

BOTSWANA

Daily News

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Maun upgrading gains momentum

Maun East Smart City requires 139 hectares of land for smart, green mixed use development

Esther Mmolai

MAUN

North West district leadership and stakeholders have welcomed the Maun East Smart City concept, which aims to position the tourism town as the country's premier eco-urban hub. The initiative will require 139 hectares of land for smart, green mixed-use development. The project, undertaken by Managed Portfolio Botswana, seeks to establish a resilient, green and smart city anchored on sustainability, digital innovation, nature-based tourism and inclusive economic growth. Launching the concept in Maun

on Tuesday, North West district commissioner, Mr Thabang Waloka said the Maun East Smart City concept reflected the collective commitment to sustainable development, inclusive growth and the intelligent use of technology to improve the quality of life for the people. "Maun has long been recognised as the tourism gateway to the Okavango Delta and a centre of economic opportunity and with growth comes responsibility. Rapid urbanisation demands that we plan smarter, build resilient infrastructure, and ensure that development is orderly, efficient, and environmentally responsible. The Initiative responds directly to these needs," Mr Waloka said.

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Mr Thabang Waloka

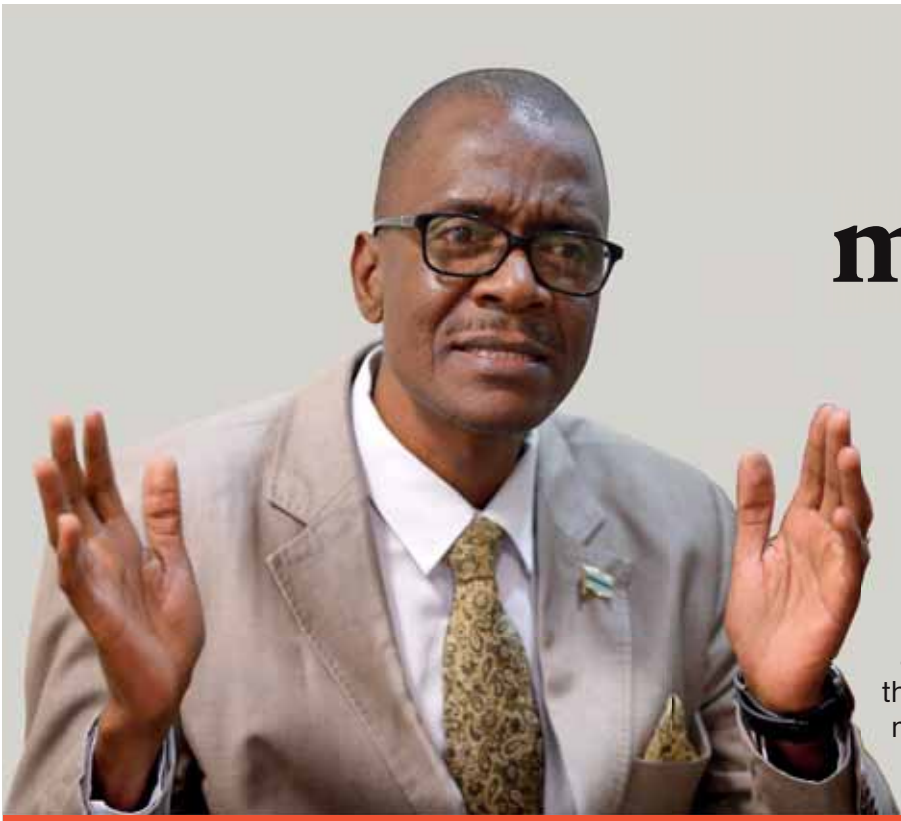
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Health ministry makes strides despite challenges

Keith Ketl
SEROWE

Despite ongoing challenges related to shortages of medicines and medical commodities, the Ministry of Health recorded notable progress across several key areas of public health in 2025. Reflecting on the year, the ministry's chief public relations officer, Dr Christopher Nyanga, outlined major achievements, reforms, and initiatives that marked 2025 as a year of both resilience and reform for Botswana's health sector.

RELOCATION OF PRIMARY HEALTHCARE SERVICES

In April 2025, primary healthcare services, including clinics and health posts, were relocated from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Local Government and Traditional Affairs.

Dr Nyanga described the move as a critical step toward bringing health services closer to communities and advancing Universal Health Coverage.

The relocation of Primary Health Care functions marks a significant milestone in Botswana's health sector reform and decentralisation agenda.

NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE

The ministry also initiated stakeholder consultations, through kgotla meetings, council sessions and direct engagements with various stakeholders, on the introduction of a National Health Insurance (NHI) scheme, which aims to achieve Universal Health Coverage.

Dr Nyanga said the NHI would represent a major transformation of Botswana's health system, aiming to ensure equitable access to quality health care for all citizens, regardless of location or socio-economic status.

He said the ministry planned to table the NHI Bill before Parliament during the February 2026 sitting.

ESTABLISHMENT OF PEDIATRIC SURGICAL CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

Dr Nyanga said the ministry, with support from Kids Operating Room (KidsOR) and funding from philanthropists Mr Steve Lansdown and Ms Margaret Lansdown, made significant strides in strengthening paediatric surgical care over the past 12 months. Two such centres were successfully completed at Princess Marina Hospital and Nyangabgwe Referral Hospital, marking a first for the country.

Both facilities are equipped with state-of-the-art, child-specific surgical infrastructure. At Princess Marina Hospital alone, more than

150 children have already received life-changing surgical procedures since the centre became operational in June 2025. As a result, waiting times for paediatric surgery have been drastically reduced.

Dr Nyanga noted, however, that shortages of specialised personnel such as paediatric anaesthetists and nurses remained a key challenge.

In partnership with KidsOR, the ministry is working to build a skilled workforce capable of delivering safe and continuous paediatric surgical care nationwide.

The initiative aims to improve access to safe, timely, and high-quality surgical services for children by establishing paediatric surgical centres of excellence in Botswana.

At Princess Marina Hospital alone, more than 150 children have already received life-changing surgical procedures since the centre became operational in June 2025. As a result, waiting times for paediatric surgery have been drastically reduced.

EXPANSION OF SAFE SURGICAL CAPACITY

To strengthen surgical resilience, Dr Nyanga said a Solar Surgery System is being implemented in 12 hospitals across the country. The initiative is designed to ensure that surgical services can continue uninterrupted during power outages.

He said the KidsOR project, supported by the Lansdowns, had delivered transformative change by reducing waiting times, improving theatre infrastructure, and introducing sustainable energy solutions. With Nyangabgwe Referral Hospital preparing for its official opening and training programmes progressing, Botswana is positioning itself as a regional leader in paediatric surgery in Southern Africa.



Two cataract surgery campaigns were conducted in 2025 at Selebi Phikwe Government Hospital and Scottish Livingstone Hospital to restore sight to 694 Batswana.

EYE CATARACT SURGERY CAMPAIGNS

Two cataract surgery campaigns conducted in 2025 at Selebi Phikwe Government Hospital and Scottish Livingstone Hospital restored sight to a total of 694 Batswana.

Dr Nyanga said many beneficiaries had been on waiting lists for a long time, making 2025 a life-changing year for them. He described the campaigns as a significant milestone in improving eye health and quality of life for hundreds of citizens.

MEDICAL DELIVERY DRONES

Government launched Botswana's medical delivery drones, an innovative breakthrough that will transform the way it has been delivering healthcare across the nation. The initiative is designed to ensure that life-saving and essential medicines reach even the most remote and hard-to-access communities with speed, reliability, and precision.

The innovation, which was launched by President Advocate Duma Boko, aligns with government's commitment to equitable healthcare, as no citizen should be denied timely access to critical treatment. **BOPA**



Medical delivery drones is an innovative breakthrough that will transform the way Ministry of Health has been delivering healthcare across the nation.



Ministry of Health chief public relations officer, Dr Christopher Nyanga said the ministry, with support from Kids Operating Room and funding from philanthropists, Mr Steve Lansdown and Ms Margaret Lansdown, made significant strides in strengthening paediatric surgical care over the past 12 months.

Majere applauds special education learners

Thamani Shabani
FRANCISTOWN

Special education learners, who participated at the just ended National Special Olympics, deserves special recognition and appreciation for displaying a sterling performance.

The mayor of Francistown, Mr Gaone Majere said during the city's full council meeting citing that the team returned home with an impressive total of 77 medals, a remarkable achievement that he added, spoke to their dedication, resilience and talent.

The team secured 34 gold medals, 29 silver medals, and 14 bronze medals, earning not only accolades but also the admiration of the nation of Botswana and 'their performance is a testament to what can be accomplished when determination meets support and opportunity', Mr Majere said.

While he acknowledged youth unemployment as one of the challenges in the city, he said the council had however committed itself to creating meaningful opportunities for the youth through the Tender Preference Scheme, under which a portion of procurement was reserved specifically for youth-owned enterprises.

Through the scheme, the council has awarded over P1 million to youth-owned companies out of P7,161,161.15 worth of tenders, representing 14.41 per cent of the total.

"We should, however, acknowledge that the pace of procurement has been slower than anticipated due to the current economic conditions we are experiencing," added Mr Majere.

The house was also briefed that the council was more committed to harnessing solar energy across its institutions citing that the solar systems had now been installed and commissioned at Tagala and Lekgaba primary schools while installation works at Mahudiri and Phatsimo primary schools had also been completed and currently awaiting commissioning by the Botswana Power Corporation.

The next school scheduled in the programme of works, he said was Pelotshwana Primary School as all required materials had already been procured noting that the commencement of works at the school has been delayed due to the breakdown of the cherrypicker, a critical piece of equipment necessary for the successful execution of the project.

"This initiative is fully

aligned with the government's commitment to sustainable energy as articulated in the National Energy Policy, which promotes a transition from coal dependency to renewable energy sources. It is also well in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goal number 7, which is Affordable and Clean Energy," he said.

He said the council would generate income from International Renewable Energy Credits and Carbon Credits as the government advances efforts for Botswana to participate meaningfully in the global carbon economy.

Furthermore, he said the city council had identified and prioritised different sectors, including tourism, manufacturing and the informal sector, among others, as engines for economic growth and development.

"Under the tourism sector, we have identified 17 heritage sites, which are currently being documented to create an informative heritage platter," said Mr Majere.

In addition, he said the council would resuscitate the Francistown Educational Park to promote urban tourism, generate income and



Francistown mayor, Mr Gaone Majere has applauded the special education learners who participated at the just ended National Special Olympics, saying they deserved recognition and appreciation for displaying a sterling performance at the games.

create employment opportunities in ancillary sectors such as hospitality, retail and transport.

The fencing of the park is almost complete and will be followed by restocking of the park.

The move is expected to position the city as a premier Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions destination as it has hosted several high-profile events, including the BTC Marathon, Batanani Walk, Miss Universe

Botswana and Land Pitso, among others.

The city is also billed to host Tourism Pitso from January 29 to 30, while the City Tourism will be launched in Francistown on Saturday.

"These activities not only showcase our capacity and readiness to host major events but also contribute significantly to the local economy and the livelihoods of our residents." **BOPA**

UB council to hasten restructuring process

- **Maele appoints Nine UB council members**
- **Council tasked to complete restructuring exercise by March 31, 2026**

Gontle Merafhe
GABORONE

Minister of Higher Education Mhas appointed a new University of Botswana Council, comprising nine experts drawn from various disciplines.

The university has been operating for nine months without a council.

The new council comprising five appointed members, two nominees proposed by the university and two re-appointments are Morupule Coal Mine chief executive officer, Mr Edwin Elias, UB lecturer Dr Shabani Ndzingi, IDM Country director, Dr Theophilus Mooko, UB lecturer, Dr Audrey Masizana, lawyers, Messrs Onaethata Kambai and Tebatso Seabue, Dr Chilindi Maloiso, who is UB director of Health Science, Messrs John Phatshwe and John Mpoloka from the Ministry of Higher Education.

Addressing the council in Gaborone on Tuesday, Mr Prince Maele implored council members to reposition UB beyond traditional teaching and research, saying universities must now drive innovation and economic relevance.

Also, he cautioned council members against involvement in operational matters.

Instead, he urged them to focus on strategic oversight, noting that substantial work remained



Minister of Higher Education Mr Prince Maele

outstanding following the nine-month hiatus.

He further challenged the council to conclude the restructuring exercise, which had taken five years to conclude.

Already, he said he had met with UB Vice Chancellor, Prof. David Norris for progress update on the exercise with the new deadline set for March 31, 2026.

In addition, the minister tasked the council chairperson, Dr Daniel Tau with expediting the onboarding process to enable the council to begin work immediately, adding that additional meetings would be required to address compliance backlogs. Reflecting on the country's prevailing economic challenges, which contributed to UB's prolonged period without a council, the minister urged the university to transform into a fourth-generation institution by developing a sustainable third income stream.

"I say this to all public universities BUAN, BOU, BIUST and UB they must have a third income stream. For universities, this is very easy," he said.

In his remarks, Dr Tau

acknowledged that the absence of a council created a governance vacuum, resulting in the failure to execute key statutory responsibilities. These included the declaration of financial statements and accounts, normally undertaken between April and June as well as the submission of the annual report due in September.

Expressing concern, Dr Tau said the university had fallen behind peer institutions despite its mandate to be exemplary in governance.

Meanwhile, Professor David Norris said the university had fallen short of expectations along the research and innovation value chain, failing to fully deliver on the objectives of its 2017-2018 strategy.

He attributed this partly to the institution's cost structure, revealing that 92 per cent of the university's budget was spent on wages, leaving limited resources for core academic and innovation activities. Anchored on research and innovation, Prof. Norris said the university had adopted a new strategic direction aimed at translating research outputs into marketable products and services.

He noted that the existing organisational structure did not support this vision, prompting a comprehensive restructuring exercise to align the institution with its strategic priorities.

"The process involved reviewing the organisational structure, job profiles and performance systems to ensure timely and effective delivery of our mandate. This also resulted in the reconfiguration of faculties," he said.

As part of the restructuring, he said five faculties were reorganised to promote multidisciplinary research and collaboration. **BOPA**

Maun upgrading gains momentum

...from page 1

Mr Waloka said the envisioned project would create a city environment that was safe, connected, environmentally conscious and economically vibrant, one that served not only present generations but also those yet to come.

Appreciating the landmark concept, he said it represented progress, innovation and a shared vision for the future of the district and nation at large.

The district commissioner further noted that the initiative would benefit the people of Maun through housing opportunities across all income levels, commercial activity, institutional services, jobs for youth and local contractors, investment stimulus pointing that when communities thrive, the district thrives and the nation prospers.

Mr Waloka pledged that the district administration would facilitate engagement, support regulatory compliance, ensure community interests were protected.

He further encouraged Managed Portfolio Botswana to maintain openness, transparency and stakeholder participation.

North West District Council chairperson, Mr Itumeleng Kelebitseng said the launch marked the beginning of a new chapter, one defined by innovation, sustainability and inclusive growth.

Maun, he said was a tourism destination, a gateway to natural heritage, to opportunity and to progress and with the smart city initiative.

As such, he reaffirmed their support to the project aimed at improving the quality of life for the people, creating jobs, empowering businesses and ensuring that development remains environmentally responsible.

The initiative, he said called for collaboration between the community, government, private sector and development partners and encouraged all to move forward with a shared sense of purpose, ensuring that no one was left behind as they build the city that was smart, resilient and people centred.

Batawana deputy chief, Kgosi Kealetile Moremi also hailed the initiative saying it came at an opportune time when the nation was guided by Vision 2036.

In addition, she said the project responded meaningfully to the vision, which promoted urban development infrastructure, economic opportunities and environmental responsibility.

As community traditional leaders, she said they recognised developments in the area which were well planned and sensitive to both communities and the environment.

For their part, some leaders also welcomed the project, saying it would elevate Maun's status as it aimed to stimulate economic growth, expanded affordable housing, accelerated youth employment, strengthen small-medium enterprises capacity and positioned it as Botswana's investment hub. **BOPA**

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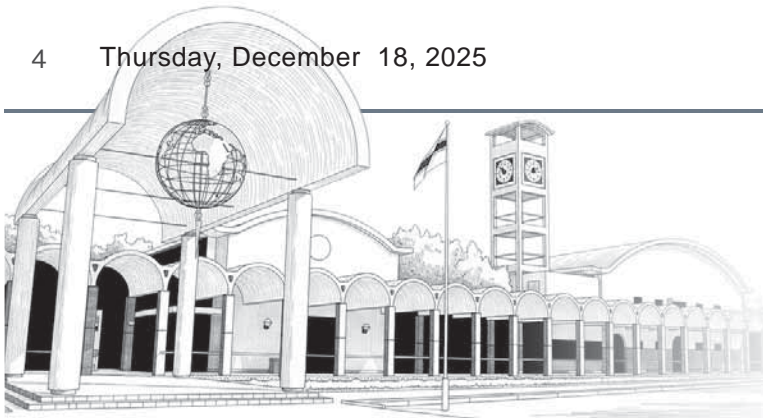
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EDITORS

Ms Lorato Okaile
Tel: 365 3640 - lgaleage@gov.bw
Ms Masego Pilane
Tel: 365 3569 - mkpilane@gov.bw
Mr Sefhako Sefhako
Tel: 365 3589 - sesehako@gov.bw

HEAD OF MARKETING HEAD OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Ms Lucretia Chima
Tel: 365 3574
lchima@gov.bw
Mr Yobe Shonga
Tel: 365 3604
yshonga@gov.bw



PARLIAMENT 2025

Police make progress in stock theft fight

GABORONE

A total of 202 cases of stock theft have been recorded in Shashe West constituency over the last five years of which 90 are registered before the courts, 70 completed and 20 are still pending.

The remaining 112 cases are going through various stages of investigation, Minister of Communications and Innovation, Mr David Tshere told Parliament on Tuesday.

Responding on behalf of the Minister for State President, Defence and Security, Minister Tshere said he was not aware of the lack of breakthrough by police in stock theft cases in the constituency which included Jamataka, Shashemooke and surrounding villages.

“What I am aware of is that the police are on the ground on daily basis to tackle the problem of crime, including stock theft,” Mr Tshere said.

Furthermore, he said the police had put up several measures to fight stock theft, among them Operation Kgomokhumo VI which commenced June 1 to August 31, 2023 and Operation Kgomokhumo VIII which ran from April 22 to July 22 last year.

The minister pointed out that district Anti-Stock Theft teams were established in Jamataka, Shashemooke and surrounding areas as well as mephato formed in Shashemooke, Mathangwane, Makobo, Matsitama and Natale villages.

Moreover, the District Anti-Stock Theft team comprising eight

A total of 202 cases of stock theft have been recorded in Shashe West Constituency over the last five years of which 90 are registered before the courts, 70 completed and 20 are still pending. The remaining 112 cases are going through various stages of investigation, Minister of Communications and Innovation,

officers was allocated a vehicle which is still available to address concerns related to stock theft and the team is currently deployed in the villages of Chadibe, Jamataka, Makobo, Natale, Borolong and Mabesekwa.

Mr Tshere explained that there is a plan to build a new police station in Shashemooke under NDPI2 and it is aimed to cover Jamataka and surrounding villages.

The minister was responding to a question by Shashe West MP, Mr Jeremiah Frenzel who asked if the minister was aware of lack of breakthrough by the police on the high rate of stock theft cases in Jamataka, Shashemooke and surrounding villages and the measures being put in place to address the situation.

He also wanted to know when the area would be provided with designated patrol vehicles to curb the high crime rate, if there was a police station planned for the area and when stock theft cases that had been lying dormant for over four to five years in the Shashe West constituency would be disposed.

BOPA

Ministry ceases plot allocation

Plot allocation at Shashe Bridge Ward in Maun has ceased on account of environmental sensitivity, existence of aquifers and the area being a flood plain

GABORONE

Plot allocation at Shashe Bridge Ward in Maun has ceased on account of environmental sensitivity, existence of aquifers and the area being a flood plain.

Answering a question in Parliament on behalf of the Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Assistant Minister of Trade and Entrepreneurship, Mr Baratiwa Mathoothe, said Shashe Bridge Ward was located in a recognised settlement of Maun therefore, some residents of the ward were legally allocated residential plots, while some part of the land was illegally occupied.

He said those who had illegally occupied land were summoned to appear before the Land Tribunal in 2016, where it was ruled that 81 of the 200 who were profiled be evicted and their shelters demolished.

Mr Mathoothe said during the process of demolition, Tawana Land Board was at some point instructed by the Office of the President to suspend the demolitions so that a nationwide exercise to profile squatters be undertaken with the view to provide amnesty to those who might qualify, based on the criteria to be developed.

The exercise resulted in two groups of squatters, those whose homes had been demolished and those who remained as the instruction was issued before their shelters could be demolished.

Only the properties that met the criteria for legal occupation were formally recognised, while the rest were still classified as squatters within a recognised ward, Mr Mathoothe said.

He said no provisions were made for compensation of those whose homes were already demolished, at the time when the demolition exercise was suspended. “This is because the nature of the

land occupation did not entitle the occupants to any form of compensation,” he said, adding that a court order was obtained against them and it had not been abandoned.

Mr Mathoothe said no form of arrangements had been made to resettle the affected individuals but were advised to follow the right procedures for allocation of land and that any outstanding issues would be revisited through the relevant land board.

Maun West MP, Mr Caterpillar Hikuama, had asked the minister to update the Parliament on the land tenure status of the demolished houses at Shashe Bridge in Maun and to further state

if the said properties were formally recognised settlements or classified as informal/squatter settlements.

Mr Hikuama had also asked the minister to state whether any attempts were made by the ministry and or land board to regularise the land occupancy of Shashe Bridge residents prior to the demolition and what provisions if any had been made to compensate residents whose homes were demolished.

He also asked if government had made any arrangements for the resettlement or relocation of the affected residents.

BOPA



Assistant Minister of Trade and Entrepreneurship, Mr Baratiwa Mathoothe said Plot allocation at Shashe Bridge Ward in Maun was no longer viable on account of environmental sensitivity, existence of aquifers and the area being a flood plain.

Road contractors fail to meet deadline

GAORONE

Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Mr Noah Salakae has told Parliament that both Gumare-Sepopa and Sepopa-Mohembo projects had reached their completion dates and the contractors had been served with notices to claim for delay damages which was a motivation for contractors to complete the projects.

Giving details of the projects, Minister Salakae said the asphalt overlay of Gumare-Sepopa-Mohembo Road (A35) was awarded in October 2022, and the commencement date being November 21, 2022.

He said the project was awarded in two sections; Gumare-Sepopa (73.9km) awarded to Bango trading and Sepopa-Mohembo (74km) awarded to Rockefeller respectively.

Mr Salakae said the scope of the projects entailed predominantly asphalt overlaying of all the sections of the road.

At the time of award of the

projects, the whole road from Gumare to Mohembo was in a very bad condition, that the original scope being asphalt overlaying became irrelevant or not appropriate as an intervention, Minister Salakae saying sections that required reconstruction and shoulder widening were identified.

Following that, the two projects were divided into two contracts or packages.

The minister explained that package two (Gumare-Mohembo) was a 37.7km stretch that started from Gumare entailed the use of cold-recycling technology for reconstruction and shoulder construction.

He said the package also included the construction of the access road of Etsha 1 (1.7km), Etsha 6 (3km), Etsha 13 (3.2 km) and Ikoga (2.8km).

Furthermore he said package two (Gumare-Mohembo) entailed shoulder construction and asphalt overlaying for a stretch of 36.2 km of the road up to Sepopa and also

increased the width of the road from six to nine metres.

Mr Salakae stated that Sepopa-Mohembo Road section, the contracts or packages were subdivided. He said package two started from Sepopa and entailed the use of cold- recycling technology for reconstruction of the 10km of the road and shoulder construction. He stated that the contract also included construction of access roads of Sepopa 1.9km, Kajaja 1.2km, Nxamasere 1km, Samochima 0.9km, Shakawe police 1.5km, Shakawe airstrip 0.5km and Mohembo Kgotsa.

He said that package one entailed asphalt overlaying and shoulder construction of the 64km to Mohembo.

The minister said that during the last visit to the Gumare-Sepopa-Mohembo Road in February 2025, overall progress for the projects for Gumare-Sepopa Road package one was 43 per cent and it was 70 per cent and package two was 62 per cent and now 85 per cent.

Mr Salakae said Sepopa-Mohembo Road package one was at three per cent and now at 18.7 per cent and package two was 21 per cent and now 32.8 per cent.

He said contractors’ claims for extension of time due to delays attributable to the employer were sighted as stumbling blocks to progress and were resolved.

He said contract for Gumare-Sepopa package one were extended from November 2024 to October 2025 with further extensions on the table for resolution. He said claims for Sepopa-Mohembo package one had been referred to a Dispute Adjudication Committee for resolution adding that these issues were highlighted as impediments to progress by the contractors during the visit.

He highlighted that the construction material particularly quality gravel was a very scarce resource in the North West region of Botswana hence whenever suitable gravel deposits were identified it was essential that they be utilised.

To address the issue of poor quality, he said the ministry had found ways by stabilising the gravel material with mixtures such as cement, bitumen and other suitable material to improve the strength and other qualities on the gravel.

He affirmed the adequacy and durability of the materials used for construction. He said the road was expected to achieve a service life of atleast 10 to 15 years before requiring any further intervention.

Okavango West MP, Mr Kenny Kapinga, had asked the minister to give a progress report on what had been achieved in the construction of the Gumare-Sepopa-Sepopa-Mohembo road since the last visit to the project by the assistant minister.

He asked him to update the people of Okavango on the interventions he made and what progress the interventions achieved. Mr Kapinga asked if the minister would vouch for the quality of materials being used in the construction of the road and what the longevity of the road would be.

BOPA

Hikuama calls for detailed analysis of PSLE results

Pako Lebanna

GABORONE

Opposition whip, Maun West MP, Mr Caterpillar Hikuama called for a detailed analysis that could analyse the PSLE results nationally, and the various regions and schools in order to develop the relevant interventions.

Mr Hikuama, who was responding Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education, Ms Nono Kgafela-Mokoka statement in Parliament on Monday, expressed concern about schools in remote areas not performing well, citing Nxaraga Primary School on the outskirts of Maun which only managed a 12 per cent pass rate, which he said was extremely low and required the ministry to closely examine their conditions and offer the requisite solutions.

Giving a Ministerial Statement to Parliament on the PSLE provisional results on Monday, Ms Kgafela-Mokoka said a total of 52 771 candidates sat for the examinations without any disruptions at the centres countrywide.

She said through centre inspections, there had been enhanced monitoring to ensure adherence to standards and to guard against any loss of BEC qualification credibility. Only 52 cases of maladministration and two of malpractice were recorded and accordingly investigated, she added.

Ms Kgafela-Mokoka revealed that the proportion of learners attaining Grade A stands at 21.40, an improvement by 0.30 per cent compared to the previous year; and there was similar slight improvement in the number of

Legislators have expressed concerns regarding the low academic performance of schools in remote areas, frequent transfers of school heads and overcrowding in certain institutions. They believe these factors contribute to the overall performance in some schools and have urged the Ministry of Child Welfare and Basic Education to closely assess the situation and implement necessary solutions.

learners earning grades B to D.

Also, 99.90 per cent of learners achieved Grade E or better, the same as in the previous year, and only 13 learners received the unclassified mark U, compared to 39 in 2024.

Almost all candidates (99.90 per cent in Setswana and 98.75 per cent in English) met the minimum requirements of a grade in the core language subjects, the minister said.

“As in past years, candidates continue to perform better in the Comprehension and Language Use Dimension than in the Communication Dimension, although some improvements have been noted in the latter. The quality of work improved in both letter and composition writing,” said Ms Kgafela-Mokoka.

Similar meeting of minimum requirements by around 99 per cent of learners for other subjects such as Mathematics Science, Social Studies, Religious and Moral Education as well as Agriculture were recorded, the minister revealed.

She said the results, approved by the Botswana Examinations Council (BEC) board on Tuesday, December 9, continued to be a diagnostic test that provided feedback on the national education system, guiding schools and

teachers on the needs of learners as they progressed to the next level of their education.

Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Mmopane-Metsimotlhabe legislator, Ms Helen Manyeneng also responded to the minister’s speech and expressed concern of some school heads of schools that performed well in examinations being transferred elsewhere, instead of being given the opportunity to build on the foundation they had laid.

For his part, Mogoditshane East legislator, Mr Lethogonolo Barongwang, was concerned that Mogoditshane, recorded to have 88 000 people in the 2022 population census had only three primary schools which were thus burdened by serving a large jurisdiction.

He also expressed interest in the development of multiple pathways,

stating that pupils who displayed an inclination towards the arts and vocational skills should be offered those subjects to ensure they also excelled.

Maun East MP, Mr Goretetse Kegonegile, said Setswana as a core subject increased the load on pupils in PSLE as well as Junior Certificate Examinations (JCE) and the Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE).

He also said sitting for as many as seven subjects in a short period should be reconsidered as it might lead to an increase in failure. Mr Kekgonegile said government should consider offering pupils living with disabilities a different grading system as they might be unable to compete on an equal footing with their able bodied counterparts.

Responding to legislators, Minister Kgafela-Mokoka said her ministry continuously received reports that analysed the examination and the education system adding that they kept probing measures to improve the PSLE syllabubs and examinations.

She said government was moving towards the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subjects as a means towards the betterment of the education system.

Additionally, Ms Kgafela-Mokoka said the ministry was working on infusing vocational skills at all levels and to improving access, inclusivity and quality education for all. But she said students should not be shortchanged by a reduction in subjects, given that students in other countries comparatively sat for more subjects at a similar level. **BOPA**

‘As in past years, candidates continue to perform better in the Comprehension and Language Use Dimension than in the Communication Dimension, although some improvements have been noted in the latter. The quality of work improved in both letter and composition writing.’

Govt uses public procurement to support informal sector

GABORONE

Parliament has learnt that the informal sector enjoys benefits that were initially reserved for formal sector such as participating in government tenders.

The informal sector also receives support from government through simplified regulations, reduction of compliance costs, improved business processes using ICT and strengthened access to technology, finance and markets, Assistant Minister of Trade and Entrepreneurship, Mr Baratiwa Mathoothe has said.

He said in order to minimise regulation of the informal sector, the Ministry of Trade and Entrepreneurship had over the years collaborated with Ministry of Local Government and Traditional Affairs to facilitate the sector.

In that regard, he said all licensing of businesses was carried out at Local Authorities, including Small Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) that were exempted from licensing requirements which were registered according to guidelines that were developed in 2013 and amended in 2017, to

cater for businesses operating from residential areas.

Minister Mathoothe also indicated that local government ministry was also developing Model Bye Laws for businesses that could not be regulated through the Trade Act.

Parliament also learnt that the Minister of Trade and Entrepreneurship did not have recorded cases of harassment or extortion of traders by law enforcement officers and that such matters fell within structures of local authorities and relevant policing structures.

Selebi Phikwe East MP, Mr Kgoberego Nkawana had asked the minister to state the current policy on small scale trading licenses, and what changes were being made to support small scale traders.

He also wanted to know what the ministry was doing to address the issue of harassment and extortion of small scale traders by law enforcement officers and how many of those were issues with trading licences in the last 12 months. **BOPA**



Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education, Ms Nono Kgafela-Mokoka said the PSLE provisional results indicated a slight improvement in qualification levels.

‘Over P13.4 million owed to employees’

GABORONE

The Ministry of Lands and Agriculture owes 1 469 employees about P13.4 million, comprising arrears that go back a number of years and certain current obligations.

Some payments covering salary arrears are still ongoing especially for gatekeepers, night watchmen and storekeepers, Assistant Minister of Trade and Entrepreneurship, Mr Baratiwa Mathoothe said.

Mr Mathoothe, who was answering a Parliament question on behalf of the portfolio minister on Monday said, officers of C Band multiple grading have been paid except for 10 deceased officers whose payments had

been submitted to the Master of the High Court for execution of the deceased estates.

Since this is a live issue, Mr Mathoothe said there was an ongoing exercise to determine the number of employees and the quantum hence the total amount due might change over time, depending on new entries, which would include amounts settled, and those freshly introduced as liabilities.

In the above context, let me advise this House that based on a number of court rulings, the ministry appeared before the Ombudsman on August 18 and conceded to pay all similarly circumstanced claims related to overtimes hence the need to undertake the exercise, Mr

Mathoothe said.

He explained that the underlying arrears dated back to 2015, and the considerations cut across all departments, and mainly affected extension officers.

Mr Mathoothe said that some transformation was required and appropriate consultations must take place between the relevant stakeholders, comprising my ministry, the Directorate of Public Service Management, the affected workers and their representative trade unions.

Bobirwa MP, Mr Taolo Lucas had asked the minister to give a departmental breakdown of all employees owed under his Ministry and the payment plan thereof. **BOPA**

DailyBusiness

BUSINESS BRIEFS

China and Kenya firms sign deal

NAIROBI - Kenya's Bamburi Cement on Tuesday signed a US\$250-million engineering, procurement and construction contract with Chinese firm CBMI Construction Co., Ltd to build a new clinker grinding plant in Kwale county. Speaking at the signing ceremony in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, President William Ruto said the new clinker production line was the kind of transformative investment required to drive Kenya's rapid national development ambitions through deliberate support for both public and private investment. "This project will play a critical role in strengthening Kenya's industrial capacity and supporting the delivery of strategic national infrastructure, including the Affordable Housing Program," Ruto said. He noted that the project will create meaningful employment opportunities for young people, stimulate local enterprise and supply chains, and promote balanced regional industrialization by anchoring manufacturing growth in the coastal region. **Xinhua**

Mongolia industrial output rises 1.6 per cent

ULAN BATOR - Mongolia's industrial output rose by 1.6 percent in the first 11 months of 2025, compared to the same period a year earlier, the country's National Statistics Office said Wednesday. The industrial output amounted to 47.1 trillion Mongolian tugriks (about 13.2 billion U.S. dollars) in January-November period. The increase was mainly the result of a rise in the output of processing industry, it added. **Xinhua**

China-Europe freight exceed 5 million tonnes

HOHHOT - Freight volume of China-Europe freight trains passing through the Erenhot Port, the largest land port between China and Mongolia has exceeded 5 million tonnes as of Monday this year, an increase of 22.7 per cent year on year, hitting a new record, said customs authorities. The port has handled 3 807 China-Europe freight trains this year, transporting 433 600 TEUs of goods, said China Railway Hohhot Group Co. Ltd. In 2025, the port added new routes, including routes connecting Wuhu in east China's Anhui Province with Moscow, Russia, and Datong in north China's Shanxi Province with Selyatino, Russia. Customs authorities have also taken a series of measures to enhance efficiency. Currently, the border inspection time for each train has been reduced to about 20 minutes. As the sole transit port for the "middle corridor" of the China-Europe freight train network, Erenhot currently operates 74 routes connecting over 70 stations across more than 10 countries, including Germany and Poland. **Xinhua**



PALEKA board chairperson, Mr Kabozu Kabozu (left), Chobe District Council chairperson, Mr Johane Chenjekwa (centre) and Member of Parliament for Chobe, Mr Simasiku Mapulanga during the unveiling of PALEKA new offices in Kazungula on Monday. Photos: Portia Keetile

PALEKA Trust unveils new offices

Portia Keetile
KAZUNGULA

Newly opened Pandamatenga-Lesoma-Kazungula (PALEKA) community offices are crucial to improved quality service to members. Officially opening the offices on Monday, Member of Parliament for Chobe, Mr Simasiku Mapulanga appreciated the trust efforts saying the new establishment would serve as an information centre where all services would be centered for the people of the three villages to access. He said the new administrative

centre championed an eco-friendly environment as it was fully powered by solar which resonated well with PALEKA as a custodian of sustainable environment and biodiversity. Mr Mapulanga further said that the development would promote efficiency by serving a broader community under one roof. Moreover, he stated that the trust would serve funds that were in the past injected into office rentals hence channel them to other projects. "This office development is aligned to the community Based Natural Resources Management

policy which underpins the importance of conservation by communities existing within these resources and in turn generate income through the resources for improvement of livelihoods," he added. PALEKA Board chairperson, Mr Kabozu Kabozu said that construction of the offices was a priority, adding that the offices would ensure people were assisted on time on a bigger facility in comparison to the office they rented. He also stated that they created employment and hired more than 20 personnel in PALEKA villages noting that they were planning

to increase the numbers through building of a campsite. Grand Georick Energy founder, Mr Matengu Matengu stated that Chobe was endowed with ample solar energy which they tapped into and fully powered the new offices. He said the offices were powered with 24 kilowatt hybrid system which was dependent on the sun adding that the trust could also connect to Botswana Power Corporation (BPC) grid as backup in future. Mr Matengu remarked that solar energy was the future as espoused in the Vision 2036 that Botswana intended to embrace an eco-friendly practice. **BOPA**

Francistown still open for business

Kelebogile Taolo
FRANCISTOWN

Entrepreneurs in Francistown and surrounding areas must tap into various business opportunities in their region. Speaking at the first edition of the Dikgwebo Dialogue workshop hosted in Francistown recently, CEDA Francistown Branch Manager, Mr Lesego Mohlohlwa highlighted business opportunities ranging from manufacturing, agriculture, real estate transportation among others, which could be viable in the region. He said that CEDA financed

various legitimate businesses with or without licenses. "Some businesses can be legitimate but not given licenses such as venturing into agriculture and transportation, but such businesses can be assisted at CEDA as government has allowed them to operate," he said. Mr Mohlohlwa also told attendants that CEDA financed joint ventures and partnerships by Batswana and foreigners with loans from minimum of four million up to 50 million. He further noted that CEDA had revised some guidelines to include financing working groups through initiatives such as Thuo Kgomo

which caters for Cattle production, poultry and fodder production. Mr Mohlohlwa therefore urged Entrepreneurs to visit CEDA offices to learn more about the products and services they offer. For his part Local Enterprise Authority (LEA) official Mr Kgalemang Olekantshe said Entrepreneurs around Francistown must take advantage from the construction of the A3 road as well as the re-opening of Tataki mine which created more opportunities for business in areas of hospitality, real estate, logistics and textiles among others. He said LEA assisted those with ideas to start business, trainings and

how to access financial services. Mr Olekantshe further emphasised the importance of branding as a vital tool in businesses. He urged Entrepreneurs to always promote their brands in order to grow their businesses. Botswana Digital Innovation Hub (BDIH) Communication Officer Mr Lefa Moatlhodi said Dikgwebo Dialogue was a program by BDIH in partnership with UNICEF Botswana, which aimed to capacitate Entrepreneurs across the country. Dikgwebo Dialogue workshop was held under the theme 'Opportunities in the North: Unlocking Francistown Business Ecosystem'. **BOPA**

Dikgang

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Mmakaseterata wa kgotlatshekelo kwa Lobatse, Mme Rebecca Motsamai o laotse gore mosekisiwa, Ogona Tlhabologang yo o lebisitsweng molato wa polao a tswelale a tshegeditswe mo kgolegolong go fitlhelela ba bosekisi ba wetsa tiro ya bone.

Mosekisiwa o iteile se fololetse

Mmakaseterata o laotse gore Tlhabologang a itshupe kwa lekgotleng kgwedi ya Firikgong e le masome a mabedi le boraro ngwaga o o tlang.

Calviniah Kgautlhe
LOBATSE

Monna mongwe wa dingwaga tse di masome a mabedi le borataro wa Gumare, yo a lebisitsweng molato wa polao ya legolegwa o tlaa tswelala a tshegeditswe kwa kgolegolong. Se se tla morago ga gore kopo ya mosekisiwa, Ogona Tlhabologang, ya go emela tsheko a le kwa ntle e seka ya atlega ka Laboraro, jaaka fa mmakaseterata wa kgotlatshekelo kwa Lobatse, Mme Rebecca Motsamai a ne a tsaya tshwetso ya gore a tswelale a tshegeditswe kwa kgolegolong go fitlhelela ba bosekisi ba wetsa tiro ya bone. Tlhabologang o tshegeditswe mabapi le polao ya legolegwa le lengwe la dingwaga tse di masome a mararo le bongwe, yo a neng a tsholega kwa Zimbabwe, mme a fitlhelwa a tlhokafetse ka nako ya fa bobedi joo bo ne bo isitswe kwa kokelong ya Sbrana Psychiatric Hospital, kgwedi ya Motsheganong monongwaga. Bobedi jo, bo ne bo robaditswe mo kamoreng ele nngwe.

Banna bao, ba ne ba isitswe kwa kokelong eo go tswa kwa kgolegolong ya Maun, mme ba ne ba ile go tlhatlhabiwa tlhaloganyo go thusa ba bosekisi go ntsha dikatholo tse di maleba mabapi le dikgetsi tse ba neng ba di lebisitswe tsa dipolao tsa batho tse di masisi tse di sa tlwaelesegang. Fa a sedimosetsa lekgotla gore kgang eo e tsamaya fa kae, mosekisi Rre Modibedi Tladi o supile fa ditlhotlhomiso di setse di ile motsubong mme go setse fela gore motlhotlhomisi wa kgang a rolele ba bosekisi masupi otlhe le mekwalo yotlhe gore kgang eo e pegiwe, e neelwe baatlhodi ba kgotla kgolo. Godimo ga seo, Rre Tladi o ne a rolela lekgotla gore motlhotlhomisi wa kgang eo, o sa tswa go tlogela tiro ka bogodi bosheng ka jalo dithulaganyo di tswelotse go bona gore kgetsi eo e rolelwa motlhotlhomisi yo mongwe go e tswelaledisa. Mmakaseterata o ne a laola mosekisiwa gore a itshupe mo lekgotleng gape kgwedi ya Firikgong e le masome a mabedi le boraro ngwaga o o tlang. **BOPA**

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Talent factory gateway for African filmmakers

GABORONE

In a bid to empower young people with filmmaking, production and storytelling skills, Pan-African film and television training institution, the MultiChoice Talent Factory (MTF), is calling on all African graduates who aspire to become directors, filmmakers, scriptwriters, producers and storytellers to apply for its 2026 intake.

A press release issued by MultiChoice Africa, states that any aspiring filmmakers from 14 African countries who dream of telling Africa's stories can apply for fully-funded courses at the industry-

leading network of academies and join the MultiChoice journey to give Africa a stronger voice on the world stage. Having recently become part of CANAL+, MultiChoice has rededicated itself to bringing compelling programming to homes on the continent.

The organisation stated that the 2026 intake will introduce a comprehensive curriculum designed to balance theoretical knowledge with practical immersion. While the fully accredited nine-month programme will be delivered through a hybrid format, combining interactive online learning with intensive physical in-person training.

It also shared

that with academies strategically located in Kenya, Nigeria, and Zambia, MTF offers practical training, industry exposure, and access to valuable professional networks, equipping filmmakers to succeed in a competitive entertainment landscape.

According to the release, MTF has trained 296 filmmakers since its inception in 2018, with over 42 movies already produced by graduates. Therefore, participants are required to produce their own movie projects, which are subsequently aired on DStv channels—including Maisha Magic, Zambezi Magic, and Africa Magic—as well as on the streaming platform Showmax.

The

organisation also revealed that Post-graduation, alumni success rates are high with most who go on to work within the MultiChoice ecosystem, helping to create major African productions. Additionally, the release affirmed that while many have launched their own ventures with more than 50 production companies having been established by MTF alumni to date, the MTF accreditation makes graduates highly sought-after.

Furthermore, the release also stated that MTF supports an investment that empowers African people to tell African stories, called a hyperlocal content approach—which continues to translate into international success. It also shared that

a number of MTF graduates have participated in and won numerous accolades at the Africa Magic Viewers' Choice Awards (AMVCA), Kalasha Awards, Uganda Film Festival, and the Women in Film Awards, among others. While in addition, alumni regularly collaborate with creatives in global spaces, including the European Film Market and the Durban FilmMart.

For the organisation, the nominations and award wins further testify to the calibre of filmmakers that MTF produces individuals who can compete on a global scale by telling authentic African stories, with the knowledge and skills imparted by MTF, that empowers graduates to become catalysts for economic growth and cultural enrichment in their communities. **BOPA**



In a bid to empower young people, MultiChoice Talent Factory is calling on African graduates who aspire to become directors, filmmakers, scriptwriters, producers and storytellers to apply for the 2026 intake.

Music fanatics ready for KFX festival

Banyatsi Banyatsi
KANYE

Anticipation is rising across the Kanye region as the countdown begins for the fifth edition of the Kanye Festive Xplosion (KFX), scheduled for December 20, 2025 at Mmakgodumo Gardens in Kanye.

KFX promoter Kutlo Tshukudu said preparations are progressing well, with the organising team having kicked off their first leg of activations in Lobatse on October 25, during the Lifestyle Sundays

event. “We then extended our activations to surrounding areas including Selokolela, Moshana, Lobatse, Good Hope and Gaborone. The activations continue right up to December 19, 2025,” he explained.

Tshukudu told BOPA that the purpose of these tours was to reach communities with limited access to social media while also driving ticket and merchandise sales. “Our aim is simple, to take the message directly to the people, especially those in remote areas. We want everyone to feel included and informed about this year’s KFX

edition,” he said. He added that promotional billboards have also been placed across the country, including in Francistown, Palapye, Gaborone, Orapa, Mmamashia and Maun.

KFX Marketing and Stage Manager Dragie Rantlheng echoed the same sentiments, noting that preparations for the event were running smoothly. He revealed that KFX has partnered with Estate Construction and the Kanye District Council in a joint effort to rehabilitate the gravel road leading to Mmakgodumo Gardens, which

was damaged by recent rains. “We want to ensure that every attendee enjoys a smooth and safe journey to the venue,” he said. Rantlheng also announced a star-studded line-up featuring both international and local artists. The line-up includes 25K, Young Stunna, MDU, Tribby Wadi Bozza, Jackals Onetime, Dada Kavino, EY Brizzy, Chokoma, Ancestral Rituals, and several others. He added that upcoming artists and local DJs have been offered a platform to showcase their talent at the event. Small business owners have also been given the

opportunity to rent stalls to sell food and beverages during the festival.

“Early-bird tickets were priced at P150, general tickets at P200, P250 at the gate and P600 for VIP,” he told BOPA. He further confirmed that early-bird tickets have already sold out, urging the public to secure the remaining tickets at the KFX stall near Shell–Mongala Mall, as well as from Liquorama and Choppies outlets nationwide.

“Sales have been a bit slow, but interest is steadily growing. We encourage everyone to buy their tickets early and avoid the last-minute rush,” he said.

With organisers putting the final touches in place, the 2025 Kanye Festive Xplosion promises to deliver an unforgettable celebration of music. **BOPA**



Mogoditshane trust boosts Matlolapata



Benita Magopane
GABORONE

Mogoditshane’s annual Matlolapata Football Tournament has received a sponsorship valued at P28 000, to empower female players.

The sponsorship, from Mogoditshane Community Trust Fund, will cover 100 football kits for two female teams set to participate in the annual tournament, scheduled for January 2 next year, at Solomon Dihutso Grounds in Mogoditshane.

Speaking during the sponsorship unveiling, Mogoditshane Community Trust Fund representative, Alfred Setlhake said the initiative was part of the trust’s charitable mandate to address the needs of the Mogoditshane community, particularly women.

“This sponsorship is our way of ensuring that women are not left behind in our community,” said Setlhake.

The kits feature an embroidered message that condemns gender-based

violence (GBV), which Setlhake described as one of the most pressing social challenges the trust was committed to fight.

Meanwhile, Matlolapata tournament representative, Kehumile Kgoroba, expressed gratitude to the trust Fund, describing the tournament as one of Mogoditshane’s most enduring sporting events, which had consistently attracted large crowds since its inception in 1993.

He said the sponsorship not only enhanced the event’s profile, but also increased the commercial appeal of the local game and thereby reflecting its steady growth over the years.

Kgoroba shared his vision of transforming the Matlolapata tournament into a platform that gave back to the community, by supporting the needy and elderly as it continued to expand.

The tournament will feature seven teams competing from morning until evening, comprising Under-15, Under-17 and Under-20 players, followed by junior masters and veteran players, said Kgoroba.

BOPA

Kaone Matlhomane (left) and Gorata Kgotle parading kit to be used at the Matlolapata Annual Soccer Festival during the partnership launch in Mogoditshane yesterday. Fourteen teams will participate in a tournament billed for Mogoditshane on January 2, 2026. Photo: Gaseitsiwe Moruakgomo



Maokane tournament stages third edition

Banyatsi Banyatsi
KANYE

The Annual Maokane Football Tournament scheduled for December 27 to 31 has WUSA Clothing as one of its sponsors.

The company has donated a full football kit to eight teams from Maokane and surrounding areas that will participate

in the third edition of the tournament.

Maokane football tournament president, Othusitse Seane, has described it as an important event that engaged young people during the festive period and keeping them off the streets.

It also gives small business owners a chance to earn an income by selling food during the games.

With proceeds from previous tournaments, the organisers have managed to build a two-and-a-half-room house for a less privileged person in Maokane, and Seane appealed to businesses to support them.

The tournament’s new sponsor, Redpath, a mining company contracted by Debswana has donated P25,000 towards the event. **BOPA**