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Boko takes up indigenous people cause



Bonang Masolotate GABORONE

President Advocate Duma Boko has accepted a mandate to champion the rights of Africa's indigenous people, saying this was informed by a personal commitment to addressing historical injustices and cultural erasure.

A passionate human rights lawyer, President Boko accepted the new assignment, presented by commissioner, Dr Litha Musyimi-Ogana of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) on Tuesday.

Accepting the role, President Boko pledged to advocate for the rights and dignity of marginalised communities who have long faced discrimination and cultural suppression in Botswana and across the region. "I am honoured and humbled to be asked to be the champion. It is one that I accept with humility," said President Boko, pointing out that the assignment was by nature, what he was accustomed to.

He pledged to raise their voice, protect, preserve and develop solidarity among the indigenous people on the continent.

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President Advocate Duma Boko (left) receiving a letter from African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Commissioner, Dr Litha Musyimi-Ogana, appointing him Champion for the Rights of Africa's Indigenous People at the Office of the President on Tuesday. Accepting the appointment, President Boko pledged to advocate the rights and dignity of marginalised communities who had long faced discrimination and cultural suppression in Botswana and across the region.

Photo: Felicity Male

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Government pushes for digitilisation in schools

Esther Mmolai
SEHITHWA

The Ministry of Child Welfare and Basic Education is making strides in introducing digitalisation in schools across the country.

The initiative aims to revolutionise the way students learn by incorporating technology into the classroom, enhancing teaching methods, productivity and access to resources.

Speaking at Sehithwa Primary and Sekgoma Junior Secondary Schools recently, Minister Nono Kgafela-Mokoka emphasised that digitalisation was the way forward, particularly for learners in rural or underserved areas who would have access to quality education.

This transformation, she said would not only enhance understanding but would also keep learners engaged and motivated. She also said it would address some of the challenges encountered in schools such as overcrowding in classrooms and would reduce hours of contact with teachers because learners would learn on their own.

She said digital learning also eliminated geographical barriers, making quality education more fun and accessible without the need for extensive infrastructure.

“We are forging government-to-government collaboration to ensure our dream comes true as we intend to install digital infrastructure and distribute gadgets to schools to ensure access to technology,” she added.

Ms Kgafela-Mokoka also

acknowledged that the shift would not only benefit learners but teachers as well as support staff as they would constantly seek new knowledge and skills that would help them navigate the ever-changing landscape of their lives and careers.

Self-professional development, she said was crucial as it opened new career paths, boosted confidence and kept employees competitive.

The gathering was also informed that government has infused Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) component into school curricula from early child development to primary and senior levels to foster talent and creativity.

The component aims to harness the diverse talents of learners in sports, arts and culture and foster problem-solving skills as well as prepare them for future careers.

Minister Kgafela-Mokoka also pointed out that government took

“We are forging government-to-government collaboration to ensure our dream comes true as we intend to install digital infrastructure and distribute gadgets to schools to ensure access to technology.”



Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education, Ms Nono Kgafela-Mokoka (left) interacting with Sehithwa Primary School learners during her visit to the school on Monday. She warned learners against bullying each other and engaging in other social ills that could destroy their future. Photo: Esther Mmolai

the school feeding programme serious and advised kitchen staff to adhere to food safety and hygiene standards.

Sekgoma Junior Secondary School head, Mr Lucky Zankare appreciated the renovation of the school kitchen into a state-of-art-facility, a development that has resulted in learners now receiving their meals on time.

The school has an enrolment of 556 learners; 404 of whom are on boarding basis.

Despite that, Mr Zankare complained about shortage of teachers, which he said negatively impacted the quality of education, adding that currently the school

relied on temporary teachers.

He said the school had one permanent teacher each for Mathematics, Social Studies and Physical education. This, Mr Zankare said, weakened the syllabus coverage because focus was given to completing classes while learners at Form 1 and 2 levels were left behind.

“We have never had a fully-fledged staff complement and this contributes to our poor performance.

For the last five years, our performance has been unsatisfactory,” he added. He thus called for the ministry to fill up vacant posts. **BOPA**

High demand of drugs overwhelms Nyangabwe hospital

Thamani Shabani
FRANCISTOWN

Nyangabwe Referral Hospital, the healthcare facility serving the northern part of the country, is grappling with a severe shortage of essential drugs, putting patients and staff at risk.

A recent tour of the hospital by Francistown councillors, led by Mayor Gaone Majere, revealed the dire situation, with deputy head of pharmacy, Fatima Sinkala, attributing the shortage to the hospital's high demand and rapid depletion of supplies.

At the antenatal ward, Dr Kudra Chobanga highlighted the challenges faced by patients and staff, including unavailability of essential drugs and expensive theatre consumables, forcing patients to purchase medications themselves.

Hospital Superintendent, Dr Ivan Kgetse, revealed that the hospital receives the highest number of patients in the country, with its 546-bed capacity often stretched to accommodate up to 600 patients. He emphasised that building another hospital was not the solution, stressing the need for effective management of resources and equipment.

He further said the blood bank was expected to be empty by the end of the month, currently standing at 66 per cent.

For his part, Mayor Majere pledged to work towards finding solutions to the hospital's challenges, acknowledging that both patients and doctors were at risk due to the shortage.

Mr Majere also said the visit has sparked a call to action, urging authorities to address the crisis and ensure the hospital receives the necessary support to provide quality healthcare services. **BOPA**

Child Grant Programme registration ongoing



North East District Council Deputy Council Secretary - Operations, Mr Uyapo Mafunye says registration for the Child Grant Programme has commenced in the district, with more than 186 children already recorded within the first two weeks. He encouraged parents and guardians to come forward and register eligible children. Photo: Goweditse Kome

Goweditse Kome
MASUNGA

Registration for the Child Grant Programme has commenced in the North East district with more than 186 children already recorded in two weeks.

North East District Council (NEDC)'s deputy Council Secretary - Operations, Mr Uyapo Mafunye said in an interview that the plan was to speed up the registration process and ensure that registration was completed by end of March in order to allow the programme to commence in April as intended.

Prior to the take-off of registration, Mr Mafunye said the district council had undertaken consultations with the leadership of villages across the district with the view to help raise understanding and appreciation of the programme.

Information about roll-out of the programme was disseminated through online

platforms, announced during kgotla meetings and at clinics during morning health talks, he explained.

Mr Mafunye said the Social and Community Development (S&CD) offices in villages in the district were serving as registration points and added that so far registration was progressing well.

Regarding requirements that needed to be met for registering a child, he said the child must be under 12 months of age at the time of registration and be a Motswana.

Further, he said a child's primary caregiver should have stayed in the district for more than six months, a requirement that he explained was intended to avert people registering in more than one district.

He said the other requirements included availing a child's birth certificate as well as the caregiver providing proof that the child was legally under their care.

Mr Mafunye said in cases

where one of the parents was a foreigner, the child would still be eligible to benefit from the programme.

on the possibility of the child grant being used for unintended purposes, he noted that it would be necessary to conduct periodic checks to certify that money was being used for the benefit of the children.

“Social workers and other leaders will monitor the condition of children both at home and during monthly clinic visits,” he said, adding that anyone not using the money properly would be liable to legal action under the Children's Act.

On the other hand, he said the district would intensify public education and empower especially the girl child empowerment on the dangers of engaging in sexual activities at a tender age, particularly because of the possibility of teenage pregnancies rising due to young girls wanting to benefit from the programme.

BOPA

Minister supports positive discipline

Esther Mmolai
TSAU

While there is a perception that the abolition of corporal punishment in schools has fuelled indiscipline among learners, the Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education Ms Nono Kgafela-Mokoka has emphasised that corporal punishment is not an effective method in fostering moral development.

Although condemning in the strongest possible terms all forms of student misconduct, she is of the view that children have the right to learn without violence whether in public or private schools and called on teachers to shift towards positive discipline methods to foster a safer and more

effective learning environment rather than relying on physical punishment.

She was responding to comments raised by some teachers who argued that schools were facing challenges of high levels of indiscipline because of the suspension of corporal punishment.

They argued that the growing challenge of learners' misconduct and all forms of disruptive behaviours threatened the safe environment in schools despite efforts to come up with other modalities to enforce discipline.

But the minister stressed that as teachers, they should engage parents because they were the first teachers to mould their children

into good and responsible citizens.

Ms Kgafela-Mokoka blamed child negligence saying some parents had failed to play a crucial role in shaping their children's development and education. Discipline, she said must begin at family level citing the Setswana idiom *Lore lo ojwa lo sale metsi* which relates that parenting is the first line of discipline.

She said some parents expected teachers to single-handedly mould their children and stated that if children were not taught good moral values at home, teachers may also find it challenging to overcome gaps in behaviour.

She called on parents to take it upon themselves to administer corporal punishment, saying

currently the ministry was overwhelmed with cases of children who were demanding compensation after being harmed when corporal punishment was administered on them in schools.

However, teachers were urged to understand that their profession was a calling rooted in deep passion and dedication to nurture students with love and care and not to harm them.

They were encouraged to act as role models to learners and equip them with the behavioural skills necessary to navigate their social environments effectively.

"To ensure positive behavioural support, you should be coming up with alternatives for corporal punishment," she said.

With regard to teachers' welfare, Ms Kgafela-Mokoka urged teachers to exercise patience as the ministry was aware of their unfavourable working conditions and was working round the clock to address them.

The minister also had the opportunity to interact with some learners and warned them against misconduct noting that action would be taken against unruly students.

Learners were encouraged to take their education seriously and to respect teachers and obey school rules as required.

They were warned against substance abuse and violence, bullying, absenteeism and other social ills. **BOPA**

President challenges envoys to market Botswana

Bonang Masolotatse
GABORONE

President Advocate Duma Boko has urged Ambassador designate to Japan and High Commissioner to Australia to leverage their positions to promote Botswana's interests and attract investment.

President Boko expressed the sentiments on Tuesday during a courtesy call by Dr Thuto Mahlanza, High Commissioner designate to Australia and Professor Boga Manatsha, Ambassador designate to Japan.

He emphasised the importance of strengthening ties with Australia and Japan, highlighting opportunities for economic cooperation in mining, technology, healthcare and manufacturing, as the country seeks to diversify its economy and become a regional hub.

When receiving Dr Mahlanza, President Boko advised him to look for opportunities and benefits that the country and Botswana could derive from Australia.

He said Australia and Botswana were mining countries and there

was a lot to be gained from each other.

The President said Dr Mahlanza was taking up the post when multilateralism and world order were facing a challenge, calling for the country to navigate the geopolitical sphere.

He said Botswana remained steadfast in its diplomatic values and ambitions and would work with countries that shared the same values.

Also, he said Dr Mahlanza should serve the interest of the country through business partnerships and attract investment, adding that the country was seeking to be a financial centre and transport hub, areas in which Australia had excelled.

As for Prof Manatsha, President Boko said the country had a good relationship with Japan, having received assistance through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), of which he was also a beneficiary while chairman of the Law Society of Botswana.

The JICA assistance paved way for the recognition of the LSB and his subsequent assignment by the International Bar Association in various capacities.

President Boko noted that Japan was leading in technology and



President Advocate Duma Boko (right) bidding farewell to ambassador-designate to Japan, Prof. Boga Manatsha at the Office of the President on Tuesday. President Boko urged him to attract credible investment and investors that could help grow Botswana's economy. Photo: Felicity Male

digitisation, which the country could learn from and pointed out that other assistance to the country included budget support assistance, digital migration and the Kazungula Bridge project, thus calling for the deepening and strengthening of relations between the two countries.

Another area that the President suggested was the medical and health space, where he said Japan's retired specialists could help improve the country's healthcare.

Manufacturing has been highlighted as another area of interest, where he said Japanese industries could set up and manufacture in Botswana.

President Boko also highlighted that many Botswana students had

studied in Japanese universities, adding that the government would like such opportunities to continue.

As for South Korea, which falls under the Botswana embassy in Japan, he said the country gained independence at the same time as Botswana but had developed into a high-income country, therefore providing a learning opportunity.

Prof. Manatsha thanked the President for the assignment to represent the country in Japan and promised to advance the country's interests, saying he would focus on low-hanging fruits for the country's benefit, citing teaching opportunities for Botswana teachers in Japan and South Korea, and the expatriate labour market for Botswana.

He also added that the Philippines expressed interest in Botswana beef, and they were also into tannery industries.

While Dr Mahlanza said his appointment came at a time when the economy was not doing well, which necessitated him to immediately hit the ground running.

He cited existing opportunities in political engagement and agricultural development, adding that he would service close to 1000 Botswana living in Australia.

He added that the Australians were interested in mining and Africa offered such an opportunity, further noting that the country had a well-developed financial sector, which Botswana could learn from. **BOPA**

Boko takes up indigenous people cause

from page 1

President Boko pointed out that indigenous people in Botswana, South Africa, Angola, Zimbabwe and Zambia, faced challenges, some perpetuated by dominant tribes who labelled them by the main tribes as the San.

"What do they call themselves? Why do we call them the San?" President Boko questioned, pointing out that labelling them and characterising them as hunters and gatherers owing to

their culture was the beginning of the problem.

The word San, he said, was derogatory, but had been convenient for the dominant tribes to refer to them as such.

Also, he said indigenous people had dominant tribes imposing their culture upon them, such as requiring them to have chiefs, herdmen and their deputies.

Such imposition is meant to defy and trample upon the indigenous people's culture, President Boko said.

He appreciated Dr Musyimi-

Ogana's visit since it prompted looking into the injustices meted out to the indigenous people and also stressed the need to have the plight of the indigenous people addressed with their input, because they deserved respect.

He said there would be a series of actions and interventions, to address indigenous people's challenges.

Dr Musyimi-Ogana, said that since President Boko had been championing the rights of the indigenous people, they appointed him to be their champion in

Africa.

She presented President Boko with the letter as well as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

The commission is working on developing the indigenous people's map in Africa, to understand what they call themselves, Dr Musyimi-Ogana explained that there was a need to have data that identified indigenous people across Africa.

She said their knowledge had been misplaced, and in many cases, were misinformed. **BOPA**

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PARLIAMENT 2026

Ministry commits to competitive and inclusive tourism

Mmoniemang Motsamai
GABORONE

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism continues to exemplify commitment to diversification, citizen empowerment and positioning Botswana as a competitive and inclusive tourism destination.

To this end, Minister of Environment and Tourism, Mr Wynter Mmolotsi said the ministry had completed the Mohembo Bridge Infill Tourism Layout. Presenting the ministry's 2026/27 budget request, he said, for the current financial year, they had completed an investment feasibility study for the six priority tourism sites which confirmed that the sites could be financially viable, releasing 130 hectares of land for investment.

In addition to the feasibility study, he said the ministry, in conjunction with Tawana Land Board, was currently assessing 15 remaining properties affected by Mohembo Bridge Tourism layout.

He said compensation for relocation, estimated at P1.4 million, was expected to be completed in the 2026/27 financial year. Furthermore, he said through promotion of private sector led economy, the ministry was imploring stakeholders to partner with government to develop and package urban experiences alongside the heritage and cultural products.

"Building on this momentum, plans are underway to extend City Tourism initiative to Maun, Kasane, Lobatse and Selebi Phikwe during the 2026/27 financial year to ensure that every urban centre contributed meaningfully to diversification, employment creation and improved livelihoods. In fulfilment of citizen inclusion in the tourism sector, Mr Mmolotsi said the ministry strived to make tourism investment land available in Chobe, Gaborone and Okavango Districts.

In Chobe, he said the development of land parcels under the Kasane/Kazungula Redevelopment Project (KKRP) would introduce new hotels and recreational facilities, expand room and space capacity while stimulating the local economy of Kasane and enhancing the Chobe tourism offering. In Gaborone, Mr Mmolotsi said the Block 7 Tourism Precinct presented an opportunity to integrate urban regeneration with tourism in the capital city, creating vibrant mixed-use spaces that combine hospitality, retail, cultural attractions and heritage.

Regarding research and development, he said was regulating and facilitating research and wildlife filming activities across protected areas, wildlife management zones, forest reserves, cultural heritage sites and national monuments. As at January 2026, he said 105 out

of 218 research applications and 43 out of 98 filming permits were approved.

"These permits are more than administrative instruments; they enable scientific inquiry, promote conservation, filming and showcase Botswana's cultural and natural heritage to the world, while also contributing to the national economy," he said.

Regarding Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM), Mr Mmolotsi said the ministry was facilitating joint ventures between community trusts and investors to advance cultural and geographical tourism diversification in the Kgalagadi region.

He added that flagship projects included the Phuduhudu Cultural Village, Khuis Tourism Park and development of a lodge in Khawa, all of which would showcase indigenous knowledge and crafts. Consequently, Parliament approved the proposed 2026/27 total budget allocation for the ministry amounting to over P1 billion to finance both the recurrent and development budget.

The largest share of recurrent budget is proposed to be allocated to the Department of Wildlife and National Parks at a sum of P379.2 million, while the second largest share of P216.9 million would go to the ministry headquarters. The development budget totals P178.6 million for the 2026/2027 financial year and is intended to support 20 projects spanning the five programmes that included infrastructure development programme, which mainly covered the Kasane/Kazungula Redevelopment Project at P85.8 million to ensure completion of ongoing works. The budget would also entail conservation and protection initiatives targeting wildlife species, their habitats and mitigation of human wildlife conflict and would require the second-largest allocation of P44 million. **BOPA**

Govt aligns education system with global trends

GABORONE

Parliament has been informed that the entire education system has been reviewed to align it to contemporary needs of the country and make it globally competitive.

Answering a question in Parliament on Tuesday, Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education, Ms Nono Kgafela-Mokoka said the world had moved from conventional Outcome Based Education (OBE) to Science Technology Engineering Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) driven education to steer holistic child development and skill-based education with a human face or education with production.

Minister Kgafela-Mokoka said as such, the entire general education curriculum was reconfigured from a conventional outcome-based education to a STEAM driven skill and competency-based curriculum, in line with contemporary global education reform trends. "It should be noted that the then Ministry of Basic Education and Skills Development reviewed the General Education curriculum around 2019 to introduce the outcome-based education.

That entailed the development of competency and skill-based curriculum from pre-primary to senior secondary level and was to be implemented in phases starting at

senior secondary level," she added. The minister further said the first phase of implementation started in 2021 in two senior secondary schools at Moeng College which offered horticulture, crop production and animal production while Maun Senior Secondary School offered hospitality and tourism studies.

Notwithstanding, the fact that outcome-based education was in principle a good reform, it did not avail the necessary resources and sufficient capacity building for teachers.

She indicated that no primary school teachers were trained in OBE while in senior secondary schools, 1 185 of 3 232 teachers were trained in various subjects.

Currently, she said government was in process of implementing STEAM-based curriculum which embraced digitisation and was creating borderless classrooms by ensuring that teachers had gadgets and schools were equipped with interactive smart boards.

She said there was Continuous Professional Development Framework which was currently at draft level and the CPD framework would lead to the professionalism of the teaching profession, inculcate a culture of lifelong learning, personal and professional growth. "This will lead to improvement of learner outcomes and motivation of educators

across the sector," she said.

She further said Teacher CPD would be standardised nationally to ensure that all educators had access to quality and relevant development opportunities and were held to the same standard. She said currently, BOTPECO in partnership with Commonwealth of Learning, had developed an instrument which formed the basis of the CPD framework.

Minister Kgafela-Mokoka said in line with standardised pedagogical practices of both teaching and assessment, all teachers across all levels were to be capacitated on the holistic teaching and assessment of a STEAM driven curriculum guidelines, assessment guidelines as well as capacity building on the same which would then be followed by monitoring to ensure quality teaching and learning.

Member of Parliament for Maun West, Mr Caterpillar Hikuama had asked the minister to appraise Parliament on the implementation, success and failure of the outcome-based education as a curriculum reform in the ministry. Mr Hikuama had also asked for a detailed breakdown of the number of primary and secondary school teachers who had undergone formal OBE specific training to date and the timeline for training the remaining workforce. **BOPA**



Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education, Ms Nono Kgafela-Mokoka said the general education curriculum was reconfigured from a conventional outcome-based education to a Science Technology Engineering Arts and Mathematics driven skill and competency-based curriculum, in line with contemporary global education reform trends.

MPs advocate strengthening tourism for diversification

GABORONE

Members of Parliament have identified tourism as the primary engine for Botswana's economic diversification and called for radical shift in infrastructure development and local empowerment to move the industry beyond its current boundaries.

Though MPs backed the Ministry of Environment and Tourism's proposed budget, they warned that the sector's potential as an economic

diversifier would remain untapped unless government addressed anti-business user fees, deteriorating human-wildlife relations as well as lack of infrastructure in remote tourism hubs.

They emphasised the need to promote both domestic and international tourism, increase local participation and balance coexistence of wildlife and human populations. Contributing to the debate on the ministry's budget request on Tuesday, MP for Nata-Gweta,

Mr Lawrence Ookeditse, urged the ministry to prioritise human-wildlife coexistence.

Mr Ookeditse noted that his constituents were severely affected by wildlife conflict that some had resorted to killing animals in self-defence.

He also argued that the Makgadikgadi Salt Pans remained an under-exploited asset, hence suggested conducting further research into the area's ancient history, noting its reputation as a cradle of

humankind.

Again, he called on the ministry to empower community trusts to invest in high-end tourism and ensure wildlife officers were better resourced.

MP for Okavango East, Mr Gabatsholwe Disho, highlighted the need for sustainable, eco-friendly practices to diversify the economy.



Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Mr Noah Salakae told Parliament on Tuesday that Department of Road Transport Services and Botswana Police Service played complementary roles in regulating and enforcing road transport operations in the country.

Salakae defines DRTS and police roles in road regulation

GABORONE

The Department of Road Transport Services and the Botswana Police Service play complementary roles in regulating and enforcing road transport operations in Bo-

swana.

This was said by Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Mr Noah Salakae responding to a Parliamentary question on Tuesday. Minister Salakae explained that DRTS was primarily responsible for establishing policies and proce-

dures that regulated road transport services in line with the country's statutory framework and international best practice.

He said the department also enforced road transport operations through its Transport Inspectorate Division. However, Mr Salakae

noted that the Botswana Police Service was mandated to enforce all written laws in the country, including road transport legislation such as the Road Traffic Act and the Road Transport Permit Act.

The minister explained that under Section 54 of the Road Traffic Act, police officers were empowered to arrest motorists suspected of committing certain offences without a warrant. "These offences include driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, reckless and dangerous driving and causing death by reckless driving. Transport inspectors do not have the power to arrest motorists who violate the Act. Instead, they can only recommend appropriate charges to the police where a road traffic offence is detected," he added.

He further stated that Section 116 of the Road Traffic Act allowed police officers in uniform to stop vehicles, inspect them and ensure compliance with the law.

Other authorised officials, including transport inspectors and licensing officers, he said may also enter and inspect vehicles

or premises where there was reasonable suspicion that an offence under the Act had been committed. Mr Salakae added that regulations under the Act empowered the police to regulate traffic, prevent obstruction on roads and temporarily restrict access to roads during emergencies or public events. With regard to road transport permits, he said Section 27 of the Road Transport (Permits) Act empowered both the Botswana Police Service and authorised officers from DRTS to stop vehicles and demand the production of permits or relevant documents to ensure compliance with the law.

Mr Salakae said the two institutions therefore worked in a complementary manner to regulate and enforce road transport operations and ensure adherence to the country's regulatory framework. Mmopane/Metsimotlhabe MP, Ms Helen Manyeneng, had asked the minister to clarify the respective roles of the DRTS and the Botswana Police Service in regulating and enforcing road transport operations. **BOPA**

Policy reforms to formalise second-hand vehicle industry

GABORONE

The second-hand motor vehicle industry plays an important role in Botswana's economy by facilitating mobility, supporting enterprise development and providing employment opportunities to many citizens.

Answering a question in Parliament on Tuesday, Vice President and Minister of Finance, Mr Ndaba Gaolathe highlighted that at the same time as with many sectors involved in cross border trade and significant cash-based transactions, the industry may present certain vulnerabilities that could expose the country to tax leakages and illicit financial flows if not properly regulated.

Minister Gaolathe said that it therefore required concerted efforts by relevant authorities in order to detect, prevent and combat such ills. "With regard to policy reforms aimed at formalising the second-hand vehicle industry and preventing tax leakages, first and foremost the imported pre-owned motor dealer is a reserved activity for citizens of Botswana or companies wholly-owned by citizens in accordance with Regulation 24 of the Trade Regulations, 2020," he said.

In relation to policy reforms, he said the Ministry of Trade and Entrepreneurship was in the process of amending the Trade Act in order to introduce the Fit and Proper requirement designed to prevent criminals or their associates from being granted licenses to operate car dealerships.

"This regulatory requirement aims to strengthen the licensing framework, uphold market integrity and protect consumers," he explained.

In addition, he said government had strengthened customs valuation controls as the point of importation and enhanced post clearance audit mechanisms to verify the accuracy of declared import values.

Regarding integration of data by key institutions to detect and combat

trade-based money laundering, Mr Gaolathe said the Botswana Unified Revenue Service (BURS) was working in collaboration with other government agencies including the Financial Intelligence Agency (FIA), relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) responsible for financial intelligence, law enforcement, immigration control and transport regulation.

Con... page 8

Govt suspends 132 DM model projects

GABORONE

Government has initially planned to implement 148 projects under the Development Manager (DM) procurement model but only 16 remain on site and 132 has been suspended.

This was said by Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Mr Noah Salakae in response to a question in Parliament from Member of Parliament for Bobirwa, Mr Taolo Lucas on Monday. Mr Lucas had asked the minister to apprise Parliament on the total number of DM model projects that had been cancelled, considered for cancellation or were still being negotiated. He had also asked whether or not cancelled projects or contracts attracted penalties or costs to government and if so, how much money was lost to cancelled projects or owed

contractors of cancelled projects.

Mr Lucas had further requested for the total number and titles of DM projects that had been allowed to continue and the criteria employed in making such a decision.

In response, Minister Salakae refuted that the precise financial implications for the suspended 132 projects would be determined through the ongoing negotiations with the respective development managers and Parliament would duly be informed upon conclusion of the engagements which were expected to end in May.

"16 ongoing DM projects relating to roads and schools' infrastructure were allowed to proceed as they had reached advanced stages of implementation, including construction," he said.

He added that the decision to allow projects to proceed was

informed by the potential job losses for workers and subcontractors, should the projects be terminated, demobilisation costs and contractor claims associated with terminating projects already under construction, risks relating to deterioration of partiality completed works and site security as well as the likelihood of increased project costs, should the projects be re-tendered in future due to inflationary pressures.

On the total cost of the projects that had been allowed to continue and the conditions for such continuations, Minister Salakae said the estimated cost required to complete the 16 projects currently at construction stage was over P11.47 billion (P11 470 654 576.59), which would be spread across budgets up to 2027/2028.

"However, government continues to engage the respective

development managers to explore alternative project delivery methods and funding arrangements that may reduce the financial burden on government while ensuring continuity of critical infrastructure development," he said.

Regarding whether or not government would consider using DM model in the future, Mr Salakae told Parliament that government had revoked the Presidential Directives that authorised the use of the DM procurement model.

"Therefore, government will not be using the DM model in future. However, government remains committed to ensuring that public infrastructure projects are delivered efficiently and sustainably in the best interest of the citizens of Botswana," said Minister Salakae. **BOPA**



Daily Business

BUSINESS BRIEFS

South Africa economy recovery remains slow

JOHANNESBURG

Though South Africa's economy grew by 1.1 per cent in 2025, an economist warned Tuesday that the pace of expansion remains 'slow and uneven' amid persistent structural challenges. According to the latest data released by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), the country's gross domestic product (GDP) increased by 0.4 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2025, marking the fifth consecutive quarter of economic growth. Raymond Parsons, an economist at the North-West University Business School, said the latest data confirmed that South Africa had been experiencing a slow and uneven economic recovery over the past year. Parsons noted that household consumption spending continued to carry much of the burden in sustaining economic activity. *Xinhua*

Kenya to leverage Safari Rally to boost visitor arrivals

NAIROBI

Kenya's tourism board says it will capitalise on the World Rally Championship Safari Rally, set to begin today, to promote the East African nation as a premier sports tourism destination. The Kenya Tourism Board (KTB) said more than 10 000 regional visitors were expected to attend the four-day event in Naivasha, about 90km northwest of Nairobi. KTB CEO June Chepkemei said the agency was using the rally to position Kenya as a multi-experience destination, where visitors could combine coastal excursions, cultural activities, and high-octane motorsports. Chepkemei said fans from Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ethiopia were expected to join local and international spectators for the 2026 Safari Rally. *Xinhua*

Namibia eyes gains from uranium and critical minerals

WINDHOEK

The increasing global demand for critical and strategic minerals, especially uranium, is expected to benefit Namibia as countries look for secure supply chains for energy transition technologies, a report revealed. According to the latest update released late Monday by the Chamber of Mines, the country's mining sector enters 2026 with a 'cautiously positive' outlook, supported by commodity prices for gold, uranium, and base metals, as well as growing investor confidence in Namibia's mineral sector. Despite positive market conditions, the update highlighted several risks facing the sector, including increasing geopolitical tensions, uncertainty in global supply chains, and rising domestic cost pressures. *Xinhua*

Acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti (second left) appreciating the cordon fence maintenance by Bobirwa regiment to control the movement of livestock from Zimbabwe and other areas to prevent the spread of Foot and Mouth Disease. Photo: Chenzimu Manyepedza



Dikoloti hails Bobirwa regiment in FMD fight

Chenzimu Manyepedza
TSHOKWE

The Bobirwa regiment's vigilance and teamwork will contribute to government's goal of effectively fighting Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and combating cross-border stock theft.

This was said by Acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti during the handover of Mmadikgaka Veterinary Camp to the Bobirwa regiment, which has been maintaining the cordon fence along the Shashe River to control movement of animals between Botswana and Zimbabwe.

The camp will be used by the regiments who have been maintaining the veterinary cordon fences in the Bobirwa District.

Dr Dikoloti was optimistic that regular maintenance of the cordon fence by the regiment would make a difference.

"You have shown extraordinary commitment and quick action in the face of adversity. This swift response will not only protect your livestock but also ensure the well-being of the entire agricultural sector," he said.

He stated that community-based approaches, such as mephato, complement existing sustainable land management initiatives, including those backed by the Green Climate Fund, Ecosystem-Based Adaptation and the Migration Plan implemented in Bobirwa and other areas.

He further commended farmers and the community in Zone 7 area for the swift response in combating the spread of FMD.

Dr Dikoloti said the recurrence of FMD outbreaks remained high, primarily driven by persistent challenges such as illegal cross-border movement of livestock and people, and crucially, poor livestock management practices.

Dr Dikoloti further shared that government considered the current FMD threat as an

emergency that had the potential to become a national disaster, considering the rapid spread of the disease across Southern Africa,

He said FMD had the potential to devastate the national economy and livelihoods emanating from the high costs of control measures.

Dr Dikoloti said it was for that reason that the National FMD Command Centre was established to ensure inter-ministerial coordination.

He added that the FMD response plan had been approved with a budget of P97 million for immediate implementation of short-term measures such as vaccines, repair of the cordon fence and other related activities.

For his part, Kgosi Phillip Tamocha of Robelela, expressed gratitude for government's commitment in efforts to fight the spread of FMD.

He said Robelela and Tshokwe communities had long felt the impact of the disease.

Therefore, he was hopeful that the camp would help in the FMD fight.

For his part, Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Mr Ketlhalefile Motshegwa, who is also a Member of Parliament for Mmadinare appreciated the role traditional leaders in Robelela and Tshokwe played in combating the spread of FMD.

He said it was commendable that these communities were actively collaborating and making significant efforts to augment the initiatives put forth by government, thereby ensuring both economic stability and the continued growth of agricultural practices

He said livestock rearing had historically been the foundation of the economies in the communities of Tshokwe and Robelela, and the tradition not only sustained local livelihoods but also played a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage. **BOPA**

Fintech forum urges skills development and policies to advance Africa financial inclusion

KIGALI

Delegates attending the third edition of the Inclusive FinTech Forum in Kigali, the Rwandan capital, have called for stronger policies, investment in digital skills and deeper collaboration to accelerate financial inclusion and fintech innovation across Africa.

The three-day forum opened Tuesday under the theme: Shaping the Future of Inclusive Finance: Innovation. Impact. Connection"

It has brought together more than 3,000 participants from around

the world, including government officials, regulators, investors and fintech entrepreneurs.

Rwanda's Minister of Education Joseph Nsengimana emphasised the importance of equipping young Africans with digital, analytical and entrepreneurial skills needed to drive innovation.

He noted that schools, universities and technical institutions must move beyond traditional teaching models and develop capabilities in data science, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, financial technology and digital regulation.

Rwanda's Minister of Trade and Industry Prudence Sebahizi stressed that technological innovation should ultimately make trade faster, cheaper and more resilient.

"The question is not whether the technology is sophisticated, the question is whether it makes trade cheaper, faster, more inclusive and more resilient," he said, adding that countries must also remain mindful of emerging risks.

Frank Anwelle, country manager for Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone at Payaza Africa, a Nigerian-

based fintech company, said fintech companies were increasingly competing for talent rather than just customers.

"Organisations are no longer competing on products, but on talent, specifically talent that brings integrity to the table," he said.

The Inclusive Fintech Forum is organised by the Kigali International Financial Centre, the National Bank of Rwanda, and the Global Finance and Technology Network, an organisation established by the Monetary Authority of Singapore. *Xinhua*

Dikgang

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Mogokgo o tshwenngwa ke tshenyo ya didirisiwa mo sekoleng

Portia Rapitsenyane
PALAPYE

Mogokgo wa sekole se segolwane sa Lotsane kwa Palapye, Rre Watson Basoli a re o tshwenngwa ke tshenyo ya didirisiwa tsa sekole e e dirwang ke baithuti.

One a ntsha matshwenyego a ka Mosupologo mo bokopanong jwa komiti ya batsadi le barutabana jo maikaelelo a jone e neng e le go tsibosa batsadi ba baithuti ba ba simololang lekwalo la bone ka tsamaiso ya sekole.

Rre Basoli a re e ne ya re mo ngwageng o o fetileng, sekole sa Lotsane sa amogela ditilo tsa baithuti di le makgolo a mane, mme yare mo nakong e khutshwane sephatlo sa ditilo tseo sa bo se setse se sentse ke baithuti ka go sa di diriseng sentle.

Ka jalo, Rre Basoli a re se a tshwenya ka sekole se dira ka bojotlhe go tsibosa baithuti le go ba ruta gore ba tshware didirisiwa tsa sekole jang mme go supagala fa seemo seo se sa fetoge ka baithuti bangwe ba tswelotse ke tshenyo e.

Ka jalo o kopile batsadi go thusanya le sekole go kgalema bana go tswa kwa malwapeng.

Rre Basoli o tswelotse a supa fa go na le baithuti bangwe ba ba utswelang ba bangwe mo sekoleng mme bangwe ba utswa dibeke tse ba tsenyang dibuka mo teng ga mmogo le tsone dibuka.

Mogoko a re e le sekole, ba itemogetse fa go na le dintwa tsa ditlhopho tsa baithuti, mme go supagala di simologile kwa dikoleng tse ba neng ba dira lokwalo la borato teng.

A re sekole se tla a dira ka bojotlhe go sireletsa baithuti ba bangwe mo go ba ba dirang jalo ka go ba tseela dikgato tse di maleba.

O kopile batsadi go ela tlhoko mo bana ba tsenyang dibuka teng fa ba tsena kwa malwapeng ka go nna ba leba gore ba tsentse eng mo go tsone ka bangwe ba tsenya dingwe tse di borai.

O tswelotse a supa fa moithuti a sa tshwanela go tla ka dilo tse di bogale mo sekoleng di tshwana le dithipa, mme fa a ka fitlhelwa ka tsone, o tla a tseelwa dikgato mme a felele a seegetswe fa thoko ka wa bo a le borai.

A re ga go na fa baithuti ba dirisang thipa teng mo ditlutong tsa bone e bile ga go na lebaka la gore moithuti a tsamae ka yone.

O kopile batsadi go tsenya bana ba bone mo tseleng, a re go dira jalo, go ka nolofatsa tiro ya barutabana.

A re batsadi ga ba a tshwanela go palelwa ke bana kana go laolwa ke bana.

O lemotshitse batsadi gore go dira sentle ga moithuti go tsamaelana thata le boitshwaro jwa gagwe, a supa fa boitsholo jo bo siameng jwa ngwana bo mo fa



Batsadi ba le kwa bokopanong jwa komiti ya batsadi le barutabana ya sekole se segolwane sa Lotsane, jo maikaelelo a jone e neng e le go tsibosa batsadi ba baithuti ba ba yang go simolola Form 4 ka tsamaiso ya sekole kwa Palapye ka Mosupologo. Mogokgo wa sekole seo, Rre Watson Basoli a re o tshwenngwa ke tshenyo ya didirisiwa tsa sekole e e dirwang ke baithuti. Senepe: Portia Rapitsenyane

sebaka sa go reetsa.

Rre Basoli a re ntswa sekole sa Lotsane se ageletswe ka terata, ba itemogetse gore go nale bangwe

batho ba ba phunyang terata eo, gore ba ralale sekole.

A re fa dikole ditswalwa ngwaga e e fetileng, ba ne ba dira maiteko

a go tswala diphatlha tseo, mme ya re mo letsatsing le le latelang ba fitlhela terata eo e phuntswe gape.

A re se se supa fa batsadi bangwe mo motseng e le bone ba butsenseng diphatlha tseo maikaelelo e le go ralala sekole ka di ne di thibilwe baithuti ba seyo.

Rre Basoli a re mokgwa o ga o a siama ka sekole se leka go laola metsamao ya baithuti mme bangwe mo motseng ba kgoreletsa maiteko a, a ba a kopa gore ba ba dirang jalo ba emise ka ponyo ya leitho.

O ile a supa gore fa moithuti mongwe a ka dirisa diphatlha tseo go tsena mo sekoleng, motsadi o tla a bitswa mme e nne ene a tla a ntshang madi a go baakanya terata ka moithuti yoo e tlaabo e le ene a tshwerwe a tsena ka yone.

A re go na le dikgoro mo sekoleng mme go rotloediwa baithuti go di dirisa.

Mo go tse dingwe Rre Basoli o ne a re sekole se itlamile gore se tla a tswelotse se ntsha maduo a a kwa godimo ka boineelo, mme ntlang ya tshwaragano ya bone le batsadi, sekole se ka seka sa kgona. **BOPA**

Dipolao di ile magoletsa kwa Mahalapye

Kefilwe Selotlegeng
MAHALAPYE

Kgaolo ya Mahalapye East e setse e gatisitse dikgetse tsa dipolao di feta lesome le botlhano.

Dipalo ka bontsi ke dipolao tsa bomme.

Se se builwe ke mopalamente wa Mahalapye East, Rre Augustine Nyatanga kwa pitsong ya borre le bana ba basimane kwa Taupye ka Labobedi.

A re bontsi jwa dipolao tse di bakiwa ke kgokgontsho le tiriso phetelela ya dinotagi.

Ka jalo, o kopile borre go bua kana go kopa thuso fa ba imetswe ke mathata.

Rre Nyatanga a re bontsi jwa nako, borre ba tsaya tshwetso ya go didimala ba ikhupetsa ka kutlobotlhoko fa ba na le mathata a malwapa kana ba tlhokile kutlwisisanyo le bakapelo ba bone.

A re nngwe ya dikgang tse di tshwenyang ke ya batho ba ba nngang mmogo ba sa nyalana .

A re fa mongwe wa bone a tlhokafala, batsadi gangwe le gape, ba itatola yoo setseng, mme ba mo amoge dithoto tse ba di kgobokantseng mmogo.

A re go dira jalo, go baka kwelotlase ya maikutlo.

O kgothaditse borre go nyalana bakapelo ba bone.

A re go na le lenaneo la Re-A-

nyalana le le thusang thata batho ba ba ntseng mmogo lobaka go nyalana.

Rre Nyatanga a re keletso ya gagwe ke go bona batho ba tshela sentle ba tsaya botsogo jwa bone tsia ka go itlhatlhobela malwetsi ka nako.

Mogakolodi wa tsa botsogo wa BOFABONETHA, Reverend Mpho Moruakgomo o rotloeditse borre go itlhatlhobela malwetsi ga mmogo le go tsaya kalafi sentle.

Rev. Moruakgomo a re dipatiso di supa fa borre ba le bonya mo go tsayang dikgato ka botsogo jwa bone mo ba felelang ba tla ba ikgoga go setse go le thata.

O kaile fa malwetse a sa

tsibogelweng ka nako, a ama botsogo jwa lelwapa mo go tsa tlhakanelo dikobo.

O gateletse botlhokwa jwa puisano mo lelwapeng, a re e hema dilo tse di ka bakang kgokgontsho e ka felelang ka dipolao.

A re gape batsadi ga ba na botsalano le bana ba bone segolo jang borre, ntswa ba tshwanetse go ba ruta maele a botshelo le go ba lemotsha molemo le bosula.

O kopile batsadi go rotloetsa bana ba basimane go nyalana ka bonako le go tswa mo malwapeng a batsadi a tlhalosa gore banana ba tshwanetse go fiwa ditsha ba le dingwaga tse di lesome le boferabongwe, selo se se ka fokotsang dikgotlhang tsa mo malwapeng. **BOPA**

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Minister for State President, Defence and Security, Mr Moeti Mohwasa (right) and Assistant Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Mr Keoagile Atamelang in Parliament. Mr Mohwasa said the Office of the Auditor General was currently undergoing a major legislative overhaul to secure full administrative and financial autonomy.

Legal reforms underway to bolster OAG independence

Tebagano Ntshole
GABORONE

The Office of the Auditor General is currently undergoing a major legislative overhaul to secure full administrative and financial autonomy.

Presenting the budget on Tuesday, Minister for State President, Defence and Security, Mr Moeti Mohwasa, told Parliament that while the Constitution provided for the Auditor General's independence, practical autonomy remained constrained. Currently, he said the Auditor General was housed under the Ministry for State President, Defence and Security and reported to Parliament indirectly through the Minister of Finance.

"To rectify this, a comprehensive review of the Public Audit Act is underway. The review aims to strengthen the independence, legal framework and financial and administrative autonomy of the Auditor General while enhancing immunity and professionalism of leadership and staff," Minister Mohwasa stated.

He added that a policy document following stakeholder consultations was currently being finalised for Cabinet submission as part of broader Public Finance Management reforms. Despite the push for reform, the minister admitted that technical and administrative hurdles had crippled the office's ability to release timely reports.

He indicated that the Government Accounting and Budgeting System (GABS) was ineffective, leading to a three-year backlog in reporting to the National Assembly and audit reports for 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 had all been delayed. He said the 2022/23 report had finally been sent for printing and was expected to be tabled during the current parliamentary session.

Minister Mohwasa warned that such delays undermined public trust and prevented stakeholders from assessing the financial health and integrity of government operations.

To address this, the minister said the Auditor General had conducted a systems audit on GABS, with a final report expected by the end of the current financial year. Meanwhile, to fund operations

for the upcoming 2026/27 cycle, Parliament approved P125 million for the recurrent budget and P4 million for the development budget for the OAG, which its portfolio included 18 ministries, eight independent departments and 31 local authorities.

Additionally, the office oversees

MPs advocate strengthening tourism for diversification

...from page 4

Mr Disho urged government to develop infrastructure in high-potential areas like the Okavango Delta. He noted that the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) was a potential predator hub, and therefore to facilitate easier access, he proposed construction of an airstrip, noting that tourists currently faced an exhausting 900km drive from the nearest major airport. He also called for a review of hunting laws, citing unfair price disparities for the same animal species.

Takatokwane MP, Mr Jacob Kelebeng, welcomed the empowerment of community trusts and focus on wildlife officers' welfare, particularly in Khutse and Dutlwe.

Though he supported the Agro-Forestry strategy, Mr Kelebeng noted that the invasive sexanana plant in the Kgalagadi area remained a nightmare for residents. He also suggested leveraging travel fairs and global partnerships to market tourism and further proposed involving local creatives with large followings, such as Motsetserepa, to promote the sector, while ensuring that conservation laws were respected during zoning and planning.

Kgatlang Central MP, Mr Mpho Morolong, called on the minister to visit the Phuthadikobo Museum to address staff welfare issues. Mr Morolong also raised concerns over the unfair treatment of a Mochudi resident whose 50 parrots were destroyed by wildlife officers. He argued that laws should be

the review of audit reports for 68 parastatals and maintained direct mandate to audit the financial statements of Air Botswana and Botswana Railways. "This can be done through both insourcing and outsourcing in consultation with the Boards of the two Entities," the minister said. **BOPA**

explained to residents to encourage compliance rather than causing financial ruin. Kgalagadi South MP, Mr Tokyo Modise, supported the budget but highlighted dire lack of accommodation and offices for wildlife officers in Mabuasehube.

However, he expressed hope for a high-end resort in Khawa and commended the ministry's goal of creating over 5 000 jobs. Bobirwa MP, Mr Taolo Lucas, bemoaned the recent hike in tourism registration and user fees, describing them as anti-business.

"These rates do not make economic sense and could push Batswana out of the tourism industry," Mr Lucas warned.

He noted that export fees for phane (mopane worms) had become exorbitant for seasonal harvesters. He thus suggested a single license fee for the entire season, but questioned when the compensation fund would become fully operational. Serowe North MP, Mr Baratiwa Mathoothe, supported the budget but lamented double standards in wildlife compensation.

Mr Mathoothe noted that compensation rates differed for the same species depending on whether the owner was a commercial or subsistence farmer. He expressed concern over residents in Tshimoyapula, Mmashoro and Majwanadipitse who he said continued to be terrorised by wild animals. Consequently, Parliament approved the proposed 2026/27 budget allocation amounting to over P1 billion to finance both the ministry's recurrent and development budget. **BOPA**

Manpower audit prepares Mohembo Border for 24-hour economy

The Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs has embarked on a comprehensive manpower audit to address staff shortages and prepare the Mohembo Border Post for a shift towards a 24-hour economy.

Answering a question in Parliament on Tuesday, Minister Pius Mokgware informed legislators that the audit, expected to be completed by June 30 this year, would enable strategic redistribution of staff to high-traffic areas.

He added that as part of the realignment, the ministry had proposed creation of a new leadership position at a D4 salary scale to head the Mohembo Border, owing to its strategic importance. The minister acknowledged that current staffing levels at Mohembo were currently inadequate, adding that while the approved establishment for the post was eight officers comprising five immigration officers and three

support staff, it was currently manned by only two immigration officers.

"Two other positions were redeployed to the Mamuno Border Post to operationalise the One-Stop Border and 24-hour operations, as the project did not include a manpower budget due to zero growth in the public service," Maj. Gen Mokgware explained.

He further told Parliament that to mitigate delays during the transition, the ministry deployed additional officers during holidays and peak periods to enhance service delivery. He added that plans were underway to fill a third permanent post at the border immediately.

MP for Okavango West, Mr Kenny Kapinga, had raised concerns regarding whether the current staff count was sufficient to handle the sharp increase in travellers and the border's vital role in regional migration. **BOPA**

Policy reforms to formalise second-hand vehicle industry

...from page 5

Specifically, he said the Department of Road Transport and Safety (DRTS) which was mandated by the Road Traffic Act to register all vehicles in Botswana, had interfaced its vehicle registration and licensing system with that of BURS and the latter's system populated information of every vehicle that had been cleared by BURS for registration purposes and that meant DRTS cannot register any vehicle that had not been cleared by BURS. Mr Gaolathe said regulation of vehicles also required clearance by Botswana Police Service to ensure that stolen vehicles were not registered in Botswana.

He added that FIA employed a number of intelligence methods to detect, prevent and combat trade based money laundering in the importation of vehicles and other trade related activities. He said the agency disseminated intelligence to relevant competent authorities for investigation and enforcement.

He further said with respect to digital invoicing, Parliament in November 2025 passed the Value Added Tax (Amendment) Act which introduced a legal framework for electronic VAT invoicing in Botswana.

Mr Gaolathe said once fully implemented, the Electronic VAT invoicing system would require VAT registered businesses, including vehicle dealerships, to issue digital invoices that were transmitted directly to the tax administration system in real time or near real time.

He further said the reform would significantly strengthen transparency in commercial transactions, reduce opportunities

for under reporting of sales and enhance VAT compliance.

"This will also provide government with improved data analytics capabilities to detect irregular trading patterns and potential tax leakages," he added.

The minister said as regards to regulatory limits, governance of the vehicle import and sale sector was currently guided by a number of legislative instruments including Customs Act, Value Added Tax Act, Proceeds and Instruments of Crime Act and the regulatory frameworks administered by relevant government ministries and department responsible for transport regulation and business oversight, most of which had already been explained.

Mr Gaolathe said government remained committed to strengthening compliance, combating illicit financial flows and modernising revenue administration systems across the economy. Member of Parliament for Mogoditshane East, Mr Letlhogonolo Barongwang, had asked the minister to state policy reforms that were being implemented to formalise second-hand vehicle industry, prevent tax leakages and curb illicit financial flows associated with vehicle imports. The MP also wanted to know how key institutions such as BURS, FIA, Immigration and DRTS integrated data to detect and combat trade-based money laundering in the importation and sale of vehicles.

Mr Barongwang also asked if government effected mandatory digital invoicing and ceased cash transaction immediately for vehicle dealerships to strengthen transparency, accountability and tax compliance and the regulatory limits that existed. **BOPA**

Arts & Culture

Kavuna sees future in applied arts



Selelo Kavuna envisions his company becoming the leading force in Botswana's art industry through innovation and creativity. Photos: Keetile Bontsibokae

Keetile Bontsibokae
MOLEPOLOLE

Twenty-seven years ago, in the quiet village of Kachikau, Selelo Kavuna was born. From his earliest days in primary school, he stood out among his peers as a budding artist.

What began as playful wire-car toys, modelled after construction, mining and logistics trucks, soon revealed itself as the foundation of a lifelong calling.

"I became more curious about art and design, and I opted for the subject at junior school," recalled Kavuna as he shared his journey during an interview.

He said senior school expanded his horizons further, introducing him to modelling, woodcarving and sculpting techniques.

To hone his creativity, he also challenged himself by working with diverse materials such as paper mâché, clay, plaster of Paris and epoxy resin, proving his versatility in creating sculptures, busts, statues and utility models.

Kavuna said for him, applied arts, the fusion of design and practicality, represented the future.

"Applied arts overlap with decorative arts, and modern applied art is usually called design," he said.

Today, trading under Rovep Holdings, Kavuna focuses on cement-based products, water fountains and sculptures.

He said his clientele ranged from individuals seeking decorative pieces to government

departments and councils commissioning monumental works.

Beyond commercial art, he is also an inventor, currently developing concepts such as a multifunction wheelchair, a shoe-washing machine and a self-loading truck.

Kavuna's vision for Rovep Holdings is clear, "to lead Botswana's arts industry through dynamism, innovation and creativity."

With the company's slogan: Living the Art, he said his plan was to expand into Rovep Creative Centre, a hub for applied arts.

Despite his success, Kavuna's journey had not been without challenges.

He said Patent registration costs remained a heavy burden, while the absence of a dedicated workshop limited his operations. Yet his resilience continues to shine through.

A BA Honours graduate in Human Resources Management from ABM College, Kavuna has also mastered hairdressing, demonstrating his industrious spirit.

He trained under the Self Employment Training (SET) programmes and was a member of Thapong Visual Arts Centre from 2018 to 2022.

Kavuna's advice to fellow artists is pragmatic, "Since art is broad, find your position and commercialise your ideas," he shared.

He also urged government to invest in grooming emerging talent rather than focusing only on established names. **BOPA**



Selelo Kavuna's artwork focuses on cement-based products, water fountains and sculptures.

London Book Fair kicks off

LONDON

At Olympia London, where the 2026 London Book Fair opened Tuesday, the China pavilion stands out not merely for its expansive footprint, but for the comprehensive publishing ecosystem it showcases.

The Chinese publishing delegation has arrived with an impressive portfolio of over 4 000 titles and a packed schedule of more than 40 events.

Spanning the three-day fair, the agenda ranges from high-profile new book launches and author talks to rights exchanges and industry forums. From the historic Yongle Encyclopedia to modern award-winners, the China pavilion offers a comprehensive view of Chinese literature.

Complementing these physical texts are interactive VR experiences and IP exhibits, highlighting the sector's dynamic fusion of heritage, digital technology and creative content development. This approach is also reflected in the fair's programme. A symposium on: China and the World in the New Era, launched multilingual editions, and events surrounding the English editions of *China Development Report 2025* and *Global Development Report 2025* brought Chinese development issues into a broader international publishing conversation.

For Marcelino Elosua, founder and chair of LID Publishing,

this initiative transcends mere market dynamics.

Speaking at the symposium, he said publishing was not only a business activity, but also something with a deeper cultural meaning.

Others pointed to a broader change in the industry itself. Peter Reay, a publishing professional and translator with over a decade of experience living in China, observed that the dynamic between China and overseas markets was evolving into a truly reciprocal exchange.

"In the publishing industry, I think we are definitely talking about the change, the switch of that balance from having a one-way stream to now having a bilateral stream between the two," he said. Nicolas Cheetham, managing director at Head of Zeus, made a similar point after a showcase event for Chinese writer Mai Jia's translated works.

The China pavilion, he said, offered readers, editors, translators and publishers somewhere to meet and to swap stories and recommendations and enthusiasm.

"That is what the book trade is built on. It is built on individual passions and enthusiasms," he told Xinhua.

That network now extends beyond publishing in the narrow sense. An industry event held during the fair focused on China-Britain cooperation in creative publishing, with topics ranging from youth IP development to digital content innovation and international

distribution.

As CEO of 8 Lions Entertainment Ltd., Jiella Esmat has put its collaboration brought faster, better, greater results.

Artificial intelligence was another recurring theme at the fair, particularly in relation to translation and content creation.

"People are not reading books because they were done efficiently or conveniently but are reading books for the human connection," Jack Hargreaves, a young British translator of Chinese literature, told Xinhua.

He warned that surrendering too much of the creative process to machine translation would mean losing important and foundational aspect of writing and translation and literature.

Chinese writer Xu Zhiyuan placed AI in a wider historical context, saying that every information revolution changes how people understand themselves and the world, while also bringing anxiety and dislocation.

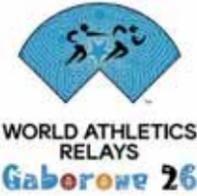
"A great reader wants to take themselves away from the real world and immerse themselves in someone else's virtual reality," said Cheetham.

Esmat offered a similarly human-centered view. "AI is changing a lot, but it is not changing everything."

This business is about relationships, it is about great stories, and it is about mutual collaboration, and AI cannot replace those things," she said.

Xinhua

DailySport



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GENERAL STAND

Day 1 – \$25
(approximately BWP 331)

Day 2 onwards – \$35
(approximately BWP 463)



Top swimmers set to make waves in Ghana

Anastacia Sibanda
GABORONE

Botswana will send both the senior and junior swimmers to the 2026 Africa Aquatics Swimming Championships in Borteyman Sports Complex in Accra, Ghana from May 5 to 10.

In the senior girls' team, Botswana will be represented by Jieun Chang and Sally Ingwe, while the senior boys' team has Mmusi Matthews, Khalil Sethi, Gaamangwe Keitsile and Thabang Seetso. The junior girls' team is made up of Melodi Saleshando, Yun-Suh Chang, Muela Mutie and Phoebe Oagile-Motso, while the junior boys' side has Tetelo

Magang, Tema Modirelabangwe, Larona Matenge and Thero Montshiwa.

According to Africa Aquatics, this year's edition, has for the first time, adopted a modified format, to feature seniors, juniors, masters, as well as Inter-Zonal Championships.

Botswana Swimming Sport Association spokesperson, Bokang Mokobi said the association was confident that it had selected a formidable team that would bring positive results and glory to the country.

He said the swimmers had prepared well as they competed in different galas, adding that they would also feature in three high profile galas in South Africa.

The team is expected to feature in the levels championships from March 28 to April 3, followed by South African Youth Nationals and Junior Youth Nations competitions.

Also, Mokobi said the team had previously competed at the CANA Zone IV Championships in eSwatini and managed to win medals for the country.

He was therefore hopeful that the athletes would drop incredible times and record-breaking performances. **BOPA**



Mmusi Matthews



Yun-Suh Chang



Melodi Saleshando

Spectators in for thrill at Lefika International Relays

Anastacia Sibanda
GABORONE

Spectators should brace themselves to see top athletes from Poland, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Zambia, South Africa, Lesotho and Botswana in action at the Lefika International Relays slated for March 28 at the National Stadium.

Botswana, Zambia, Nigeria and South Africa are expected to field athletes in the 4x100m (women) while Botswana,

Zambia and Nigeria will take part in the 4x100m (men) category.

So far, the 4x100m mixed relay line up is made up of Botswana, Zambia, Nigeria, South Africa and Poland.

Botswana will line up in the 4x400m for women and men categories with Zambia and Nigeria, while Lesotho will field a team in the 4x400 mixed together with Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Nigeria.

In an interview, Lefika Athletics Club

secretary, Dineo Basitang said this year's event would be big as more countries were yet to confirm.

In the last edition, she said they only featured two countries.

The event, she said would be used a qualifier for World Athletics Relays, adding that countries also hoped to use the event to gauge their readiness for the May 2-3 event in Gaborone.

She further said the Lefika relays would be used a dry run for the World Athletics

Relays.

"We are expecting the World Athletics Relays to assess referees, volunteers and all their logistics to identify as to which areas need more attention," she said.

While preparations were going well, she said they faced challenges of lack of sponsors.

She said tickets were already on sale online and the VVIP stand is P500, premium P200 and P50 other stands.

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