

Kavango poison survivors on t

• JANA-MARI SMITH

THE two survivors of the poisoning that killed seven other children in the Kavango Region are out of danger, hospital officials said yesterday.

Dr Yuri Yangozov, medical supervisor at the Rundu Intermediate Hospital, yesterday said that eight-year-old Applonia Sikambo "looks like she is out of danger". He said although her liver took a beating from the yet unidentified toxin, the "immediate threat is over" and she is recovering at the Rundu hospital.

Ten-month-old Diyeve Makushe, the only one of the children who doctors say was in a stable condition when she was admitted to the Catholic Hospital in Andara last week, remains stable.

Doctors have noted that Makushe was exposed to only a minimal amount of the toxin, because she is still breast-feeding.

Sikambo and Makushe were among nine children from Kahanga village in the Mukwe Constituency, 180 kilometres east of Rundu, who suddenly fell ill on Monday a week ago. Seven died within the next five days.

Although it is not yet clear exactly how and when the children were poisoned, it is suspected that the poison was in their food.

The Ministry of Health and Social Services and the Police are investigating the source and type of poison. Doctors in the Kavango Region say these were not the first poisoning deaths in the area.

Yesterday, the Rundu hospital released the names of the dead children. They were Erwin Mukerenge (18), Tivi Cristian Marungu (5), Basilius Chrisangu Moyo (9), Helena Murere (2), Stefanus Ndunda Thikambo (12), Patrick Mbudhi Murere (8) and Sikambo Kasongo (8).

Dr Yangozov said so far the autopsies have only revealed that all the children died from acute liver failure. Samples taken from the bodies, as well as the water sources and food to which the children were exposed, are still being examined.

Nampa reported yesterday that Floris Smith, the manager of the Shadikongoro Irrigation Project in eastern Kavango, had dismissed reports that maize bought from the project was

linked to the poisonings.

Smith said the project does not sell maize seeds directly to the community.

Relatives of the children told reporters last week that the maize the children ate was allegedly bought directly from Shadikongoro.

The Police and a Government medical team visited the project last week to examine its fertilisers, insecticides and crops for any links to the poisonings.

Health and Social Services Minister Dr Richard Kamwi told a media conference that the children's symptoms included abdominal pain, vomiting and fainting.

Health officials also could not rule out the possibility that cassava might be the culprit, as literature

Smart partnership

Gianluca Massalini from Scintille, which means sparks, Elisabeth Shimbumburu Mungetli from the Grow Together Kindergarten and Frederick Mushampe and Memory van Rooi at the building site. The Grow Together Kindergarten in the Okahandja Park informal settlement was started in 2000 and has 25 children, including four orphans. In 2008 the Scintille organisation from Italy got involved with the kindergarten and helped financially as well as with the training of the owner, Elisabeth Shimbumburu Mungetli. In 2009 the plot was bought and now that the building plans have finally been approved, building has started. The total cost of the project is about N\$80 000. So far Scintille has raised the money for the first phase and construction will progress as funds become available.

Photo: Tanja Bause



NAC workers

• NICO SMIT

THE Namibia Airports Company (NAC) has issued a warning to disgruntled employees who have threatened to strike that such an action would be illegal.

The NAC and the Namibia Public Workers Union (Napwu) held a joint press conference last Saturday to express their position over threats of possible strike made by a group of employees last week.

Last Wednesday approximately 50 NAC employees stationed at Eros airport in Windhoek held a meeting where they elected an interim worker representative committee and discussed what path to follow on a number of outstanding issues.

These issues include the state of ongoing negotiations over a housing allowance, employee medical aid, a unilateral change to housing subsidies and overtime tariffs by NAC management, outstanding overtime back pay, and delay tactics by NAC management on wage and salary negotiations.

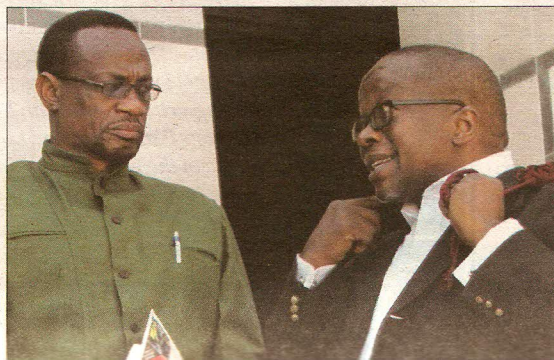
The disgruntled group

Jailed ex-NBC chief's appeal postponed

• WERNER MENGES

THE appeal which former Namibian Broadcasting Corporation director general Gerry Munyama has lodged against his seven-year prison sentence is now scheduled to be heard in the Supreme Court at the end of next week.

The hearing of the appeal, which was set to take place



Munyama made several withdrawals from the account and also deposited some of the money into his private bank account.

He was found to have misappropriated some N\$100 720 from the NBC in this process.

At the time, the NBC was experiencing serious financial difficulties.

Munyama's actions were