portfolio was anchored on two key instruments, which included the National Policy on Gender and Development and the National Strategy Towards Ending Gender-Based Violence.

"Both are currently undergoing comprehensive review to ensure they remain relevant to today's challenges. Consultations are ongoing, with finalisation expected in August," she added. Ms Chombo further announced that Cabinet had approved the drafting of a transformative GBV legislation. She said preliminary stakeholder consultations had been completed and drafting instructions were submitted to the Attorney General's Chambers in February.

Despite significant progress, the minister acknowledged that GBV remained a persistent and devastating scourge in Botswana. Regarding the 2018 National Relationship Study, she revealed that 37 per cent of women and 21 per cent of men had experienced some form of violence at least once in their lifetime. In 2024, she said the Botswana Police Service recorded 31 975 cases of offences against the person, of which 10 747 were GBV-related.

"These included murder, rape, defilement of children under 18 and violence against children, including cases where parents murdered their own children. These trends are a sobering reminder that violence against women and girls continues to undermine the very fabric of our communities," she said. During the budget debate, Palapye MP and Minister of Water and Human Settlement, Mr Onnetse Ramogapi, supported the budget and called on all stakeholders to join the ministry in the fight against

the rising GBV cases across the country. However, Francistown West MP Mr Ignatius Moswaane raised concerns about other allocations under the ministry.

He argued that the P150 million budgeted for the Tirelo Sechaba Programme was insufficient

and should be reviewed. He also described the P120 million allocated to the Youth Development Fund (YDF) as too little, especially given that 60 per cent of Botswana's population consisted of youth, many of whom were unemployed. **BOPA**

Parliament approves P23.4 billion withdrawal from Consolidated Fund

Thato Mosinyi
GABORONE

Parliament has approved revenue appropriation of over P23.4 billion thus authorising government to withdraw funds from the consolidated fund for state expenditure to enable implementation of approved budget priorities.

Government funds include three main funds which are appropriated for, in order to ensure accountability and compliance with budgets and legal restrictions.

The Consolidated Fund, is the major fund established in the country's Constitution into which all government revenues or other monies raised or received for the purposes of government shall be paid and from which funds are appropriated to meet the expenditures for the purpose of government as authorised by the Constitution Appropriation Act and other acts of Parliament.

Presenting the proposals on Tuesday, Minister of Finance, Mr Ndaba Gaolathe indicated that the Development Fund (DF) and the Tertiary Education Development Fund (TEDF) were the main funds that were established to cater for development programmes and projects.

"The annual appropriations made from the consolidated fund into the two funds sought to authorise spending on the development programmes and projects and accountability of the same. The Development Fund (DF), established under Section 36 of the Public Finance Management Act and maintained as a separate account, was used for financing government projects for economic and social development," Mr Gaolathe said.

He explained that within the Development Fund, the Domestic Development Fund (DDF) was financed through domestic sources and excluded external sources of funding such as loans and grants. He said the TEDF was also a Special Fund set up with the purpose to meet the costs of establishment of the Medical School and its associated facilities as well as expansion of the University of Botswana (UB) and the establishment of the Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST).

Accordingly, he said the 2026/2027 revenue proposal was aimed to finance a total of P23.4 billion comprising appropriation of funds to the DDF to finance part of the total Development Expenditure amounting to P23.2 billion as projects under the TEDF amounting to P280.7 million. He said of the total Development Fund



Minister of Finance, Mr Ndaba Gaolathe said the P23.2 billion would enable implementation of approved budget priorities.

expenditure, P23.2 billion was proposed for appropriation from the Consolidated Fund Revenue to the DDF to finance part of the 2026/2027 development programmes while the balance would be financed through loans and development grants as well as direct receipts into the Development Fund.

He said P180.7 million of the TEDF was proposed for allocation to Sir Ketumile Masire Teaching Hospital with the funds earmarked for the procurement of essential medical equipment to support daily operations as well as for upgrading of information technology systems and software in order to improve efficiency in service delivery.

As a teaching hospital, he said the allocation directly advanced the strengthening of clinical training platforms, enhancing research capacity and improving the quality of health professionals.

Furthermore, Mr Gaolathe indicated that an amount of P50 million was proposed for the construction of student hostels through the Public Private Partnership (PPP) implementation model at BIUST. The funds, he said would also cover expansion of lecture rooms, thereby increasing teaching space, improving the learning environment and supporting higher enrolment in science and technology programmes.

He noted that in addition, a further allocation P50 million was proposed for UB, for the continuation of on-campus student accommodation for 630 students. **BOPA**

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MPs call for flexible YDF to boost businesses and job creation

Marvin Motlhabane
GABORONE

Members of Parliament have urged the Ministry of Youth and Gender Affairs to overhaul the Youth Development Fund (YDF) by shifting toward targeted funding for youth-led businesses rooted in personal passion and interests, as a key strategy for fostering sustainable enterprises. Debating the ministry's proposed budget for the 2026/27 financial year recently, Francistown South MP, Mr Wynter Mmolotsi emphasised that aligning financial support with young people's intrinsic motivations, whether in technology innovation, eco-friendly agriculture, creative arts, or community services, would create resilient businesses capable of driving economic growth, job creation and long-term environmental and social impact.

Mr Mmolotsi argued that the previous YDF model, dictated business types to beneficiaries, often forcing them into ventures they had no passion for. He noted that the majority of such businesses collapsed within three months, largely because the programme covered rental costs and left youth unable to sustain operations.

"The youth were set up for failure because they could not maintain businesses that were not born out of their own intellectual ingenuity," he said, adding that the revised YDF should grant young people greater flexibility to pursue their passions. He highlighted that today's youth were highly tech-savvy, with most of their ideas inspired by technology and urged the ministry to prioritise what the youth wanted to do. Mr Mmolotsi also questioned whether ministry staff had the necessary capacity to properly assess and screen business ideas for viability, warning that focusing on individuals posed significant challenges. He proposed increasing group sizes from four to at least 10 members and raising the funding ceiling from the previous P400,000 to at least P1 million per group.

That, he argued, would provide healthier start-up capital compared to the current P100,000 per individual and would help create more jobs while improving business survival rates, provided there was adequate market access. Francistown West MP, Mr Ignatius Moswaane described the YDF as a vital vehicle for job creation for Batswana.

He called on the ministry to channel more funds through its women empowerment programmes to support women-owned businesses, describing that as crucial in addressing rising cases of gender-based violence (GBV).

"Funding women's businesses will reduce financial dependence on men, which often causes friction in families," he said. Mr Moswaane opposed routing funds through Civil Society Organisations for women-centric programmes.

Instead, he advocated for direct funding for women to establish viable enterprises that created jobs and alleviated poverty.

Mmopane/Metsimotlhabane MP, Ms Helen Manyeneng stressed the importance of monitoring all funded youth businesses

beyond the initial grant to ensure sustainability. She said beneficiaries needed ongoing mentoring to overcome enterprise challenges. On the proposed youth centres across the country, Ms Manyeneng welcomed the initiative but recommended that they be located in strategic, accessible areas to effectively support unemployed youth in developing their business ideas. Regarding GBV, she urged the ministry to engage community elders for culturally relevant advice and redress.

Tswapong South MP, Dr Kesitegile Gobotswang called on the minister to advocate for women operating in the informal sector, many of whom faced legislative and regulatory barriers. He cited examples such as women trading in mopane worms, whose

businesses were often hampered by restrictions from the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. Dr Gobotswang also urged to protect the informal enterprises and ensure that they can operate optimally.

While supporting the revision of the YDF, Dr Gobotswang demanded clear timelines for its implementation, including target dates for the launch of One-Stop Service Centres for GBV.

He expressed concern over the under-utilisation of the recurrent budget, only 50 per cent spent in the previous financial year, and criticised the limited developmental budget, noting that youth challenges remained immense and required bolder investment to create meaningful opportunities.

Tati East MP, Mr Tlhabologo Furniture described youth unemployment as a serious and escalating concern.

He urged the ministry to intensify efforts to create job opportunities, noting the ministry's cross-cutting role should ensure equitable youth representation in government employment. He referenced recent Directorate of Public Service Management announcements on absorbing cleaners, gardeners, and night watchmen into permanent government positions, expressing concern that many others in similar categories would remain excluded.

Mr Furniture recalled the current administration's pledge to create 500 000 jobs in five years and questioned whether that target would be met on time, citing numerous

youth petitions to Parliament expressing dissatisfaction over unemployment.

Francistown East MP, Mr Tiroeane Ntsima supported the minister's proposals, noting that past government efforts funded youth outside the mainstream economy. He praised the ministry strategic intent to place youth at the heart of the economy.

He criticised previous approaches where youth were placed in programmes without budgeting for graduation or scaling their enterprises. Mr Ntsima called for youth-owned businesses to target larger and internationally competitive ventures rather than small-scale entities with limited economic impact, adding that youth, as today's leaders, deserve dignified job opportunities. **BOPA**



Minister for State President, Defence and Security, Mr Moeti Mohwasa (right) and Minister of Trade and Entrepreneurship, Mr Tiroeane Ntsima at Parliament. Mr Mohwasa said the insourcing programme, which commences on April 1, would be done in phases and that phase one would entail absorption of 490 temporary employees within the cleaning and gardening cadres.

Insourcing programme implementation starts April 1

GABORONE

The anticipated implementation process of the upcoming insourcing programme is scheduled to commence on April 1.

This was confirmed by Minister for State President, Defence and Security, Mr Moeti Mohwasa, responding to parliamentary question on Tuesday.

Minister Mohwasa said the insourcing programme would however, be done in phases and phase one would entail absorption of 490 temporary employees within the cleaning and gardening cadres.

The employees, he said, would be absorbed into the already existing permanent positions, which fell vacant across the Public Service.

He added that the vacancy rate included 249 cleaners, 178 night watchmen or gatekeepers and 63 gardeners or groundsmen.

Mr Mohwasa further said the second phase would entail absorption of the remaining employees engaged on temporary basis in the three areas and as and when their current contracts expired from May to July.

In addition, he said the last phase of insourcing process would focus on employment of employees who were working for

private companies, performing outsourced services in the same cadres effective August.

However, he said, a comprehensive compilation of all ongoing contracts was currently in progress as the data collection exercise aimed at determining the accurate number of affected workers was expected to be completed by end of April.

"To ensure transparency and fairness during the implementation exercise, the Directorate of Public Service Management (DPSM) has been tasked to develop recruitment guidelines, which would provide selection process to be followed in line with government policies and procedures," he said.

Moreover, he said DPSM would be monitoring recruitment process as implemented by Ministries, Department and Agencies (MDAs) and local authorities. Maun West legislator, Mr Goretse Kekgonegile, had asked the minister to brief Parliament on the implementation of the upcoming insourcing of security, cleaning and gardening services within the Public Service effective April 1.

Mr Kekgonegile also sought clarification on the target number of workers to be employed per category, the recruitment process in terms whether it would involve

open advertisement and former temporary workers, or target only current temporary workers.

He further wanted to know how the ministry would ensure

transparency and fairness within the recruitment process and again which ministries, local authorities and parastatals would be affected. **BOPA**



Serowe District Council chairperson Mr Atamelang Thaga (right) deliberating during a special council meeting convened to consider the 2026/2027 budget for the district's operations. Mr Thaga acknowledged the constrained allocation, urging councillors to remain mindful of the country's prevailing economic challenges. Photo: Baldwin Nyamande



Daily Business

Kgalagadi North Council unveils P173m budget

Thuso Kgakatsi
HUKUNTSI

The Chairperson of Kgalagadi North District Council, Mr Stephen Lekgobero, has presented a P173.1 million budget for the 2026/2027 financial year, marking the commencement of implementation for National Development Plan 12 (NDP 12) and District Development Plan 9 (DDP 9). Delivering the district budget speech, Mr Lekgobero noted that the financial plan comes at a time when the country was still recovering from prevailing economic pressures, calling for cautious and disciplined financial management.

“As we deliberate, let us remain mindful that the broader monetary environment remains uncertain. This calls for prudent financial management and disciplined expenditure control to ensure that the Council fulfills its mandate effectively,” he said.

He explained that the budget was guided by key principles, including addressing short-term national and district priorities, aligning with the long-term aspirations of Vision 2036, and remaining consistent with the Government of Botswana’s development agenda.

Mr Lekgobero highlighted that the previous financial year (2025/2026) was marked by significant fiscal and operational challenges.

“Among these were limited revenue streams, deteriorating infrastructure, overcrowded schools, rising demand for services, and increasing operational costs such as utilities, fuel, and fleet maintenance. The district also grappled with persistent

challenges in supporting destitute persons and a shortage of staff accommodation,” he said.

Despite these setbacks, he said the council remained committed to its priorities, including improving access to healthcare services, strengthening waste management, supporting vulnerable groups, expanding staff housing, reducing utility costs, enhancing revenue generation, and promoting corruption prevention.

The approved recurrent budget for 2026/2027 stands at P173,118,250, comprising a Revenue Support Grant of P170,951,466 and council-generated revenue of P2,166,780.

“This reflects an increase of P17.2 million from the previous year’s budget of P155.9 million,” he said. However, Mr Lekgobero cautioned that the increase was effectively offset by the adoption of the Primary Health Care Services payroll, effective April 1, 2026, which introduces 179 posts costing P36.3 million.

This adjustment results in a net decrease of over P21 million, reinforcing the need for strict cost containment measures.

“In terms of expenditure, Personnel Emoluments account got the largest share at 74 per cent (P128.5 million), followed by Special Expenses at 11 per cent (P19.8 million). Running Expenses make up 9 per cent (P14.8 million), while Establishment Expenses account for the remaining 6 per cent (P10.1 million),” he said.

He noted that the

departmental allocations show Primary Health Care Services receiving the largest share at P40 million (23 per cent), followed by Human Resource and Administration at P28.1 million (16 per cent).

Social and Community Development has been allocated P24.9 million, while Civic and Mechanical Engineering Services will receive P21 million. Mr Lekgobero noted that, other departments, including Finance, Council Management, Architecture and Building Services, Education, Development Planning, Public Health, and Legal Services, shared the remaining 35 per cent.

On the development budget, Mr Lekgobero noted that most proposed projects in the previous financial year were not funded due to fiscal constraints, except for the Ikageng programme. This, he said, had slowed progress on key development initiatives. “For the 2026/2027 financial year, the focus will be on completing ongoing projects.

A total of P47.6 million has been earmarked for

development, forming part of a broader five-year estimate of P338.6 million under NDP 12 for the district,” he said.

He said, the bulk of the development budget which accounts to 89 per cent and stood at P42.5 million would go towards social welfare programmes, including the Constituency Community Projects, Ikageng Programme, and construction of houses for destitute persons and Remote Area Development Programme (RADP) beneficiaries.

“Maintenance of primary schools will receive P3 million, while the remaining funds will be used for expanding kgotla offices in Monong, Ngwate, and Ncaang, as well as addressing classroom backlogs,” he said.

Mr Lekgobero also revealed that projects under the Development Manager Model remained on hold pending a government review.

In conclusion, he stressed that while the budget demonstrated the council’s commitment to service delivery, it also underscored the financial challenges ahead.

“This calls for discipline, innovation, and accountability in how we manage our resources.

Let us ensure that every Pula spent translates into tangible benefits for our communities while safeguarding against financial shocks,” he said.

He urged stakeholders to remain vigilant in implementing the budget and called on residents to pay for services rendered in order to enable the council to meet its financial obligations.

He added that ongoing reviews of development projects would help inform priorities during the midterm review of NDP 12 and DDP 9. **BOPA**

“As we deliberate, let us remain mindful that the broader monetary environment remains uncertain. This calls for prudent financial management and disciplined expenditure control to ensure that the council fulfills its mandate effectively.”

Kgalagadi North District Council chairperson, Mr Stephen Lekgobero (second right) and council secretary, Mr Masaoko Katorah during a special full council meeting in Hukuntsi recently. Mr Lekgobero told councillors that the P173 million budget was guided by key principles, including addressing short-term national and district priorities.

Photo: Thuso Kgakatsi



BUSINESS BRIEFS

Business forum strengthens ties

CONAKRY

Around 15 French companies participated in an economic and commercial forum that brought together Guinea and French companies aimed to strengthen bilateral cooperation. The Guinea-France business forum was also intended to formalise a partnership between the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts of Guinea (CCIAG) and the Aix-Marseille-Provence Chamber of Commerce and Industry, with the partnership focusing on technology transfer, increased French investment in Guinea and exchanges between the two countries’ business communities. Guinea Industry and Trade Minister Fatima Camara said Guinea was now asserting itself not only as a market, but also as a platform for production and growth. **Xinhua**

Duo to boost trade cooperation

ABIDJAN

Morocco’s senior trade official expressed the country’s willingness to strengthen trade cooperation with Cote d’Ivoire. Omar Hejira, Morocco’s secretary of state to the minister of industry and trade, said during a visit to the Cote d’Ivoire Export Agency that the two sides shared a common goal of boosting trade. The two sides agreed on several areas of cooperation, notably the establishment of an economic steering group bringing together public and private sector stakeholders from both countries. The identified sectors cover high-growth potential industries, including agro-industry, textiles, automotive, cosmetics and handicrafts. Morocco and Cote d’Ivoire have on several occasions reaffirmed their determination to consolidate and deepen their economic relations. **Xinhua**

Summit urges investment in climate

NAIROBI

The third Climate Change Global Business Summit on Africa kicked off in Nairobi-Kenya on Monday, with the East African nation calling on international investors to finance climate-smart agriculture to boost food security on the continent. The two-day summit, hosted by The European House-Ambrosetti, brought together global leaders, private sector players and investors to champion climate finance, environmental stewardship and a just transition. Kenya’s Cabinet Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development Mutahi Kagwe warned that failure to finance climate-smart agriculture in Africa could trigger far-reaching consequences for global food systems. Kagwe said that climate change was already dismantling traditional agricultural systems across Kenya, with extreme weather patterns now defining the country’s reality. **Xinhua**

Dikgang

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Kgosi Mbiganyi Letsholathebe wa Letsholathebe (molemeng) le Moatlhodi Mogolo wa pele wa Kgotla Kgolo ya ditsheko, Justice John Mosojane jaaka Kgosi a ne a begelwa morafe wa gagwe bosheng. Kgosi Letsholathebe o kopile tshwaragano le popagano ya morafe go tlabolola motse. Senepe: Goweditse Kome

Kgosi Kgwakgwe o a kgalema

Aobakwe Molefhi
DIGAWANA

Banni ba Digawana ba kgalemeletswe go batla go kgaoganya motse wa bone ka dikgang tsemi se kakeng tsa isa motse kwa pele.

Mo phuthengong ya kgotla ka Mosupologo, Kgosi Kefithile Kgwakgwe wa Digawana o kgadile a sa kgwe mathe batho ba a reng ba batla go rotloetsa semorafe mo motseng wa gagwe.

O buile se kwa phuthengong e a neng a e biditse, maikaelelo e le go lekodisa banni ka kago ya sepodise e e tseletseng kwa motseng oo.

Go le pele, banni bangwe ba kgotla ya Lorwana e e kafa tlase ga Digawana ba supile fa ba le sebete se molangwana ka leina la kago eo.

Ba supile fa ba sa dumalane le gore diofisi tseo di bidiwe Digawana Police station ka jaana di le mo kgotleng ya bone ya Lorwana.

Kgosi Kgwakgwe o ba tthaloseditse gore dikgotlana tsa Lorwana, Mogojogojo, Gopong ke tsa Digawana mme e bile di thusiwa fela sentle kwa Digawana, ka ditirelo tse di farologaneng.

A re fa ba ka tsewela ba diiwa ke dikgang tsa go lwela leina la kago eo, ba tlaa kgoreletsa ditlhabolola tsa motse wa bone.

"Re tshwanetse gore mo nakong ya gompiono re kabo re baakanyetsa pulo semmuso ya kago, mme rona jaanong re batla go diiwa ke dintwa tsa maina."

go diiwa ke dintwa tsa maina," ga buwa jalo Kgosi Kgwakgwe.

O boleletse morafe wa gagwe gore gotswa kwa kago eo e simolotseng go reriwa teng, e ne e ntse e bidiwa gotwe Digawana police, mme a supa fa a gakgamadiwa ke modumo o o tsositsweng ke batho bangwe mo nakong eno.

Mongwe wa batsena phuthengong Mme Kelebemang Tokonyane go tswa kwa kgotlaneng ya Gopong o supile fa morafe o batla go dira kang fa e seong teng.

O tthalositse gore leka nako ya kago eo e simolola, dikgotlana tsotlhe dine di emetswe, mme ga go

ise go nne le yoo ngongoreng le ntswa go ne go papamaditswe gore go simolodisiwa kago ya Digawana police.

Rre Ntoloki Ntshakisang ene o supile fa Lorwana a ise e re ka nako epe a bidiwe motse, a supa fa go g a k g a m a t s a ka gore banni ba Lorwana ba tsaya ditirelo tsotlhe fela mo kgotleng e tona ya Digawana.

Dibui tse dingwe kwa phuthengong eo di supile fa kago eo, e beilwe kwa kgotlaneng ya Lorwana ka gore gone go sena lefelo la kago mo Digawana.

Ba supile fa dikgotlana tse di akaretsang Gopong, Lorwana le Mogojogojo di wela kafa tlase ga kgotla e tona ya Digawana.

Bontsi jwa banni ba tthalositse fa gole botlhokwa gore go amogelwe fa Lorwana ele kgotlana ya Digawana fela jaaka tse dingwe.

Ba tladitse ka gore ga se phoso gore motse wa Digawana o bo o golela kwa kgotlaneng eo. **BOPA**

Maiteko a banni ba Letsholathebe aa itumedisisa

Goweditse Kome
LETSHOLATHEBE

Kgosi yo o sa tswang go tlhlongwa wa Letsholathebe o akgoletse morafe seabe sa one mo ntweng kgatlhanong le bolwetse jwa tlhako le molomo.

Kgosi Mbiganyi Letsholathebe o ntshitse kakgolo e ka Matlhatso kwa tirong ya go mo rola mo morafeng wa gagwe.

Kgosi Letsholathebe a re le fa a gorogile ka nako e e thata ya tlhagogo ya bolwetse jwa tlhako le molomo, o lebogela ka fa morafe wa gagwe o tshwereng ka thata ka teng mo go thuseng lefatshe go fenywa bolwetse jwa tlhako le molomo.

"Fa go ntse jaana go supa gore re a utlwa e bile re ya golo gongwe, mme fa re ka tsewela fela jalo, re sa emise tlhokomelo ya leruo la rona, re ka fenywa bolwetse jo," o ne a tshwaela jalo, a supa fa go ikitaya ka thupana ga banni le go tshetsa ditaalo tsa ba matlhoko a leruo go tiisa moko.

A re maiteko a banni a tlaa thusa lefatshe la Botswana go inoga mo dipharagobeng tsa bolwetse jwa tlhako le molomo ka bofelo.

O ba tthaloseditse fa kgomo e le khumo ya Motswana mme ba sa tshwanela go di tlogela di gobeya mo nageng. A supa fa go sa tlhokomeleng leruo go ka bakela barui tatlhegelo e kgolo bogolo jang fa go lebilwe seelo sa phimolo dikededi ya kgomo fa e bolawa fa e fitlhetswe e nale tlhako le molomo.

Kgosi Letsholathebe o lebogetse morafe go bo o bopile mophato o o baakanyang terata e e laolang matlhoko a leruo, a tthalosa fa se se tlaa thusa go laola tlhako le molomo le malwetse a mangwe

a leruo. Mo go tse dingwe, Kgosi o ne a kopa morafe go tsosolosa dikomiti tsa motse.

O ne a ithaopa go etelela pele komiti ya twantsho borokutlhi e a kaileng fa e tshwanetse ya tsosolosiwa ka bofelo le fa borokutlhi bo se kalo mo motseng oo. Fa a ama ntlha e nngwe, o ne a re motse wa Letsholathebe o rena ka tidimalo bosigo, selo se a boletseng fa se le molemo thata bogolo jang ka go sena mafelo a a sa letlelelwang a a rekisang majalwa a a itirelwang mo malwapeng.

Tebang le kagisano ya banni, o ne a ba kopa go ikaga le go itlwaetsa go rarabolola tlhoka-kutlwisanyo tsa bone ka kagiso ntle le go di isa fa pele ga bogosi.

"Fa o bona mongwe ka wena a sa dire sengwe sentle, mo lemotsheng gore tsela e a e tsamayang ga se yone, o seka wa mo tlogela a wela ka lemema a bo o tsoga o re o mmoleletse mme o ne o sa tsaya kgato," ga rialo Kgosi Letsholathebe.

E rile a ntsha molaetsa wa kgotlhatso, Mme Ludo Mosojane o ne a itse Kgosi Letsholathebe fa baagi ba motse oo ba beile mo go ene go tla ka tebelopele e e tlaa tlabololang motse wa bone.

O tthalositse fa Kgosi a gorogile ka nako e motse o ikgantshang ka barutegi ba le bantsi ba ba ka thusang go tokafatsa mananeo a gagwe a go fetola motse le gore ditore le megopolo ya gagwe ka motse di diragale.

Mogolwane wa makgotla a Setswana, Rre Samuel Siphithi o ne a tthalosa fa ba lebanwe ke dikgwetlho tsa dikgang tsa go lwela bogosi.

A re se, se ne sa baka gore lephata la makgotla a Setswana le dire

lenaneo la go simolola ka ngwaga wa 2018 go ya kwa go 2023 la go itebaganya le matshwenyego a neelano bogosi. O tthalositse fa maikaelelo a lenaneo le e ne e le gore lelwapa lengwe le lengwe la bogosi le dire tlhatlologano le neelano ya bogosi go itsa dikgotlhang tsa fa yo o mo setilong sa bogosi a se fologa ka mabaka ape fela.

Rre Siphithi o ne a rotloetsa Kgosi Letsholathebe go ikanya tirisano ya melao ya makgotla a Setswana le wa Bogosi Act le go ithuta mo go ba ba ntseng ba tshwere kgotla ba tsamaisa ditsheko ka a ka anywa go le go ntsi mo go bone.

"Go ya ka tsamaiso ya rona, dikgang tsotlhe tsa tetlanyo, di simolola mo makgotleng a Setswana ka go aga morafe e seng go ba sekisa," ga rialo Rre Siphithi. **BOPA**

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BPS autonomy to boost efficiency and accountability

Marving Motlhabane

GABORONE

Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Mr Nelson Ramaotwana has announced that the Botswana Prison Service will become an independent entity in the next financial year, a move aimed at boosting efficiency, accountability and focused resource management.

Presenting the Botswana Prison Service's budget proposals for the 2026/27 financial year in Parliament on Tuesday, Mr Ramaotwana also reviewed performance for 2025/26 and highlighted both achievements and persistent challenges, including overcrowding in the country's prisons. Minister Ramaotwana said BPS, established under the Prisons Act (Chapter 21:03) and recognised as a disciplined force under the Constitution, remained committed to providing safe custodial care, rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders.

"Botswana currently operates 22 prisons and one centre for illegal immigrants with a combined authorised capacity of 4 337 inmates. As of March 18, 2026 the actual prison population stood at 4 457, including two children accompanying their mothers, representing a 2.8 per cent overcrowding rate that continues to strain resources and hinder humane treatment and rehabilitation efforts," he said.

The minister also reported progress under the Prison Food Security Strategy, noting that between April 2025 and January 2026 they produced 110 906.2kg of vegetables valued at P1,280,969.95 for inmate rations. Additional harvests from the previous ploughing season, he said included 6 180kg of maize meal, 2 240kg of samp, 2 220kg of sorghum meal and 80kg of cowpeas, all processed and issued to prison kitchens. He added that vocational training and rehabilitation also recorded notable success, saying a total of 366 inmates were currently enrolled

in various programmes, with 73 already trade-tested and certified in dressmaking, welding and fabrication and air-conditioning and refrigeration. He said another 106 inmates were scheduled for testing at the Madirelo Training and Testing Centre in March and April.

He said reintegration efforts received a boost through 528 community-based reintegration committees across the country.

During the period under review, he said the committees supported 243 ex-offenders, of whom 176 were now gainfully employed while only eight re-offended and were re-admitted, with 10 ex-offenders further assisted with starter packages by the Anglican Diocese Botswana to launch small businesses in areas such as manicure and pedicure, carpentry, upholstery, brick moulding, vegetable production and tuck shops. On the financial front, Mr Ramaotwana said the 2025/26 recurrent budget allocation was P866,358,240, of which P829,073,134 (95.7 per cent) had been spent by March 17.

The development budget stood at P60,139,527, with only P15,212,793 (25.3 per cent) utilised, a performance the minister described as unsatisfactory, pledging improvement in the coming year.

He reiterated that key development projects completed or advanced during the year included electrical refurbishment at Boro Prison, replacement of farm fences at Mahalapye and Molepolole Prisons, installation of standby generators at Serowe Prison and the Divisional Command North Office in Francistown and procurement of three new vehicles. Ongoing works cover staff houses in Machaneng, Gaborone and Moshupa, as well as poultry houses at Lethakane. However, he maintained that several major initiatives including Public-Private Partnership projects, the Development Manager Model and the refurbishment of Gaborone Central Prison could not proceed due to financial constraints. The

minister indicated that the Prison Service would be requesting additional funds to implement the critical projects in the 2026/27 budget.

He said the proposed 2026/27 budget was expected to build on such foundations, with greater emphasis on infrastructure upgrades, expanded rehabilitation programmes and full operational independence to deliver safer and more effective correctional services. Debating the budget proposals, Serowe South MP, Mr Leepetswe Lesedi said the ministry budget was quite low, however he urged the minister to consider revamping the situation with Prison overcrowding, adding that staff welfare issues ought to be further reviewed for optimum delivery at workplaces.

He argued that security of prisoners and officers at prisons was equally concerning and urged the

minister to come up with ways of ensuring safety of all within prisons. Furthermore, he said prisons should be well resources with vehicles that were in good standard to carry out their daily mandate without any compromise. Kanye East MP, Mr Prince Mosanana argued that prisoners could be used to save funds for government and be trained to feed themselves through producing their own foods and possibly acquiring large farms to feed the country at large. He said once done right the prisoners could be empowered to start their own businesses beyond serving time in prisons as a step toward offender rehabilitation and reintegration into the society.

Mr Mosanana maintained that to reduce prisons overcrowding all other inmates with light offenses or petty crimes should be given lashes instead of being incarcerated.

MP for Mmadinare, Mr Kethlalefile Motshegwa said the country had serious issues of moral degeneration of which analysts viewed it as the main cause of crime. Therefore, he argued that Dikgosi should have a stake in establishing a moral code for the country to attain peace and tranquility. For rehabilitation and reintegration efforts, he urged the ministry to forge strategic ties with TVET programmes to hone the skills of prisoners and assist them to be empowered to do maintenance of public institutions and possibly help them to start meaningful businesses in future. Parliament, meanwhile, approved the requested budget on the 2026/2027 recurrent and development budget for the Ministry of Justice and Correctional Services at approximately P906,692,740 and P38,520,000 respectively. **BOPA**



Hundreds of Muslims gathered at Lekidi Football Ground in Gaborone recently, to perform special prayers for Eid al-Fitr, marking the end of the month-long dawn-to-dusk fasting of Ramadan. The event celebrated spiritual reflection, devotion and community, as worshippers came together to give thanks to Allah for the strength to complete the sacred observance. Photo: Courtesy of Monirul Bhuiyan/PRESS PHOTO

Danega to benefit from development programmes

GABORONE

Danega remote settlement will, following recent assessment, benefit from Ikageng Public Works Programme projects, Community Development Programme funding and will also be considered during the District Development Plan 9 mid-term review.

This was revealed by Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Mr Kethlalefile Motshegwa when responding to a question in Parliament on Tuesday. Minister Motshegwa acknowledged that the current living conditions in Danega were not ideal for both residents and service providers.

He acknowledged that Danega was declared a recognised settlement but did not yet have a fully-fledged primary school. He said while a satellite primary school had existed for some time, the settlement was officially recognised in August 2024.

He further acknowledged the current state of the school's infrastructure, adding that prior to the settlement's official recognition,

the community took initiative to construct a school using donated reeds.

He noted that to build upon the spirit of volunteerism, government engaged partners such as the First National Bank of Botswana, which donated a portacabin classroom to help alleviate the shortage of teaching space.

"The ministry continues to advocate for the maintenance and refurbishment of the existing structures as well as construction of permanent facilities under the Schools Backlog Eradication Programme," he said. He added that the district was further encouraged to use programmes such as Ikageng Public Works Programme and Constituency Community Projects (CCP) which had successfully supported schools such as Tsodilo, Xhaoga, Mkgacha and Eretsha primary schools while awaiting full funding.

Furthermore, Mr Motshegwa revealed that a profiling exercise was conducted on November 23, 2025 which revealed that Danega satellite school required to be relocated due

to flooding at the current site. He said a village expansion plan was underway including a basemap to demarcate a proper school plot.

In the interim, he said the school would continue to operate at its current location until relocation was completed. He said the school did not have an authorised establishment register typical of an established school as it was currently staffed entirely by temporary teachers and had no school head as it had not yet been officially granted full primary school status.

The minister thus informed Parliament that formal registration and the appointment of permanent staff could not be concluded while Danega remained an unrecognised settlement. However, he said the formal registration of the school was now actively in progress to rectify the situation.

He said there were accommodation challenges at Danega, adding that prior to the recognition of the settlement, permanent structures could not be developed. However, he said following the recent profiling

exercise, a development plan had been prepared, which included staff housing, a clinic, a school, a kgotla, access roads and water supply infrastructure.

In addition, Minister Motshegwa said funding would be explored through CCP, the Ikageng Public Works Programme, Private Sector Partnerships and the normal planning process as such developments were not initially catered for under National Development Plan 12.

He highlighted that service delivery was constrained by the absence of proper access roads which affected activities such as water bowing services. He highlighted that the ministry through council, Water Utilities Corporation (WUC), land board and relevant stakeholders were on the ground to expedite interim service provision while awaiting long-term infrastructure development.

Furthermore, he said two boreholes had been drilled in Danega through the CCP, one supported domestic animal use while the other was used for the

school garden and sanitation purposes.

Member of Parliament for Ngami, Mr Phillimon Aaron, had wanted to know if the minister was aware that Danega, which was a fully gazetted village, was still operating without a proper primary school and that the current satellite structure was made of boards and had some of the walls made of river reeds.

Additionally, MP Aaron had said the satellite school was ran by temporary teachers without a school head since it was not awarded the status of a primary school. The satellite school, he said had one accommodation house made of boards yet there were nine temporary teachers.

He said the nearest villages were Gumare and Nokaneng, which were about 20 kilometres away and were without gravel roads to connect them to Danega. Thus, he said the temporary teachers commuted to the school from neighbouring villages which was a challenge especially during rainy seasons. **BOPA**

Arts & Culture

Moreri champions support for divorcees

Lindi Morwaeng
MOGODITSHANE

The newly crowned Miss Millennium 2026, Leano Moreri has vowed to advocate for healing and support of divorced women, a cause deeply rooted in her personal experience.

The 42-year-old, Molepolole born said her initiative would focus on creating safe spaces for healing, while working with stakeholders to address the social and emotional challenges faced by divorced women.

“My project is inspired by my mother, who went through a difficult divorce 10 years ago and still, has not fully healed. She faces stigma from the society, something many

divorced women continue to endure in silence due to lack of support,” she said after she was crowned Miss Millennium 2026 on Saturday.

The 18th edition of Miss Millennium featured elderly women contestants of varied ages.

Phatsimo Ranjo followed closely as First Princess while Tshepiso Mphethe was named Second Princess.

Moreri said she would work with stakeholders to address the social and emotional challenges faced by divorced women.

Miss Millennium, a pageant established by a group of jazz enthusiasts, celebrates women aged 40 years and above and uniquely integrates beauty with purpose.

The winner is tasked with spearheading a community project, reinforcing the platform’s commitment to social responsibility.

Giving keynote remarks, Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Kethalefile Motshegwa, commended the organisers and sponsors for sustaining the initiative over the years.

He emphasised the importance of partnerships between government and community-driven platforms, noting that the pageant aligned with the ministry’s mandate

of uplifting vulnerable and marginalised groups.

“We are a ministry responsible for community and social development, including the welfare of vulnerable groups in society. I invite the organisers and contestants to explore areas where we can collaborate on impactful community projects,” he said.

Motshegwa also highlighted the growing significance of the creative sector, stressing that arts and entertainment must be recognised

as a key contributor to economic development.

“This is not just entertainment; it is an industry that needs to be resourced and supported,” he said, adding that government was keen to strengthen linkages between artists, industry players and development initiatives.

He further acknowledged contribution of the pageant’s pioneers for their dedication in nurturing a platform that blends culture, music and social advocacy. **BOPA**



Women of Jazz Ensemble entertaining during the finale.



Forty-two-year-old Leano Moreri of Molepolole was crowned Miss Millennium 2026 at Millennium Jazz Restaurant in Mogoditshane on Saturday. Phatsimo Ranjo snatched the First Princess position while Tshepiso Mphethe was named the Second Princess.



Some of the former Miss Millennium Queens parading before crowning of the pageant winner. Photos: Felicity Male

DailySport



Ticket Prices

GOLD STAND
Grandstand North with a clear view of the final lap of the 100m):

Day 1 – \$120
(approximately BWP1598)

Day 2 onwards – \$150
(approximately BWP1986)



Debswana World Athletics Relays title sponsor

Anastacia Sibanda
GABORONE

Debswana has been unveiled as World Athletics Relays title sponsor after announcing a P16 million funding. The financial support saw the event changing the name to Debswana World Athletics Relays Gaborone 26.

Debswana, the country's main player in diamond trade, has over the years, been the engine that drives the country's economy, enabling it to attain middle income economy.

Speaking at the sponsorship launch on Tuesday, Debswana chief executive officer Andrew Motsomi said through the partnership, Debswana aimed to utilise the platform to revive the diamond market.

Motsomi said the aim was to promote the natural diamond story to the world, highlighting the critical role diamonds played in transforming lives, supporting communities and driving sustainable economic growth in Botswana.

He said the partnership represented a powerful opportunity to amplify Debswana's global brand presence.

Motsomi said as the world turned its attention to Gaborone, the moment would be leveraged to tell the authentic and compelling story of natural diamonds, a story rooted in positive impact, sustainability and national development.

Furthermore, he said the sponsorship aligned with Debswana's broader brand and national storytelling objectives, particularly in advancing Botswana's visibility on the global stage and reinforcing the value proposition of natural diamonds in an evolving luxury market.

He said the World Athletics Relays were expected to attract approximately 1735 athletes and officials, alongside hundreds of technical personnel, volunteers and thousands of international visitors.

According to the World Relays, he said the event would deliver an unprecedented global exposure, with over one billion online impressions, coverage by more than 150 international broadcasters and participation from over 120 accredited international

journalists and photographers.

"The event programme will feature world-class relay competitions, including the men's and women's 4x100m, 4x400m, and mixed relay events and is expected to attract top athletes from around the world," he said.

Minister of Sport and Arts, Jacob Kelebeng said Debswana's extraordinary contribution was a bold expression of confidence in Botswana's future and in the transformative power of sport.

He said it reflected Debswana's longstanding commitment to national development, excellence and responsible partnership.

"It is a clear demonstration that when Botswana rises, we rise together. As a result of this landmark sponsorship, this global event will now proudly bear the Debswana name, an enduring symbol of our nation's resilience, ingenuity and progress," he said.

Kelebeng said the naming rights partnership firmly positioned Debswana at the centre of what promised to be one of the most successful relay events in the history of the competition.

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He said it also cements Debswana's lasting legacy in the advancement of sport and youth empowerment in the country.

"This partnership will have a far reaching impact. It will enable us to deliver an exceptional, world class experience for athletes, officials, spectators, and millions watching across the globe.

"It will support the enhancement of our facilities, amplify Botswana's visibility on the global stage, and open new doors for economic growth, sport tourism, and job creation," he said.

Beyond the competition itself, Kelebeng said the sponsorship gives Botswana a remarkable opportunity to tell the Botswana story, rich cultural heritage, extraordinary tourism landscape, and the inspirational journey of diamond industry.

"All these elements tied together, will paint a powerful portrait of who we are as a people: resilient, creative, welcoming, and ambitious," he said.

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Debswana CEO, Andrew Motsomi (left) and Minister of Sport and Arts, Jacob Kelebeng during World Athletics Relays Gaborone 26 sponsorship launch on Tuesday. Debswana announced a P16 million sponsorship for the competition. Motsomi said through the partnership, Debswana aimed to utilise the platform to revive the diamond market. Photo: Pheny Moalosi