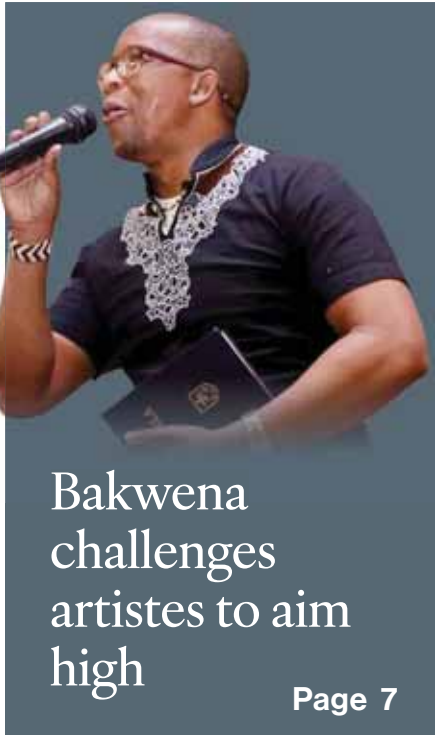


BOTSWANA

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Health facility handover April



The 70-bed hospital in Moshupa will be handed over to government in April and is expected to reduce congestion at other health facilities. Minister of Health Dr Stephen Modise highlighted during a tour of the hospital on Tuesday, that the facility had ample space for additional services, including dialysis, blood cleansing, and kidney treatment.

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Kgosi Mutemo Mbambo (left) and Assistant Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Mr Ignatius Moswaane at National Wetlands Day commemorations in Shakawe on Monday. Mr Moswaane said the Okavango District should take advantage of the Shakawe wetlands city stature to improve tourism avenues and ensure that they benefited communities. Photo: Kedirebofe Pelontle



Exploit Shakawe wetlands city status

Kedirebofe Pelontle
SHAKAWE

The Okavango District should fully harness their wetlands for optimum benefit.

Even though rich with natural resources and being in close proximity to the Okavango Delta, which is a UNESCO World heritage site, Shakawe and the district as a whole remains economically marginalised.

Speakers at the national Wetlands Day commemorations in Shakawe on Monday pinned hopes on the status of Shakawe as a Ramsar site Wetlands City, a rank bestowed on the village last July for its commitment to conservation of the Okavango Delta.

Officiating at the event, the Assistant Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Mr Ignatius Moswaane emphasised that the Okavango District should take advantage of the Shakawe wetlands city stature to improve tourism avenues and ensure that they benefited the communities.

Mr Moswaane observed that the Okavango Delta with its unique and attractive water ways and its diverse wildlife, has potential to create employment opportunities through tourism.

He further implored communities in the wetlands proximity to respect policies and regulations aimed to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources.

Traditional knowledge he said, was also crucial in the preservation of natural resources as cultural beliefs passed from generation to generation played a pivotal role hence this year's event theme appreciated that aspect.

The assistant minister stressed the importance of maintaining good environmental upkeep of natural resources and urged residents to also be alive to the effects of climate change on the

natural resources available in their area. Okavango West Member of Parliament Mr Kenny Kapinga highlighted the need to develop the Shakawe village riverfront to expedite tourism for local communities.

Mr Kapinga observed the need

to relocate some government facilities such as the Botswana Defence Force camp to make way for tourism development.

He said such a move would facilitate establishment of hotels on the riverfront and would support tourism activities such as

boat cruises and fishing, therefore making tourism more profitable for local communities.

Okavango District Council chairman Mr Gaopalewe Ronald observed that local communities depended on the delta for food such as fish and wild fruits, and

used the mokoro (canoe) for transport.

Mr Ronald hence further shared that wetland lands were intertwined with cultural heritage as cultural beliefs helped drive conservation pre-modernisation.

BOPA

Maun steps up for cleaner town

Gaolethoo Kgatitswe
MAUN

The push for a cleaner Maun gained momentum on Friday as North West District Council (NWDC) launched the #KeepMaunClean campaign, linking environmental responsibility to tourism growth, business appeal and community pride.

Community members, local leaders and volunteers fanned out across selected areas of Maun to clear litter and restore public spaces, reinforcing the idea that environmental responsibility begins at the community level before it becomes national policy.

The campaign aligns with a directive introduced by the President of Botswana, which designates the second Saturday of every month as a national clean-up day aimed at fostering a culture of shared responsibility across the country.

Kgosi Oleyo Ledimo, who delivered welcoming remarks during the launch, urged residents to fully embrace the initiative, describing cleanliness as both a civic duty and an economic asset that enhances Maun's appeal as a tourism destination while attracting customers to local businesses.

For his part, Deputy District Commissioner, Mr Ramogapi Gaborekwe described the campaign as a practical step towards building disciplined and responsible communities,



Residents during the #KeepMaunClean campaign launch recently. Community members, local leaders and volunteers fanned out across selected areas of Maun to clear litter and restore public spaces, reinforcing the idea that environmental responsibility begins at the community level before it becomes national policy. Photo: Gaolethoo Kgatitswe

stressing that cleanliness should be embedded in everyday behavior rather than treated as a once-off event.

"Cleaning our environment should not come as a directive from leaders or council, rather it should start from an individual," he said.

North West District Council chairperson, Mr Itumeleng Kelebetse echoed the call for

collective ownership, noting that lasting change begins at the household level and naturally extends to workplaces and ultimately public spaces.

"If we take care of our immediate surroundings, Maun as a whole will reflect that effort," he said.

Maun resident, Ms Gaone Bontsinyane expressed optimism that sustained participation by all

will see Maun set an example for other towns, demonstrating that consistent community action can deliver visible and lasting results.

Beyond litter collection, the #KeepMaunClean campaign positions cleanliness as a long-term mindset, linking environmental stewardship to public health, tourism growth, and community pride.

BOPA

UNICEF donation brings joy to Kgatleng schools

Mmoniemang Motsamai
OODI

The United Nations' Children's Fund (UNICEF)'s School In a Box kit holds much more than just school supplies. It represents hope and the right to education for children in rural communities and the low-income families.

For early childhood learning, the school in a box kit apart from learning continuity, also provides healing to children who have lived through times

of trauma. The school in a box kit initiative according to UNICEF country representative to Botswana, Dr Komanzi Mothengi also brought about joy to the children as some develop new found excitement for school.

Speaking during the handing over of a donation to primary schools in Kgatleng District, in Oodi on Monday, Dr Muthengisaid following the floods that affected schools across the country last year, UNICEF found it fit to donate

some school supplies to stimulate learning. He said UNICEF learnt that thousands of families and 1 800 children were affected by the floods, preventing some children from going to school since many communities in Kgatleng and other districts were affected.

The donation that included 78 boxes of early childhood leaning material, 50 boxes of stationery, 2 006 school bags and 46 boxes of recreational material targeted 20 000 learners across the country,

and is part of UNICEF's mandate : No Child is left Behind.

Since government prioritises Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Dr Muthengi said UNICEF had partnered with government to attain the education transformational process.

"We are committed to strengthening Botswana's education by working with other partners to supplement these efforts," he said.

Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education, Ms Nono Kgafela-Mokoka (left) and UNICEF country representative, Dr Komanzi Mothengi (second left) during the handover of School In a Box kit. The donation will benefit Kgatleng schools that were affected by flood last year. Ms Kgafela-Mokoka acknowledged UNICEF's support in foundational learning and that the donation would complement government's interventions to strengthen STEM. Photo: Mmoniemang Motsamai



Peloetletse urges public officers to enhance accountability

Goitsemodimo Williams-Madzonga
TUTUME

Public officers in the northern region, including Francistown, Sowa Town, Tonota, North East and Tutume districts, have been urged to take accountability and ensure consistent feedback to the citizens they serve.

Speaking during a meeting with officers on Monday, Permanent Secretary to the President, Ms Emmah Peloetletse, emphasised the pivotal role public officers play as key implementers of government policies.

She urged them to seek clarity from their superiors regarding the services they provide, stating that understanding these responsibilities was essential for effective communication and accountability.

Ms Peloetletse pointed out

that delays in service delivery often stemmed from inadequate information sharing within government departments, leading to situations where citizens were redirected multiple times for services that could be provided at one location. This lack of coordination, she said had contributed to public dissatisfaction regarding service quality.

She also indicated that some public officers were falling short in their duties due to a lack of familiarity with their responsibilities, which had resulted in a public outcry for improved service delivery.

To address these issues, Ms Peloetletse announced ongoing efforts to digitise services aimed at expediting processes. She noted that this transition required public officers to be prompt in responding to online requests, thereby enhancing service standards and

reducing congestion in physical offices.

Furthermore, she encouraged public officers to reach out to her office directly regarding any challenges not promptly addressed by their superiors.

Despite the financial and physical challenges facing the country, Ms Peloetletse expressed confidence in curbing leakages that drain government resources, which she believed would contribute to realising the vision of a new Botswana.

She also noted that while National Development Plan 12 and the Botswana Economic Transformation Plan were underway with their coordinators, public officers were welcome



Ms Emmah Peloetletse

to propose ideas for rebuilding and revitalising the nation's economy.

In response, officers suggested to the Permanent Secretary that the government should consider reducing allowances paid to some officials, including senior government employees, to align with the current financial climate.

They also supported the re-insourcing of previously outsourced services, such as security and cleaning, which they said had historically facilitated corruption and inflated charges by service providers, adversely impacting employee compensation. **BOPA**

Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education, Ms Nono Kgafela-Mokoka, acknowledged UNICEF's impactful support in foundational learning, and that the donation would complement government's interventions underway to strengthen STEM.

She commended the organisation for playing a part in education, stating that government's partnership with UNICEF was critical in providing support to vulnerable children and bridging the education gaps.

Ms Kgafela-Mokoka assured partners that donation would be used transparently and in line with its intended purpose.

The ministry's permanent secretary, Ms Mmamiki Kamanakao, said the timing was appropriate, when STEM driven education should be strengthened in accordance with the ambitions of the new administration.

She said the ministry had been tasked with ensuring that the learning environment was child friendly as the enrolment of foundational learning was increased.

"It is worth mentioning that these materials are offered in live with government's STEM curriculum for early childhood development," he said.

Meanwhile Kgatleng East MP Mr Mabuse Pule, noted that the collaboration between UNICEF and government had yielded positive results in early childhood learning.

"UNICEF has always been a strategic partner in providing expertise to education and improving learning outcomes. This donation will complement government interventions in hard to reach areas," he said.

Mr Pule appealed to government to prioritise fixing dilapidated school infrastructure and learning resources. **BOPA**

Health facility handover April

Marvin Motlhabane
MOSHUPA

Minister of Health, Dr Stephen Modise says the 70-bed facility will spare patients from Moshupa and surrounding villages the need to travel long distances to Princess Marina Hospital for specialised care.

He said in an interview after the tour of the facility that although the hospital was originally slated to open to the public in October last year, progress was on track and the facility was now expected

to be officially handed over in April. He noted that the building's design allowed for future expansion and optimisation of space to increase bed capacity if required.

Dr Modise highlighted the hospital's ample space for additional services, including dialysis, blood cleansing, and kidney treatment.

He added that the facility could be adapted to accommodate outpatient clinics and host visiting specialists for large-scale health campaigns, enabling them to serve many patients in a single day.

He reaffirmed the government's commitment to fully equipping

the hospital to deliver a range of specialised services, including paediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology.

While expressing satisfaction with the construction progress, Dr Modise admitted frustration over the lengthy timeline to completion.

He also raised concerns about potential staffing challenges, noting that shortages of healthcare personnel could hinder service delivery despite efforts to address them. Director of Primary Health Care in the Ministry of Health, Dr Bobby Kgosiemang, assured that preparations for the hospital's

opening were well advanced.

He confirmed that recruitment of nurses and doctors had already been completed, with staff training and induction scheduled to begin shortly. All necessary equipment, including ambulances, are ready for use. Project manager, Mr Daniel Lysson reported that construction was fully complete and current focus was on inspection, testing, and commissioning of all installed machinery and electrical systems to ensure they meet required standards. **BOPA**

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Makopong community unite to shield Zone 13 from FMD threat

Naomi Leepile
MAKOPONG

Residents of Makopong in Kgalagadi South have launched a grassroots border protection initiative to safeguard Botswana's livestock industry from the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak currently escalating in neighbouring South Africa.

Led by the Makopong Farmers Committee, the community began a strategic fortification of the international borderline on January 27.

The move comes as a response to the threat the virus poses to livelihoods and the national economy.

The primary goal is to maintain the status of Zone 13 as an FMD-free 'Green Zone', a region recognised as one of the nation's most vital contributors to beef production.

Speaking on the urgency of the situation, Councillor for Makopong area, Mr Shimane Bimbo, emphasised that the time for total reliance on government had passed.

"It is the duty of every responsible citizen to stand and step up during times like this and be wholeheartedly patriotic to our country without looking and relying solely on the government," Councillor Bimbo said.

He explained that the committee's resolution to inspect and repair the border fence served as an essential precautionary measure to prevent cloven-hoofed animals from crossing between Botswana and South Africa.

The community-led project has identified critical vulnerabilities along the border, including a shortage of 1.6-meter standard poles, a need for fresh barbed wire, and several burrow pits under the existing barrier fence.

Furthermore, Mr Bimbo explained that the patrol road had become largely inaccessible due to the overgrown of the invasive

'It is the duty of every responsible citizen to stand and step up during times like this and be wholeheartedly patriotic to our country without looking and relying solely on government'



A volunteer from Makopong farming community, Mr Kilelo Moagele repairing a Foot and Mouth Disease cordon fence. Makopong residents have launched a grassroots border protection initiative to safeguard Botswana's livestock industry from the disease outbreak currently escalating in South Africa. Photo: Naomi Leepile

Prosopis mesquite (Sexanana) tree.

To address these gaps, he said residents had already begun making individual contributions of P200 or more to fund materials and provide food for the volunteer workforce.

Despite the high level of commitment, Mr Bimbo said the committee had reported a significant shortage of equipment, including chainsaws, shovels, and axes.

He noted that there was also an urgent request for a grader to clear and demarcate the patrol line, which was essential for monitoring prohibited crossings in ungazetted areas.

The community was hopeful that their patriotic efforts would be bolstered by additional support to ensure that the newly established funds for FMD were used to fully erect a secure cordon fence, permanently protecting the cattle-rich Zone 13.

Adding his voice to the call for national solidarity, Makopong Tribal Representative, Kgosi Obenne Matshogo urged other communities along the borderline to follow Makopong's example.

He warned that the fight against FMD was a collective responsibility, as an outbreak in a single zone could lead to a nationwide agricultural crisis.

Kgosi Matshogo noted that preventing the spread of the disease into the country was a task for every citizen, stressing that benchmarking from proactive communities like Makopong, was key to securing Botswana's economic future. **BOPA**

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Zimbabwe mineral exports reach US\$3.4 billion in 2025

HARARE

Zimbabwe's mineral exports reached US\$3.4 billion in 2025, up from US\$2.9 billion recorded in 2024, the Minerals Marketing Corporation of Zimbabwe (MMCZ) said Tuesday. According to the MMCZ, a state-owned enterprise mandated to market and sell all of Zimbabwe's mineral resources, excluding gold and silver, cumulative mineral sales in 2025 reached over 4.8 million metric tonnes. The MMCZ said the strong sales performance reflected improved market conditions, enhanced operational efficiencies and the benefits of strategic systems upgrades. **Xinhua**

Haier debuts in South Africa and eyes local market

JOHANNESBURG

China's home appliance giant, Haier on Monday held a launch ceremony in Johannesburg, South Africa's economic hub, marking its official entry into the South African market. Li Huagang, senior vice president of Haier Group, described South Africa as a strategically important market with significant opportunities. He said the company places high importance on the market and viewed it as a key hub for future expansion across the wider southern African region. Highlighting its focus on environmentally friendly innovation, Haier showcased a range of smart home appliances at the event, including washing machines, refrigerators, and air conditioners. Li said Haier had tailored its product lineup to local market conditions, introducing solutions designed to meet customer needs, such as solar-powered air conditioners aimed at easing the burden of high electricity costs. **Xinhua**

Tanzania seeks loan to expand Dar es Salaam port

DARES SALAAM

The government of Tanzania is in talks with the World Bank to secure a low-interest loan for the construction of four new berths at the Dar es Salaam port, an official has said on Tuesday. Deputy Minister of Transport David Kihenzile told parliament that the expansion would enable the port to accommodate more large vessels at the same time, strengthening its regional and international competitiveness. Responding to concerns over port congestion, Kihenzile said the additional berths would ease bottlenecks and improve vessel turnaround times, noting that the project aligned with rising cargo volumes and growing demand for maritime transport in the region. **Xinhua**

Africa solar expo to advance green transition

NAIROBI

The Intersolar Africa 2026 opened Tuesday in Nairobi, attracting more than 100 regional and global exhibitors to showcase technologies powering the continent's green transition.

Senior government officials, industry executives, and innovators attended the opening ceremony of East Africa's leading exhibition and conference on solar power and energy storage, which runs until Wednesday.

Alex Wachira, principal secretary in Kenya's Ministry of Energy and Petroleum, said solar technologies had accelerated the green transition in Africa, while boosting climate resilience and inclusive growth.

"Solar power is playing a significant role in the continent's green energy landscape, providing grid stability, reliability and affordability," Wachira said.

Currently, grid-connected solar represents about 6.5

per cent of installed capacity in Kenya, equivalent to over 200 megawatts, or about 440 gigawatt-hours annually, said Wachira.

The solar photovoltaic (PV) capacity in Africa grew from 2 935 megawatts in 2024 to 4 498 megawatts in 2025, according to the Africa Market Outlook for Solar PV 2026-2029, which was launched at the Intersolar Africa expo.

Alyssa Pek, strategy director for the Global Solar Council, a

clean energy industry lobby, said Africa had emerged as one of the most strategic markets for solar products, driven by the need to achieve net-zero targets and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Pek noted that 2025 marked the fastest growth year on record for Africa's solar market, with 4.5 gigawatts of solar PV capacity installed, representing a 54 percent year-on-year increase.

"We believe that Africa's solar market is growing beyond our expectations," Pek said. **Xinhua**

‘Moleta ngwedi ke moleta lefifi’



Tona wa lephata la pereko le selegae, Major General Pius Mokgware (mojeng) le mopalamente wa pele wa Lobatse, Rre Nehemiah Modubule morago ga phuthego ya kgotla bosheng. Banni ba Lobatse ba rotloeditse puso go gatela pele ka go tlhoma kgotla ya molao motheo.

Senepe: Calviniah Kgautlhe

Ba Gobojango le Mathathane ba ntsha maikutlo ka kgotla ya molao motheo

Chendzimu Manyepedza
GOBOJANGO

Banni ba Gobojango le Mathathane mo kgaolong ya Bobirwa ba supa fa ba le bete se molangwana ka go tlhongwa ga kgotla ya molao-motheo.

Ba supile maikutlo a bone mo di phuthegong tsa kgotla tse di neng di buisiwa ke tona wa lephata la ditlhaeletsanyo le ditlhamo, Rre David Tshere kwa Gobojango le Mathathane ka Labobedi.

E re ntswa ba dumalana le gore molao-motheo o ka baakanngwa, banni ba metse eo, ba ntshitse mabaka a a farologanyeng kgaatlanong le go tlhomiwa ga kgotla ya molao-motheo.

Mongwe wa dibui, Rre Norman Mmadithaba wa Mathathane a re go tlhomiwa ga kgotla ya molao-motheo go ka babalela itsholelo e e sa direng sentle. A re ntswa go le bothokwa go baakanya molao motheo, puso e ka seka seka go fetola le go thatafatsa dingwe di tsetlana tsa melao le go godisa dikgotla tshekelo tse di setseng di tlhomilwe.

A re kgang ya go tlhoma kgotla ya molao-motheo e tsile ka nako e e seng maleba e bile puso e e potlaketse go feta dikgang tse dingwe tsa ditshwanelo tsa setho

di akaretsa botsogo le thuto.

Rre Mmadithaba a re go tlhomiwa ga lekgotla leo go ka kgotlela ledula le kagiso mo lefatsheng, ka jaana merafe ka go farologana e ka batla go itsheka gongwe le gone go seka dikgang tsa lefatsheng. Rre Meshack Makgosa wa Mathathane a re dikgang tsa go tlhongwa ga lekgotla la mofuta oo di ka baka ketsaetsego ka jaana go lebege di dirwa ka lepotlapotla.

A re go ne go le bothokwa go rutuntsha batho ka bothokwa jwa lekgotla leo, a supa fa bontsi bo le mo lefifing, mme go ka baka gore ba tseye ditshwetso tse di seng maleba ka ntlhaya tlhalelo ya thuto mabapi le gone go tlhongwa ga lekgotla le.

Rre Simione Tshwene le ene o supile fa kgang ya lekgotla le le akantsweng leo e bakile ketsaetsego ka jaana bangwe ba supa fa le tla fa bangwe dithata tsa go nna le ditshwanelo ntswa ba amega mo melatong ka go farologana e e akaretsang thubetso, polao le e mengwe, selo se aren se ka gataka ditshwanelo tsa batswa setlhabelo.

Rre Gaedupi Dialwa wa Gobojango a re tshekatsheko ya go tlhongwa ga lekgotla leo e tsile ka nako e e seng maleba, a supa fa mo nakong eno batho ka bontsi

ba wetse maikutlo ka seemo se se tsweletseng ka go wela tlase kwa dikokelong le dikokelwana ga mmogo le mo lephateng la thuto.

O supile fa itsholelo mo malwapeng ka bontsi e ngomola pelo, ka jalo a re puso e tlhome matlho diemo tse ka jaana le tsone di tlotlomatsa ditshwanelo tsa batho.

Rre Morgan Makgaswane ene o supile fa go le bothokwa gore batho ba tlhaloganye molao motheo le ditsetlana tsa one, a re go dira jalo go ka ba thusa go ntsha seabe se se utlwalang.

A re go bothokwa go baakanya mongwe melao ka jaana e sena tomagano. Fa a fa tekodiso, Tona Tshere a re tshekatsheko ya go tlhongwa ga lekgotla la Molaomtheo, e tla morago ga go lemoga fa gole bothokwa go baakanya molao motheo wa lefatsheng leno o saleng o tsena mo tirisong bogologolo.

A re dingwe ditsetlana tsa molao motheo di siilwe ke nako e bile di baya bangwe ka fa mosing, ka jalo a re lekgotla la Molaomtheo le ka thusa go rarabolola dingwe dikgang tsa mofuta oo.

A re lekgotla leo le tla a bo le itebaganya le go tlotlomatsa le go somarela ditshwanelo tsa setho.

BOPA

Calviniah Kgautlhe
LOBATSE

Banni ba Lobatse ba rotloeditse puso go gatela pele ka go tlhoma kgotla ya molao motheo ba re nako kgolo ke eno.

Ba buile seo mo phuthegong ya kgotla e e neng e buisiwa ke tona wa lephata la pereko le selegae, Major General Pius Mokgware kwa kgotleng ya Peleng kwa Lobatse bosheng.

Fa a tswa la gagwe mona-le-bogole, Rre Michael Thamage, a re o amogela mogopolo wa go tlhomiwa ga lekgotla leo ka gore go ‘leta ngwedi ke go leta lefifi.’

A re molao wa bana-le-bogole o kwadilwe mme ga o diragadiwe ka jalo go tlhomiwa ga kgotla ya molao motheo go tlaa ba thusa gore ba nne le kwa ba ka ikuelang teng kwa go maleba.

O tlhalositse gore e re ntswa molao o tlhomilwe, bana-le-bogole ba beilwe ka fa mosing ka molao o sa diragadiwe mme e bile ba solofela go le go ntsi thata mo lekgotleng le le tlaa tlhomiwang gore ditshwanelo tsa bone di seka tsa tsuulolwa. Kgosi Tebogo Kemoabe wa Peleng a re tlhako e tsenye kgamelong ka jalo go tshwanetse gore go sekasekiwe dikgang tsa kgokgontsho ya bong.

A re bomme ba isa dikgang kwa makgotleng le kwa go ba sepodisi mme morago ba tloge ba je semenogane ba fetoga batlhanka ba mafoko a bone ba lebile fela gore ba ka tloga ba bolawa ke tlaa.

A re marara ba tshwenngwa ke gore palo ya ditsheko tsa kgokgontsho ya bong e golela pele ka jalo seemo se se tshwanetse sa tsibogelwa, a re go tlhongwa ga kgotla ya molao motheo gongwe go tlaa fokotsa koketsego ya dikgetse tsa mofuta oo.

Moruti Solomon Diphoko ene a re puso e magorogo masha ka jalo Batswana ba tshwanetse ba e neela sebaka gore ba ithulaganye mme ba diragatse ditsholofetso tsa yone go isa lefatsheng leno kwa pele.

O ne a rotloeditse puso gore e tswelele e tsepame mo go se e se batlang go se dira go itsa go ntshiwa ke ope mo seporong.

Rre James Makwati o amogetse mogopolo ka tsoo-pedi a bolela gore dikgang tse di amang molao motheo di ntse di tsaya lobaka go wediwa mme jaanong go tlhongwa ga lekgotla leo go tlaa fefosa ditsheko. Fa a tswa la gagwe,

a eme kgatlanong le tshimolodiso eo mo sebakeng se, mopalamente wa pele wa Lobatse, Rre Nehemiah Modubule a re maikarabelo a kgotla ya molao-motheo ke go ranola le go sireletsa molao motheo mme jaanong go

bothokwa gore go tle tsheka-tsheko ya molao motheo pele mme go dirwe Constitution Review Act.

A re go bothokwa go nonotsha makgotla go a neela dithata go kgona go seka dikgang tsa molao motheo. Godimo ga seo, a re go bothokwa go dira dilo ka matsetseleko, le gore molao wa Bogosi o tshwanetse wa nonotshiwa gore Dikgosi di fiwe dithata. A re go ya ka molao motheo Tautona o filwe dithata tsotlhe tsa go tlhophisa baatlhodi ba Judicial Service Commission mme seo se tshwanetse sa baakanngwa mme morafe o neelwe dithata tseo. Mme Kenanao Mononi ene o ne a kopa gore go tlhomiwa go lekgotla leo go emisiwe pele, mme go etelediwe pele dikgang tsa ditlhabololo tse di ka fetolang matshelo.

O supile a ipelaetsa gore lekgotla leo le ka nna la dira gore mongwe le mongwe a ipagololele mogodu ka mabaka a ditshwanelo mme seo se tloge se tsise tlhakatlhakano mo ngwaong. A re kgotla kgolo ya boikuelo le kgotla kgolo ya ditsheko di teng ka jalo ba ka nonotshiwa gore ba dire tiro eo ya go sireletsa ditshwanelo.

Mme Mononi a re go bothokwa gore go etelediwe pele tse di tlaa tlhamelang batho ditiro ko pele mme lekgotla leo le tlaa latela morago ga seo.

Faa mo tlatse, Rre Oabile Matlale a re dikgang tse di amang molao motheo di tsweletse di a sekwa kwa makgotla tshekelong mme di a rarabololwa fela sentle ka jalo a re lepotlapotla le ja mong.

Mme le ene fela jalo a re go bothokwa gore go etelediwe dikgang tsa ditlhabololo kwa pele mme go tlangwa ga lekgotla leo go dirwa kwa morago.

Go le pele, fa a ba ama ka lefoko, Tona Mokgware a re nako e gorogile ya gore Botswana a nne le lekgotla le le haphegileng go lebelela dikgang tsa ditshwanelo.

O tlhalositse gore mogopolo o o tsile morago ga gore ba ralale dikgwetlho tse ba lemogileng fa di ka rarabololwa fela ke tshimolodiso ya kgotla kgolo ya molao motheo.

Ka jalo, a re go bothokwa gore Motswana mongwe le mongwe a bue a ntshitse phega, a ipele ka go tsaya karolo mo go ntsheng mogopolo.

Tona a re dikgang tse di tlhokang kgotla ya molao motheo di mafaratlhatlha ka jalo go tlhongwa ga lekgotla leo e tlaa nna tharabololo ya dikgang tse di ntse di baya ba bangwe ka fa mosing. A re kgotla kgolo ya ditsheko e e teng ga e kake ya kgona go rarabolola dikgetse dingwe ka jalo kgotla ya molao motheo e ka tlhotlha dikgang tse ka bokgabane.

O boleletse banni ba Lobatse gore go bothokwa gore e re pele ga go fetolwa molao motheo wa lefatsheng go bo go tlhomilwe pele kgotla ya molao-motheo.

A re ka nako ya fa phathi e e busang ya Umbrella for Democratic Change e ne e isitse kgang ya bone kwa kgotla kgolo e ne ya re yone ga e a nonofela go tsaya ditshwetso mo dikgannyeng tsa ditshwanelo.

BOPA



Letlhakeng District councillors during an address by Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Mr Nelson Ramaotwana on the establishment of the Constitutional Court recently. Councillors expressed their support for the establishment of the court. Photo: Mothusi Galekhutle

Councillors embrace Constitutional Court establishment

Mothusi Galekhutle
LETLHAKENG

Letlhakeng district Councillors have expressed their backing for the establishment of the Constitutional Court.

They endorsed the creation of the court during a consultation meeting held recently, addressed by the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Mr Nelson Ramaotwana.

Minister Ramaotwana informed the council that the first step in setting up the Constitutional Court as the nation's highest court was to amend Chapter 6 of the constitution to officially recognise it as the Supreme Court.

He also discussed consequential amendments to the constitution, including a related amendment to Chapter 2. He emphasised that establishing the Constitutional Court as Botswana's highest court was crucial as it would safeguard human rights and interpret the constitution.

He said the Constitutional Court was a specialised or exclusive jurisdiction over constitutional and human rights matters, unlike the High Court and Court of Appeal, which have general jurisdiction.

The Constitutional Court, he said, would prevent abuse of power by Parliament and ensure that Parliament did not undermine the constitution or human rights,

providing necessary checks and balances.

He noted that the Constitutional Court could challenge laws before they were enacted, even at the bill stage, if it felt they violated the constitution or human rights, rather than waiting until after they became law. He also stated that the court would play a key role in providing checks and balances during the planned comprehensive constitutional review.

Mr Ramaotwana said the proposed Constitutional Court would also handle cases related to election petitions and property rights, which would require further constitutional amendments. He assured that any constitutional changes would be made through a referendum.

The minister noted that Constitutional Court would be court of first instance on matter within its jurisdiction and would hold final appellate jurisdiction on such matters.

He emphasised that the Constitutional Court would protect everyone, including the less privileged, marginalised groups, and those facing discrimination. Mr Ramaotwana stated that if the government failed to enforce human rights, the Constitutional Court

would compel it to do so.

In addition, he said during the establishment of the Constitutional Court, a deputy chief Justice position would be introduced.

Making an input to the presentation, Letlhakeng councillors expressed their support for the establishment of the court, emphasising that it would protect fundamental human rights and ensure that their tribe, the Bakgalagadi, was recognised by the constitution.

They stressed that the Constitutional Court would prevent any tribe in Botswana from being disenfranchised and ensure equal recognition for all tribes.

Councillor for Sesung-Metsibothoko, Mr Tshokodiso Raselepe stated that the creation of the Constitutional Court would provide the Bakgalagadi tribe with an opportunity to guarantee their constitutional recognition and prevent disenfranchisement.

Mr Raselepe mentioned that if the constitution failed to recognise them, they would turn to the Constitutional Court to defend their rights.

Councillor for Maboane, Mr Nthusang Gabaoage, welcomed the establishment of the Constitutional Court, saying it would bring the Bakgalagadi tribe's recognition in

the constitution and promote equality among all tribes in Botswana.

He added that during any comprehensive constitutional review, they would have the opportunity to approach the court if they felt there were irregularities or if they were being disenfranchised.

Councillor Osupile Metseebapile of Khudumelapye, who believes the time is right to establish the Constitutional Court, suggested that consultations should include all Batswana from all areas, not just the main villages. He expressed hope that the court would help resolve election disputes promptly.

He also urged that the process of establishing the court should not be delayed to pave way for a comprehensive constitutional review. Councillor for Ditshegwane, Mr Tshababule Kgotlhang said the establishment of the Constitutional Court was long overdue and necessary to address human rights issues and prevent marginalisation.

The Deputy Council Chairperson and Councillor for Takatokwane, Mr Johane Gaosafelwe expressed optimism that the Constitutional Court would improve the turnaround time for cases, avoiding the years-long delays currently experienced.

BOPA

Residents fearful ConCourt might abolish death penalty

Thandy Tebogo
KANYE

The atmosphere was filled with tense air as scores of tribesmen and women at Gangwaketse main kgotla took turns to air their views on government's proposal to establish the constitutional court.

The meeting, which went until late evening saw differing views and concerns that the Constitutional Court has the potential to preside over matters of the constitution.

The Minister of Labour and Home Affairs, Major General Pius Mokgware's address recently, sparked a lot of interest and concern among community members, with people expressing strong opinions on how the Constitutional Court might impact on their lives and governance.

The community's concern was that government's focus on the establishment of the constitutional court was now diverting attention and resources from pressing issues such as healthcare, therefore calling for the availability of drugs and medical supplies at health institutions.

One of the residents Kgosi Seate Marumo of Moshana said he was

of the view that the Constitutional Court was going to abolish the death penalty.

Kgosi Marumo explained that death penalty was intended to curtail repeated occurrences of offences.

"Constitutional Court is important but not urgent," he said. He urged the government to prioritise availability of drugs in clinics and hospitals instead.

He expressed a suspicion that the introduction of Constitutional Court was intended to pardon murder convicts. Senior chief representative Kgosi Kwelagobe Mookodi said government had not yet demonstrated the intentions to restore the powers of dikgosi, expressing doubt that the Constitutional Court had the potential to address their concerns as indicated in the ministers' speech.

Kgosi Mookodi said as dikgosi they still felt there was lack of respect for traditional leadership, adding that they were not consulted on the establishment of the Constitutional Court.

Whilst Mr Mokgethi Mmolai, said the public's concerns and proposals were not prioritised indicating that people were expected to foot the bill

for drugs and other medical supplies.

This he said was a heavy burden for Batswana.

Another participant Mr Dikabelo Selaledi said there were pressing matters that government should focus on, saying the country was stricken by Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and experiencing poor food security due to poor registration system, making it difficult for farmers to access ploughing subsidies.

In response minister Mokgware stated that government did not have any intentions of abolishing the death penalty. He noted that the death penalty had strong public support hence its inclusion in the constitution.

He implored the residents to inform themselves and understand issues in a fair manner and approach them with an open mind.

Maj Gen. Mokgware stated that there were only nineteen murder convicts as opposed to comments that murder convicts cells were overflowing.

He also explained that in order to advance developmental projects, government could not only focus on one area of development whilst

neglecting others citing the residents' call for government to focus only on medical supply and drugs as well as FMD alleviation.

He encouraged the community to familiarise themselves with budget allocation saying it demonstrated that critical sectors like health have been prioritised. Minister Mokgware stated that government had prioritised procurement of drugs and medical supplies.

He had earlier on informed the residents that the Constitutional Court would bring peace and tranquility.

The aim he said, was to have a court that could address issues harmoniously and on time citing that human rights issues should be tried by the Constitutional Court.

He stated that the reasons that led to the idea of the establishment of the Constitutional Court was that it was the only court that could resolve inheritance cases.

He also explained that the rights of employees were usually compromised on issues of company liquidation as the liquidation act was not in favour of employees' welfare.

BOPA

Health tops Shorobe priorities

Gaolethoo Kgatitswe
SHOROBE

Calls for urgent improvement in Botswana's health system dominated Constitutional Court consultations in Shorobe kgotla on Monday, as residents urged government to prioritise access to medication and lifesaving services before establishing new judicial institutions.

While the community did not oppose the proposed Constitutional Court, discussions quickly shifted to pressing realities on the ground, with residents warning that delays in addressing the country's health challenges were costing lives.

Kgosi Totang Dingalo of Shorobe commended government for engaging citizens directly on constitutional matters, describing the consultation as a sign of a listening and inclusive administration.

However, residents used the platform to voice concerns that socio-economic challenges, particularly in healthcare, required immediate attention.

Shorobe resident, Mr Ketshabile Mambukushu said although the Constitutional Court was a good initiative, its timing raised questions.

"It is a good idea, but our health system is failing the people, and that should come first," he said, calling for swift intervention to restore public confidence in healthcare services.

Echoing similar sentiments, Mr Oabile Chombo argued that funds intended for the Constitutional Court could be redirected to urgent needs such as healthcare and the deteriorating Maun-Shorobe road, which he described as becoming increasingly impassable.

He said postponing the establishment of the court would be a more responsible approach during this time.

"People are dying simply because there is no medication, and that deserves more urgency than anything else," he said.

For his Part, Mr Zambia Keabetswe welcomed the establishment of the Constitutional Court, noting its potential to address long-standing constitutional issues, including the recognition of tribes previously excluded from constitutional acknowledgment.

"We do not want to go to court to argue for our recognition in the Constitution of Botswana so if the Constitutional Court can resolve such issues, then we welcome it with open arms," he said.

Responding to the concerns, Minister of Transport and Infrastructure Mr Noah Salakae urged residents to view development as a balanced process, cautioning against sacrificing one sector to address another.

"If we abandon other developments to focus on one, we risk undermining the economy and reversing progress," he said, adding that shortages of medication had been a long-standing challenge that would not necessarily be resolved by delaying constitutional reform.

He appealed to the community to consider national priorities holistically, describing the Constitutional Court as a key step in strengthening Botswana's democratic and legal framework.

BOPA



Chinese diver brings deep sea history to surface

FUZHOU

Wearing thick and heavy diving gear, with a humming in his ears, Chen Hao follows a rope into deepening blue. His descent is slow and deliberate in water shrouded by silt clouds and diminishing visibility. Eventually Chen's hand meets wood, the plank of a ship untouched for centuries. Above him lies the open sea and in front of him a concrete vision of history.

For nearly two decades, Chen has been making such descents into the depths of the sea. Now in his early fifties, he is deputy head of the underwater archaeology center at the Fujian provincial research institute of archaeology in east China, and is one of the few Chinese archaeologists who still spends much of the year underwater. From China's northern seas to its southernmost waters, Chen's dives follow routes once traveled by merchant ships along the ancient Maritime Silk Road.

Chen, notably, looks like someone shaped as much by the ocean as by scholarship, being broad-shouldered with skin darkened by a combination of sun and salt. During the chill of winter, when hazardous seas temporarily halt diving, Chen turns his attention to the shore, compiling survey data and gearing up for future dives, among them a joint underwater archaeology effort in South Africa. Though sidelined from diving for now, the ocean still anchors his every endeavor.

"I prefer being at sea to sitting in an office," Chen said. "That's where the historical secrets are." Before the sea became his workplace, Chen had a desk. In 2005, he held a stable office position at the Fujian Museum, and during this time he was sent to observe the excavation of the Wanjiào No.1 shipwreck, a Chinese merchant vessel dating back to the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) that sank off the coast near Fujian's Pingtan County.

"Each day, divers raised hundreds of porcelain pieces from the seabed," he recalled. "The vessel carried tens of thousands of blue-and-white ceramics, preserved so exceptionally that the finds stunned everyone on site." Soon after, Chen left his desk job and applied to enter the field of underwater archaeology.

This transition demanded both physical endurance and resolve. In 2009, at age 35, just within the age limit, Chen joined the fifth national underwater archaeology training programme, becoming its oldest participant and class monitor. Over three months, trainees were required to earn more than a dozen professional diving certifications before moving directly into fieldwork at submerged sites.

"You would collapse into sleep the instant you touched the bed," Chen

recalled. "But the anticipation of handling those relics on the seabed kept you going." Of his cohort from those intense early days, fewer than five remain on the frontlines today. Risk has always been part of the work. Diving off Wenzhou, east China's Zhejiang Province, Chen once operated in almost total darkness underwater, visibility so poor he could not read his wrist computer or compass. He moved by touch and instinct alone, relying on experience to read what he could not see.

Off Fujian's Shengbeiyu islet, meanwhile, the search was dominated by relentless tidal currents that repeatedly dragged him away from the target coordinates. Fighting the water left his legs numb. Back on deck, he would lie still for over an hour before recovering. It was through these punishing dives that the team finally fixed the exact position of a shipwreck dating back to the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368).

Nothing has challenged Chen more consistently than the waters off Pingtan. Winds of force six or higher lash the area more than 300 days a year. Reefs cluster densely, currents tangle and shift, and survey vessels strike hidden rocks that crack their hulls. Yet, historically it was a major maritime corridor in China. For about a millennium, ships streamed through these waters, with many foundering there, leaving one of the nation's densest underwater archaeological fields.

The search for wrecks frequently begins with fishermen. Chen lingers for long stretches along the coast, listening. "Fishermen know the sea better than anyone," he said. "When they say something unusual lies below, it can be the breakthrough." Time is not the only adversary. Looters can devastate a site and erase centuries of accumulated evidence in days. For Chen, protection precedes excavation.

His institute collaborates with the coast guard, police and fisheries authorities, installing 24-hour monitoring in priority waters and carrying out regular patrols. Chen has watched the field evolve through technology. Previously, equipment was mostly cumbersome and rough, heightening every risk and leading to inefficiency underwater.

Today, real-time navigation and communication systems keep divers linked and oriented, while sonar, imaging and sensing tools locate wrecks with sharp accuracy. Still, the act of recovery calls for profound restraint. Ropes, bamboo packaging fragments and hull filling materials can crumble at a touch after centuries underwater. His team uses adapted pneumatic tools to brush away sediment with care and encases delicate pieces in epoxy resin before lifting them to the surface. **Xinhua**



A 30-year-old Ghanzi-based Afro Kwasa artiste, Khoba Mago, popularly known as Major Khoba, has made entrance into the music industry with a unique style of performing in the Naro language. Major Khoba said he first appeared on the music scene in 2018, but later regressed before making a comeback, motivated by support from his followers. He said his renewed journey was driven by his desire to sing in his mother tongue, which allowed him to connect with his ancestors, express his authentic identity and contribute to cultural preservation among indigenous communities. Major Khoba said he had released five singles and was currently working on another titled *Curu the Guu*. The Naro Afro Kwasa artiste is under the tutelage of his producer, Brandon Marimira. Photo: Malebogo Lekula

Bakwena challenges artistes to aim high

Keetile Bontsibokae
MOLEPOLOLE

Born in Serowe in 1978, Gobuamang "Mass" Bakwena, a multi-talented artist has called on Botswana's emerging musicians and performers to strive for international excellence while balancing their artistic pursuits with education.

Bakwena, whose stage name "Mass" originated from a church drama in 1994, has built a career that spans singing, songwriting, choir conducting, ballroom dancing, choreography, and teaching.

His musical journey began at the age of eight during Sunday school at the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA) in Serowe.

At 19 years, he was already conducting major choirs, including Swaneng School Choir, Palapye Crime Prevention Choir, and Molepolole College of Education Choir.

In 2012, he established his Afro-Jazz identity, adding to a long list of achievements: a Diploma in Mathematics and Music, presidency of the Association of Botswana Schools

Performing Arts, record-holder in the Stanbic Bank Clash of Choirs, founder of BOSETU Choir and Unique Rhythms Choir, television presenter, and professional Master of Ceremonies.

Despite his success, Bakwena emphasised the challenges facing Botswana's arts industry, particularly the country's small population, which limits audience size and income opportunities for artists.

"Most Batswana are gifted in various arts, but with such a small fan base, many artists struggle to earn a living and eventually leave the industry," he explained.

He therefore advised young artists to pursue education alongside their creative passions, noting that additional skills could provide stability when the arts alone could not.

"It is discouraging for youth who dedicate themselves to the arts only to find the industry unresponsive to their dreams," he said.

Bakwena encouraged local artists to produce world-class work that could break into international markets, while acknowledging that the domestic industry was slowly showing signs of growth. He also recommended side hustles as a practical way to finance artistic projects, given the high costs involved in producing quality work.

"Those who remain committed and work hard will inspire the next generation of artists," Bakwena concluded, urging perseverance and innovation in the face of challenges. **BOPA**





Arsenal beat Chelsea to reach EFL Cup final

Botswana to host ITF World Tennis Tour events

Anastacia Sibanda
GABORONE

Botswana is set to host the Men's and Women's ITF World Tennis Tour professional events.

The tournaments are expected to attract a significant influx of international players and officials to the National Tennis Centre from May 11-23.

There is no doubt that Botswana tennis is entering one of the most promising periods in its history, fuelled by a surge of exceptional junior talent. Notably, Ntungamili Raguin recently made headlines by qualifying for Junior Grand Slam events, including the Australian Open, Roland Garros, Wimbledon and the US Open.

Alongside Raguin, several other junior stars are showing immense potential, with many eyeing the top 100 position in the International Tennis Federation (ITF) World Junior Rankings. Achieving such a ranking is a critical gateway, allowing athletes to qualify for or better prepare for the prestigious Junior Grand Slam stage. These emerging talents include Tinashe Phatshwane, Lebone Tlape, Malak Macheng and Angel Chakanyuka. Furthermore, Botswana continues to excel in the college tennis pathway, with standout players such as Ekua Youri, Chelsea Chakanyuka, Denzel Seetso, Batsomi Marobela and Mark Nawa.

In recognition of this growing depth, the Botswana Tennis Association (BTA) has taken strategic steps to host ITF World Tennis Tour Junior tournaments. These events expose local players to elite international competition while allowing them to earn valuable global ranking points on home soil.

At the senior level, the BTA is now advancing its efforts to host professional events, providing a viable platform for players to transition into professional careers following their junior development. In an interview, BTA vice president, Nonofu Othusitse noted that in line with international standards, each tournament was identified by gender, prize money and host city. The upcoming events will be designated as M15 Gaborone for the men and W15 Gaborone for the women.

"An M15 tournament represents a men's event offering US\$ 15 000 (over P200 000) in prize money, while a W15 tournament is the women's equivalent," Othusitse explained.

Over the two-week period, Botswana will host four tournaments in total, two for men and two for women. These competitions will allow local athletes to earn crucial international ranking points and compete for a share of the US\$ 15 000 purse per tournament.

Othusitse emphasised that this was a significant milestone, as the ITF World Tennis Tour served as the foundational level of professional tennis and also functioned as the primary bridge linking the Junior circuit to the higher tiers of global professional tennis.

Because ranking points earned at these events are incorporated into the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) and Women's Tennis Association (WTA) systems, players have the opportunity to progress to the Challenger Tour, the ATP/WTA Tour and ultimately the Grand Slams.

For Botswana, hosting the M15 and W15 Gaborone tournaments aligns with the Botswana National Sport Commission's Vision 2028, which seeks to enhance the impact of sport on society, improve athlete performance and elevate the hosting of major events. Furthermore, the initiative supports the country's Vision 2036, which positions sport as a key contributor to national economic growth. **BOPA**

Arsenal beat Chelsea to reach EFL Cup final

LONDON

Arsenal reached the final of the English Football League Cup for the first time since 2018 after edging Chelsea 1-0 on Tuesday to complete a 4-2 aggregate semifinal victory. Chelsea, beaten 3-2 at home in the first leg, dominated possession and created more chances but could not find a breakthrough.

Instead, it was Arsenal that struck deep into stoppage time when Kai Havertz rounded goalkeeper Robert Sanchez and slotted home a low finish. The victory sends Arsenal into the EFL Cup final for the ninth time in the club's history. The Gunners have lifted the trophy twice, most recently in 1993.

The second leg of the other semifinal will be played on Wednesday, with Manchester City, leading 2-0 from the first leg, hosting Newcastle United. **Xinhua**



Chelsea Chakanyuka



Mark Nawa



Denzel Seetso



Malak Macheng



Ntungamili Raguin



Batsomi Marobela



Angela Chakanyuka



Ekua Youri



Lebone Tlape

Barcelona ease past Albacete into Copa del Rey semifinals

MADRID

Reigning Copa del Rey champions, FC Barcelona became the first team to reach the semifinals on Tuesday with a 2-1 win away to second division side Albacete.

Lamine Yamal put Barcelona ahead in the 39th minute, curling a left-footed shot into the far corner after Marcus Rashford won possession in midfield.

With several changes to its starting lineup, Barcelona had struggled to break down a disciplined Albacete defense before the breakthrough.

Rashford sent a low ball across the face of goal in the third minute

and wasted a clear chance five minutes later after being slipped through by Dani Olmo.

Albacete also threatened in the first half.

Agus Medina shot straight at goalkeeper Joan Garcia, while Antonio Puertas twice tested Garcia after turnovers in the Barcelona half.

Ronald Araujo doubled Barcelona's lead in the 58th minute with a header from a corner.

Robert Lewandowski should have made it 3-0 soon after, but fired tamely at Raul Lizoain when well placed. Lizoain later denied Ferran Torres, who replaced Lewandowski as the game opened up, while Albacete

missed opportunities of its own. Jefe Betancor headed over when unmarked and then had a goal ruled out for offside in the 84th minute.

Albacete pulled one back in the 87th minute through Javi Moreno's diving header to set up a tense finish. Torres had a goal disallowed for offside at the other end, and Barcelona defender Gerard Martin cleared Fran Gamez's chipped effort off the line to preserve the win.

Two more quarterfinals are scheduled for Wednesday, with Alaves hosting Real Sociedad and Valencia at home to Athletic Club. Real Betis hosts Atletico Madrid on Thursday. **Xinhua**