

BOTSWANA

Daily News

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- Ostrich sector revival guarantees boom for local sunflower and wheat farmers
- Dibete acres earmarked for immediate private lease to drive youth into export-ready agribusiness



Some of the ostriches at the 561 hectare ostrich farm in Dibete. President Advocate Duma Boko, yesterday toured the farm, which he said had the potential to create employment, boost income and contribute to Botswana’s economic diversification. Photo: Thompson Keobaletswe

Anastacia Sibanda
DIBETE
About 100 kilometres northeast of Gaborone, nestled in the semi-arid brush of the Central District, lies Dibete. It is quiet here, save for the dry wind and the low, resonant booming of the world’s largest birds. This is the home of the Dibete

Ostrich Multiplication Unit (DOMU), a state-owned facility established in 2006 to act as the breeding heart of Botswana’s commercial ostrich dreams. For years, the facility stood as a monument to unrealised potential, a quiet and stagnant outpost in a nation whose economic heartbeat has long been dictated by the steady tick of diamond mining. But yesterday’s high-profile

visit by President Advocate Duma Boko has injected fresh political momentum into this dusty sanctuary. The tour represents far more than a routine photo opportunity. It was a calculated opening salvo in a coordinated government campaign to revive a lucrative and multi-million-Pula industry. Faced with volatile global diamond markets, Botswana

is aggressively searching for structural pivots and the ostrich, with its high-value feathers, lean meat and premium leather, is stepping back into the spotlight. President Boko views the revival of the ostrich sector not as an isolated agricultural programme, but as a catalyst for a broader economic domino effect.

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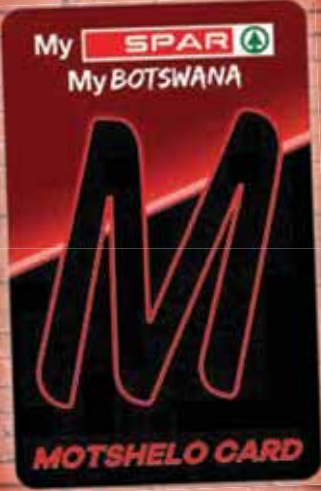
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UB to honour Kengalogile family

Esther Mmolai
MAUN

Remembering and honouring the fallen community veterans who made a positive impact in the society they lived, preserves their legacy, fosters community connection and ensures the sacrifices they made continue to inspire and guide future generations.

For the late Mr Piet Rakeeku Kengalogile, born 1880 and died 1955, and Ms Yarubi Piet Kengalogile, born 1870 and died 1969, to cede their personal land for use by the government to establish a world class research institute was a profound sacrifice with a direct positive bearing on the future of the entire nation.

The Kengalogile family willingly availed more than 20 hectares of land, where the Okavango Research Institute now sits, a premier, fully -fledged research institution of the University of Botswana in Maun.

Established in 1994, the facility is dedicated to the study of wetlands and adjacent drylands, focusing on the Okavango Delta ecosystem. It also provides postgraduate training, community outreach and critical scientific data.

In remembrance and recognition of the Kengalogile family's benevolent gesture, the University of Botswana will unveil two tombstones July 25 at Sexaxa, to honour their legacy.

The event will celebrate the family's good deed and the longstanding collaboration between the University of Botswana and the people of Ngamiland in advancing research that benefits Botswana and the Okavango Delta.

ORI director, Dr Casper

Bonyongo, confirmed the upcoming event which represents the fulfilment of a commitment made by the university many years ago, and an enduring acknowledgement of the importance of community partnership, cultural heritage and shared stewardship in advancing national development.

Narrating the origins of the institute, a press release from ORI states that the university remains deeply appreciative of the generosity, trust and foresight demonstrated by the Kengalogile family.

It acknowledges their selfless decision that laid the foundation for an institution that has become one of Botswana's foremost centres of scientific excellence, producing research that informs environmental policy, conservation planning and sustainable development nationally and internationally.

The prestigious institute can be traced to a defining period in Botswana's environmental history during the late 1980s and early 1990s. At the time, the government was exploring opportunities to utilise the waters of the Okavango Delta to support national economic development.

One of the proposed initiatives involved dredging the lower Boro channel to increase water flows into the Thamalakane and Boteti Rivers, thereby improving water delivery to Mopipi Dam and strengthening water security for the Orapa Diamond Mine.

The release also indicates that the proposal that generated the national controversy was formally advanced in 1989 as part of the Southern Okavango Integrated Water Development Project (SOIWDP). The project was



UB Vice Chancellor, Prof David Norris and Okavango Research Institute director, Dr Casper Bonyongo during a recent event in which they announced that plans were underway to unveil tombstones to honour the Kengalogile family who voluntarily availed their land for the establishment of Okavango Research Institute. Photo: Esther Mmolai

recommended in a feasibility study prepared by Snowy Mountains Engineering Consultants (SMEC) for Botswana's Department of Water Affairs.

While the proposal was intended to support strategic

The university acknowledges their selfless decision that laid the foundation for an institution that has become one of Botswana's foremost centres of scientific excellence, producing research that informs environmental policy, conservation planning and sustainable development nationally and internationally.

national development, it generated significant concern among local communities, conservation organisations and international environmental groups. Community leaders, led by veteran politician, the late Motsamai Mpho, together with local and international conservation organisations, strongly opposed the proposal.

Furthermore, the release indicates that the international advocacy groups, including Greenpeace, publicly expressed concerns regarding the potential ecological consequences of altering the hydrology of one of the world's largest inland wetlands. The December 1990 National Geographic magazine vividly portrayed the Okavango and significantly raised international awareness of the delta at the height of the Boro controversy.

At one stage, implementation appeared imminent, with heavy machinery already mobilised to the project site. However, following extensive public opposition, the government suspended the proposed dredging project. The debate surrounding the proposal exposed a critical national challenge.

Although strong views were

expressed by all parties, there was very limited scientific evidence available to objectively evaluate the likely environmental, hydrological and socio-economic consequences of the proposed intervention.

The absence of rigorous scientific knowledge highlighted the urgent need for a permanent research institution dedicated to understanding the Okavango Delta and providing independent scientific evidence to support national decision-making.

Recognising this knowledge gap, the government directed the University of Botswana to establish a specialised research centre in Maun, to generate the scientific information necessary for evidence-based environmental management and policy formulation and in response, the University established the Okavango Research Centre in 1994.

Over the years, the centre expanded significantly in scope, capacity and international reputation, eventually evolving into today's Okavango Research Institute, internationally recognised as a leading centre for wetland research, environmental science and sustainable natural resource management. **BOPA**

Tsabong water crisis to ease as projects nears completion

Naomi Leepile
TSABONG

Water Utilities Corporation (WUC) is on the verge of delivering relief to the water-stressed Tsabong District, with key multi-million Pula infrastructure projects sitting between 98 per cent and 99 per cent completion.

The near-total success of these major pipelines and upgrades comes at a critical time for the region, which is currently battling a harsh daily water deficit of 280 cubic meters.

Speaking at a stakeholder engagement workshop in Tsabong, WUC General Manager Mr Benjamin Baitshenyetsi highlighted that despite immense pressure on underground aquifers, a massive infrastructure turnaround was nearly ready for final delivery.

"Pipeline and supply upgrades are nearing full operational status," Mr Baitshenyetsi announced, pointing to a string of engineering successes designed to secure the region's supply.

Among the near-complete projects is the Kokotsha-Werda



Water Utilities Corporation General Manager - Tsabong Benjamin Baitshenyetsi told stakeholders during an engagement workshop in Tsabong recently that major water infrastructure projects were between 98 and 99 per cent complete. Photo: Naomi Leepile

Water Transfer Project Phase 1, which is at 98per cent completion and would officially bring water from the plant to Kokotsha village.

Furthermore, both the Makopong village new boreholes

project linking the village to the Draaihoek network and the critical Maubelo Borehole to Tsabong project have reached 99 per cent completion.

To completely bypass reliance

on an unstable power grid, the General Manager also confirmed that solar-powered borehole conversions had already been 100 per cent completed at Maralaleng, Omaweneno, Tsabong, and McCarthy's Rust.

Looking ahead, Mr Baitshenyetsi unveiled an aggressive roadmap starting in August 2026, which will see network extensions to new plots, the opening of a new Customer Service Office at Werda, and the rollout of smart prepaid water meters to curb physical water losses.

However, the major operational victories highlighted by the General Manager face a severe threat from a mounting financial crisis within the district.

Following Mr Baitshenyetsi's briefing, WUC Supervisor of Customer Accounts, Mr Ontlametse Tlaang, laid bare a crippling financial backlog, revealing that consumers in the Tsabong District owe the corporation over P13 Million.

Mr Tlaang expressed concern over the mounting debt, warning that it starved the corporation

of vital liquidity and directly threatened its capacity to keep these newly built systems running efficiently.

"The heavy debt burden severely restricts the corporation's liquidity and directly compromises its capacity to maintain and upgrade vital infrastructure to serve the public efficiently," Mr Tlaang stated.

According to financial data presented by the supervisor, local families and residents are the primary drivers of the crisis. Domestic consumers hold the lion's share of the debt at 53 per cent, amounting to an astonishing P6,934,875.81.

Government departments are the second-largest debtors owing 33 per cent, P4,343,103.68, of the total arrears, while local businesses and councils account for the remaining 9 per cent and 5 per cent respectively.

Furthermore, Mr Tlaang made a strong appeal to stakeholders, emphasising that long-term water security relied heavily on immediate debt settlement and proactive water conservation. **BOPA**

Safari company supports Gweta health services

Goitsemodimo Williams-Madzonga
GWETA

Unchartered Africa Safaris has donated essential medicines worth P200, 000 to Gweta Primary Hospital to support improved healthcare in the area.

Speaking during the handover ceremony on Friday, company representative Ms Phatsimo Khumalo said as a business operating in Gweta and surrounding villages and settlements, the company considered it important to support the communities by purchasing essential medicines to help save lives.

She said the donation, which included medication for hypertension, diabetes and

antibiotics, was made through the company's Corporate Social Responsibility programme, which focused on the health and education sectors.

Ms Khumalo said the challenges facing the country's health sector prompted the company to intervene and make a meaningful contribution towards improving access to essential medicines. Although the medicines were donated to Gweta Primary Hospital, she said they would also be distributed to health facilities in Tsokatshaa and Zoroga.

She further said the company had previously installed solar panels worth P1.7 million at the hospital in 2024 to ensure uninterrupted health services during power outages.

In addition, Ms Khumalo said

similar solar systems had been installed at boreholes supplying water to the village to ensure a reliable water supply despite electricity disruptions. She explained that the solar systems now served as the primary power source, while electricity supplied by Botswana Power Corporation served as backup.

Receiving the donation, Chief Medical Officer, Dr Kakanyo Masalila expressed gratitude to the company for its continued support, saying the partnership dated back to the COVID-19 pandemic.

He recalled that during the pandemic, the company repaired the hospital's backup generator at no cost, ensuring uninterrupted delivery of health services.

Dr Masalila said, like many

health facilities across the country, Gweta Primary Hospital was experiencing severe medicine shortages, with many shelves remaining empty and affecting service delivery.

Although the Ministry of Health was working to address the shortages, he said supplies were taking time to reach health

facilities. He noted that the donation would increase the hospital's medicine availability from 49 per cent to 85 per cent and was expected to last until the end of the year.

In addition to the medicines, the hospital also received an oxygen generation plant through Global Fund support. **BOPA**



President Advocate Duma Boko appreciating eggs at Dibete Ostrich Multiplication Plant, which had been non functional for about 10 years. The plant successfully hatched 269 ostrich chicks from the breeding stock last year. Photo: Thompson Keobaletswe



The P1 billion expansion of the Botswana Oil Francistown Fuel Depot is set to significantly enhance the country's strategic fuel storage capacity. Senior Project Manager, Mr Kabelo Lanka told the media recently that the construction of the bulk petroleum products storage facility was 88 per cent complete. Once operational, the depot will provide sufficient storage to meet the northern region's strategic fuel reserve requirement of up to 60 days' stock cover. Photo: Ogopoleng Kgomoethata

Kelebogile Taolo
FRANCISTOWN

The expansion of the Francistown fuel depot, at a cost of P1 billion, is set to significantly boost Botswana's strategic fuel storage.

The Botswana Oil Limited (BOL), Senior Manager Hydrocarbon Sourcing, Mr Kabelo Lanka, confirmed that the project is 88 percent complete and on course for

completion in April 2027.

Speaking during the Botswana Oil Limited Strategic Media Tour in Francistown recently, Mr Lanka said the expansion will add 60 million litres of storage capacity to the existing 38 million litres at the facility. He stated that the facility was currently recognised as Botswana's largest storage facility and that the project was being executed in two distinct phases. He confirmed that Phase One was already complete and that the overall project remained both on schedule and within budget. Mr Lanka added that once complete, the facility would dramatically increase the nation's ability to manage petroleum product supplies.

BOL's Chief Strategy and Sustainability Officer, Mr Letshego Moeng, informed the media about the ongoing Francistown Depot Expansion Project and outlined the company's broader initiatives aimed at strengthening the country's security of fuel supply.

With only 12 per cent of the works remaining, he said the project would significantly increase the country's strategic fuel storage capacity and enhance national energy security.

Mr Moeng emphasised the importance of the media in ensuring Batswana receive accurate

and timely information. He said it was critical for the media to get first-hand information and to relay vital messages to the public on matters relating to the country's energy security. He noted that an informed media played a key role in building public understanding and trust around national strategic projects.

Mr Moeng also highlighted BOL's regional expansion plans, including the Coastal Storage Project in Namibia. In his deliberations, Head of Health, Safety, Security, Environment and Quality (HSSEQ) Mr Ronny Orlando said it was the duty of BOL to ensure that the product was of good quality adding that there were some tests being done to verify that fuel met the standard quality required.

Members of the media were taken through BOL's operations and experienced first-hand the technology and systems that underpin the company's work.

These included the automated gantry that enhances loading efficiency and inventory management, firefighting and emergency response systems, environmental management practices, the quality assurance laboratory, business continuity measures, and product traceability systems. **BOPA**

Ostrich farming to spur economic gains

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The greatest hurdle currently holding the industry back is not lack of global demand, but that of local feed. Ostriches require highly specific nutrition to thrive and the absence of a reliable feed value chain has historically kept population growth stagnant. By addressing this bottleneck, government hopes to catalyse a parallel agricultural boom in crop farming, particularly for sunflower and wheat growers whose produce forms the baseline of commercial ostrich feed.

"The market for sunflower growers is already available through the ostrich industry. We need to attract more entrepreneurs into this business because our ostrich population is not growing due to insufficient feed," President Boko said. Significantly, the success of this economic pivot relies heavily on changing the culinary habits of the nation.

For generations, beef has reigned supreme on the plates of Batswana, hence President Boko is calling for a cultural shift and urging the public to embrace ostrich meat.

Highly nutritious, exceptionally low in cholesterol and packed with protein, it is being pitched as a weapon against the rising tide of lifestyle diseases that place immense financial strain on the country's public healthcare system.

"We must normalise the consumption of ostrich meat. Through intensive public awareness campaigns, we can grow the local market while promoting healthier eating habits," President Boko added. Yet, vision without land is merely a fantasy. To ground these ambitious goals in reality, government is tackling the historically difficult issue of agricultural land allocation.

Out of the 561 hectares surrounding the Dibete facility, the state has already earmarked 250 hectares for immediate lease to private ostrich farmers.

To ensure this expansion is felt

nationwide, landboards across Botswana are encouraged to identify and clear suitable parcels of land specifically for ostrich husbandry.

It is a streamlined and fast-tracked effort designed to give young entrepreneurs and seasoned farmers alike the space they need to build their flocks.

The gears of this recovery plan are already in motion under the stewardship of Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti.

The sector is rebounding from a severe market collapse that previously left many local farmers in debt and the initial indicators are promising. Last year, DOMU successfully hatched 269 ostrich chicks from its primary breeding stock, representing a vital baseline for future growth.

For his part, Minister Dikoloti, said the roadmap was to scale the population to 6 000 birds in the medium term, with an ultimate target of 10 000.

While the facility is currently focusing on table egg production, commercial meat production is slated to begin next year.

For the youth of Botswana, who face high unemployment rates, the revival of this highly technical and export-ready industry could provide an unprecedented doorway into modern agribusiness. For decades, Botswana's prosperity has been unearthed from deep within the earth, relying on the finite shimmer of diamonds to sustain its growth.

Today, faced with shifting global markets and the natural limits of mineral wealth, government is looking above ground for its next economic frontier.

By turning a dormant breeding centre into a bustling and export-ready economic hub, government is committing to prove that the path to a diversified future, one that protects the nation from the volatility of a single commodity, can sometimes be found on the wings of a bird that cannot fly. **BOPA**

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PARLIAMENT 2026

‘Parliament under -resourced’

Ketshepile More
GABORONE

Parliament of Botswana operates under financial constraints, which limit Members of Parliament (MPs) ability to serve citizens effectively, Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr Dithapelo Keorapetse has said.

“Parliament’s proposed funding remains a small fraction of the national budget at just 0.2 per cent of the overall budget. This includes a recurrent budget of P206 million, barely 0.2 per cent of the P91,265,983,275 billion total, and a development budget proposal of P8 million,

which represents a marginal 0.03 per cent of P23.38 billion in the 2026/2027 financial year,” he said at the inaugural official opening of the Third Meeting of the Second Session of the 13th Parliament in Gaborone on Monday.

He therefore said Parliament could not effectively fulfil its Constitutional responsibilities or offer the necessary representation, oversight and leadership that democracy required if it lacked resources. Reflecting on the last 20 months, Mr Keorapetse said the 13th Parliament started operation amidst serious economic challenges.

However, he indicated that it would face challenges with unity and determination, acknowledging that government took office under difficult economic conditions.

Moreover, Mr Keorapetse said the composition of Parliament, which was 69 MPs; including the President and the Speaker, revealed both continuity and concerning trends in the nation’s democratic representation.

The low number of women MPs, he indicated, adversely affected decision-making on women’s



Members of Parliament and the public listening to Speaker of the National Assembly Mr Dithapelo Keorapetse during the inaugural official opening of the Third Meeting of the Second Session of the 13th Parliament in Gaborone on Monday. He said limited funding continued to constrain the institution’s ability to effectively support Members of Parliament in serving the public.

issues in Oversight Committees and inter-parliamentary bodies, risking the development of policies that neglected the delicate needs of the population and undermined inclusive governance principles.

“The current Parliament includes only six female MPs, representing 8.7 per cent of the total membership, which is a decline from the nine female MPs who constituted 11 per cent of the 12th Parliament,” Mr Keorapetse noted, adding that the decrease was a decline in gender equity in political leadership.

Among the current members there are 21 returning MPs, comprising 20 males and one female, in addition 46 first-time MPs, which included 41 males and five females, now occupying seats in the chamber.

Mr Keorapetse emphasised urgent need for enhanced capacity-building initiatives aimed at supporting and promoting female representation within the House.

Meanwhile, Mr Keorapetse said with only a limited number of MPs relative to other countries in the region such as Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, and Lesotho,

Botswana needed 100 MPs at most given its geographical challenges.

He said challenges, which included long distances between wards and constituencies, made it difficult and expensive for MPs to connect with their constituents, as illustrated by specific travel costs and time; highlighting the significant burden on MPs in Botswana. **BOPA**

Speaker urges MPs to rise above partisanship

Ketshepile More
GABORONE

Speaker of the National Assembly has urged Members of Parliament (MPs) to build an institution that reflects the diversity of their people, safeguard their rights and amplify their voices.

Speaking at the inaugural official opening of the Third Meeting of the Second Session of the 13th Parliament in Gaborone on Monday, Mr Dithapelo Keorapetse said, as guardians of the Constitution, MPs should be stewards of public trust and servants of the people.

“We are called to rise above partisanship when the national interest demands it, to disagree with respect when ideology divides us, and to unite with resolve when our nation needs us. We are called to remember that the power we exercise is borrowed, that the authority we wield is entrusted and that the privilege we enjoy is

temporary,” he noted.

Parliament, as the modern kgotla, Mr Keorapetse said should remain a place where words matter, debate robust and where decisions were made in the full light of public scrutiny.

“When we scrutinise the

“We are called to rise above partisanship when the national interest demands it, to disagree with respect when ideology divides us, and to unite with resolve when our nation needs us. We are called to remember that the power we exercise is borrowed, that the authority we wield is entrusted and that the privilege we enjoy is temporary,

budget, when we question the allocation of funds, when we demand performance audits, we are not being obstructive. We are being patriotic. We are ensuring that the taxes of our people drawn from the sweat of the farmer, the toil of the miner and the ingenuity of the entrepreneur are deployed for the public good,” said Mr Keorapetse.

Mr Keorapetse further said the Winter Parliament Session served as a call to action, emphasising the need to consolidate democratic legacy through effective legislation, oversight, and citizen engagement.

He said it was a call to reinforce the transparency that built trust, the accountability that ensured integrity, and the public understanding that sustained legitimacy. **BOPA**



Speaker of the National Assembly Mr Dithapelo Keorapetse said Members of Parliament, as guardians of the Constitution, should be stewards of public trust and servants of the people. Photos: Phenyio Ramatu

Saleshando calls for inclusive Parliament

Esther Mmolai
PARLIAMENT

The Leader of Opposition (LOO), Mr Dumelang Saleshando has called for strengthening of Parliament to ensure it becomes inclusive and reflects the vital role that both government and opposition play in democracy. Speaking at the inaugural official opening of the Third Meeting of the Second Session of the 13th Parliament in Gaborone on Monday, he said Parliament’s greatest asset was public confidence built on fairness, impartiality and integrity.

Parliament, he said, was where democracy acquired substance, where the aspirations of ordinary citizens were examined, refined and transformed into law. In addition, Mr Saleshando said Parliament was where government was held accountable, where national consensus was forged despite political differences and where future generations would judge whether they were faithful stewards of the republic.

He further called for the offices of the Speaker and the Clerk to ensure that every parliamentary process inspired trust and treated all members equally, regardless of the offices they might hold and from which side of the aisle they sat.

Mr Saleshando also said the historic occasion reaffirmed that law making was at the heart of the constitutional mandate under Section 86 of the Constitution. “The 13th Parliament occupies a unique place in Botswana’s history. For the first time since independence, political power changed hands peacefully through the ballot and not the bullet. That

moment was not a victory for one political party over another but a victory for every Motswana who believes that power belongs not to governments, but to the people and a victory for the Constitution that has brought us thus far and needs a full comprehensive review to take us to the next heights,” he noted. The LOO also underscored the need to prove that democratic change delivered democratic maturity, citing that the government had the responsibility to govern while the opposition had the responsibility to ensure that government governed well. Those responsibilities, he said were indispensable, highlighting that the opposition does not exist to oppose progress but existed to improve it.

Mr Saleshando reiterated that the opposition questioned where necessary, strengthened legislation before it became law, defended the Constitution and held government accountable on behalf of the people, assuring the House that where the government advanced Botswana’s interests, they would have their support. “Where improvement is needed, it will have our constructive engagement and where the national interest demands it, it will have our principled opposition; that is not obstruction, it is constitutional patriotism,” he said. He pledged as the opposition to discharge their constitutional responsibilities with dignity, integrity and unwavering commitment to Botswana.

He said they shall scrutinise without hostility, criticise without malice, cooperate without compromising principle and remember that the highest loyalty was owed to Botswana and to the people from whom all constitutional authority flows. Despite capacity challenges in the Parliamentary Counsel’s office, he said they had six private member bills and applauded fellow opposition MPs who had submitted several private member bills.



Leader of Opposition, Mr Dumelang Saleshando (left) and Leader of the House, Mr Moeti Mohwasa arriving for the inaugural official opening of the Third Meeting of the Second Session of the 13th Parliament in Gaborone on Monday. Photo: Phenyo Ramatu

Moreover, he noted that Parliament could not effectively fulfil its primary responsibility of making laws without an adequately resourced office, saying the issue demanded urgent attention. He cited that it was unsustainable for an institution whose core mandate was law-making to rely on only two lawyers serving both the National Assembly and Ntlo Ya Dikgosi. Mr Saleshando also

recommended setting up a real time dashboard that showed the process of each private members’ bill from the day a Member of Parliament submits an instruction to Parliamentary Counsel, adding that the dashboard should be accessible to the general public too. Members of Parliament, he said were accountable to the electorate, hence they should see that their aspirations and needs were well represented.

The electorate, he said, were more interested in whether Parliament improved their lives and wanted an economy where success was determined by merit rather than connections. Mr Saleshando said the challenges before Botswana could not be solved with yesterday’s thinking, saying the economy must diversify and institutions must become more transparent and independent. **BOPA**

Mohwasa advocates for constructive debates

Esther Mmolai
PARLIAMENT

A high performing Parliament is not simply measured by the bills it passes but by quality of legislation, the effectiveness of its oversight and the confidence that citizens place in the institution. The leader of the house who is also the Minister for State President, Defence and Security, Mr Moeti Mohwasa revealed when delivering his speech at the 13th Legislative Meeting of Parliament on Monday, noting that public trust remained the greatest measure of parliament success. He underscored the need for constructive debates during the winter session, acknowledging that President Advocate Duma Boko had consistently reminded them that leadership is not just about power but the service to the people and challenged fellow Members of Parliament that such words should guide every contribution they make in this house.

“Every debate, every motion, every law should ultimately serve

one purpose, improving the lives of Botswana. We may belong to different political organisations and hold different convictions, but we are all united by one constitutional duty to serve Batswana, hence we should work as a unit to advance their interests,” he added. Mr Mohwasa further highlighted that as the executive, they had reaffirmed their commitment to working collaboratively with Parliament in advancing Botswana’s development, noting that they are looking forward for constructive debate, rigorous scrutiny and meaningful engagement as parliamentarians consider the legislative and policy proposals before the house. He also appreciated the historic occasion in which the 3rd meeting of the Second Session of the 13th Parliament was officially opened with speeches, saying that signifies something much more profound and reflected the continued growth of Parliament as one of the four most institutions of democracy reaffirming this place at the centre of the constitutional

order. “This occasion reminds us that Parliament is much more than a building where laws are debated and passed, it is the people house, where the voices of Batswana find expression, where the government is held to account, where national issues are openly debated and where decision are taken to shape the future of Botswana. As we gather here today, we must recognise that the expectations of Batswana have never been this high, across the country, citizens are looking to this house for leadership, accountability and practical solutions to the challenges they are facing every day,” he said. Mr Mohwasa further stated that young people wanted opportunities to work and build meaningful lives, families wanted an economy that enables them to live with dignity, farmers wanted support to remain productive despite changing climatic conditions, businesses want an environment that encouraged investment, innovation and growth, communities expected

safety and envisioned public institutions they can trust. Although these expectations, he said are legitimate and reminded them why Parliament existed, noting that parliamentarians were also equally aware that some citizens had questioned whether Parliament had always lived up to those expectations, some felt their debates had not always translated into tangible improvements in their lives while others believed that political differences sometimes overshadowed that urgent responsibility of delivering results. Rather than dismiss these concerns, he said they should accept them with humility as they should inspire them to work harder, listen more carefully and ensure the work of the house continued to improve the lives of the people they served. Since independence, Mr Mohwasa observed that Parliament had remained one of the strongest democratic institutions through changing times and different political landscapes, citing that it has safeguarded constitutional governance, upheld the rule of

law and protected the peace and stability that had earned Botswana international respect. He paid tribute to those who had served the institution with distinction over the past decades, for their dedication, laid foundation in which they had the privilege to build. He also expressed his appreciation to every political party represented in the house noting that “our political colours may differ; our philosophies may not always be the same but debates may at times be robust. But we should let the shared purpose guide our deliberations throughout the legislative meeting. Democracy is strengthened and not weakened by the exchange of different ideas, healthy debates sharpens our thinking, improves our laws and strengthening public confidence in our institutions,” he said. Parliamentarians were urged not to allow diversity of opinions to divide them, instead, it should enrich their democracy and help them make better decisions for the nation. **BOPA**

DailyBusiness

BURS strengthens domestic revenue mobilisation

Gontle Merafhe
GABORONE

Botswana is mobilising domestic tax revenue to approximately 13 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product, says Botswana Unified Revenue Services Acting Commissioner General, Mr Phodiso Valashia.

Addressing the media on the recent Tax Reforms affecting Value Added Tax (VAT), Income Tax and the Tax Administration Act, in Gaborone recently, Mr Valashia said the nation should be ambitious enough to move decisively towards a tax-to-GDP ratio of 25 per cent over the next three years, making the move more than a fiscal target.

“It is about a Botswana that increasingly finances its own development, strengthens its economic resilience, creates opportunities for its people and invests with confidence in its future.

Prosperity is not created by taxation, nor can it be sustained by debt alone. Prosperity is created by productive businesses, innovation, investment and the hard work of our people,” he said.

Mr Valashia said the role of a modern tax system was to ensure that prosperity created was translated into better education, quality healthcare, greater economic opportunity and a better quality of life for every Motswana.

Furthermore, he said it enabled Botswana to finance more of its own development, strengthen its fiscal sovereignty and reduce excessive dependence on debt.

Mr Valashia said the aim was to build a revenue service that was fair in its administration, simple in its processes, responsive in its service, intelligent in its decision making and trusted by the people it served.

Acting commissioner, domestic taxes, Ms Segametsi Radibe-Michael said they had reviewed all the revenue laws and a lot was coming out of the review project, one of those being the housing of procedural rules into one act which had come to be known as the Tax Administration Act, a debut for Botswana.

Ms Radibe-Michael said the organisation was to carry out a phased implementation, to ensure preparedness of both the revenue service and the tax payers.

She said new regulations had been issued and more were being developed and expected to be published before the end of the year.

“The new regulations we have now re-enacted means the old have been repelled. We have used a savings clause to make sure that in the meantime some of the regulations from the old laws can continue during the transition period, to make sure there is no gap,” said Ms Radibe-Michael.

She said guidelines were also being developed which would explain expectation on the part of the taxpayers as guided by feedback from the public and businesses.

Talking to the Value Added Tax, Ms Radibe-Michael said the idea was to widen the tax base because the ambition was to operate a broad-base VAT system which taxed everything.

VAT is a consumption tax, which means that its burden falls on the consumers and not businesses who

are allowed to claim VAT charged by their counterparts, Ms Radibe-Michael said.

She explained that the system they had, ensured that every-time businesses reported, they were to off-set what they had brought from what they had collected in 12 months.

She further said as part of the project, they were to ensure the widening of the segments of the VAT that were eroded to avoid the need for government to raise the rate while they also wanted to ensure equality of transactions in some areas such as auctioneers and deputy sheriffs. **BOPA**



BURS Acting Commission - Domestic Taxes, Ms Segametsi Radibe-Michael and BURS Acting Commissioner General, Mr Phodiso Valashia (left) during a media engagement sensitisation workshop on changes in tax laws in Gaborone recently. Photo: Gaseitsiwe Moruakgomo

Smart strategies drive BITRI innovation

Marvin Motlhabane
KANYE

As Botswana races toward economic diversification and sustainable growth, the Botswana Institute for Technology Research and Innovation (BITRI) is emerging as a powerful engine of change. Far from being just another research body, BITRI is actively turning laboratory breakthroughs into thriving businesses, creating jobs, and empowering local SMEs.

Acting Director of Research and Partnerships, Ms Lesego Moribame, captured the institute’s ambitious vision during a strategic engagement with the Kanye District Council recently.

“BITRI was established as a parastatal to develop technology-based solutions that address national priorities. Our mandate goes beyond research, we focus on real-world impact.”

At the core of BITRI’s success is its Technology Transfer Office (TTO), housed under the Department of Research and Partnerships. The TTO, with its Intellectual Property and Business Development units, operates a clear framework to protect and profit from innovations through its Institutional Intellectual Property Policy and Innovation Management Framework.

Ms Moribame outlined three key pathways to commercialisation being licensing, where BITRI grants rights to produce and sell technologies while retaining ownership and earning royalties that fuel further research and development, with priority given to local SMEs and companies for non-exclusive licenses. Secondly, full technology transfer, where ownership is handed over to capable partners ready to scale production.

And thirdly, according to Ms Moribame is new ventures, where BITRI creates or supports spin-off companies, often through joint ventures, to attract investors when suitable private partners are limited.

Complementing the TTO is BITRI Investments, the institute’s wholly-owned commercial subsidiary. This entity serves as a holding company, brokering partnerships, facilitating market entry, and driving deals, including recent collaborations in battery metals processing.

Every technology undergoes rigorous quality checks with the Botswana Bureau of Standards (BOBS) and is protected by patents, trademarks, and other IP safeguards before reaching the market.

Technology Transfer Business Specialist, Mr Matlhogonolo Mosweu highlighted some of BITRI’s most impactful creations that are already making a difference on the ground.

The Seding LED Solar Light stands out as a flagship success. The durable, eco-friendly, solar-powered lighting solution is designed for off-grid use. It automatically switches on at sunset and off at sunrise, bringing reliable light to homes, farms, hotels, lodges, office parks, golf courses, parking areas, and public spaces.

BITRI has set up assembly plants, including one in Kanye, and is licensing the technology locally. The latest version, Seding V2.5, is ready for local manufacturing and potential export.

By expanding energy access and cutting reliance on the national grid, it directly supports Botswana’s renewable energy ambitions.

Another exciting initiative is the EV retrofitting plant in Kanye, where BITRI transforms

conventional petrol and diesel vehicles into modern electric ones. This not only extends the life of existing vehicles and reduces emissions and fuel costs but also builds local expertise in green technology and supports the country’s broader e-mobility goals.

Beyond these, BITRI’s portfolio includes innovations in specialty chemicals, advanced materials (such as KSBB bricks) and more, all tailored to solve pressing national challenges.

These technologies are not developed in isolation. Through licensing, training, prototyping, and end-to-end commercial support, BITRI equips local entrepreneurs to adopt, manufacture, and scale solutions.

“Adoption and commercialisation of BITRI technologies by SMEs would go a long way in promoting the establishment of local industries to employ Batswana,” said Kanye District Council Chairperson, Mr Morapedi Kgosithebe.

He expressed the Council’s eagerness to forge deeper partnerships with BITRI, noting that such collaboration could generate sustainable jobs and create new revenue streams to fund district development.

BITRI’s integrated model, combining world-class research with aggressive commercialisation, makes it far more than a research institute.

It is a dynamic innovation partner for government, industry, and entrepreneurs alike.

As the country pursues Vision 2036 and beyond, BITRI’s commercial arms are poised to play an even bigger role in converting Botswana’s resources and ideas into globally competitive technologies and successful businesses. **BOPA**

BUSINESS SERVICES

Lucara discovers another big diamond at Karowe

GABORONE - Lucara Diamond has recovered an exceptional 1,305.4 carat diamond from its Karowe Diamond Mine. The stone is the tenth diamond in excess of 1,000 carats recovered by the Company since operations commenced, further reinforcing Karowe’s stand-alone position as the world’s most prolific source of exceptionally large, high-value diamonds. According to the statement from Lucara the diamond was recovered by the Mega Diamond Recovery (“MDR”) X-ray Transmission (“XRT”) machines, which have been instrumental in preserving and recovering some of the world’s largest gem-quality diamonds. “The recently recovered stone is categorised as white and is unbroken. The stone measures 79.9mm x 34.1mm x 51.9mm in size.” The stone was recovered while processing a blend of open pit material and previously mined, unprocessed stockpiled ore. As a result, the statement says the company cannot conclusively determine whether the diamond originated from current open pit mining or from run-ofmine stockpiled material. **BOPA**

Access Bank financial year audit confirms earnings

GABORONE - Access Bank Botswana has reported that audited reports for financial year ending 31 December 2025 have been completed and released. A statement from the Botswana Stock Exchange listed bank notes that the unaudited profit before tax of P103.5 million reported on 31 March 2026 remains unchanged. The bank states that it remains a well-capitalised and resilient institution, focused on executing its strategic objectives and supporting the growth of Botswana economy. Access bank has also appointed KPMG Botswana as its external auditors for the financial year ending 31 December 2026, replacing PricewaterhouseCoopers. **BOPA**

Hainan plans to ban sales of fuel cars by 2030

HAIKOU - South China’s island province of Hainan has set the goal of banning the sale of combustion-engine cars by 2030, taking the lead in the country’s transition toward new energy vehicles (NEVs). By 2030, all newly added and replaced private vehicles, as well as all new and replacement vehicles in public service and commercial operation in Hainan, must be NEVs, with the exception of special-purpose vehicles, according to the province’s 2026-2030 plan for building a national demonstration zone for ecological civilization. It is estimated that by that time, the share of NEVs in Hainan’s total vehicle fleet will rise from 23.75 per cent in 2025 to 45 percent. The province will also improve its charging infrastructure network, with the vehicle-to-charging-pile ratio kept below 2.5 to 1, said the recently issued plan. **Xinhua**

Dikgang

PAMPIRI YA THUTO LE DIKITSISO

Ipapatse Fa Leletsa

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261 0480 | 241 3402 | 365 3500

‘Go fudusa leruo ke go anamisa bolwetse’

Keetile Bontsibokae
LEPHEPE

Mothusa tona wa temo-thuo le lefatshe, Rre Motsamai
Motsamai o tsibositse barui gore go fudusa leruo go diphatsa ka go ka anamisa bolwetse ka bonako.

Rre Motsamai o buile se bosheng fa a ne a amogela terata e e sa tswang go agwa sesha, e e kgaoganyang molelwane wa kgaolo ya Kweneng le wa Mahalapye kwa Lephepe.

Rre Motsamai a re bangwe barui a ba lemoga gore terata e ya go ba tswalela go dira jaaka tlwaelo, ka bangwe ba tlwaeditse leruo go nwa kwa metsweding ya metsi e seng mo kgaolong ya bone, ba fudusa leruo.

“Ke lo tlhaba podi matseba gore go fudusa leruo go ka le tsenya mo diphatseng tsa go lata bolwetsi kgotsa go bo anamisa,” ga tlhalosa Rre Motsamai.

Mo godimo ga moo Rre Motsamai a re terata e le nosi e ka se tsise tharabololo, ka jalo a re maiteko a motho a feta go menaganye tshireletso e ka dirwang ke terata.

“Motho ke ene a nang le dikankanyo tsa go tlola terata, a e huhumela kgotsa a huhumetsa leruo, ka jalo, motho ke ene modisa wa leruo, mme re tshwanetse gore re mo sokolole pele gore a tsalwe sesha, a wele, e nne motlhokomedi, a nne a ntse akanya gore bolwetsi jo bo ka fela motlhofo,” ga tlhalosa Rre Motsamai.

O kopile badisa go dira ka thata go tlhomamisa gore leruo le babalesegile. Rre Motsamai a re go amega ga leruo go ka feletsa go bakile gore ba latlhegelwe ke ditiro, mme seo se babalele malwapa a bone.

Rre Motsamai a re kgomo ke banka ya Motswana, ka jalo seru sa bolwetse jwa tlhako le molomo se se apesitse mohama wa thuo, ke kgwethlo e amang bothle.

A re seemo sa nako eno se rurifatsa Setswana se se reng, ‘Ka e tlhoka ka tlhoka boroka, ka e rua le gone ka nna ka bo tlhoka.’

Rre Motsamai a re thekiso ya leruo e ama mongwe le mongwe, go akarediwa bagwebi, ditiro tsa morafe jaaka manyalo ka gore dikgomo di dirisiwa go ntsha bogadi le tse dingwe ditiro ka go farologana tse di tlhokang go dirwa ka madi a tswang mo thekisong ya kgomo le gone go nna le le se jewang mo malwapeng le mediro ka go farologana.

Ka jalo, Rre Motsamai a re go botlhokwa gore botlhe ba nne le seabe mo kagong sesha ya terata e laolang matlhoko a leruo.

A re bolwetse jwa tlhako le molomo bo tlhora boroko ka jaana le ba ba neng ba ipoloketse madi kwa dibankeng ba simolotse go a ntsha mowa, ka jaana bolwetse bo ba bohile diatla ba sa kgone go rekisa leruo.

Terata eo, e sa tswang go agiwa sesha ka boithaopo jwa barui ba dipolase tsa Sandveld, ka mokgatlho wa barui wa Sandveld Ranchers Association (SRA) le banni ba metse e e mabapi e akaretsa, Boatlaname, Lephepe, Sojwe, Shadishadi le Loologane go tswa

kwa Lephepe go fitlha kwa Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR).

Terata eo e boleele jwa dikhilomethara di feta lekgolo, mme mo nakong eno, baithaopi ba kgonne go baakanya sekgele sa dikhilomethara tse di lesome le boraro. Ka jalo, Rre Motsamai a re o leboga barui le morafe ka kakaretso go tsibogela kopo ya puso ya gore ba tsenye letsogo mo go lwantsheng tlhako le molomo.

“Ke fano go tla go amogela se le se dirileng, ele maiteko a go lwantsha bolwetsi jwa tlhako le

molomo, mme ke amogela jaana go tswa mo morafeng, ka gore tiro e ya go dira terata ga se ya ba mokgatlho wa Sandveld ba le nosi, mme ke tiro ya morafe o ikiteileng sehuba,” Rre Motsamai a tlhalosa.

A re tshwaragano, tirisano mmogo, boithaopo le boipelego di sa ntse di tshela mme go tlhoka gore di nosediwe.

Modulasetilo wa barui ba dipolase ba Sandveld, Rre Gaobolekwe Tlogelang a re, bangwe ba tshaba go ntsha mosi ka sekhurumelo le fa ba itse kana ba bonye mongwe

a kgaola terata, ka ba re ba tshaba gore badiri molato ba tlaa ba jesetsa mo kgobedung.

Le fa go ntse jalo, a re go botlhokwa go lemoga gore se se dirwang se tlaa nna molemo mo go bothle.

Rre Gaobolekwe a re terata gantsi e kgaolwa ke barui ka gore fa gongwe ba a bo ba batla go tlodisa leuo la bone ka bogaufi ka ba re dikgoro tsa terata di kgakala le bone, fa bangwe ba kgaola terata gore ba e dirise mo ditirong tsa bone ka go farologana. **BOPA**



Barui ba Sandveld Ranchers Association ba rolela mothusa tona wa lefatshe le temo-thuo, Rre Motsamai Motsamai terata ya mafudiso e e kgaoganyang kgaolo ya Legare le ya Kweneng. Senepe: Keetile Bontsibokae

Puso e itlama go rarabolola kgang ya bogosi

Omphile Ntakhwana
SEOLWANE

Mothusa tona wa lephata la dikgaolo le tsa ngwao o kopile banni ba Seolwane go nna dipelo telele jaaka lephata le wetsa kgang ya bogosi jwa motse. Fa a buisa phuthego ya kgotla kwa Seolwane, mothusa tona Rre Ignatius Moswaane o supile fa ya bogosi jwa Seolwane etswa kgakala.

“Re fitlhetse e le gore Kgosi Mhaladi Oteng Mhaladi ga a mo setilong sa bogosi, mabaka ele gore konteraka ya tiro ga yaa atolosiwa ka kgwedi ya Phalane 2023,” ga bua Rre Moswaane.

Mothusa tona o tladitse ka gore mabaka a a dirileng gore konteraka ya tiro ya ga Kgosi Mhaladi e seka ya atolosiwa ke gore go nnile le lekoko (taskforce) le le neng le tlhomilwe ke tona wa lephata la dikgaolo le tsa ngwao, wa nako eo. ‘Kgosi

Mhaladi o ne a lebisitswe melato ele mmalwanyana, mme rona re fitlhetse e le gore lekoko le le neng le tlhomilwe go batlisisa ditatofatso le ne le sa kgobokanya bosupi,’ a rialo Rre Moswaane.

O tswetse a re ka jalo, tona wa lephata la dikgaolo le tsa ngwao wa gompieno, o mo romile go tla go tsaa bosupi mo morafeng ka tse di lebisitsweng Kgosi Mhaladi, gore a ye go begela Tona, tshwetso e tsewe, gore a konteraka ya tiro e atolosiwa a boele mo setilong, kana masupi a a ntshitsweng ke setshaba kgatlhanong le Kgosi Mhaladi ke boammaruri, mme fa go le jalo go tlhongwe Kgosi e nngwe ene a arabele ditatofatso tse?

Pele a tsaa bosupi, Rre Moswaane o ne a tlhalosa gore ka fa molaong, go mefuta ele mebedi ya dikgosi.

‘Go bogosi ja letsalo le bogosi jo bo tlhophilweng ‘ a rialo Rre

Moswaane. O tswetse a re fa Kgosi e tshela go fitlheleng dingwaga di le masome a marataro (60), o fiwa konteraka ya tiro go fitlhelela a tlhokafala. Rre Moswaane o supile gore go na le tsamaiso ya gore kgosi e ka ntshiwa mo setilong, mme go tshwanetse ga salwa molao morago.

“Ditatofatso di dirilwe, lekoko le ne la tlhamiwa, konteraka ya tiro e ne ya seka ya atolosiwa mabaka e le gore go ditatofatso, Kgosi Mhaladi o kwadile a kopa gore konteraka ya tiro ya bogosi e atolosiwe a boele mo tirong,’ a rialo mothusa tona, a tlatsa ka gore ke ka jalo a tsileng go buisa phuthego go kgobokanya bosupi gore kgang e wele.

Ditatofatso tse di lebisitsweng Kgosi Mhaladi ke gore o latofaditswe ka go dirisa madi a dikoleke tsa badiri ba bojalwa mo motseng e se ka fa molaong, go tsaa madi a komiti ya ditlhabololo tsa motse

(VDC) kwa bankeng ya Standard Chartered, go gataka ditshwanelo tsa setshaba, go tlhoka go dirisana sentle le modulasetilo wa VDC le komiti ya gagwe, go thapa (hire) batho mo lenaneong la Ipelegeng e se ka fa tsamaisong, go tsaa ditshwetso a le esi tsa go rekisa disanke tsa komiti ya VDC, magareng ga tse dingwe.

Rre Moswaane o tswetse gape o tlhomamisa gore bogosi ja Seolwane ke ja tsalo. Dibui ka go farologana ba ne ba kgwa mothusa tona kgaba ka bosupi, bangwe bone ba supa fa ditatofatso e se boammaruri.

Mothusa tona o supile fa a tlaa begela tona tsotlhe tse a di kgobokantseng kwa phuthegong ka kgang e, gore tshwetso e tsewe.

Setshaba sa Seolwane se tsamaa sekgele go bona ditirelo tsa lekgotla la Setswana ka ba sena kgosi mo kgotleng,’ a rialo Rre Moswaane. **BOPA**

Maitlamo JSS marks 10 years of growth

Esther Mmolai
MAUN

Every great institution begins as an idea. Ten years ago, Maitlamo Junior Secondary School was exactly that an idea and a promise to the Disana community.

That promise was to give young people not only an education, but an opportunity to discover their potential, build character, and prepare for life beyond the classroom.

The school opened its doors in May 2016 after community members raised concerns that children were traveling far for school and that Maun’s four existing junior schools were operating beyond capacity. Government responded to the plea and built the new facility.

On Friday, the state-of-the-art school celebrated a decade marked by dedication, growth and community spirit. The milestone highlighted not just buildings and classrooms, but the achievements of learners, the commitment of teachers and parents, and the support of stakeholders.

One of the school’s pioneers, former Principal Education Officer Mr Justice Baloyi, recalled that Maitlamo learners were initially housed at Sedie and Tsodilo junior schools while construction was underway.

Residents later unanimously named the school ‘Maitlamo’, vowing to work with teachers and the Parents Teachers Association to make it a model of quality results.

“By naming the school Maitlamo, parents vowed to join forces with the school management, PTA and other stakeholders, towards providing a conducive environment for teaching and learning hence the school is amongst the best in the country,” Mr Baloyi said.

Since 2016, Maitlamo has consistently topped other schools in the North West region in terms of academic performance.

Doctors Inn Private Hospital CEO Dr Maxwell Nhlatho, who addressed the celebrations, said the past 10 years proved the investment was worth it.

“Ten years of hope were worth it since we built a school and therefore, the next 10 years must build a legacy,” he said.

Dr Nhlatho said the community invested believing that today’s classrooms would shape Botswana’s tomorrow. He challenged the school to look beyond grades.

“The true measure of a school is not the grades its learners achieve today, but the people they become tomorrow. What kind of people have we produced; are they responsible; do they solve problems and serve others? Do they leave Botswana better than

they found it? To me, that is the true report card of a school,” he said.

He added that schools exist not merely to produce examination results, but to produce responsible citizens with knowledge, wisdom and integrity adding that knowledge without character

could be dangerous.

Speaking to learners, Dr Nhlatho urged them to keep learning and growing. He also paid tribute to teachers, saying their rewards are often seen years later.

“A teacher plants seeds whose harvest they may never personally

witness. That is why teaching is not merely an occupation but an act of faith hence we must value them because every profession begins in a classroom,” he said.

School Head, Ms Tuelo Morima said like any other school, Maitlamo faced challenges including vandalism and high

learner numbers. To cope, some laboratories were converted into classrooms.

As Maitlamo enters its second decade, the focus shifts from building a school to building a legacy one learner, one teacher and one community partnership at a time. **BOPA**



Kgosi Oleyo Ledimo (left) and Chief Executive Officer of Doctors Inn Private Hospital, Dr Maxwell Nhlatho, during the celebration of Maitlamo Junior Secondary School’s 10th anniversary. Photo: Esther Mmolai

Authority warns of rise in gambling

Letticia Nnokotema
TSABONG

The Gambling Authority has noted a sharp rise in gambling participation among both adults and young people in Botswana, a trend it attributed to the growth of online betting platforms.

This was revealed by the Authority’s Director of Responsible Gambling and Corporate Affairs, Ms Linnet Mafukidze, during a kgotla meeting in Tsabong on Tuesday.

The meeting was part of the Authority’s ongoing public education campaign aimed at promoting responsible gambling, raising awareness of the legal framework, and safeguarding vulnerable groups.

Ms Mafukidze said the Gambling Authority is mandated to regulate and license all gambling activities in the country. She cautioned that any unlicensed gambling, including card games and dice games, is illegal under Section 33 of the Gambling Act of 2012.

“Gambling should be regarded strictly as a form of entertainment and not as a means of generating income or making a profit,” she said.

She urged the public to practice responsible gambling by using only money they could afford to lose and ensuring that gambling does not interfere with work, education, or family responsibilities.

The Director stressed that strict age limits remain in force, with

individuals under 21 prohibited from participating in any gambling activity.

Ms Mafukidze appealed to parents and guardians not to allow children access to electronic devices to place bets or gamble on their behalf. “Such practices undermine the law and expose young people to gambling at an early age,” she warned.

She acknowledged that irresponsible gambling could lead to addiction with serious effects on individuals and families.

To address this, the Authority has intervention programmes in

place.

These include a self-exclusion programme, where individuals can request to be blocked from licensed platforms, and a third-party exclusion programme, which allows family members to apply for the temporary suspension of a relative showing signs of irresponsible gambling. Both are implemented only after investigations confirm the need.

Tsabong resident Mr Felix Ntau suggested that the Authority introduced a user profiling system with monthly spending limits to curb excessive gambling.

Pastor Masego Koonnetseng also called for the campaign to be extended to churches, saying there were signs of irresponsible gambling within some church communities, including the alleged misuse of church funds.

He said awareness programmes in churches could help with education and prevention.

The kgotla meeting formed part of the Gambling Authority’s broader drive to ensure compliance with Botswana’s gambling laws and to protect communities from the harms of irresponsible gambling. **BOPA**



Director of Responsible Gambling & Corporate Affairs, Ms Linnet Mafukidze during the meeting on responsible gambling educational awareness by the Gambling Authority. Ms Mafukidze emphasised that gambling should be regarded as a form of entertainment rather than a means to make income or profit making. Photo: Naomi Leepile

...the state-of-the-art school celebrated a decade marked by dedication, growth and community spirit. The milestone highlighted not just buildings and classrooms, but the achievements of learners...



Debswana invests P1.7 million on Mmalekwa Trust

Thandy Tebogo
KANYE

Debswana has invested P1.7 million at Mmalekwa Cultural Heritage Site, through the development of a heritage centre. Mmalekwa site is the final resting place for Bangwaketse chiefs, forefathers, missionaries, and colonial administrators.

Speaking at the official handover of the centre to Kanye District Council and Mmalekwa Trust Committee on Friday, Jwaneng Mine general manager, Goitseone Gadifele stated that the main objective was about preserving a story that belongs to Bangwaketse.

It is also to preserve the legacy of the past leaders, celebrate their contributions and protect the place with the dignity and

respect it deserved. History such as this cannot and should never be forgotten," he said.

Development he said, was not only about infrastructure, but also entailed protecting identity, preserving local culture and ensuring that stories of the forefathers continued to inspire generations to come.

He indicated that the project contributed to Botswana's aspirations of growing cultural and heritage tourism as part of economic diversification.

"Heritage sites such as Mmalekwa tell stories that are uniquely ours, when they are protected and promoted, they attract visitors, support local businesses, create jobs and strengthen community pride, in doing so, they remind us that

preserving our past can also create opportunities for the future," he said.

Gadifele stated that the site had been designed to serve both the heritage site and the community.

The centre comprise a mini hall for meetings, educational activities and community gatherings, a dedicated library space to preserve knowledge and encourage learning, a kitchen and cafeteria to support visitors and events, ablution facilities as well as a kiosk that creates opportunities for enterprise.

He said the heritage site created opportunities beyond heritage preservation, as it provided Mmalekwa Trust Committee with a platform to generate sustainable revenue, create employment opportunities and



support the ongoing maintenance and preservation of the important heritage site.

One of the tribesmen, Edward Dibeela said Britain, Rhodesia and South African soldiers as well as Tom Brown who translated dictionary into Setswana were buried at Mmalekwa.

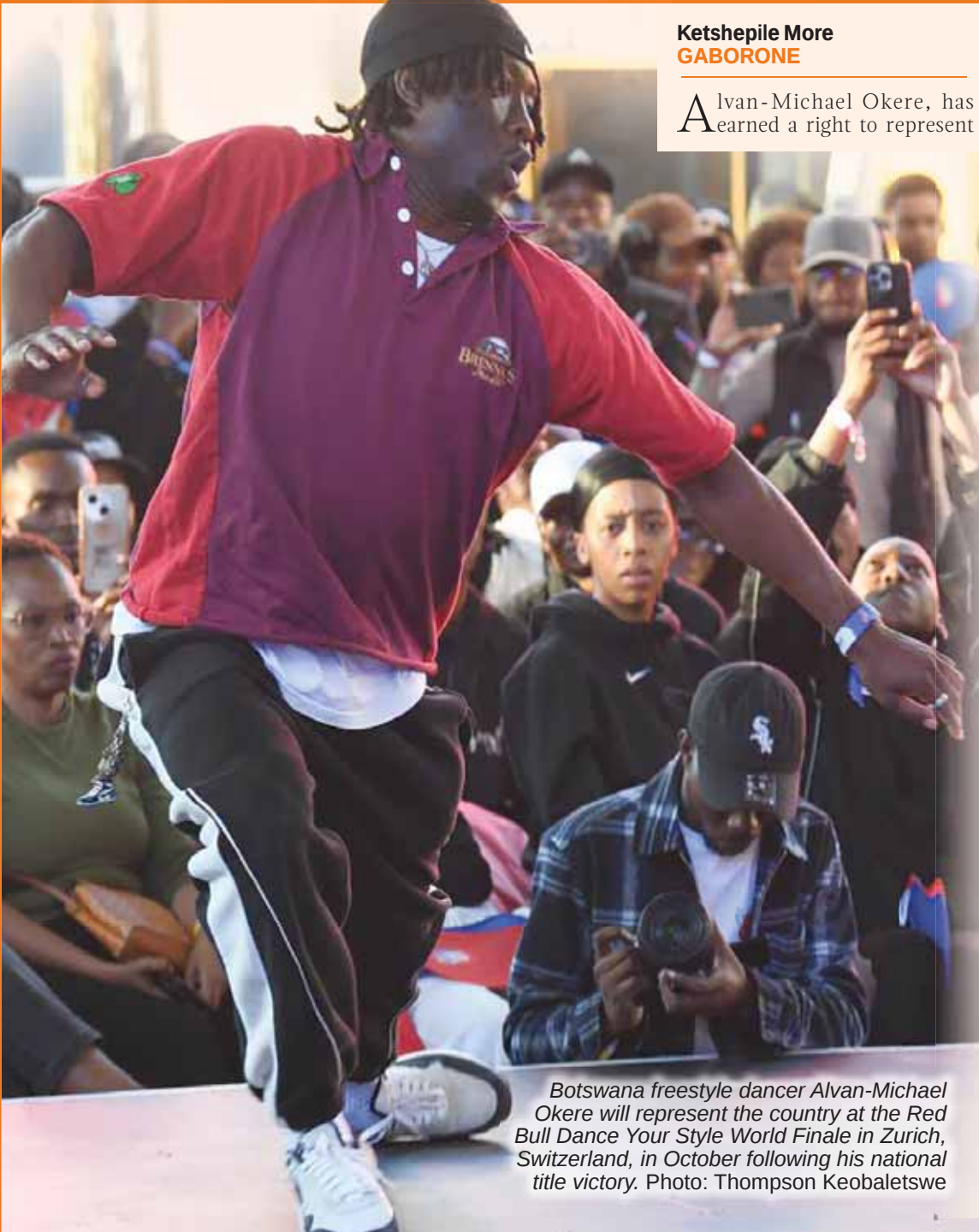
Mmalekwa Trust Committee Secretary Mr Ofentse Solomon said they took a decision to debush, develop and register Mmalekwa heritage site plot with landboard to pave the way for developments.

The aim, he said was to develop a cemetery digital library and

a florist shop or a restaurant at the site. The committee is awaiting a design from Botswana International University of Science and Technology to assist in dividing the cemetery in to eight divisions.

He further indicated that some of the past leaders buried at the site included Richard Rowland who was the road contractor and water reservoir builder, Sejelo Gaseitsewe whom the Sejelo Police Station is named after and missionaries who used to travel between Kanye and Ghanzi on a donkey cart. **BOPA**

Okere dance moves take him to Zurich



Ketshepile More
GABORONE

Alvan-Michael Okere, has earned a right to represent

Botswana at the global Red Bull Dance Your Style championship scheduled for October 24 in Zurich, Switzerland.

A freestyle dancer, Okere's winning strategy relied on rigorous disciplined training for a year following the 2025 Red Bull competition in which he finished second behind Lebo Mabifhi.

"I had to train for hours per day practising each move and transition aiming for the win," Okere said. His preparations showed in his dance set, as he adapted to musical curveball the Dj dropped, having fun and celebrating the joy of all music genres thrown, rather than getting caught in the stress of intense dance battle.

"I capitalised on the audience energy to fuel me up, and because of them I did not feel exhausted from the intense fast dance set," Okere explained.

Born in Nigeria and raised in Botswana, Okere draws his dance inspiration from French twins, Les Twins whom he credits for shaping his moves from a young age. Strong on new style hip-hop, Okere however displayed a vast vocabulary of movement according to the Dj's random unpredictable songs.

His ability to instantly switch from one dance style to the other based on the musical beat won him the audience approval, which is what the Red Bull Dance Your Style winner is decided on; and not the judges.

Often, dance looks deceptively simple to the eye, but it takes a lot of coordination, balance and rhythm. And, all this makes it physically and mentally challenging, which requires serious strength to perform movements seamlessly.

"My biggest challenge to get to the final and eventually winning the competition was getting over social anxiety which I always get when dancing in front of people," Okere said adding that in the last winning round, he wondered how he would dance the track for that final round; 'but then I just proceeded to move my body.'

Advising other aspiring dancers especially those thinking of trying their luck in the competition, Okeke, a public health major student at Gaborone University College, said they should never doubt their talents and believe in themselves.

He also said they should never overthink, as that had the potential to destroy creativity. "Just go in there and do what feels right for you."

First held in 2018, Red Bull Dance Your Style is a global dance competition that brings together some of the world's best street dancers to compete against each other in a freestyle battle format.

Dancers competing for the national title will participate in regional qualifiers battles in order to secure a spot in the national final.

All registered dancers compete for a top 16 spot, where they will then compete head-to-head in a one versus one battle format, battling over two rounds.

After each battle, the audience will decide who rules the dance floor and advances to the next round.

Red Bull Dance Your Style does not offer a cash prize; the ultimate reward for the winning dancer is global visibility, career acceleration, and the prestigious championship title. **BOPA**

Botswana freestyle dancer Alvan-Michael Okere will represent the country at the Red Bull Dance Your Style World Finale in Zurich, Switzerland, in October following his national title victory. Photo: Thompson Keobaletswe



Ntungamili Raguin has etched his name into African sporting history after becoming the first player from Botswana to reach the semi-finals of the Wimbledon Junior Championships.

Ntungamili soars high

Anastacia Sibanda
GABORONE

Botswana tennis sensation, Ntungamili Raguin has written another chapter in African sports history, becoming the first-ever player from Botswana to reach the semi-finals of the Wimbledon Junior Championships.

Partnering with Nigeria's Oluwaseun Peter Ogunsakin, the unseeded duo captured the hearts of tennis followers across the continent during their historic doubles run at the All England Club in London.

Although, they did not make it to the final after losing to the tournament's

top-seeded favourites, Luis Miguel Guto from Brazil and Ziska Sesko from Slovakia in a deciding match tiebreak 6-3, 6-7 (8-10), 10-6, proved they were not pushovers. The unseeded players dropped the opening set 3-6 but fought back with composure to steal a second-set tiebreak 7-6 (10-8).

In the deciding match tiebreak, the top seeded players narrowly edged out the African duo 10-6 to claim a final 6-3, 6-7, 10-6 victory.

Despite bowing out, Raguin and Ogunsakin exit the tournament as the first players in the history of their nations to ever reach a Junior Grand Slam semi-final.

Botswana Tennis Association president, Oaitse Thihe described

Ntungamili's performance as, 'Out of this world'.

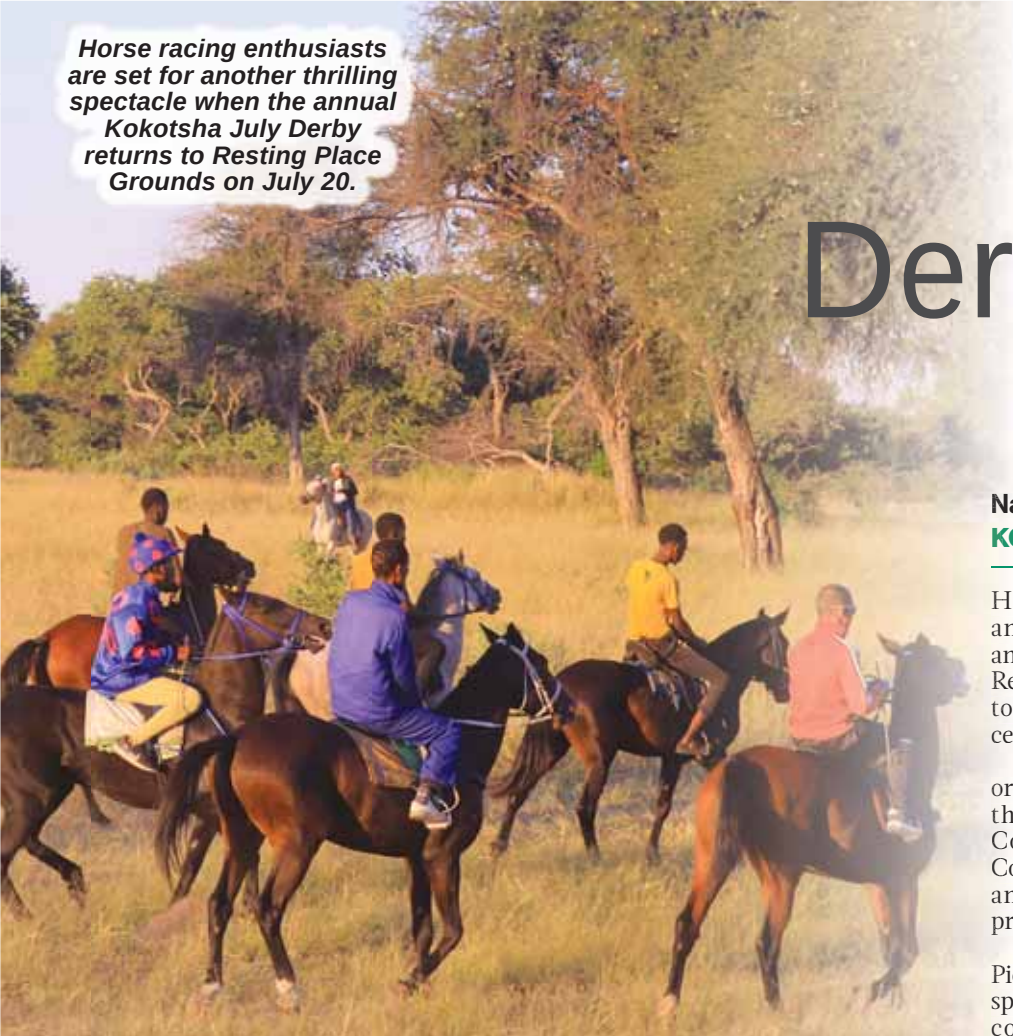
He said his ability to seize the moment after fighting his way into the main draw of the doubles demonstrated that he was growing with every tournament.

Thihe said the player did well in the opening rounds, showing maturity at every stage of the tournament.

"Despite playing against the highest-ranked junior players in the world, Raguin and his partner gave absolutely everything, refusing to be intimidated and pushing the tournament favourites into a deciding set," he said.

He said Ntungamili's Wimbledon success was no fluke, but rather a continuation of a breakout season for the rising star. **BOPA**

Horse racing enthusiasts are set for another thrilling spectacle when the annual Kokotsha July Derby returns to Resting Place Grounds on July 20.



Kokotsha July Derby gallops back into action

**Naomi Leepile
KOKOTSHA**

Horse racing enthusiasts are set for another thrilling spectacle when the annual Kokotsha July Derby returns to Resting Place Grounds on July 20, bringing together top local riders, community celebrations and live entertainment.

Dubbed, The Big One, the derby is organised through a partnership between the Kokotsha Village Development Committee VDC and the Kokotsha Community Horse Racing Association, and has become one of the region's premier horse-racing events.

Kokotsha VDC chairperson Patricia Piet said the event was more than just a sporting competition, as it also promoted community development and social

cohesion.

"The Kokotsha July Derby is a significant community event aimed at promoting local talent, fostering unity and encouraging healthy competition," she said.

Piet said the derby also provided a platform to showcase community initiatives while strengthening the spirit of togetherness among residents and visitors.

In addition to the high-stakes races, patrons will be treated to a variety of entertainment, with popular entertainer Steve Mi'Gruva' Mane expected to headline the performances.

With anticipation building and riders preparing to compete for top honours on the sand track, this year's Kokotsha July Derby is expected to deliver an exciting blend of sporting action and family entertainment. **BOPA**