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President Advocate Duma Boko officially launching the indigenous language news bulletins in Gaborone on Monday. The President said indigenous language inclusivity was important for upholding human rights, preserving cultural heritage and empowering communities by fostering identity, well-being and access to education and governance. Botswana Television and Radio Botswana now broadcast news bulletins in four more languages; iKalanga, Naro, Shekgalagari and Sheyei. Photo: Pheny Moalosi

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# Ghana officials call for visa-free Africa

GABORONE - Minister for State President has reaffirmed Botswana's support for a continent-wide visa-free regime.

Minister Moeti Mohwasa was welcoming a delegation from Ghana undertaking the ambitious Trans Africa Tourism and Unity Campaign.

The Ghanaian team, led by Mr Ras Mubarak, paid a courtesy call on Minister Mohwasa on Monday as part of their 40 000-kilometre, 39-country road journey, a Pan-African initiative advocating for seamless intra-African travel. Botswana was the 11<sup>th</sup> stopover for the campaign.

In his address, Minister Mohwasa applauded the delegation for a campaign he said captured the spirit of unity, resilience and the future envisioned for the continent.

“Your road journey across 39 African countries is no small feat. It is a demonstration of what is possible when Africans come together with shared purpose to break down borders, promote intra-African travel and advocate for a visa-free Africa,” the minister said.

He said Botswana applauded the mission to promote seamless intra-African tourism and advocate for a continental visa-free regime.

The objective, he said, aligned with the African Union's Agenda 2063, which aimed to facilitate the free movement of people, goods and services across the continent.

The minister also highlighted Botswana's strategic position in African tourism, particularly its leadership in sustainable tourism, wildlife conservation and stewardship of the Okavango Delta, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

“We see the tourism sector not only as a revenue generator but also as a powerful tool for people-to-people connectivity, youth empowerment and peacebuilding,” he added.

He further affirmed Botswana's openness to further exploring bilateral and multilateral pathways to enhance visa-free mobility.

The minister commended the delegation's leadership for their courage and unwavering belief in Africa's future, saying ‘Botswana stands with you in solidarity, in principle and in purpose.’

“Your visit is a reflection of the strategic and symbolic importance Botswana holds in this continental journey.

We are pleased that our values of stability, governance, environmental stewardship and economic inclusivity are resonant with the ideals your campaign espouses,” the minister said.

For his part, the head of delegation and former Member of Parliament for Kumbungu constituency, Mr Mubarak described the campaign, endorsed by the government of Ghana and countries including Angola, DRC and Gabon, as a testament of commitment to the Pan-African ideals.

“The objective of our campaign is to appeal to governments in our continent for the implementation of a V4, a visa-free policy for all African nationals,” he said.

He highlighted that a visa-free Africa, envisioned since the 1960s by African founding fathers like Kwame Nkrumah, would spur growth and create necessary jobs, especially in the tourism sectors.

Mr Mubarak urged African

governments to adopt the policy sooner than the African Union's 2063 vision, arguing that prolonged delays would deny opportunities to Africa's youthful population.

He also praised Botswana's efficiency, saying the delegation had a positive experience at the border, which took less than 45 minutes for passport stamping as compared to the four hours of waiting and bureaucratic bottlenecks they experienced in other countries.

The delegation also presented a letter addressed to the President, Advocate Duma Boko.

As they prepared to continue their journey to South Africa, Mr Mubarak commended Botswana's recent victory in the men's 4x4 relay at the World Championships in Tokyo, saying it was as an inspiring story to all.

Meanwhile, the 163-day epic journey began on August 18, traversing West, Central and Southern Africa.

From Accra, Ghana to Namibia and Botswana, the team has already been to 10 countries, including Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola.

The team arrived in Botswana on September 27 and departed yesterday. **BOPA**



Minister for State President, Mr Moeti Mohwasa (left) and lead campaigner for Trans Africa Tourism and Unity Campaign, Mr Ras Mubarak during a courtesy call in Gaborone on Monday. Mr Mohwasa commended the team for promoting the Trans Africa Tourism and Unity Campaign, a Pan-African initiative that celebrates unity, resilience, and a shared vision for the continent. The campaign's road journey will span 39 African countries. Photo: Phenyo Moalosi

## KSB, Medlane launch cataract surgery initiative

By Lesedi Thatayamodimo

GABORONE - In an act of community care and international solidarity, the Kerala Samajam Botswana (KSB) in collaboration with Medlane Clinic has launched a life-changing cataract surgery programme aimed at restoring the vision of elderly and visually impaired individuals in the Nata-Gweta constituency.

Speaking in a media brief recently, High Commissioner of India to Botswana, Mr Bharath

Kumar Kuthati said the cataract surgery initiative highlighted how partnerships between local communities, health institutions and well-wishers could make a tangible difference in the lives of the people.

“Cataract, as we all know, is one of the leading causes of preventable blindness and addressing it not only restores sight, but also restores dignity, independence and quality of life,” he said.

Nata Gweta MP, Mr Lawrence Ookeditse said he was pained by

the fact that in almost every village in his constituency, he encountered blind or partially blind or visually impaired people.

“A lot of them are elders, and were not given as much attention as they should and I made a promise that one of the first things that I am going to do, is ensure that we handle the whole issue of preventable blindness,” he said.

Mr Ookeditse who is also Assistant Minister of Health, explained that the eye operation meant that people would not only

be able to see, it rendered them economically productive and also improved their social life aspects.

“Being blind means that there has to be a caregiver who is constantly there 24 hours a day. In many instances, in these villages and settlements, you find that children of those that are virtually impaired cannot go out to find work, they basically depend on social security which is not given to them, but given to the victim,” he said.

Mr Ookeditse therefore, thanked all involved in the process, adding that he would like for it to expand to other constituencies.

He indicated that the initiative was expected to assist 50 families, with the screening of patients scheduled for October 4 to 5, followed by the surgeries on October 10 to 11.

Mr Ookeditse revealed that the surgeries would be performed here in Gaborone, at Medlane, a top-notch private clinic.

Furthermore, he said the clinic would take care of the travelling costs of patients from Nata/Gweta to Gaborone, accommodation as well as the after surgery care.

“Patients will also bring their personal care giver,” he said.

President of KSB, Mr Jofy Antony reflected on the organisation's long-standing commitment to charitable work saying, ‘over the years, we have carried out various charitable activities, we distributed food, clothes, toys, and sanitary pads to villages, but today's project is something very close to our heart, restoring the vision of those suffering from cataract.’

He said despite the distance, they were committed to reaching out, saying restoring someone's sight meant giving them the ability to live independently. **BOPA**



Assistant Minister of Health, Mr Lawrence Ookeditse (right), Kerala Samajam Botswana president, Mr Jofy Antony (left) and India High Commissioner, Mr Bharath Kumar Kuthati after a media briefing in Gaborone recently. Kerala Samajam Botswana and Medlane Clinic have launched a life-changing cataract surgery programme aimed at restoring the vision of the elderly and the visually impaired in the Nata/Gweta constituency. Photo: Thompson Keobaletswe



Acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti (right) having a moment with Kgosi Mutemo Mbambo of Shakawe during a consultative meeting with Tawana Land Board members in Maun recently. Dr Dikoloti urged land board members to introspect and change their practices to fulfil the ministry’s mandate of ensuring national food security and fostering sustainable land use. Photo: Esther Mmolai

## Dikoloti highlights critical role of land boards

By Esther Mmolai

MAUN - The effective delivery of land management hinges on good governance, transparent processes and responsive personnel that promote equity and sustainability, acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti has said.

Addressing members of the Tawana Land Board and its sub-land boards during a consultative meeting in Maun recently, Dr Dikoloti urged them to introspect and change their practices to fulfil the ministry’s mandate of ensuring national food security and fostering sustainable land use.

He said the ministry was currently overwhelmed with complaints regarding numerous inefficiencies in land allocation, particularly disturbing reports which involved citizens who applied for land 30 years ago still waiting, while others who applied within the last five years had already been allocated plots.

“Such reports are disturbing because one has to ask if the problem is the policy or the implementers,” he said.

He added that the slow pace of allocation was a major barrier as it prevented many Batswana from accessing essential socio-economic programmes for which land access was a prerequisite.

“It is time to take stock of yourselves and see if there is need to look into the entire land management system with the objective of addressing the stumbling blocks that exist,” he said.

On land as a key to national development, Dr Dikoloti highlighted the crucial role of land boards in achieving ambitious government goals.

He indicated that government was aiming to increase the agriculture sector’s contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from two per cent to a much higher six to 10 per cent.

The minister told members that achieving the target of growing the national herd to five million was fundamentally dependent on land, as more land provided the necessary grazing space for cattle.

He added that land boards must be seen to be actively contributing to government frameworks and initiatives, including the Bonno Housing programme and the National Development Plan 12.

He thus challenged them to accelerate their efforts in allocation, saying land provided the essential resources and space for survival and economic activity.

For his part, permanent secretary in the ministry, Mr Kabelo Ebineng, also emphasised

that good governance in land management was critical to accelerate allocation.

Mr Ebineng highlighted the need for better land administration to ensure fair and efficient allocation of plots.

He also advised board members to fully embrace the Public Service Charter, which emphasised accountability, transparency and integrity in service delivery.

Earlier, Tawana Land Board chairperson, Ms Reamogetse Yekenge, informed the minister that the main board managed six sub-land boards as well as the North West and Okavango districts, covering 58 villages under tribal territory.

Ms Yekenge said they also managed areas in state land, including 38 land concessions with 69 sites, some of which she said were in protected World Heritage sites. She stated that with more benefits coming from such concessions, the board currently experiencing a lot of challenges as more locals wanted to own sites in such prime areas. **BOPA**

# Govt embraces language diversity for national unity

By Ketshepile More

GABORONE - Botswana Television and Radio Botswana on September 29 started to broadcast news bulletins in four more indigenous languages; iKalanga, Naro, Shekgalagari and Sheyei, a progressive development that has been hailed for promoting inclusivity and national unity.

The milestone, was launched by President Advocate Duma Boko in Gaborone on the eve of Botswana’s 59<sup>th</sup> independence.

The President noted that indigenous language inclusivity was a crucial step toward sustainable and equitable development as it served as a vital tool for community empowerment and social cohesion.

Indigenous language inclusivity is important for upholding human rights, preserving cultural heritage and empowering communities by fostering identity, well-being and access to education and governance, he said adding that the introduction of the four languages was a start and such would give Batswana an opportunity to learn each other’s languages as well as heritages.

He said more languages would be introduced in the national broadcast and all languages should be equally recognised.

Additionally, he said the launch meant more job creation, with translators, linguists, producers and news anchors, among others.

President Boko said it was also important to introduce indigenous language in the curriculum for seamless and improved learning.

“Language inclusivity in education positively impacts indigenous students’ learning, engagement and overall well-being,” he said.

He said such a step could be

a turning point for Botswana’s human development as it would contribute to societal progress and decolonisation.

He added that language inclusivity was recognised as crucial for the socio-economic development of countries, something which was evident in developed economies such as China, who used their indigenous languages in their curriculum.

Furthermore, the President said indigenous people should have a sense of belonging as the rest of Batswana, particularly when they sang their National Anthem. He said they could only do so when their languages were recognised and acknowledged.

“The National Anthem embodies unity for all Batswana and by recognising each tribe’s language we are upholding what our National Anthem is symbolising,” said President Boko.

From now onwards, he said the National Anthem would bring a sense of pride to the indigenous people and would strengthen their sense of belonging, identity and self-worth as Batswana.

For his part, Minister for State President, Mr Moeti Mohwasa said the introduction of indigenous languages not only to the news bulletin was a fulfilment of government’s constitutional duty to reflect and serve the whole nation.

Mr Mohwasa said such a development was a nation-building of the highest order.

“We often speak of unity in the language, but unity is not a uniformity. Unity in Botswana must always be rooted in respect for difference. This development is a true promise of independence, in a country where every citizen is valued, respected and no voice is left behind,” he said. **BOPA**

# Afford Africa equal voice - Boko

By Keonee Majoto

NEW YORK - Until Africa gets a permanent seat in the United Nations (UN) Security Council, the organisation will continue to come across as lacking a sense of true inclusivity.

In his inaugural address of the UN General Assembly recently, President Advocate Duma Boko accused the UN of treating Africa indifferently and not being fully receptive of the continent’s voice.

“This United Nations cannot be truly international, it cannot be truly together, and will not be better until our continent, home to one fifth of the population of the world, is afforded an equal voice at the highest body of this organisation,” he said.

President Boko said it was time that the five permanent members of the Security Council; China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States of America delivered on their promise to

agree on a permanent seat for Africa, something that had never happened for the 80 years of the UN’s existence.

He called on member states to recommit to multilateralism, saying such would be in acknowledgement of the fact that no member could successfully weather the storms of today’s century alone.

The President was reflecting on the theme of this year’s general assembly session: Better Together: 80 years and More for Peace, Development and Human Rights.

“We are better together in combating pandemics, we are better together in adapting to climate change. We are better together in securing peace and better together in ensuring that human dignity is not a preserve of the few but the inheritance of all,” he said.

Concerning the Palestine-Israel conflict, President Boko appreciated countries that had given heightened attention and

consideration to the situation, among them Britain, Australia, Canada and France.

Echoing a call for peaceful resolution of conflict, the President said the carnage in Gaza ought to prick the collective conscience of all.

“We stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people in their pursuit of a home and of dignity. We urge all parties to stop the war and seek a peaceful resolution,” he said, as he also affirmed Botswana’s support for the sovereignty of Ukraine, a country similarly embroiled in conflict with its neighbour, Russia.

President Boko highlighted the importance of building resilience in communities and putting adaptation at the centre of sustainable development to address the devastating effects of climate change.

He thus called on the UN General Assembly to scale up financing for climate adaptation in order to enable countries to

invest in water infrastructure, early warning systems as well as in climate-smart agriculture.

On shortage of essential medicines that Botswana experienced in recent months, President Boko said the situation had not only exposed the vulnerabilities of the country’s supply chains but had shined a light on the wider inequities of the global health system.

“We call upon the UN, international financial institutions and the private sector to work with us to build resilient health systems. Together let us explore local production, regional supply hubs and fairer mechanisms to ensure that no nation is left to face health emergencies alone,” he noted.

President Boko also reaffirmed the country’s commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to advancing equality, including the protection of indigenous people, women and children. **BOPA**

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The long-awaited P210 million Tsabong Multi-species Abattoir project has reached its completion stage and was handed over to Ministry of Lands and Agriculture by IPS Botswana Construction Company recently. The project, which began in 2021, is expected to bring economic opportunities and diversification to the region. Photos: Naomi Leepile

# Multi-species abattoir complete

By Naomi Leepile

TSABONG - The long-awaited Tsabong Multi-species Abattoir has officially reached its completion stage, with IPS Botswana construction company handing over the project to the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture. The P210 million project, which began in 2021, is expected to bring significant economic opportunities and diversification to the region. Speaking during the project handover in Tsabong recently, the Director of Projects and Procurement at the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture, who was also the abattoir project engineer Mr Ofentse Kgaogano confirmed

the project’s readiness, stating it was now at a ‘plug and play stage.’ The facility is well-equipped and includes an admin block, clinic, canteen, slaughter hall, a rendering plant, mini conference room, chillers, livestock receiving block, a workshop, lavatories, portable water plant, and a waste water plant, he said. Mr Kgaogano also confirmed that most of the equipment has been commissioned, passed inspections, and currently undergoing training for staff. He expressed confidence that water and electricity are available, with a backup generator in place. The facility also plans to implement a solar system as a further backup.

Mr Kgaogano announced that the Botswana Meat Commission would be the main operator of the abattoir. Furthermore, markets for the meat have already been secured in Norway and Belgium. While the project has been handed over, Mr Kgaogano noted that a date for the official opening has not yet been

announced, but would be very soon. Stating the challenges, Mr Kgaogano noted that the project faced challenges during its construction, notably COVID-19 and shortage of steel, which had to be sourced from outside the country, leading to increased costs and delays. Despite this, the abattoir was

now complete and ready for its next phase. Mr Kgaogano urged the community to fully utilise the facility to ensure it benefitted them, by so doing avoiding it becoming a ‘white elephant’. He called on locals to support the abattoir by bringing their animals for slaughter. **BOPA**



Officials touring Tsabong Multi-species Abattoir during the project hand over recently. Director of Projects and Procurement at the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture, who was also the abattoir project engineer, Mr Ofentse Kgaogano said the facility was well-equipped and included among others a clinic, canteen, slaughter hall and mini conference room.

## Councillors hail proposed revenue collection initiatives

By Relief Lephutshi

MOSHUPA – Moshupa District Councillors have expressed gratitude over the council chairperson’s proposed initiatives towards improving their revenue generation. According to the council chairperson Mr Peter Sethibe, increasing revenue was a crucial part of his roadmap that could aid service delivery with ease. In his opening speech, Mr Sethibe said the proposed revenue maximisation committee was expected to ease revenue challenges. Responding to the chairperson’s speech during a full council recently, councillors expressed that revenue collection was not doing well hence yielded low income and further increasing the current financial struggles. Most of the councillors hailed the introduction of digital payment platform which was expected to be in use in the near future, thanking the chairperson for his tremendous work by forging partnership with network providers in this regard.

The councillors indicated that the move would enable residents to pay services from the comfort of their homes, thereby helping with the realisation to increasing revenue base. Councillor Godiraone Kgole of Ranaka welcomed the initiative further alluding that his constituents have finally found favour as it would alleviate them from unfavorable trips to obtain services hence saving them from the financial struggles and other discomforts. Councillors also suggested that it would be of high use to expand the network service usage through messaging the council debtors to improve on revenue collection communication. Some of the councillors proposed that Moshupa District Council should embark on a benchmarking visits from other councils that generated funds and ran business outside government aid. Concerning the proposed profiling of open spaces to be leased out to investors for purposes of revenue generation, Councillor

Benjamin Morokonyane of Lotlhakane West suggested that, the guideline procedures for the open spaces be devised in a way that would rule out any opportunities of fronting. Furthermore, he requested the council to come up with a structure to protect altering of such spaces in a way that might negatively affect the council. In addition, Moshupa councillors called for profiling of their natural resources that needed to be prioritised for high value goods. Such resources they said were inclusive of river sand, pit sand, gravel, concrete and others, suggesting that establishment costs of such natural assets be considered. They said such resources required urgent action, considering the rate at which they were obtained freely for own beneficiation especially by non-citizens. The councillors further added that it was crucial to ensure their protection as the community could lose on the value of such endowments on daily basis. **BOPA**



Mopalamente wa kgaolo ya Letlhakeng, Brigadier Domcaza Mokgwathi o kgothaditse setshaba go ithuta puo ya diatla e e dirisiwang ke ba-tlhoka kutlo. A re puso le ba-na-le-seabe botlhe ba tshwanetse go itsolopanya gore ba-tlhoka kutlo le ba-na-le-bogole botlhe ba bone ditlamelo le mananeo a a ka thusang go tokafatsa matshelo a bone. O buile jalo ka letsatsi la mafatshefatshe la ba-tlhoka kutlo kwa Letlhakeng bosheng.

# Lekalana le tlaa ruta puo ya diatla

## Ka Puseletso Kenyaditswe

LETLHAKENG - Botswana Society for the Deaf e dira botsalano le badirelapuso le makalana a a ikemetseng, ruta puo ya ba-tlhoka kutlo, maikaelelo e le go akaretsa ba-tlhoka kutlo.

Se se builwe ke mogolwane wa Botswana Society for the Deaf, Mme Orapeleng Mokgosi ka letsatsi la mafatsfatshe la ba-tlhoka kutlo bosheng kwa Letlhakeng.

Mme Mokgosi a re mo-na-le-bogole le ene fela jalo o na le ditshwanelo.

O tlhalositseseemo sa go tlhoka kutlo se ka se fetoge, ka jalo setshaba se tshwanetse se ba amogele ka fa ba ntse ka teng le go ithuta puo ya bone ya diatla.

A re go itse puo ya diatla go tlaa thusa gore ba-tlhoka kutlo ba thusiwe sentle ka jalo ba kgone go akola mananeo le ditirelo tse dingwe tsa puso jaaka mongwe le mongwe.

Mme Mokgosi a re go tlhoka go itse puo ya diatla ke go rontsha ba-tlhoka kutlo tshwanelo ya bone, a supa fa ba tshwanetse go bona ditlamelo tsotlhe le tsa botsogo tota ntle le kgoreletsego

a supa fa go ka ba itumedisa go bona motlhoka kutlo a thusiwa ntle le thuso ya moranodi.

Mopalamente wa Letlhakeng, Brigadier Domcaza Mokgwathi, a re go le gantsi ba-tlhoka kutlo ba amiwa thata ke lehuma kgotsa kgethololo, ka ba bua puo e sa tlhologanngweng ke bontsi ka jalo ba kgoreletsego go bona metswedi ya go itsketsa.

Ka jalo, Brigadier Mokgwathi a re puso le ba-na-le-seabe botlhe ba tshwanetse go itsolopanya gore ba-tlhoka kutlo le ba-na-le-bogole botlhe ka kakaretso ba bona ditlamelo le mananeo a a ka thusang go tokafatsa matshelo a bone.

A re tumalano ya mafatshe ya ditshwanelo tsa ba-na-le-bogole e gatelela botlhokwa jwa puo ya diatla, ka jalo tsamaiso ya thuto e tshwanetse ya akaretsa botlhe.

Brigadier Mokgwathi a re puso e rekegela ditshwanelo le matshelo a batho ka kakaretso, ka jalo maiteko a tsweletse ka go dira go tokafatsa seemo sa ba ba lebegang ba saletse morago kana ba beilweng ka fa mahuring go akaretsa ba-tlhoka kutlo.

O ba file tsholofelo ya gore puso e tsweletse ka go lemoga pharologanyo mo matshelong a

batho, maikaelelo e le gore botlhe ba tshwarwe ka go lekalekana.

Brigadier Mokgwathi a re go kokoana jalo, ga se fela go ipelela letsatsi leo, ke go sedimosa tse di tlhokwang ke batlhoka kutlo le maiteko a a dirwang go ba thusa le go bua ka ditshwanelo tsa bone le go tlhomamisa gore di a diragadiwa.

A re dilelo tsa bone ga se tsa batho ba iphetlhela puso ka gole boamaruri gore ba ntse ba ithokomolositswe, mme seo se tsisa dikakanyo tsa gore ga se batho ba sepe mo setshabeng.

A re matshwenyego a magolo a ba-tlhoka kutlo ke gore melaetsa ga e goroge ka nako kwa go bone, ka puo ya bone ya go dirisa diatla e sa tlhologanngwe ke bontsi, ka jalo gonne thata gore ba thusiwe sentle le gone ka nako.

Le fa go ntse jalo, mekgatlho e e ikemetseng e tsweletse ka go dira maiteko a gore setshaba le botlhe ba ba romilweng go isa ditirelo kwa setshabeng, ba itse fa ba direla tshaba e farologanyeng ka puo, jaak gona le ba-tlhoka kutlo ba ba dirisang puo ya diatla.

Letsatsi leo, le ne le tshwerwe ka setlhogo se se reng: Ga Gona Ditshwanelo tsa Setho Ntle le Puo ya Diatla.”BOPA

## Kgotla ya Magapatona e tthatlosiwa maemo

### Ka Tebogo Masuruke

TUTUME - Puso e tsere tshwetso ya go tthatlosa maemo kgotla ya Magapatona kwa Tutume go nna nngwe ya tse letlelwang go pega folaga.

Seo se senogileng kwa moletlong wa go tthatlosa kgotla eo maemo bosheng.

Kgosi wa pele wa Tatitown, Mme Ludo Mosojane a re go botlhokwa go tsosolosa serodumo sa dikgotla tsa Setswana.

“Kgosi ke setlhare se se tshwanetseng sa nna le dikala mme morafe wa akola go nna mo meriting wa sone,” Kgosi Mosojane a tthalosa.

Le fa dikgosi e le botshabelo, a re di hupediwa ke dikgwetlho tse di okameng morafe jaaka tiriso ditagi e e golelang pele mo bananeng le kgokgontsho ya bong. A re matshwenyego a, a tlhoka go lwantshiwa ka tshwaragano ya morafe le Kgosi.

Mme Mosojane a re pele ga go tlhongwa lekalana la sepodisi, morafe o ne o laolwa ke molao wa makgotla a Setswana, go rena kagiso le tlotlo.

Fa a itebaganya le Kgosi ya Magapatona, Kgosi Abel Jenamo, a supa gore boeteledipele bo na le dikgwetlho. A re fa sengwe se sa tsamaye sentle mo motseng, menwana e supa Kgosi.E rile a fa tshedimoso ya mosepele wa go godisa kgotla eo maemo, Rre Elvis Chizhala a re kgang e simolotse

ka ngwaga wa 2001 ba kopa puso go re kgotla ya Magapatona e nne motse, e seka ya nna kgotla e ka fa tlase ga Tutume.

Rre Chizhala a re seo ba ne ba dira jalo ba lebile go re tlhologo ya kgotla eo e ne e le motse.

A re puso e ne ya tsholola kopo ya bone morago ga go ba tshepisa, ka jalo ba ile ba tsaya tshwetso ya go sekisa puso.

O boletse fa ba ile ba fenyatsheko ya go tthatlosa kgotla maemo le gore e nne e e pegang folaga mme ya go e godisa go nna motse ya pala, mabaka e le gore ke kgotla e e mo motseng e ka se tlhomiwe motse gape.

A re le fa go tseere nako go diragatsa se se neng se laetswe ke lekgotla la ditsheko, ba leboga puso go diragatsa dikeletso tsa banni ba kgotla ya Magapatona.

Mo mafokong a go amogela baeng, Kgosi Jenamo o ne a leboga kgosi yo o tlogetseng tiro ka bogodi, Kgosi Mphilo Magapatona go nna le tebelelopele a sedimosetsa morafe ka seemo sa kgotla eo.

Kgosi Jenamo a re Kgosi Magapatona o supile bopelokgale jwa go lwela morafe wa gagwe go fitlhelela kgotla e tthatlosiwa maemo.

A re kgotla ke lefelo le go rerwang dikgang tsa motse le go thusana go lwantsha dikgwetlho ba tshwaragane ka lorato le ka tlotlo, go aga morafe le go godisa serodumo sa Kgotla.**BOPA**



Monni wa Serowe, Rre Dintle Seanego a apere mebala ya Botswana go supa mowa wa lerato le popagano ya setshaba kwa ipelelong dingwaga tse di masome matlhano le boroba bongwe jwa boipuso kwa Serowe ka Labobedi. Banni ba ne ba kgobokanetse kwa kgotleng kgolo go ipelela boipuso. Senepe: Keith Ketl

# Celebrating 59<sup>Years</sup> of Independence

Thursday October 2, 2025 No. 182

## Independence celebration joyous occasion for all

By Chendzimu Manyepedza

**SELEBI PHIKWE** - As the country celebrated 59<sup>th</sup> independence anniversary, a palpable sense of joy and pride enveloped communities across the nation.

This milestone is not merely a date on the calendar; it serves as a reminder of resilience, unity, and the shared journey of a people determined to forge their destiny.

Among those who marked this momentous occasion included refugees who arrived in Botswana in 1979, and now wholeheartedly embrace the spirit of independence and community.

They celebrate not only the nation's progress but also their own remarkable journeys toward integration and belonging within the rich tapestry of Botswana's diverse society.

The story of 72-year-old Mr John Yanamalha offers an insight into the depth of this sense of belonging.

His journey reflects the intertwining threads of unity and consultation that the nation's leaders had cultivated over the years, crafting a narrative that welcomes refugees as vital contributors to the fabric of the country.

Recalling the tumultuous times

of his youth, Mr Yanamalha shares the harrowing experience of fleeing his war-torn homeland of Angola.

At just 18, the deafening clamour of gunfire shattered his childhood, forcing him to abandon the familiar comforts of home and leave behind beloved friends and family.

His heart-wrenching trek across treacherous paths ultimately brought him to the warm embrace of Botswana, a land that would become a sanctuary.

Upon arrival as a refugee, Mr Yanamalha was deeply moved by the unparalleled kindness extended to him.

In a nation grappling with its own challenges, he felt a sense of welcome that was strikingly sincere.

"I was never seen as a stranger," he reflected.

"Instead, I was enveloped with love.

The deep sense of unity among communities made it possible for me to settle after being released from Dukwi camp in 1981 and to begin rebuilding my life."

He speaks with admiration of the spirit of solidarity that characterised Batswana back then, a spirit rooted in open conversation and a collaborative approach to restoring lives.

This foundation became the cornerstone of various societies, paving the way for the successful integration of refugees into the community.

Mr Yanamalha also emphasises that the collaborative efforts of government officials and traditional leaders played a crucial role in providing refugees

with access to vital resources such as education, healthcare, and opportunities for economic participation.

He says through these collective endeavours, the nation has not only welcomed him but made him feel no doubts about choosing Botswana as his second home.

Since then, he has married, built a home in Selebi Phikwe, and is proud to have served as a driver for the Selebi Phikwe Town Council, a job he diligently performed until his retirement.

Mr Yanamalha expresses that while the country successfully cultivated a strong ethos for a long time, one he has had the opportunity to witness, he is concerned that these values are slowly fading.

This decline has left some communities and individuals feeling disconnected from their societal roots, which he noted has contributed to rising social issues that have become challenging to address. **BOPA**

## Lobatse resident recalls Botswana journey

By Calviniah Kgautlhe

**LOBATSE** - On Tuesday, September 30, scores of members of the public adorned in Botswana colours gathered at various wards in Lobatse for the 59<sup>th</sup> Independence celebrations through a spectacle of cultural heritage activities to celebrate Botswana's history and sovereignty.

The festivities included traditional and contemporary musical renditions, fashion, traditional food and poetry.

The 86 year old elder, Mr Joseph Bakwena was amongst those in a celebratory mood at Peleng Ward.

For him, the day brought back memories when the British established the Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1885 to counter

the threats of German and Boer expansion and to secure trade routes to Zimbabwe and the Zambezi River.

Mr Bakwena recalled that during the colonial era, the British had placed a white district commissioner in Lobatse who lived at Boswelatlou Ward to look out for their interests running the state of national affairs.

He recalled a jubilation that ensued on the eve of independence in 1966 as they gathered at the kgotla where the Union Jack was lowered down and folded and the national blue, black and white flag was hoisted high as a herald of a new dawn.

At the same time, a melodic composition of national anthem; *Fatshe Leno La Rona* by the late

Kgalemang Motsete was sung with pride for the first time.

He recalled that during the colonial era civil liberties were limited adding that people were not permitted to commune in numbers and to also pray freely, "you had to pray according to how the chiefs wanted, when you go against this you were thrown into jail without trial. I am happy that after independence we became free to worship anyhow we wanted," he said.

Additionally, Mr Bakwena further recalled that the first 3km tarred road stretch from the railway to the Old Legislative Council was built in Lobatse to be used by the British when they visited Botswana adding that they saw this as cutting edge infrastructure development.

"Our transport at the time was donkeys and cows then later horses, we had no vehicles," he said.

As part of the Tuesday itinerary, the public listened to a message from President Advocate Duma Boko delivered by Lobatse District Commissioner Mr Mpho Mathe who encouraged all to unite as a nation for the betterment of the country.

Lobatse Mayor, Mr Aron Ganakgomo buttressed the need for all to live the ideals of Botswana's democratic ethos as espoused in the national anthem; *Fatshe Leno La Rona*.

He emphasised the need to build a strong nation, noting the importance of solid family structures, which would in turn be reflected through a prosperous nation.

He added that preserving peace and security was paramount, as such Batswana must continue to cultivate tenets of democracy.

Peleng Court President Kgosi Tebogo Kemoabe said Independence Day provided Batswana the opportunity to come together and celebrate.

She appreciated Lobatse MP, Mr Kamal Jacobs for his generous donation of 12 cows across the wards in Lobatse, which she said was a noble gesture which all must emulate. **BOPA**



*From a journey of resilience to a life of belonging, Mr John Yanamalha (right) and wife Segametsi, celebrate not just Botswana's 59<sup>th</sup> independence anniversary, but the unity and kindness that the community welcomed him home with.* Photo: Chendzimu Manyepedza



*Lobatse residents gathered at various wards to celebrate Botswana's 59<sup>th</sup> Independence Day on Tuesday. They thanked area MP, Mr Kamal Jacobs for providing 12 cattle for the celebrations.* Photo: Calviniah Kgautlhe

## Boko urges unity to safeguard peace, harmony

By Kamogelo Matlala

**GABORONE** - President Advocate Duma Boko has encouraged Batswana to embrace unity and cooperation in order to safeguard and foster peace and harmony.

In his national address to mark Botswana's 59<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Independence on Tuesday, the President further called on Batswana to be patriotic, reflective and forward-looking.

"This is a day of reflection, as we remember those who came before us and how impactful their contributions were," he said.

President Boko said for the first time in the country's

history, celebrations were held under a government led by the Umbrella for Democratic Change, a coalition of political parties working together to better Botswana after 58 years of single party dominance.

"It is through togetherness that we will overcome any and all issues facing our country, large or small. It is through togetherness that the African continent will heal and grow," he said.

The President also lauded a quartet of athletes for clinching a Gold medal, making Botswana the first African nation to win the men's title in the 4x400 metres relay at the World Athletics Championships. **BOPA**

## Kite culture takes flight, brings tradition to world

JINAN - A golden dragon twists through the blue sky, a rainbow phoenix spreads its vibrant wings, and a string of tiny swallow kites flutter in the breeze.

On the vast lawn of a kite park in Weifang, east China's Shandong Province, known as the 'World Capital of Kites', the air is alive with colour and motion.

More than 2 400 years ago, the world's first kite took off from here. As the cradle of kite-making, Weifang is renowned for its long-standing kite culture and exquisite craftsmanship.

Local records show that the city has been making kites for over two millennia. After Cai Lun invented papermaking in the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220), paper kites began to appear among the people.

In modern times, Weifang has gained fame both at home and abroad for its distinctive kites, noted for their sound structure, bright colours, stable flight, and strong folk flavor.

In 2006, Weifang kite-making was inscribed on China's first list of national intangible cultural heritage.

"Making a kite requires 36 procedures, divided into four major techniques, framework making, mounting, painting and flying, each interdependent and closely linked," said Yang Hongwei, a national-level inheritor of the craft.

Born into a kite-making family, Yang apprenticed under her grandfather in 1982 and has honed the skill for over 40 years, creating everything from giant kites 300 meters long to micro kites with a diameter of just two centimeters.

"Making kites may look easy, but it takes repeating each step day after day, and learning new things in the process," Yang said.

In recent years, she has devoted herself to passing on the craft, offering kite-making classes in schools, and training over 20 000 primary and middle school pupils. Attention to detail is a hallmark of Weifang's kite masters. Wang Yongxun, a city-level inheritor and vice chairman of the Chinese Kite Association, said he selects bamboo aged between two and three years for the kite frame for its strength and flexibility.

While kites were once mounted with rice paper or silk, which are difficult to preserve, he has developed a custom-blended fabric that is lightweight, economical and colourfast.

He has visited more than 40 countries and regions to showcase Weifang's kite-making skills, working to take this calling card of the city to the world.

Today, combining traditional craftsmanship with modern

science and technology, Weifang continues to create innovative kite designs. In a local kite factory in Wangjiazhuangzi, Weifang City, dozens of workers are busy filling orders for dragon, eagle, butterfly, and swallow kites bound for countries including the United States, France and Saudi Arabia.

The village is home to more than 200 kite enterprises, generating over ¥300 million (about US\$42.16 million) in annual sales.

More than half of its 4 700 residents work in the industry, making it the largest kite

processing and export base in the city. Across Weifang, over 600 kite companies employ approximately 80 000 people, with annual sales exceeding ¥2 billion and products sold to more than 50 countries and regions.

Each spring, kite enthusiasts from around the world flock to Weifang. In April, the 42<sup>nd</sup> International Kite Festival in Anqiu, Weifang, attracted 257 kite teams from 51 countries and regions, including Italy, Portugal, Brazil, Russia and Belgium.

More than 2 000 colourful kites drew tens of thousands of visitors

from home and abroad to enjoy the spectacle.

With its deep cultural roots and spirit of innovation, the festival has been held for over 40 years, making it one of China's longest-running international events since the start of the reform and opening-up era.

"China and the Republic of Korea (ROK) have a long history of friendship. Coming to Weifang this time, I'm pleasantly surprised to see how fast China has developed. In words like 'flying dreams,' I can feel China's openness to the world," said a

visitor from the ROK.

Weifang's 'kite wings' have already swept across the skylines of every continent.

Since last year, delegations have visited countries including France, Germany, Italy, Hungary and Slovakia to promote kite culture through flying events, exhibitions and other activities, creating new opportunities for international cooperation.

"Kites are an art that crosses cultures, borders and languages," said Hans Peter Boehme, vice president of the International Kite Federation. **Xinhua**



**Ratang Centre director, Pearl Dube (left), Miss Botswana director, Benjamin Raletsatsi (second left), Miss Botswana 2025, Ruth Thomas (centre), Kgosi Saki Gabanamotse of Hatsalatladi (second right) and Project 124 executive director, Goitsewang Khutsafalo at the launch of the Beauty with a Purpose project in Gaborone recently. The initiative titled: The Beauty Movement seeks to teach children the value of self-acceptance while supporting women in prison, survivors of rape, women with skin conditions, as well as those permanently scarred by accidents to rediscover their worth and inner strength. Photo: Teko Letsholo**

## Thomas unveils project

By Benita Magopane

GABORONE - Miss Botswana, Ruth Thomas, has officially unveiled her Beauty With a Purpose project, titled: The Beauty Movement.

As she prepares to represent Botswana at the 73<sup>rd</sup> Miss World, the reigning queen's initiative aims to teach children the importance of self-acceptance and to support women in prison, survivors of rape, women with skin conditions and those permanently scarred by

accidents in rediscovering their worth and inner power.

"Beauty is in all of us and we are more than what we look like," said Thomas, emphasising that her goal is to help those who feel vulnerable appreciate life and recognise that they are special. Each of us has our own unique fingerprints.

Imagine how many billions of people exist in the world, yet there is only one you.

That's the power of individuality," she added.

The Beauty Movement will

be launched in Hatsalatladi, a location symbolic of Thomas's vision, as the area has for decades experienced severe ground fissuring, leaving the land deeply scarred, mirroring the resilience and healing.

The initiative will see Thomas collaborate with Project 124 Africa, a project-based learning and opportunities platform for entrepreneurs, over the next three months, as well as Ratong Centre, a Non-Governmental Organisation that provides a safe space for women who have

experienced trauma and equips them with sustainable skills.

Executive Director of Project 124 Africa, Goitsewang Khutsafalo, expressed confidence in investing resources into the initiative, noting that it aligned with the company's mandate of empowering women.

He further highlighted that the project had the potential to play a critical role in the fight against gender-based violence by restoring the lost self-confidence of many women. **BOPA**



*Botswana Athletics Association acting president, Oabona Theetso said the women relay should be given more attention, adding that time was now to redeem the girl child come 2026 World Athletics Relays.*

Oabona Theetso

## World relays gain traction

By Anastacia Sibanda

GABORONE - The World Athletics Relays, set to be hosted in May, are rapidly gaining traction, especially after Botswana's recent success.

With the men's 4×400 metres relay team having won gold at the last World Athletics Championships, the focus is now squarely on Botswana to deliver a seamless event.

The Local Organising Committee (LOC) is rising to the task, determined to ensure the first-ever hosting of the event on African soil is a major success.

In an interview, Botswana Athletics Association (BAA) acting president, Oabona Theetso, said they had a broader strategy for the home games.

The association's primary goal is to expand beyond the 4×400m men's relay, field athletes in all events with fierce competition.

"Of recent, the country has been relying almost solely on the men's 4×400m relay and the burden is beginning to outweigh the team," Theetso said.

By fielding other competitive teams, he explained, they also aimed to give more athletes a chance to shine.

He highlighted the need to focus on women's relays, stating that time was now to redeem the girl child come next year.

"We can field them in the mixed relays. This time there will be mixed 4×100m and 4×400m, which are good relays that can help our girl child," he added.

He was also confident that preparing all the teams would allow them to benefit from the crucial home-ground vantage point.

So far, 17 nations have already secured their spots for the World Athletics Relays by making it to the finals of the World Athletics Championships.

The USA has qualified in all relay events, followed by The Netherlands with three teams.

Taking a closer look at the home team, the country is looking to its core group of athletes, including 4×400m gold-medal-winning team members like Collen Kebinatshipi and Letsile Tebogo, to inspire and anchor the expanded squad.

Looking at the already qualified nations, the world's relay powerhouses are expected to give fierce battles for medals.

The USA is the overall relay powerhouse, having qualified in all five

events and often fielding multiple world-class sprinters across their squads.

In the women's relays, athletes like Sha'Carri Richardson (4×100m) and Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone (4×400m) headline teams that are heavy favourites.

In the mixed 4×400m, the USA also hold the world lead and championship record, making them the team to beat in this event.

In the men's 4×400m, primary competitors would include Botswana, USA, South Africa, Belgium, Qatar, Great Britain, Jamaica and The Netherlands.

Athletes to watch here would include Collen Kebinatshipi (Botswana), Benjamin Rai (USA) and Zakithi Nene (RSA).

While the event is Botswana's signature race, the rivalry with South Africa and Belgium will make the final a must-watch, with the home crowd a deciding factor.

In the women's 4×400m, event would feature Botswana, USA, Jamaica, The Netherlands, Belgium, Poland, Norway, France and Italy.

The Netherlands, anchored by the phenomenal Femke Bol, is expected to challenge the USA's traditional

dominance.

Athletes to watch in the race include McLaughlin-Levrone, Nickisha Pryce and Bol.

In the men's 4×100m, primary competitors would include USA, Canada, The Netherlands, Ghana, Germany, Japan, France and Australia.

Athletes to watch include Noah Lyles (USA), Andre De Grasse (Canada) and Xavi Mo-Ajok (The Netherlands).

However, the event is always unpredictable, though the USA and Canada are technical and talent frontrunners.

In the women's 4×100m would feature competitors from the USA, Jamaica, Germany, Great Britain, Spain, France, Canada and Poland.

Athletes to watch would be Richardson (USA), the Clayton sisters Tia and Tina (Jamaica) and Sophia Junk (Germany).

The perennial showdown between the USA and Jamaica would likely define the race.

Ultimately, Botswana's success would be determined by its ability to capitalise on home turf and successfully launch its new relay programme against experienced global competitors. **BOPA**