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Tuesday, April 1

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Lightning kills 4 family members

Midlands Bureau

FOUR members of the same family died last week, three of them on the spot, when they were struck by lightning in Chief Mukoka's area in Gokwe South, while herding cattle.

Acting provincial police spokesperson for Midlands Assistant Inspector Emmanuel Mahoko confirmed the incident, which occurred at around 3pm on Wednesday last week.

He said the fourth victim died on Good Friday at Kana Hospital where he had been admitted after sustaining serious injuries.

"On the fateful day, five members of the same family — aged between seven and 20 — were herding cattle in the village pastures when heavy rains started falling.

"A bolt of lightning suddenly struck them, killing three on the spot. Two others sustained serious injuries and were taken to Kana Hospital for treatment where one of them died two days later," he said.

Asst Insp Mahoko said the fifth person was still undergoing treatment in hospital.

He said a Gokwe magistrate waived the conducting of post-mortems since no foul play was suspected.

"Whenever it is raining, people should always remain indoors and avoid venturing outside.

"If they happen to be caught out, they should not seek shelter from under the tallest tree or be the tallest figure in an open area," he said.

In another unrelated incident, police said an 11-month-old baby in Chief Sayi's area in Gokwe South that was with its deaf and mute mother died after drinking suspected poison.

The incident happened at around 1pm.

"The baby was in the family's bedroom in the company of its deaf and mute mother when the incident happened. While there, the baby is said to have picked up a plastic container suspected to have contained a cotton pesticide and drank from it.

"The mother only realised this when it was too late. She rushed to her neighbours who came to investigate. By that time, froth was coming out of the baby's mouth.

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"They tried to render first aid, but it was all in vain and the child died soon afterwards. The body was ferried to Gokwe District Hospital mortuary for a post-mortem," he said.

"Members of the public or guardians are advised to always store pesticides or any harmful substances that they may be using in their homes out of the reach of children," said Asst Insp Mahoko.

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