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Constitutional Court a must - Boko

By Pako Lebanna

GABORONE - The establishment of a Constitutional Court is an important step in developing Botswana's constitutional democratic system, and in strengthening the judicial process, President Advocate Duma Boko has said.

Contribution to the Constitutional Amendment Bill that has been tabled before Parliament on Monday, President Boko ventilated the argument that the Constitutional Court would be an important instrument in developing the nation's legal process.

The President said the court was essential to the protection of the rights and providing an avenue for recourse of everyone resident in Botswana.

It would clearly delineate a legal route and platform where constitutional matters were handled with urgency, consistency, and authority, President Boko said.

He added that by ensuring that institutions operated within the confines of the constitution, such an institution would uphold the rule of law and further provide strong protection for vulnerable groups, promote fairness in governance and ensure accountability.

In countering the argument that not sufficient consultation had been made with the public and societal stakeholders, President Boko pointed out that among the findings of the 2022 report presented by the Presidential Commission into the Review of the Constitution, the Dibotelo Commission, was that public opinion was in favour of establishing a Constitutional Court.



President advocate Duma Boko on Parliament floor during Constitutional Amendment Bill debate in Gaborone on Monday. In his contribution to the bill President Boko argued that the constitutional court would be an important instrument in developing the nation's legal process. The President also said the court was essential to the protection of the rights and providing an avenue for recourse of everyone. Photo: Gothusang Lesego

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Water project to support sustainable livelihoods

By Esther Mmolai

MAUN - It is critical for relevant authorities implementing the ongoing Maun Water Supply and Sanitation Phase II to consult all key stakeholders, including the community, to get feedback.

North West district commissioner, Mr Thabang Waloka, made the remarks during the stakeholder meeting held in Maun recently, citing that the water project was important for sustainable livelihoods.

“Water is a fundamental right and driver of socio-economic development and growth; hence, engaging stakeholders is paramount to promote ownership,” he said.

Mr Waloka said his office was experiencing an influx of reports from some members of the community blaming the contractors for lack of cooperation.

He stated that some residents complained that the contractor had destroyed their yards and nothing had been done to compensate them.

Mr Waloka called on the authorities to speedily look into

the issues and do what was right.

Water Utilities Corporation general manager in Maun, Mr Paul Mafavuneh, informed the gathering that the project would indeed address severe water shortages in the village and its surrounding areas once complete.

He said Maun needed 15.6 million litres of water daily, and the corporation could only supply 11.8 million litres on average, something he said called for measures such as rationing.

Also, stakeholders learned that there was a significant improvement of water supply since the commissioning of two boreholes and installation of generators at Kunyere North.

However, some residents complained about the quality of water, saying at times, the water had rust or a greenish colour; the fear authorities allayed, stating that the water supplied was clean and safe for drinking.

They were informed that despite the colour, the water was treated and met acceptable quality standards in accordance with the Botswana Bureau of Standards (BOBS). **BOPA**

Serowe District Council hands over house

By Keamogetse Setilo

THABALA - The Serowe District Council recently handed over a one-bedroom house to Mr Mogogi Mokuni in Thabala village.

Speaking during the handover ceremony, Serowe Council Housing Committee Chairperson, Mr Baikokobetsi Lorato, stated that the house constructed through the Bonno Turnkey Housing Scheme exemplified the government’s efforts to fulfill its goal of providing quality housing for citizens to improve their livelihoods.

The scheme supports individuals with an annual income of between P4,400 and P95 000.

Additionally, Mr Lorato who is a councilor for Serowe South mentioned that the Bonno Housing Programme was doing well in the district, emphasising that up to now, the district continued to be inundated with applications and had constructed houses in various locations throughout the district.

The programme has various options, including turnkey

project, where an individual provides a plot and the council constructs a house from the ground up and delivers the finished project, he said.

Another option, Mr Lorato relayed, was home improvement, whereupon one could utilise the programme services to expand or renovate their residence, all at an agreed fee.

He, however, challenged those assisted to repay loans extended to them on time so that more people could benefit from the program.

Councilor Lorato noted that the house handed over in Thabala was a turnkey initiative and commended the contractor for finishing the work ahead of schedule and for not compromising quality.

“We are fortunate as a country to have initiatives like Bonno Housing Pogramme; it is our responsibility to utilise these programmes to improve our standard of living,” he stated.

Kgosi Abel Kgaboyarona from Thabala opined that housing provided dignity to individuals and urged all eligible individuals to apply for Bonno to improve their lives. **BOPA**



Participants during the Maun Water Supply and Sanitation Phase II stakeholder engagement meeting in Maun on Friday. Photo: Courtesy of Ministry of Water and Human Settlement

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Maele urges African universities to lead dev.

By Lorato Gaofise

GABORONE - African higher education leaders have been urged to strengthen university leadership, deepen collaboration and accelerate innovation to help drive the continent's socio-economic transformation.

Speaking at the 21st Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Gaborone on Monday, Minister of Higher Education Mr Prince Maele said Africa's development challenges demanded a new model of university engagement, one that moved beyond traditional roles and prioritises real-world impact.

He identified youth unemployment, climate change, food insecurity, low value addition, sluggish economic growth and rising insecurity as persistent barriers undermining Africa's progress.

"Our science output must receive a catalytic boost. Universities must evolve from centres of teaching and research into mission-driven institutions that generate solutions, technologies, products and services aligned with national and regional priorities," he said.

Minister Maele described the conference theme: Positioning Africa's universities and the higher education sector to effectively impact development processes on the continent as timely and forward-looking, reflecting growing recognition that African universities must be more proactive in shaping national and regional development.

"The theme clearly recognises that it is through innovation that higher education can build resilient societies and advance economic development," he added.

Mr Maele challenged institutions to lead Africa's transition to a green and climate-resilient economy, noting that the continent currently secured only 3.6 per cent of global climate finance, far below what was needed.

He urged universities and the private sector to critically assess the bottlenecks limiting Africa's participation in global climate financing and to scale efforts to attract investment into clean energy, climate-smart agriculture and green job creation.

The minister also commended long-standing development partners, including the Mastercard Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the African Development Bank and the World Bank, for sustained investment in

Africa's higher education sector, and appealed for continued support to help build work-ready graduates and resilient economies.

Botswana University of

Agriculture and Natural Resources (BUAN) Vice Chancellor Professor Ketlhatlogile Mosepele echoed the call for cohesion and purposeful partnerships,

describing the conference as "a historic convergence of knowledge, action and purpose."

Prof. Mosepele stressed that Africa's agricultural and

higher education transformation depended on stronger collaboration between universities, governments, communities and industry.

He urged public universities to demonstrate measurable impact and ensure society received a meaningful return on investment.

He further said universities must redesign curricula, embed entrepreneurship, strengthen inclusion for women and youth, and ground research in real community challenges.

Prof. Mosepele also highlighted digital transformation and leadership development as critical levers for building globally competitive African institutions.

The five-day meeting has attracted delegates from 175 universities across more than 40 African countries, with discussions focusing on higher education reform, climate-responsive agriculture, innovation ecosystems and strategies to strengthen Africa's human capital for sustainable development.

As the conference progresses, leaders have reiterated that Africa's universities were not just academic institutions as they were vital engines for innovation, resilience and economic growth. **BOPA**



Minister of Higher Education, Mr Prince Maele officially opening the 21st Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) Annual General Meeting and Conference in Gaborone on Monday. Mr Maele challenged African universities to lead transition to a green and climate-resilient economies, and create smart jobs for the continent. Photo: Felicity Male

Wetlands protection key to birds conservation

By Esther Mmolai

MAUN - Botswana has been urged to strengthen stakeholder support for wetland protection, which plays a vital role in conserving migratory waterbird species that flock to the country during the rainy season.

Botswana is a party to the African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), an intergovernmental treaty that coordinates conservation action across 255 migratory waterbird species along their flyways.

Reports presented at the recently held Bird Migration Conference revealed that Botswana hosts 93 migratory waterbird species, making its contribution to the network central to regional habitat protection and sustainable use.

The two-day conference, convened by Re Jala Peo Organisation, sought to spotlight bird migration and its ecological significance, while encouraging dialogue on managing threats such as deforestation, climate pressures, predators, pollution and human activity.

Held at Maun Lodge, the event attracted schoolchildren, conservationists, researchers, bird experts and professional wildlife guides, who all shared insights on sustainability practices that benefit both birds and communities.

Lecturer at Botswana Wildlife Training Institute, Ms Onalenna Sakarea, emphasised that greater stakeholder participation was critical for the protection of migratory waterbirds and their habitats.

She said Botswana was expected to collaborate with other AEWA contracting parties by implementing conservation plans, protecting critical habitats and submitting regular status reports on its progress.

Ms Sakarea noted that stakeholder contributions were key in helping the country meet its obligation to report conservation outcomes to other parties within

the agreement.

"It is impressive to see youngsters and environmental leaders under one roof, sharing information on protecting wildlife species and managing human activities for sustainable use," she added.

She further highlighted the importance of continuous bird monitoring, explaining that migratory waterbirds served as indicator species for environmental health and biodiversity stability.

The Department of Wildlife and National Parks also plays a central role in protecting Botswana's wildlife resources for present and future generations, often working with partner organisations to monitor bird populations and

maintain long-term programme impact.

Professional ranger and guide Mr Patrick Malatsi echoed the call for more support, saying conservation efforts must be prioritised to ensure migratory birds continued to grace Botswana's skies.

He added that migratory birds undertook extraordinary seasonal journeys, often crossing continents and oceans to find favourable breeding sites, food sources or to escape extreme weather conditions.

Mr Malatsi also said that migratory birds were a fascinating group of avian species that undertook regular, seasonal journeys between their breeding and non-breeding grounds.

"The birds have evolved the remarkable ability to navigate over vast distance often crossing continents and even oceans in search of favourable breeding habitats, food sources or escape harsh weather conditions."

Re Jala Peo continues to drive conservation awareness at community level, equipping children, youth and women with life skills education, environmental stewardship training and hands-on engagement with local ecosystems in schools across Botswana.

Through these programmes, learners participate in habitat care, wildlife protection, tree planting and ecosystem monitoring initiatives. **BOPA**

Constitutional Court a must - Boko

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Outlining the historical path Botswana undertook towards its constitution, President Boko said the Order in Council of May 9, 1891 declared Bechuanaland a British Protectorate, and over the following century, the British Parliament proclaimed in August 1966 to grant Bechuanaland independence as the Republic of Botswana.

This was after the 1963, Lobatse Conference and the Malborough House Conference held in London in February 1966 agreed to the terms of Botswana's independence and basic tenets of its constitution.

But, minority ethnic groups and vulnerable groups including women were not represented at Lobatse and Malborough House, President Boko argued and the country thus needed a broader, inclusive constitutional review process that would involve the

views of a diverse sector of society. He said the Constitutional Court would be the first step in creating an avenue where any party felt aggrieved by the constitutional review process could find a fair arbitrary process.

President Boko noted that the Botswana constitution had a Bill of Rights, Section 3 to 16, which protects the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, including the rights to life, personal liberty, protection from inhuman treatment and the freedoms of conscience, expression, movement, association and assembly.

This, the President pronounced was international best practice flowing from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international instruments that provided for life, liberty and equal protection before the law.

Such are sacrosanct clauses that needed to be protected as the constitution is amended, President Boko said, in order to ensure

that as the country became more inclusive, basic rights remained protected.

He said Section 18 of the Constitution already provided for the enforcement of protective provisions.

"Furthermore, the past precedent of the judgment from Attorney General of Botswana versus Unity Dow case is that the Section 3 provision that 'every person in Botswana is entitled to fundamental rights and freedoms' is legally binding and not a mere preamble.

Nonetheless, Botswana still requires a Constitutional Court," the President argued, pointing out that the Aguda Commission led by Justice Akinola Aguda (1923-2001), a Nigerian jurist and former Chief Justice of Botswana had also recommended that there should be a Supreme Court established in the country; with the Dibotelo Commission later pointing to public opinion being in favour of a Constitutional Court. **BOPA**

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Motshegwa clarifies medical supplies distribution

GABORONE - The Ministry of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, is not aware nor has received any reports of transportation of medical supplies by nurses’ private vehicles in small villages and remote clinics.

Mr Ketlhalefile Motshegwa explained to Parliament recently that Boteti West Constituency had three delivery points of drugs and medical supplies from the Central Medical Stores (CMS), which also served as distribution points for their respective clusters and all the facilities within clusters order their drugs and supplies from their delivery points.

However, he said facilities occasionally request from one another as a way of rationalising distribution.

Mr Motshegwa explained that Inter-facility transportation of

medical supplies, was done using government vehicles and if there were any such cases, it would be contrary to the existing government procedures whereby all medical supplies and drugs should be transported in safe and secure official vehicles.

The ministry takes highly the welfare of officers and therefore, endeavours to ensure that all officers perform duties within the boundaries of their line of duty as stipulated in the Job Effectiveness Description, Minister Motshegwa said.

Boteti West MP, Mr Sam Digwa had asked the minister if he was aware that nurses in some small villages and remote village clinics were using their private vehicles to collect medical supplies from larger nearby medical facilities and whether that was procedural. **BOPA**

Financial limitation hinders office renovations

GABORONE - Acting minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti says he is unable to state when the Mathangwane Agricultural Offices will be renovated, due to financial limitations.

Responding to a question in Parliament on Thursday, from Shashe West legislator, Mr Jeremiah Frenzel, the minister said the offices were budgeted for renovations during the 2025/2026 financial period but could not be carried out due to financial limitations and insufficient funding.

He said due to the same, the ministry was unable to state when the village of and Natale Japane lands would have their own specific agricultural officers.

equivalent to the sitting allowance of land board members and the review of their daily allowances was dependent on the review of the sitting allowance for land board members, but due to the prevailing financial situation, the ministry had no plans to review the allowances at the moment.

Mr Frenzel wanted the minister to state when the Mathangwane agricultural offices would be renovated and when the Natale and Japane lands would start being serviced by their own designated Agricultural Officer .

He also wanted the minister to state when the allowances for land-overseers would be reviewed to meet the current standard of living. **BOPA**

Presently, Natale is assisted by an officer stationed in Shashemooke while farmers in Japane are assisted by an officer based in Borolong, Dr Dikoloti said, adding that the two areas had a combined number of about 120 farmers, which was at a ratio of 1:60 agricultural officer to a farmer.

He said the ratio far much better than other area which stood at 1:1 200 against the target ratio 1:100.

Dr Dikoloti said that the ministry was working on improving extension support through different means such as production clustering, and that the two areas could be assessed on their comparative or competitive advantage and facilitated accordingly.

He noted that the land overseers were paid a daily allowance

GABORONE - Butcheries and food vendors are inspected for compliance with meat hygiene requirements annually and biannually respectively, says Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs.

Responding to a question in Parliament on Thursday, Mr Ketlhalefile Motshegwa said food vendors who cooked and sold food were classified as high-risk establishments and were therefore inspected twice a year, while butcheries that sold raw meat were generally inspected once a

‘Terminal benefits yet to be processed’

GABORONE - Minister of Communications and Innovation, Mr David Tshere says employees of Meropa Resources were issued letters of intent to retrench end of August this year.

Responding to a question in Parliament on behalf of Minister of Minerals and Energy, Mr Tshere said due to the current liquidity challenges faced by the company, terminal benefits were yet to be processed.

He said the matter was outlined

during the last engagement with employees in Lentsweletau on August 19 where management explained the steps being taken to contain the escalating costs.

“It is evident that lack of payment of terminal benefits has likely delayed medical exit clearances, however, I wish to clarify that pre-employment medical examinations are conducted by each prospective employer, regardless of previous employer clearances as those records remain

specific to the former employer,” said Mr Tshere.

“While this does not eliminate the inconvenience caused, it ensures that new employers can still assess fitness for duty independently,” he added.

He said Mineral Development Corporation Botswana (MDCB), Botswana Development Corporation and Minergy Limited were engaged in joint negotiation with potential investors to secure a capital infusion into the business.

Mr Tshere stated that a key component of the process was the resolution of outstanding employee payment obligations and that the ministry acknowledged the severity of the situation and the hardship endured by the employees.

“While this is a complex and lengthy undertaking, negotiations have advanced significantly with several investors and government remains committed to ensuring that employees receive their due entitlements,” he said.

To mitigate the situation, Mr Tshere said a four-month salary payout was extended through MDCB, to cover the period up to July 31 this year, providing temporary relief while long-term solutions were being pursued.

Member of Parliament for Tswapong South, Dr Kesitegile Gobotswang had asked the minister to appraise Parliament on the fate of some 500 employees of Meropa Resources.

Dr Gobotswang wanted the minister to state if the ministry was aware that employees of the company were issued letters of intent to retrench effective August 31 yet there had been no proper communication or progress regarding payment of terminal benefits and the completion of the medical exit procedures.

He also wanted the minister to state if the delay had placed the employees at a severe disadvantage as the lack of medical exit clearance had prevented them from seeking and securing new employment opportunities elsewhere.

Dr Gobotswang asked if the ministry was aware that as a result of prolonged uncertainty surrounding their retrenchment and outstanding entitlements, employees continued to suffer financial and emotional distress, and what remedies were in place to assist the employees. **BOPA**



Minister of Communications and Innovation, Mr David Tshere said employees of Meropa Resources were issued letters of intent to retrench end of August this year.

Ministry inspects butcheries annually

year, unless conditions warranted frequent visits.

The Food Control Act 1993 and its subsidiary legislation, regulates food safety for butcheries and food vendors.

Mr Motshegwa indicated that routine inspections were guided by the level of risk associated with the type of food handled hence the frequency of inspections was determined by the risk categorisation and any emerging food safety concerns identified during routine monitoring.

He said that the main findings

from such inspections included, sale of uninspected meat, poor storage of food items, filthy or unhygienic premises, vermin infestation, and failure to use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment, issues that had in some instances, resulted in the temporary closure of establishments.

“More recently, some establishments have also been publicly named to raise awareness on food safety among operators and consumers,” he said.

In recognition of the role

butcheries and food vendors play, Mr Motshegwa said in local economic activities, councils engaged them continuously on food safety.

Mr Motshegwa was answering a question by Kanye West MP, Mr Victor Phologolo who inquired about the frequency with which butcheries and operations of food vendors were inspected for compliance with meat hygiene requirements.

He also asked about the main findings from such inspections in the last three years. **BOPA**

Govt suspends sand mining activities

GABORONE - Demand for sand continues to increase as the country's developments steadily grow through construction of new infrastructure, making it an important commodity in the economic development of Botswana's construction industry.

Responding on behalf of the Minister of Minerals and Energy, Ms Bogolo Kenewendo, Assistant Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Mr Keoagile Atamelang said that with the limited sand resources in the Southern part of the country, sand mining activities in the greater Gaborone were suspended due to the state of degradation in the river systems.

He explained that the river systems were damaged due to excessive sand mining and other uses of the river systems such as water abstraction, especially for agricultural use, got affected.

Mr Atamelang stated that during the past rainy season, communities were impacted due to excessive sand mining.

Her further highlighted that the ministry was aware that natural resources particularly sand, were being illegally mined or extracted, and the ministry continued to engage with other stakeholders to combat such acts that were savaging the Greater Gaborone including Metsimotlhabe River.

Of recent, he said law enforcement organisations had strengthened their patrols along the affected areas and river system in an effort to combat illegal activities.

Mr Atamelang explained that the amended Mines and Minerals Act included harsher punitive measures through revision of fines and giving more powers to authorised officers to confiscate, impound and dispose of equipment that was found

and used to commit such illegal activities.

He said all government departments and ministries with authority over land or its use such as the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture (land boards and Department of Lands), Ministry of Environment and Tourism (Department of Environmental Protection), Botswana Police Service and dikgosi, should not allow illegal mining to be occurring on the land they had custody over.

Mr Atamelang said that all parties entrusted with the administration of land and the environment must not allow any of such activities to be happening on their land without their knowledge and authority.

He therefore, said the ministry minerals had intentions, funds

permitting, to conduct studies along all major rivers in the country, to establish the extent of damage caused by excessive sand mining, in order to inform considerations for the proposed initiative, to allow for controlled and legal sand mining, strictly for use by young citizens in their personal or community projects.

Mmopane/Metsimotlhabe MP,

Ms Helen Manyeneng had asked if the minister was aware that natural resources, particularly sand, were being extracted from the Metsimotlhabe River and in the Mmopane/Metsimotlhabe area and if so, would the ministry consider putting in place clear regulations to allow for controlled legal sand mining.

BOPA

Road project design works in progress - Salakae

GABORONE - The 27-kilometre Mogoditshane - Gabane - Mmankgodi Road project awarded to Zutari, October last year under the Development Manager (DM) model, is among those permitted to proceed, subject to negotiations on financing and the delivery method.

Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Mr Noah Salakae informed Parliament on Monday that the project, the scope of which entailed design, construction, supervision, and delivery of works remained, following Cabinet's revocation of implementing the DM model.

"My ministry has since established a task team to engage with the development managers and provide recommendations to government on the way forward," said Mr Salakae.

He said the current physical or construction progress of the project stood at one per cent against the planned four per cent, while detailed design works were progressing concurrently with construction, with actual design progress at 95 per cent against the planned 100 per cent.

Mr Salakae said the total amount expended on the project to date was P177, 258, 737, including VAT, and the amount had primarily covered road maintenance works during the last rainy season, design works, land expropriation, and relocation of services.

The project anticipated to be completed in October 2028, the minister said was within schedule.

However, he said the payment frequency as a result of the constrained fiscal situation, presented a significant potential risk to the project as it impacted

the cash flow of the contractor and subcontractors.

He said to date, road maintenance costs paid to the contractor amounted to P4, 318, 285 including VAT, and that the figure comprised P2, 310, 393 for road widening and P2, 007, 891 for pothole repairs.

The pothole repairs were undertaken during the early part of 2025 and completed at the end of April 2025.

Mr Salakae said no payments have yet been made towards traffic management, as no major construction activities had commenced.

He said the ministry had engaged with the contractor, having observed the recent development of potholes along Roads A10 and A129 of the project since the onset of the rainy season in October, a development that necessitated urgent intervention to restore and improve road conditions for safe travel.

Mogoditshane East MP, Mr Letlhogonolo Barongwang had asked the minister to update the House on the ongoing 27km Mogoditshane-Mmankgodi dual carriageway with specifics to when the project commenced and the volume of work done against what was planned, total amount spent thus far and expected completion date,

Mr Barongwang also wanted the minister to state if he foresaw the project being completed on time and on budget considering the progress rate, how much itemised maintenance and traffic management costs to the existing road had already been paid to the contractor and if the minister.

BOPA

'Expect more medical supplies'

GABORONE - Drug availability at Kgatleng East Constituency currently stands at 56 per cent, a figure below the national target of 97 per cent.

Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs Mr Ketlhalefile Motshwegwa informed Parliament recently that the decline in drugs availability at the Central Medical Stores (CMS) had in turn contributed to reduced stock levels across clinics.

Minister Motshegwa said that the President had, in his State-of-the-Nation Address (SONA), indicated that the country could expect significant increase in supplies in the coming weeks, an intervention, that was anticipated to improve the availability of medicines in the facilities.

Furthermore, he said that immediate measures being implemented to address the current shortages included re-distribution and sharing of medicines between clinics and hospitals within the districts and across the country.

Minister Motshegwa added that the district also continued to timeously place orders with CMS for items that were in stock and in the long term, the ministry intended to strengthen stock level monitoring system and to ensure continuous placing and tracking of orders with CMS to ensure timeous delivery.

Kgatleg East MP, Mr Mabuse Pule wanted the minister to update the House on the availability of essential medicines in clinics and health posts throughout Kgatleng East Constituency and to state immediate measures being implemented to address any current shortages identified and long term strategies to ensure consistent as well as reliable availability of medicines and medical supplies in the stated facilities going forward.

BOPA



Responding on behalf of the Minister of Minerals and Energy, Ms Bogolo Kenewendo, Assistant Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Mr Keoagile Atamelang, said the limited sand resources in the Southern part of the country, has resulted in suspension of sand mining activities in the greater Gaborone due to the state of degradation in the river systems.

Strategy focuses on irrigation systems - Dikoloti

GABORONE - Botswana's Water for Agriculture Strategy is a cornerstone of national agricultural transformation agenda under NDP 12, says Acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti.

Responding to a parliamentary question recently, Dr Dikoloti said the strategy focused on efficient irrigation systems, sustainable water harvesting technologies, and precision agriculture to optimise resource use and maximise productivity.

The minister told Parliament that the commitment reflected government's determination to secure food sovereignty, reduce reliance on imports, and build climate-resilient agricultural systems.

"In implementing the strategy, my ministry will over the next four years, drive a comprehensive water

development agenda to strengthen livestock production nationwide through the revised Livestock Development Programme.

"This will include borehole drilling and acquisition, equipping and reticulation, desalination as well as the rehabilitation of boreholes, wells, and dams across agricultural production areas," said Dr Dikoloti.

The programme, he said, had been budgeted for under NDP 12, to integrate water, infrastructure and other input subsidy components to ensure sustainable farmer support.

Furthermore, Dr Dikoloti said the ministry had forged multi strategic partnerships with international development institutions, such as Green Climate Fund, GIZ, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to advance water development as well as

the restoration and sustainable management of Botswana's rangelands.

He indicated that these collaborations constituted a vital component of broader water development agenda, aimed at strengthening food security and ensuring sustainable livestock production through building climate resilience.

"We are expanding land consolidation in agricultural areas to achieve economies of scale, enabling advanced irrigation systems and coordinated water management," he said.

Additionally, Dr Dikoloti said the ministry was also promoting subsidy strategies for smart technologies, such as sensors and real-time monitoring systems, to enhance precision irrigation, reduce water loss, and strengthen farm-

level water management.

As for funding and implementation, he said it would be anchored on a Public-Private Partnership model, targeting high groundwater potential areas and consolidated land schemes.

This approach, Dr Dikoloti explained, would ensure that investment was mobilised sustainably, infrastructure modernised, and farmers empowered to adopt innovative practices.

Through these deliberate measures, he said Botswana's Water for Agriculture Strategy would deliver a resilient, efficient and inclusive agricultural sector that secured food security.

Bobirwa MP, Mr Taolo Lucas wanted the minister to appraise the Parliament on the Water for Agriculture Strategy.

BOPA

Council targets illegal vendors

By Gontle Merafhe

GABORONE - Gaborone City Council has intensified its crackdown on illegal operations as city leadership reiterates growing frustration over non-compliance with municipal and national laws.

The Mayor, Mr Oarabile Motlaleng, told the full council meeting on Monday that illegal trading, unlicensed manufacturing, and breaches of public health and child-care regulations were among the most persistent challenges facing the city.

He reported that 13 non-citizens were charged for violating the council's hawking and street-vending bye-laws, saying these demonstrated the municipality's firm stance on regulating informal trade within its jurisdiction.

In a separate enforcement action, seven individuals were charged for operating manufacturing businesses without an industrial licence, in violation of Section 6 of the Industrial Development Act.

Food safety inspections also revealed 19 cases involving unhygienic preparation and handling of food, which he described as a serious public health concern.

Mr Motlaleng stressed that traders and food handlers must prioritise cleanliness and strict adherence to hygiene principles, adding that council teams would continue to educate both vendors and consumers on safety standards.

He said they would continue to sensitise the public and build a culture of vigilance

and compliance, adding that responsible trading protected the community and strengthened the

environment.

Child-care services were not spared from scrutiny, as eight

day-care centres were charged for operating contrary to Section 97 (1) of the Children's Act, which governs registration and conduct of child-care facilities. The Mayor emphasised that adherence to the Act was non-negotiable to safeguard children's welfare.

Speaking broadly to the business sector, Mr Motlaleng urged continued legal compliance, warning that failure to meet regulatory obligations compromised public well-being.

"We urge the business community to consistently adhere to the provisions of the law to ensure compliance and contribute positively to the environment in which we operate. Upholding these regulations not only promotes responsible business practices but also safeguards the health and well-being of our community," he said.

The council also registered eight cases of urinating in public, an offence under the Sanitation and Public Health Bye-laws.

These incidents, he noted, pointed to declining public hygiene discipline and the need for renewed awareness campaigns. **BOPA**



Gaborone City Council Town Clerk, Mr Daniel Katjinothiwa (left), mayor, Mr Oarabile Motlaleng (centre) and deputy mayor, Ms Mankie Sekete during a full council session in Gaborone on Monday. Mr Motlaleng said 13 non-citizens were charged for violating the council's hawking and street-vending bye-laws. Photo: Gaseitsiwe Moruakgomo

Ethiopia launches five-year strategy

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia government has launched the Digital Ethiopia 2030 Strategy, aiming to foster the integration of technology across all economic sectors and digitize the country's

economy.

The Ethiopian Council of Ministers, the country's executive body, approved the five-year national digital transformation strategy on Saturday to accelerate

economic growth and improve public services, the Office of the Ethiopian Prime Minister announced in a statement.

The strategy aims to bolster the country's technological capacity, expand critical infrastructure, and create new socio-economic opportunities for citizens, mainly for the country's burgeoning youth population, the statement said.

The new initiative has been introduced as a successor to the initial Digital Ethiopia 2025 Strategy, which was launched in June 2020. The Ethiopian Ministry of Innovation and

Technology said recently that the Digital Ethiopia 2025 Strategy was "100 per cent successful," and laid the foundation for fostering a technology-led and knowledge-based digital economy.

"Following the successful completion of the Digital Ethiopia 2025 Strategy, which focused on technology-led innovation and modernisation, we have now unveiled the Digital Ethiopia 2030 Strategy, which will strengthen service delivery through greater use of machine inputs and automation," Ethiopia Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said. **Xinhua**



HANGZHOU - Containers being loaded onto a container ship at the Meishan port area of the Ningbo-Zhoushan Port in east China's Zhejiang Province on Tuesday, marking the port's annual container throughput exceeding 40 million TEUs for the first time. The Ningbo-Zhoushan Port is the only one in the world that has handled over 1 billion tonnes of cargo annually for 16 consecutive years. Photo: Xinhua

Chinese shares close higher Monday

BEIJING - Chinese stocks closed higher on Monday, with the benchmark Shanghai Composite Index up 0.65 per cent to 3,914.01 points. The Shenzhen Component Index closed 1.25 per cent higher at 13,146.72 points.

The combined turnover of these two indices stood at 1.87 trillion yuan, about US\$264.28 billion, up from 1.59 trillion yuan on the previous trading day.

Shares related to ceramics, tourism and non-ferrous metals led the gains, while the furniture production, road and bridge operation, and printing and packaging sectors saw notable declines.

The ChiNext Index, tracking China's Nasdaq-style board of growth enterprises, gained 1.31 per cent to close at 3,092.5 points on Monday. **Xinhua**

Barutabana ga ba bone boroko

Ka Goweditswe Kome

MASUNGA - Barutabana ba sekole se segolwane sa Ramoja ba apere kobo ka letshoba ntateng ya magodu a a utswang bosigo le motshegare mo matlong a bone a bonno.

E rile a bua mo potsolotsong, motshwarelela mogolwane wa thuto mo kgaolong ya Masunga Rre Aggrey Makhila a re kgang ya go tlhoka pabalesego ya sekole seo, e simolotse bogologolo mme e sa itshupe ele kgolo.

Sekole se, se mo sekgweng fa gare ga Ramokgwebana, Moroka le Jackalas 1 mme gape sele gaufi le molelwane wa lefatshe leno le la Zimbabwe.

Rre Makhila a re bogodu jo bo

simologile ka go utswiwa ga dijo le diaparo tsa barutabana go simolola ka 2014 go ya go 2017, bogodu joo jwa kekela go akaretsa malao le ditsidifatsi le go thuba sebolokelo sa madi sa sekole.

A re le fa ba ne ba kopa badisa dikago go nna kelotlhoko mo bathong ba ba etelang sekole seo go fokotsa ditiragalo tsa borukutlhi, gone ga seka ga thusa, ka sekole se dikologilwe ke sekgwa.

“Re le ba lephata la thuto re kopanye le ba Ipelegeng, re ne ra tswa letsholo go ya go kgaola ditlhare tse di neng di dikologile matlo a barutabana mme ra lemoga fa dipone tse di dikologang sekole le matlo a mangwe di seo ,” ga tthalosa Rre Makhila.

O ne a tthalosa gore ka ngwaga

wa 2018, dirukutlhi di ne tsa simolola go utswa motshegare barutabana ba ile tirong ba tsena ka terata e e kwa morago mme le mono motlha ga go ise go tshwarwe ope wa bone.

O supa gore e rile ba tswa letsholo la go thodumela terata, yare go ise go fete sebaka se se leele, fa ba boa ba fitlhela magotswana oa, a ba amogile dithoto.

A re tiragalo e nngwe ke ya mogokgo a tsenelelwa ke magodu mme ba mo hula ka seragantswane mo molomong, mo a ileng a bona dikgobalo tse di masisi.

“Ka Phalane ele malatsi a mararo, ke ne ka etela sekolo seo gape mme ka fitlhela seemo se se tlhomlang pelo,” ga rialo Rre Makhila.

Go leka go thibela seemo se, a re ba kopile terata e e nang le mmitwa, kampa ya sesole, sepodisi, dipone tse di bogale go dikologa terata le di khamera kana lebotla go dikologa matlo a barutabana.

O ne a gatelela gore barutabana botlhe ba tshwanelwa ke go rulaganyediwa tshidilo maikutlo ka seemo se, se ba amile e bile ba setse ba ikopela go hudusediwa kwa dikoleng di sele.

Mongwe wa batswa setlhabelo, e leng mogokgo wa sekolo seo Rre Teedzani Bombo o ne a rurifatsa fa borukutlhi jo bo tshwenya mo e bileng botshelo bo sa tlhole bole monate mo bodireding ja sekolo.



Motshwarelela mogolwane wa thuto mo kgaolong ya Masunga Rre Aggrey Makhila a re ba mo thulaganyong ya go netefatsa tshireletsego ya barutabana ba sekole se segolwane sa Ramoja se se fa gare ga Ramokgwebana, Moroka le Jackalas 1. Barutabana ba sekole seo, ba apere kobo ka letshoba ntateng ya magodu a a utswang bosigo le motshegare mo matlong a bone a bonno. Senepe: Goweditswe Kome

O tthalositse fa ba belaela gore mabaka a a ka tswang a tlhofofatsa bogodu ke gore sekole se mo sekgweng. Rre Bombo a re mongwe wa barutabana o kile a reka setsidifatsi sa mabati a mabedi mme e rile bosigo jo se gorogileng

ka jone sa lala se utswulwe.

“Fa seemo se ntse jaana, ga go sa tlhole go na le ope yo o batlang go berekela kwano, ke bereka go nna ke tima molelo o lenna ke o raletseng wa go tlaselwa,” ga rialo Rre Bombo. **BOPA**

Ka Relief Lephutshi

KANYE – Go tshuba kerese ka letsatsi la mafatshefatshe la segopotso sa HIV/AIDS ke go supa maitlamo, thotloetso le go supa lerato mo go ba ba amilweng ke bolwetse le ba ba latlhegetsweng ke matshelo .

Se, se boletswe ke Mohumagadi wa Bangwaketse Mme Masetsebi Gaseitsiwe kwa moletlong wa segopotso sa mafatshe sa Bolwetse jwa HIVAIDS kwa Kgatleng kgolo ya Kanye ka Mosupologo.

Letsatsi le, le ne le tshwerwe ka fa tlase ga setlhogo se se reng :Go fenywa dikgoreletsi, go tla ka diphetogo tse di maleba mo twantshong ya mogare wa HIV/AIDS”

Morafe go ralala kgaolo ya Kanye ga mmogo le batsaya karolo ka go farologana mo twantshong ya bolwetse jwa HIV/AIDS ba ne ba tshologetse kwa kgotla kgolo go tsenelela segopotso.

Fa a tshuba kerese, Mohumagadi Mma Gaseitsewe a re seo e nne tsholofelo mo go fodiseng bolwetse jwa HIV/AIDS le dikgwetlho tse dingwe tse di lebaganyeng lefatshe la Botswana.

“Bagaetsho, a lesedi le le re fe tsholofelo ya gore letsatsi lengwe re tla fitlhelela phenyo ka seemo sa bolwetse”, ga rotloetsa Mma Gaseitsiwe yo a neng a kopa metsotso ya tidimalo mo kgotlakgolo go lemoga ba ba latlhegetsweng ke bolwetse.

Mogokaganyi wa namaosatshwere wa Lekgotla la Ditshaba mo Botswana , Rre Malviya Alankar o galaeditse lefatshe leno gore le dira sentle mo kgaolong le lefatshe ka bophara mo go lwantsheng kanamo ya mogare wa HIV.

A re le fa go ntse jalo, go bonala fa dipalo tse di kwa godimo

ngwaga le ngwaga (dikete tse nne) di tsenwa ke mogare o mosha le gore mo bagolong ba le batlhano, a le mongwe mo go bone o tshela ka mogare.

Mo dipalong tse, go supa fa sekete, lekgolo, lesome le boferabobedi e le dipalo tsa basetsanyana le bomme ba ba botlana ba dingwaga tse di fa gare ga lesome le botlhano le masome a mabedi ba amega thata.

Fa a tswa la gagwe, mongwe wa batsaya karolo mo ntweng kgatlhanong le bolwetse e bile e le motswa setlhabelo wa bolwetse jo, Mme Khumoetsile Thukwi, a re morago ga go itemogela fa a na le mogare wa HIV ka ngwaga wa 1999, one a seka a amogelwa sentle ke ba lelwapa le tikologo ya gagwe.

“Morago ga go kopana le ba mokgatlho o o rotloetsang bomme, ke gone ka itemogela kagiso le kgololesego”, ga tthalosa mme Thukwi.

O ne a supa matshwenyego a gore banana ga ba rekegele botsogo jwa mebele ya bone ka jaana ba sa tlhagafalela go tsaya ditaelo tsa botsogo ka tlhamalalo. **BOPA**

Ka Tshiamiso Mosetlha

SEROWE - Mapodisi a Serowe a gwetlha setshaba go thusana le magosi go laola le go lwantsha dipolaano tsa marato le dipetelelo.

Mogolwane wa mapodisi a a okametseng kgaolo ya Serowe/ Palapye, District No2, Senior Superintendent Zibane Basupi, o ntshitse kopo morago ga gore ba amogele dikgang tsa polao di le pedi le petelelo ya ngwana yo dingwaga di kwa tlase bosheng.

Rre Basupi o boletse fa e rile

kgwedi e e fetileng e le masome a mabedi le boferabobedi, ba tshegetsa monna wa dingwaga tse di masome mane le boraro morago ga gore a itshupe ko mapodiseng a bolela fa a bolaile mme mongwe ka sengwe se se bogale yo ba belaelang a ne a ratana le ene.

A re go fitlhetswe mme yoo a rapaletse mo boidiiding jwa madi kwa lwapeng le a neng a bereka teng a tlhokomela mogodi mongwe teng ko kgotleng ya Makolojwane mo Serowe.

Mmelaelwa o setse a simolotse

go itshupa kwa lekgotleng la ga mmakaserata kwa Serowe.

Mo go tse dingwe tsa polao, ba tshegeditse mme wa dingwaga tse di masome matlhano le bosupa(wa masimo a Mmabahumi mo kgaolong ya Serowe mabapi le go tlhaba mokapelo wa gagwe ka sengwe se se bogale a bo a tlhokafala go ne foo.

Senior Superintendent, Basupi a re mme yoo, o tlhokile kutlwisisanyo le mokapelo wa gagwe mme a dira tiro e e masisi eo beke e e fetileng.

Mogolwane wa sepodisi o tswetsetse a tthalosa fa mosetsanyana wa dingwaga tsedi ko tlase wa dingwaga tsedi boferabobedi kwa kgotleng ya Masilo a ne a betelwa ke rre wa dingwaga tse di masome mabedi le bosupa kgwedi e e fetileng e le malatsi a le masome mabedi le boferabongwe.

Mmelaelwa o santse a tshegeditswe ke mapodise, mme le ene a simolotse go ipega kwa lekgotleng la ga mmakaserata. **BOPA**



Matlo a barutabana ba sekole se segolwane sa Ramoja a dikologilwe ke ditlhare tse di fetogileng botshabelo jwa magodu. Senepe: Goweditswe Kome

Mapodisi a kopa setshaba go lwantsha dipolaano



MINISTRY FOR STATE PRESIDENT

EXTERNAL ADVERTISEMENT

REF NO: MSP 4/6/14 I (13)

2nd December 2025

Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates for the following position in the Office of the President:

1.Vacancy Circular No 35 of 2025

Position title: Assistant General Counsel (Civil Litigation)

Salary Scale: E1 (512 148-532 860) per annum

Leave: 30 working days per annum

Benefits:

- Optional contributory medical aid scheme with the Botswana Public Officers’Medical Aid Scheme (BPOMAS) (Government pays 50% and employee pays 50%)
- Government will also contribute 50% of the medical aid cover for individuals who are already members of a different Medical Aid Scheme other than the BPOMAS
- A contract of 24 to 36 months, with a gratuity of 30% payable upon expiry of contract.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor Degree in Law.
- Masters in Law will be an added advantage.

Experience:

- At least 14 years post qualification legal experience, of which two (2) years should have been served satisfactorily at E2 salary scale or equivalent in government or other sectors.

Main purpose of the job:

To advise on litigation on behalf of Office of the President on all complex suits including vetting of legal documents and rendering legal advice.

Key Performance Areas:

- Gives instructions on litigation matters on behalf of the Office of the President
- Drafts and vets court documents within the Office of the President on complex legal matters.
- Initiates and prepares case process before transmission of the case to Attorney General’s Chambers
- Conducts legal research
- Drafts a writ of execution (instruct deputy sheriff to attach and execute writ of execution).
- Vet responses to all appeals, complaints, and queries grievances made to the President.
- Drafts responses on requests for clemency, and pardons to the President.
- Advises the Permanent Secretary to the President on appeals related to the public service.
- Provides secretarial services for NCCFI.
- Coordinates and manages staff performance by establishing and ensuring that contracts are signed with staff and that reviews are undertaken in accordance with Public Service PMS and agreed schedules.
- Fosters continual improvement of staff engagement by providing on-the job training, coaching and mentoring as needed, ensuring that all the staff meet or exceed the requirements of their performance contracts.
- Resolves all disciplinary and grievance issues in accordance with Botswana labour legislation, Public Service disciplinary policies, codes and agreed turn-around times.

Essential Competencies:

- Deciding and Initiating action
- Leading and Supervising
- Adhering to Principles and Value
- Analysin
- Formulating Strategies and Concepts
- Adapting and Responding to Change
- Delivering Resulting and Meeting Customer Expectatio
- Planning and Organising

2. Vacancy Circular No. 36 of 2025

Position title: Director (Governance Oversight Internal Affairs)

Salary Scale: E1 (P512 148-P532 860) per annum

Leave: 30 working days per annum

Benefits:

- Optional contributory medical aid scheme with the Botswana Public Officers’ Medical Aid Scheme (BPOMAS) (Government pays 50% and employee pays 50%)
- Government will also contribute 50% of the medical aid cover for individuals who are already members of a different Medical Aid Scheme other than the BPOMAS
- A contract of 24 to 36 months, with a gratuity of 30% payable upon expiry of contract.

Qualifications:

- Degree in Sociology or in any other related field.
- Master’s Degree will be an added advantage.

Experience:

- Minimum of sixteen (16) years’ relevant work experience, two (2) years of which should have been served at Executive management level or equivalent in government or other sectors.

Main purpose of the Job

- To coordinate, manage and provide strategic leadership and guidance on interior or domestic affairs particularly relating to Botswana culture, traditions, norms and Setswana value system.

Key Performance Areas:

- Guides in the formulation, review and implementation of cultural policies and strategies.
- Analyses the effectiveness of the cultural policies, strategies and programmes and advises on improvements.
- Monitors policy implementation and to ensure that policies are executed in conformity with Government Agenda.
- Serves as an honest broker of policy options in the field of culture, rather than as an advocate for his or her own policy agenda
- Advises on Botswana culture, traditions, norms and Setswana value system.
- Advises on the implications of the various Government Policies, laws and Programmes on the Botswana culture and Setswana value system.Advises Government on cultural collaboration and exchange programmes with other Countries.Coordinates national activities for promoting Botswana culture, traditions, norms and value system
- Facilitates bodies responsible for promoting culture in Botswana.
- Develops new cultural programmes by strategically reviewing existing ones for relevance and adequacy.Collaborates with key stakeholders such as Traditional Leaders, Community Leaders and Educators in implementation of policies and programmes underpinning the national culture and value system.
- Undertakes any other related duties as required to meet exigencies of the service.

Essential Competencies

- Deciding and initiating actions
- Leading and supervising
- Working with people
- Adhering to principles and values
- Persuading and Influencing
- Analysing
- Formulating Strategies and Concepts
- Adapting and Responding to Change

APPLICATIONS:

Applicants should quote the number of this vacancy circular and provide the following details;

- Full names, address, date and place of birth
- Brief summary of career with duties (Curriculum Vitae)
- Certified true copies of certificates and National Identity Card
- Two (2) copies of recent work-related references (not more than six (6) months old)
- In case of serving officers;
 - i) Date of appointment
 - ii) Present post, scale and date of appointment thereto

In case of candidates from parastatals and private sector organizations, please provide statement of salary or pay.

IMPORTANT:

All applications from serving Public Officers must be routed through their respective Heads of Departments and Permanent Secretaries. Applications not so routed will not be considered.

Applications should be addressed to:

**Permanent Secretary
Ministry for State President,
Private Bag 001,
Gaborone**

Or hand deliver at Ministry for State President, Finance House, 1st Floor Records Management Unit, Office No 108

Only shortlisted candidates will be responded to

CLOSING DATE: 15th December 2025

For any enquiries, please contact 3950800

Vivian wins Miss Hope pageant

By Keith Ketl

SEROWE - Vivian Keatlholetswe, a 13-year-old Form 1 student at Kgalemang Motsete Junior Secondary School in Serowe, has made Botswana proud by winning the Miss Preteen Hope International 2025/26 title at the Miss Hope Pageants International Competition in Cape Town, South Africa.

This prestigious competition, which took place from November 25 to 29, saw Vivian outshining contestants from 11 participating countries to take home the coveted crown.

Vivian's victory is a testament to her hard work and dedication, and she expressed her gratitude in an interview with *BOPA*, saying the crown would allow her to continue her project: A CHILD A FLOWER.

Her mother, Lydia Keatlholetswe, a Serowe District Officer, was present to witness her daughter's triumph. She shared that the project: A CHILD A FLOWER, was about donating stationery supplies to less privileged children to promote education for all despite their social backgrounds.

Furthermore, the newly crowned queen relayed that Hope International Pageants was a platform to empower young girls and women to use their talents to fulfill their purpose lives.

She said it also encouraged participants to serve in their communities and give hope to the hopeless through community engagements.

Narrating her journey to victory, she said from July 2025 to the finale, she attended Zoom trainings, which

covered the following: identifying talents, developing projects and managing them, and interview and presentation tips.

While in South Africa on November 27 and 28, Vivian attended a full training course on discovering purpose, optimally using her talents, and building a business in relation to the mentorship.

She is happy that she has been awarded a certificate for the course, pointing out she also took part in a community outreach programme at a farm where she had a platform to share some gifts with children at the farm.

All these happened prior to her being crowned with the coveted prize of Miss Preteen Hope International 2025/26 at the grand finale held on November 29.

To add cherry on top, she also walked away with the Miss Congeniality Award, a feat she stated would accord her an opportunity to continue with her philanthropy work.

The young star is of the view that winning the pageant has created her a platform for personal growth.

She attributed her victory to all Batswana who supported her all the way, more especially her parents, Kgalemang Motsete Junior Secondary School Head Ms Botho Supang and school management; Serowe District Council Social Worker, Mr Tshepiso Molefe, Botswana Hope International Director Ms Tlhatlogo Madiba and the Department of Information Services for providing media coverage throughout her journey. *BOPA*



Thirteen-year-old Vivian Keatlholetswe shone on the global stage in Cape Town, winning the Miss Preteen Hope International 2025/26 crown. The Kgalemang Motsete JSS learner brought pride to Serowe and the nation with her outstanding performance at the Miss Hope Pageants International Competition. Photo: Baldwin Nyamande

Fujian art, cultural heritage attracts visitors

TAIPEI - Huang Shou-kun sprinkled yellow, red and blue lacquer pigments into a small tank of water, letting them drift across the surface before guiding a visitor in dipping a miniature fan beneath the floating colours and then lifting it out via one swift motion, revealing a spontaneously formed, yet artfully patterned, multicoloured fan.

"Only 30 seconds and it's easily done," the lacquerware artist told visitors at a booth at the ongoing 2025 Kaohsiung Winter International Travel Fair in the city of Kaohsiung of south Taiwan.

Born in Taiwan, Huang now runs a lacquer art workshop in Fuzhou, capital of eastern Fujian Province. Invited as a provincial-level representative inheritor of Fujian bodiless lacquerware, he is presenting this craft at the fair in the exhibition area of the mainland-based Association for Tourism Exchange Across the Taiwan Straits.

"It is enjoyable to see how art is woven into our daily lives in so many ways," said 60-year-old Lo Yin after watching Huang demonstrate and explain lacquer applications on umbrellas, cups and sculptures.

"Maybe it will be a good choice to visit Fujian on my next trip to the mainland to learn more about its art and culture," added Lo, who recently returned from visiting Zhangjiajie National Forest Park in central Hunan Province and southwestern Chongqing Municipality.

The exhibition area has also featured Nanyin performances. Nanyin is a classical musical performing art originating in the city of Quanzhou in Fujian, and the performances at the fair were jointly given by a duo, one of whom is a national-level representative inheritor and the other a Fujian provincial-level inheritor.

A signature part of the arts in Minnan culture, Nanyin was included in the first batch of China's national intangible cultural heritage list in 2006 and inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009.

Meanwhile, iconic Fujian specialty products being displayed in the exhibition area including Pien Tze Huang Pearl Cream, preserved olives, and dried longan -- have also attracted interest from visitors.

Some are even eager to buy

them after trying them out. Sun Chen-ming, who has visited the mainland many times, including Fujian, was especially drawn to tea grown and baked in Fujian, which has a different flavor from the tea produced in Taiwan.

"I was told these boxes of tea are for display only, but I'll try my luck when the fair ends to see if I can buy a box to take home," he said, while holding two prints of the Chinese character Fu, which means good fortune, he ink-typed from a device provided in the exhibition area. According to tourism insiders, Fujian has always been a steady destination for Taiwan travelers -- not only because of its proximity to the island but also thanks to kinship shaped by shared culture and customs.

Located in Fujian's Putian, the island of Meizhou is believed to be the birthplace of the goddess Mazu. Many also visit Fujian cities like Fuzhou and Quanzhou, from where their ancestors moved to Taiwan, in a bid to trace their roots, she added.

Huang, meanwhile, prepares dozens of blank miniature fans each day at the fair to cater for visitors keen to try lacquer colouring.. *Xinhua*

Multitudes attend China-backed Africa show

NAIROBI - More than 500 young artists attended pre-auditions for Sing for Africa, a Chinese-sponsored musical talent show at the University of Nairobi, Kenya's oldest university.

The show was launched recently by China's Hunan TV International in collaboration with a local media partner.

Contestants showcased skills in various genres, including urban hip-hop, neo-soul and rhythm and blues. Among them, 22-year-old Edwin Muiruri performed a love ballad in his native dialect, drawing attention with his guitar skills.

Muiruri, along with other early arrivals, sought a place in the highly competitive boys-only auditions. "Since my musical journey began at the age of five, I have never looked back.

I will present a song that preaches the language of love," Muiruri said, praising the show for inspiring young people to embrace their continent and engage with other

cultures, including China.

The show, designed to nurture young singers and strengthen Sino-African cultural ties, features open auditions, knockout rounds and a grand finale. Beyond a top prize of one million Kenyan shillings (about 7,750 U.S. dollars), the winner will receive a music tour to China and a recording deal with leading producers.

Dressed in flowing regalia, Jave Samson Mwavita arrived at the pre-audition venue, determined to impress the judges and advance to the next stage.

"This show is a bridge not only between Kenyans but also Africans and the people of China. It will open doors for artists through exchange programs between Africa and China," said the 29-year-old vocalist, songwriter and filmmaker.

The show will expose local artists to Chinese culture, foster cross-cultural fusion, connect them with leading record labels, and propel them to new heights. *Xinhua*

Masunga celebrates Mokgwathi

By Goweditse Kome

MASUNGA - Residents of Masunga thronged the local kgotla recently to welcome home Paralympic sprint runner, Bose Mokgwathi.

Mokgwathi recently won a bronze medal in the 400 metres T13 event at the 2025 World Para Athletics Championships in New Delhi, India, clocking a time of 49.66 seconds.

Welcoming the gathering recently, Kgosi Thabo Maruje III said everyone was there to celebrate the achievement of a young man who defied the odds stacked against him.

Kgosi Maruje III said Mokgwathi was proof that one can come from a rural setting like Masunga and ultimately reach the pinnacle and draw world attention.

He commended government for its long-standing support of sport, noting that sport in Botswana was now evolving.

He highlighted that the event was an opportunity for the community to open doors for young people to excel through sport.

He thus urged parents to raise their children properly and not deny them the opportunity to engage in sporting activities, saying that many dreams were broken by parents.

"As we celebrate you here today, we want to show you that we are the community that raises the best of the best," he said.

Addressing the youth, Kgosi Maruje III spoke about the changing economic landscape, saying "You were born in a country where the diamonds that used to make the country take everything for granted have now run their race and lost value."

For his part, the star, Mokgwathi recounted his journey, which included competing at the Region 5 Youth Games held in Gaborone in December 2028, where he won the gold medal in the 200m T12 and 4x100m relay events and a silver medal in the 100m T12 event.

In 2019, he made his international debut at the World Para Athletics Championships held in Dubai, where he was eliminated in the first round of the men's 400m T13 event.

In March of this year,



Masunga/Letsholathebe councillor, Shandukani Maunge (left), Masunga/Vukwi councillor, Refilwe Dube (second left), Village Development Committee chairperson, Tanawo Gucha (centre), Paralympic sprint runner, Bose Mokgwathi (second right) and Kgosi Maruje III during Mokgwathi's homecoming celebration in Masunga. He won a bronze medal at the World Para Athletics Championships in New Delhi, India. Photos: Goweditse Kome

Mokgwathi competed at the World Para Athletics Grand Prix in New Delhi and won the gold medal in the 100m race.

Several months later, he represented his country at the 2025 World Para Athletics Championships and won a bronze medal in the 400 metres T13 event with a time of 49.66, making him the only athlete from his country to win a medal at the championships.

Aron Mokgwathi, Bose's father, shared his son's background, saying he was born in July 2002 and has three siblings. He said Bose's sight problems were first realised while he was in primary school, after attending pre-school.

He said Bose was taken to the Francistown eye clinic, where the specialist regretfully informed them that nothing could be done in Botswana and recommended seeing specialists in Zimbabwe. Due to financial constraints, the family could not afford the trip.

Mokgwathi said Bose's

serious athletics journey began in 2018 when he joined the National Team and won two gold medals and a silver.

He noted that in 2019, Bose was again selected for the National Team, marking his first international participation in France before qualifying for the World Championship in Dubai, where he did not perform well as it was his debut.

He recalled that in 2023, after a two-year break due to injury, Bose returned to the track, qualified for the World Championship held in France, but again did not perform well as he was still recovering.

For his part, Bose said last year, he qualified for the World Championship held in Japan, where he advanced to the finals and secured seventh place out of eight athletes.

"Things started changing that day. I told my parents that I had been training in Masunga and participating internationally, but now I want to relocate to Gaborone, where there

are better facilities and good coaches," he said. He added that since his parents had continually

supported him, he told himself that he needed to reward them by winning. **BOPA**



Mokgwathi (left) and Kgosi Maruje (right) during the former's homecoming. Mokgwathi advised that Masunga stadium be maintained so that upcoming athletes could be nurtured.