

BOTSWANA

Daily News

THE PAPER THAT INFORMS AND EDUCATES



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President Advocate Duma Boko (right) bidding farewell to outgoing Russia Ambassador to Botswana, Mr Andrey Kemarskiy during a farewell call at the Office of the President yesterday. President Boko thanked the Ambassador for his service since 2020. The President also said Botswana was in the final stages of establishing an embassy in Moscow to strengthen bilateral relations with Russia. Photo: Phenyio Moalosi

Botswana embassy in Moscow opens soon

Ndingililo Gaoswediwe
GABORONE

President Advocate Duma Boko says Botswana has resolved to open an embassy in Moscow, Russia, as part of efforts to strengthen relations between the two countries,

with a designated representative awaiting the conclusion of final engagements. He said relations between Botswana and Russia date back to before the formal establishment of diplomatic ties in 1970, reflecting a long standing relationship shaped

by former political leaders who played a role in the liberation of Africa. Speaking during a farewell courtesy call by Russian Ambassador Andrey Kemarskiy in Gaborone on Tuesday, President Boko said Botswana could benefit from

Russia's cutting edge expertise in various sectors. He expressed appreciation for the services rendered by Ambassador Kemarskiy during his six-year tenure and wished him well in his continued representation of Botswana.

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SPAR Rewards

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Ntlo Ya Dikgosi complements government - Malope

Gontle Merafhe
GABORONE

Ntlo Ya Dikgosi is neither a rival of the National Assembly nor a junior partner to government, it complements government says



Ntlo Ya Dikgosi Chairperson Kgosi Malope II

chairperson Bangwaketse, Kgosi Malope II of Bangwaketse. Officially opening the 7th meeting of the 5th Ntlo Ya Dikgosi in Gaborone on Monday, Kgosi Malope said the House had an advisory role so that

legislation was not only lawful but legitimate. “We counsel so that policy is not only on paper but rooted in the lived reality of the kgotla. In this way the three arms move as one body, distinct in function yet, united in purpose and bound together in service of the same Motswana,” he said. Kgosi Malope said where the National Assembly made laws and enacted them, the House brought wisdom of custom and the voice of the grassroots to bear upon both. He said that through the kgotla, dikgosi continued to preside over community disputes, oversee social welfare and bridge the distance between rural populations and policies of central government, among other duties. “Where the state can sometimes feel distant, the kgotla is always near, and the nearness is itself a form of service,” he said. Kgosi Malope said Ntlo Ya Dikgosi could no longer be

content to be remembered only as the dignified voice of custom in the new decade of Botswana stating ‘our vision is clear. A modern, professional and people centred Ntlo Ya Dikgosi. A House that honours the past without being imprisoned by it and embraces the future without surrendering its soul. We seek not merely to advise once decisions are already made, but to help shape them before the ink is dry. That is the difference between being consulted and being heard. And, it is a difference the House is determined to make.” Kgosi Malope said that was why the relationship between the House and the National Assembly must deepen rather than drift. He said they asked to be drawn into the national conversation at its beginning than be merely summoned to its conclusion for a bill consulted upon in the House returned to Parliament stronger and a policy first tested in the Kgotla served government better.

“Collaboration, not competition is the spirit in which we extend our hand; and a hand extended in good faith deserves to be met in kind,” he said. He said the spirit of partnership was reflected in their engagement with the Executive adding that the Ntlo Ya Dikgosi looked forward to continued collaboration with the Executive in advancing national development. He said culture and development were not rivals but partners adding that development without identity was merely construction, while development rooted in culture was nation-building. “Our heritage is not a museum piece to be admired from afar. It is an economic asset, a social adhesive and a wellspring of national pride capable of driving tourism, creating jobs and bidding our people together. As we build roads, schools and clinics, let us build also upon the cultural foundations that make Botswana unmistakably Botswana,” he said. **BOPA**

Ramogapi hails BHC for quality houses

Esther Mmolai
MAUN

Government departments and other entities have been encouraged to come forth and purchase Botswana Housing Corporation (BHC) housing units constructed at Matlapana in Maun in an effort to address accommodation shortage. The 100 housing units are under the flagship Bonno National Housing Scheme aimed to provide inclusive, affordable and dignified shelter for all Batswana. The call was made by Minister of Water and Human Settlement, Mr Onneetse Ramogapi who, together with the leadership of the North West District and BHC board undertook a site tour to appreciate progress on the construction of the houses. The project is being implemented in two phases. The first phase which comprises 45 housing units was launched in October 2024 while the second, comprising 55 housing units was launched last year August. The houses comprise high, medium and low income cost units. Mr Ramogapi called on the local authorities and other entities to express their interest in buying the houses, saying the development objective of the project was to address the outcry of shortage of accommodation. While he appreciated that the housing units would also be sold to members of the public to promote home ownership by citizens, priority, he said should be given to public servants to reduce shortage of accommodation which is a serious concern across the country. However, the minister expressed satisfaction regarding progress of the ongoing project, which he said formed part of the

development of 100 000 decent and affordable housing units. He learnt that the project was on track and within the planned scope as the overall progress for the first phase stood at 98 per cent while the second stood at 60 per cent completion and he lauded BHC and the contractors for a job well done. “This project was unbundled to accommodate 100 per cent citizen-owned companies and I am impressed with the high quality workmanship displayed by our local contractors. They have delivered nice, modern and spacious housing units that meet standards,” he said. Mr Ramogapi added that it was frustrating that some local contractors often failed to deliver quality work and on time due to a tendency of diverting project funds towards financing personal luxury. That, he said, created a dangerous financial ripple effect. The minister also urged the public to differentiate between commercial and social housing schemes, both of which were coordinated and being delivered through the BHC. He explained that the social housing scheme targeted individuals earning between P4 400 and P95 000 per annum. Under the category, beneficiaries pay P90,000 while government covers any cost above that threshold. The commercial scheme forms part of the national effort to deliver housing units across the country including by contributing to the broader government ambitious goal of delivering 100 000 houses. However, Mr Ramogapi thanked the North West District leadership and other stakeholders for the support to ensure the success of the project. To the



“ This project was unbundled to accommodate 100 per cent citizen-owned companies and I am impressed with the high quality workmanship displayed by our local contractors. They have delivered nice, modern and spacious housing units that meets standards ”

Minister of Water and Human Settlement
Mr Onneetse Ramogapi

BHC board, he urged members to actively execute their oversight role without fail, noting that financial constraints should not be used as an excuse. The ministry, he said, would try its best to facilitate them to ensure that they executed their mandate as expected. “Our intention is to build more houses in Maun because accommodation is a challenge”. BHC acting chief executive officer, Professor Selinah Busang confirmed that the project was progressing well, and explained that 17 low and medium cost units



Minister of Water and Human Settlement, Mr Onneetse Ramogapi (right) and his entourage during a site tour to appreciate progress on the construction of Botswana Housing Corporation houses at Matlapana, in Maun recently. The project is part of the development of 100 000 decent and affordable housing units. Photos: Esther Mmolai

had been completed while four high income cost were also ready. She appreciated that contractors had delivered according to the designs and specifications and encouraged institutions and members of the public to come forth to buy the beautiful houses. She said various entities had already expressed interest to secure some housing units. Asked if the corporation has plans to expand the project in case they experienced an influx on expression of interest to buy houses, Prof Busang stated that

currently, they had utilised less than a quarter of the land allocated because the project served as a practical case study to assess real market demand. “Our phase two project has more 250 housing units which we are going to construct and we are also intending to bring convenience stores because we have realised that there are no shopping centres in this area. This project will also be implemented in phases as well because our target is to deliver 650 housing units in total,” she added. **BOPA**

Government aims to expand EU economic relations

Thato Mosinyi
GABORONE

President Advocate Duma Boko has highlighted government's commitment to strengthening economic relations with the European Union (EU) as Botswana seeks to attract foreign direct investment and recover from the current economic slump.

Receiving letters of credence from the EU Ambassador-designate to Botswana and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Ms Belen Uyarra, on Tuesday, President Boko said Botswana's foreign policy had evolved over the years, with economic diplomacy emerging as a key pillar of the country's growth and development strategy.

He said Botswana's partnership with the EU, particularly through the economic partnership agreement, had benefited the country and the region through support in areas such as green value chains, digital transformation and biodiversity.

President Boko also commended the EU for its support to SADC, particularly in addressing budgetary challenges and other regional development needs.

While acknowledging the contribution of a Spanish-based company in establishing the Greater Gaborone traffic control system, he said Botswana hoped to attract more European companies to explore investment opportunities in the country.

President Boko further reaffirmed Botswana's commitment to defending a rules-based international order, where relations between nations were governed by international law rather than power or unilateral interests.

"The world is at a moment in history where there is a vicious rejection of pushback against multilateralism. And so we have added our voice to the many other voices on the world stage that have articulated the principles of multilateralism," he said.

He said Botswana and the EU should deepen collaboration in promoting and defending multilateralism.

For her part, Ms Uyarra commended Botswana for its remarkable economic and social transformation over the past six decades, expressing confidence in the country's continued development and efforts to diversify its economy away from diamonds.

She said the EU was proud to have been part of Botswana's development journey and remained committed to supporting its future transformation.

"In these years, Botswana and the EU have built a solid partnership, built on values, on shared commitment to democracy, to human rights, to multilateralism, to international rules-based order," she said.

Ms Uyarra said the EU had aligned its agenda with Botswana's economic diversification programme and development vision.



President Advocate Duma Boko (right) receiving letters of credence from European Union Ambassador-designate to Botswana and SADC, Ms Belen Uyarra at the Office of the President yesterday. President Boko said Botswana was strengthening economic diplomacy with the EU to attract foreign direct investment and accelerate economic diversification beyond diamonds. Photo: Phenyo Ramatu

She noted that Botswana's strategic position along regional trade corridors presented opportunities to expand trade and investment. Through the Economic Partnership Agreement, she said, Botswana enjoyed duty-free, quota-free access to the EU market.

She pledged to strengthen the partnership, scale up trade and attract investment through a global gateway approach, while maximising opportunities presented by the agreement.

Meanwhile, President Boko also received letters of credence from Algeria's Ambassador-designate, Mr Mourad Boukadoum, and Türkiye's Ambassador-designate, Ms Vesime Ela Beşkardeş Karagöl. **BOPA**

Botswana to benefit from China grant

Ndingililo Gaoswediwe
GABORONE

Botswana is seeking to accelerate economic diversification, improve healthcare delivery and attract foreign direct investment following a six-day state visit to China, which secured a P400m grant and medical equipment and consumables valued at approximately P40m.

Addressing the nation at a press conference in Gaborone on Monday, President Advocate Duma Boko said the engagements had identified opportunities for cooperation in infrastructure, industrialisation, digitalisation, education, skills development and trade.

He said the grant would support agreed national development priorities and strengthen bilateral cooperation.

Botswana and China established diplomatic relations in 1975.

During the recent visit, the two countries elevated the relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership, strengthening cooperation in economic development, security and other areas of mutual interest.

President Boko said Botswana aimed to use the partnership to create employment, attract investment, facilitate technology transfer and improve public services, with an emphasis on commercially and technically viable projects.

On healthcare, President Boko acknowledged the challenges facing the sector and said an instrument had been signed to facilitate cooperation under the Bright Journey cataract-surgery project, through which Chinese medical personnel were expected to assist eligible patients.

President Boko said medical cooperation between the two

countries dated back to 1981, with 46 Chinese medical specialists already working in Botswana.

He also talked about the anticipated medicine supplies from Oman, reportedly worth US\$10 million (over P130m), which were expected to arrive soon.

With regard to infrastructure development, President Boko said China confirmed that preparations were under way for the Mmopane, Block 8 road project, with implementation envisaged to begin in early 2027 through a grant assistance.

The visit also focused on expanding beneficiation, manufacturing and Botswana's participation in global value chains.

In Fujian Province, President Boko visited Contemporary Amperex Technology Co. Limited (CATL), a global leader in electric-vehicle batteries and energy-storage technologies.

He said the engagement provided insights into battery manufacturing and cleaner-energy technologies that could inform Botswana's industrial diversification and technical skills development.

President Boko also engaged with Chow Tai Fook, a major Chinese jewellery group, to explore opportunities to expand diamond sales in China while promoting local value addition, jewellery manufacturing and specialised skills.

Digitalisation is another priority, with the President identifying technology as a driver of economic transformation, innovation and improved public service delivery.

He said it could help modernise services such as institutional development and security matters to strengthen economic competitiveness. **BOPA**

Botswana embassy in Moscow opens soon

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In his remarks, Ambassador Kemarskiy thanked the government for the hospitality and support he received during

his tenure.

He expressed hope for new avenues of dialogue and bilateral engagement that would create opportunities in sectors such as mining, energy, agriculture and education.

Meanwhile, when responding to the SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF) lobbying mission during a separate courtesy call, President Boko said there was no challenge in signing of agreements but translating their principles into practical legislation was the challenge.

He said Botswana was committed to addressing the shortcomings but stressed the need for thorough engagement, adding that existing stumbling blocks had to be dealt with first.

Earlier, the vice president of the SADC-PF Ms Silvia Luca-Izaks, had described President Boko as a transformative and inspirational leader and stressed the need to sign and ratify revised protocols.

She said gender inequality remained a reality and appealed to the President to ensure the

implementation of existing agreements.

Ms Nxumalo said achieving gender equality required a joint effort from different stakeholders, noting that women continued to face barriers in the political sphere, including a lack of resources.

She called for equal access and representation, advocating for quotas for women in various sectors.

Echoing Ms Nxumalo sentiments, one member from the SADC-PF mission gave an example that Women representation in Botswana Parliament, has dropped from 11 per cent to 8.9 per cent, an indication that there was disparity between women and men.

But through gradual improvements, she indicated that Botswana could be at par with countries such as South Africa and Tanzania, having women accounting for 43 per cent and 40 per cent of parliamentary representation respectively. **BOPA**

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DailyBusiness

Revised export rules target wider farmer participation

Lesedi Thatayamodimo
GABORONE

The renewed livestock export dispensation introduces measures aimed at widening participation in export markets, with government limiting permits and increasing the levy on live cattle exports.

Speaking in a media Engagement on Monday in Gaborone, minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti, said that each farmer or livestock buyer would be limited to a single export permit under the new arrangement.

“The live cattle export levy has been increased from P30 to P300 per head, while the domestic slaughter levy will remain at P30 per head until the domestic market stabilises sufficiently for a formal review.”

He said meat exports under the dispensation will be restricted to citizens and citizen-owned companies.

Dr Dikoloti said the revised conditions were intended to promote inclusivity and ensure that more farmers benefited from export opportunities.

He noted that the previous live cattle export dispensation, introduced in 2019, had been renewed four times over six years before concluding on April 30, 2025.

“During its operation, more than 551,570 cattle were exported, mainly to South Africa and Namibia,” he said.

He said the programme provided an alternative market to the BMC, particularly during drought periods and delays in normal slaughter operations.

However, Dr Dikoloti said the benefits had not been evenly distributed, with a relatively small number of participants capturing a disproportionate share of the opportunities.

“The new arrangement is therefore intended to improve access to export markets while helping farmers reduce accumulated livestock numbers and improve their cash flow,” he said.

Dr Dikoloti said the dispensation would also assist farmers in meeting financial obligations, paying workers and maintaining their farming operations following months of movement restrictions and market disruptions.

Under the revised measures, live cattle exports will be permitted for six months, while meat and meat product exports will operate under a 12-month dispensation.

Live cattle exports will be limited to slaughter-ready steers, while individual livestock slaughter will be permitted across all zones, subject to conditions determined by the prevailing disease situation and applicable veterinary requirements.

The changes come as government continues efforts to contain FMD and restore confidence in Botswana’s livestock industry.

Dr Dikoloti said the outbreak, which began in January this year, had disrupted trade and placed livelihoods under pressure, necessitating interventions to



Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti (left), Department of Animal Health Production Scientific Officer, Mr Aubrey Ranko (centre) and Deputy Permanent Secretary responsible for livestock in the ministry, Dr Kefentse Motshegwa during media engagement forum in Gaborone on Monday. Dr Dikoloti said beef exports under the new dispensation would be restricted to citizens and citizen-owned companies. Photo: Felicity Male

protect the national herd and prevent further economic losses.

Government has redirected approximately P97 million towards disease control, including vaccination campaigns, surveillance, fencing and enhanced biosecurity.

The minister said restoring market access had to be balanced with measures to prevent further transmission of the disease.

He urged farmers to continue complying with veterinary requirements, warning that the export dispensation did not remove

the need for disease-control measures.

Dr Dikoloti said the government had remained committed to protecting livestock, restoring markets and supporting the long-term sustainability of Botswana’s beef industry. **BOPA**

Botswana capital market surges to P1.1 trillion

Lorato Gaofise
GABORONE

Botswana capital market recorded a strong performance during the nine months ended September 30, with total market capitalisation across all listed instruments increasing to approximately P1.1 trillion.

This represents a growth of 62.3 per cent from P700.4 billion recorded during the corresponding period in 2025.

According to the Botswana Stock Exchange (BSE) Market Performance Report, for the period January 1 to September 30, 2026, the growth was supported by positive performance across domestic and foreign-listed equities, increased bond market activity and continued expansion of Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs).

The report says the performance reflects the positive impact of ongoing market development initiatives under the Exchange’s Product Innovation Roadmap.

Equity market capitalisation increased by 62.3 per cent, rising from P622.9 billion as at September 30, 2025 to P1.01 trillion as at September 30 this year.

“This represent an increase of approximately P388.4 billion in

market value over the period,” states the report.

The increase, the report says is driven primarily by the foreign equity market, whose market capitalisation grew by 68.1 per cent, from P565.5 billion to P950.4 billion, while domestic equity market capitalisation increased by 6.1 per cent, from P57.5 billion to P60.9 billion.

Further, the Foreign Company Index (FCI) advanced by 45.7 per cent to 4 772.4 points, compared with a marginal gain of 0.4 per cent during the corresponding period in 2025.

The report also states that the Domestic Company Index (DCI) increased by 2.0 per cent to 11 249.7 points, while the Domestic Company Total Return Index (DCTRI), which measures capital appreciation and dividend returns, increased by 5.2 per cent to 4 116.5 points.

At company level, the report says Anglo was the strongest-performing counter, recording a share price gain of 48.4 per cent, followed by Primetime at 15.2 per cent and Investec at 12.5 per cent.

In addition, the report says Lucara recorded the largest decline, with its share price falling by 61.8 per cent, while Choppies and Letshego declined by 13.4 per

cent and 6.7 per cent, respectively.

“Equity turnover amounted to P2.1 billion, during the period, making 2026 the third strongest year-to-date trading performance over the five-year period under review. Although turnover was lower than the record P5.3 billion achieved in 2025, it remained more than double the levels recorded in 2022 and 2024,” states the report.

During the first nine months of 2026, a total of 419.1 million shares were traded, First National Bank Botswana, Sechaba and Sefalana were the most actively traded counters, during the period, recording turnover of P336.7 million, P314.3 million and P229.3 million, respectively, says the report.

Collectively, as per the report, the three counters generated P880.3 million, representing approximately 41.9 per cent of total equity turnover recorded of the Exchange between January 1 and September 30 this year.

The Retail and Wholesaling sector was the largest contributor to equity turnover at 37.1 per cent, followed by Banking at 27.9 per cent, while the local institutional investors remained the dominant market participants, contributing 92.6 per cent of total equity turnover. **BOPA**

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Murwira implores COMESA to remove trade barriers

HARARE - Foreign Affairs and International Trade Minister, Professor Amon Murwira has called on Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) member states to eliminate unnecessary tariff and non-tariff barriers to facilitate regional trade and strengthen industrial value chains. Speaking at the Green Industry Connect meeting in Harare on Monday, Professor Murwira said greater regional cooperation was essential to unlocking economic opportunities and promoting sustainable industrial development across the bloc. “There is a need for COMESA member States to remove tariff and non-tariff barriers.” **Xinhua**

Africa to promote RMB settlement

ACCRA - African governments and financial institutions have been gradually promoting diversified trade settlement and expanding RMB settlement, as China fully implemented zero-tariff treatment for 53 African countries with which it has diplomatic relations in May. Ecobank Group, a Togo-based pan-African banking group, has recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS) to strengthen RMB payment connectivity between China and Africa. From late July to August, Stanbic Bank, the subsidiary of South Africa’s Standard Bank Group in markets including Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ghana, and Namibia, officially connected to CIPS. Bank of Kigali, Rwanda’s largest commercial bank, announced in late September that it had officially become a direct participant in CIPS. **Xinhua**

Namibia mining outlook weakens

WINDHOEK - Namibia’s mining sector is projected to contract by 6.2 per cent in 2026, a sharper decline than previously forecast, the Chamber of Mines of Namibia said Monday. In its September 2026 Monthly Mining Update, the chamber said the Bank of Namibia had revised its forecast from a contraction of 2.2 per cent, reflecting weaker mining output so far this year. The country’s mining production composite index fell 4 per cent month on month in August, driven by a 12 per cent drop in diamond output. Production of uranium, zinc and gold rose 8 per cent, 27 per cent and 4 per cent, respectively, but the gains were insufficient to offset the decline in diamonds. Rising fuel prices were also squeezing profit margins at profitable mines and deepening financial pressure on loss-making operations, the chamber said. **Xinhua**

Dikgang

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Lobatse o tlaa tshegetsa Bandleng Cultural Festival



Modiri wa seromamowa sa RB2, Poloko 'DJ Polyester' Boitshepo, yo gape a tshwaraganetseng moletlo wa ngwao wa Bandleng Cultural Festival le Rre Bakang Motswedi, ke mongwe wa ba ba tlaabong ba dirgatsa kwa moletlong oo.

Mogolwane o tsibosa ka bodiphatsa jwa ditlou

Tshiamiso Mosetlha
MMASHORO

E re ka jaana nako ya go bapala Mogorogorwane e gorogile, banni ba Mmashoro ba rotloeditswe go nna kelothoko mabapi le ditlou tse di sailang mo tikologong ya motse wa bone.

Tsiboso e, e dirilwe ke ba lephata la diphologolo le makgabisana naga, ba ba tlhaloseditseng morafe bosheng fa ditlou di bonala mo mafelong a mogorogorwane o leng mo go one ka le tsone di rata leungo leo bobe.

Ba rotloeditse morafe go tlhaloganya borai jwa tlou le diphologolo tse dingwe tsa naga, ba re ba tshwanetse ba tlhomamisa gore ga ba iphithele ba le mo diphatseng fa ba ile go bapala mogorogorwane.

Mogolwane go tswa kwa lephateng leo Mme Bonolo Montsheng o ba kgotlhaditse go tsamaya ka segopa fa ba ya go dipolao tsa diphologolo tse go tshwenya.

A re setshaba se tshwanetse sa lemoga fa lengwe la mabaka a go sirelediwa ga tsone e le go

thibela go nyelela ga tsone ka jaana letsalo la tsone le le kwa tlase.

O boletse fa malatsi ano kgaga e utswiwa thata mo dikgaolong tse di farologanyeng tsa lefatsheng leno, a re batho ba le mmalwa ba setse ba tshwerwe ka nama le letlalo tsa phologolo eo.

Mo kgannyeng e nngwe, o kopile gape gore balemi-barui ba emise mkgwa wa go tsenyetsa diphologolo tse di ba senyeditse bothole, a re go dira jalo go borai thata e bile ke molato.

A re go thaisa diphologolo tsa naga le gone ga go letlelelwe.

Mme Montsheng boletse gape fa madi a phimolo-keledi fa phogolo e sentse a ise a sekasekwe.

Molemi kwa morakeng wa Thupana gaufi le Mmashoro, Rre Tshweu Ralekwalo, o boletse fa go le bokete go tshela le diphologolo dingwe tsa naga ka di le borai mo bathong le mo leruong la bone.

Rre Ralekwalo a re serapa sa ditlou se saila kwa merakeng ya bone le kwa masimo mme ditlou tseo di kgaola diterata e bile di onatsa mahudiso a bone. A re dibatana di tshwana le matlhalerwa le bophiri le tsone di tsenya tlala mo malwapeng ka di bolaya leruo la bone bosigo le motshegare. **BOPA**

Grace Sebape
LOBATSE

Lobatse o tlaa tshwara moletlo loo bidiwang Bandleng Cultural Festival o maikaelelo a one e leng go tsosolosa ditso tsa toropo eo le go e ipelela.

Morulaganyi wa moletlo oo, Rre Bakang Motswedi, yo o baakanyetsang go tshwarwa ga moletlo ka tshwaragano le modiri wa seromamowa sa RB2 Rre Poloko Boitshepo yo o itsegeng ka DJ Polyester, yo gape a leng mona-le-bogole, ba tla tshwara moletlo oo Phalane a le 24 kwa Lobatse Town Park.

Rre Motswedi a re maikaelelo a moletlo oo ke go lemoga Lobatse jaaka toropo ya ntsha ya Botswana le go tlotlomatsa letlotlo la ditso kwa toropong eo.

O tlhalositse fa moletlo o tlaa bo o tshwarwa e le lekgetho la ntsha mo ditsong tsa Lobatse ka go se kile ga tshegediwa moletlo ope wa ngwao koo.

Mo godimo ga moo, maikaelelo ke go tshwarwe moletlo oo ngwaga le ngwaga fela jaaka kwa mafelong a mangwe.

A re dipelo tsa moletlo oo di tlaa abelwa makalana a bopelothomogi jaaka a a dirang le bana-le-bogole.

Rre Motswedi o kaile fa moletlo o o tlaa ungwela banni ba Lobatse

ba akaretsa bagwebi ka jaana ba tlaa nna le sebaka sa go reka metlaagana ya go rekisa dilo tse di farologanyeng jaaka dijo.

A re ba dipalamo tsa setshaba ba toropo eo le bone ba tlaa kgona go oba letsogo ka ba tlaa ba bo tsamaisa banni ba Lobatse le baeng go ya le go boa kwa Lobatse Town Park.

Mo go tse dingwe o boletse gore moletlo o tlaa ngoka badiragatsi ka go farologana ba akaretsa Dj Mawee, Chomza, Ashley Gops, DJ Obza, DJ Polyester, DJ Hambira, Rhyme Killa, Mouza BW le ba bangwe ba akaretsa ba mmimo wa setso.

Rre Motswedi a e re ka jaana go tlaa bo go kgabilwe ka leteisi, bagwebi ba ba segang diaparo ba tlaa nna le sebaka sa go supa tiro ya bone jaaka ba tlaa bo ba apesa ba ba supang diaparo gone kwa moletlong oo.

Moletlo oo wa Bandleng Cultural Festival o tlaa tshegediwa ka fa tlase ga setlhogo se se reng '#Bathong! A go kgabiweng.' **BOPA**



Morulaganyi wa moletlo wa Bandleng Cultural Festival, Rre Bakang Motswedi a re maikaelelo ke go tsosolosa ditso tsa toropo eo le go e ipelela ngwao. Dinepe: Bandleng Cultural Festival

Morafe o kopa koketso ya ditlamelo le tshidilo maikutlo

Relief Lephutshi
KGOMOKASITWA

Ga go ise go tlhomamisiwe fa dintsho tsa batho ba le babedi kwa Kgomokasitwa di bakilwe ke mogare wa Salmonella o o fitlhetsweng mo dijong tse di neng di jewa ke morafe ka letsatsi la boipuso.

Mokwaledi wa khansela ya Moshupa, Rre Edwin Pheko, o buile se, jaaka a ne a lekodisa morafe bosheng tebang le dipatlisiso tse di dirilweng morago ga gore banni ba kubugelwe ke bolwetse ka letsatsi la boipuso, mogare oo o fitlhetswe mo dijong tse di neng di jewa ke morafe ka letsatsi leo ga mmogo le mo mantleng a bangwe ba ba di jeleng.

Le fa go ntse jalo, a re ga go ise go tlhomamisiwe gore a batho ba le babedi ba ba tlhokafetseng ba latlhegetswe ke matshelo ka ntlha ya salmonella ka jaana go tlhomamisa seo go tlhoka boitsaanape jo bo kwa godimo.

Fa a sedimosetsa morafe ka

mogare wa Salmonella, Rre Mpaphi Mbulawa yo a leng mothusa-mokwaledi wa khansela ya Moshupa a lebagane le tsa botsogo jwa setshaba o ne a tlhalosa fa mogare oo o le borai mo botsogong jwa batho ka o kgona go gapa matshelo.

Rre Mbulawa a re mogare oo o ka itshupa mo mothong yo o nnileng le kamano le one mo diureng tse thataro go ya kwa malatsing a maratato go ya bathong ba bangwe o sa itshupe ka tsela epe fela le mororo o le teng o tshela.

O kopile banni go boela kwa kokelong fa ba sa tokafale, a ba tlhomamisetse fa khansela e okeditse bodiredi ka mooki a le mongwe le ngaka, seo e le maiteko a go thusa bosigo le motshegare go busetsa seemo mo taolong. Fa morafe o itela morago ga pego o kopile puso go tlhokomela go oketsa bodiredi le ditlamelo kwa kokelwaneng go emelana le ditlamorago tsa leroborobo le le apesitseng motse kobo ka letshoba.

Bangwe ba kaile fa ba santse ba itemogela dikai di akaretsa go tsholola, go remega ditokololo, go kgwa, go sitwa ga mmogo le go palelelwa ga bangwe kwa dipateleng.

Le mororo morafe o begetswe se se bakileng go tlhoka botsogo, bangwe banni ba ngongoregetse maduo a ditlathlho ba supa fa a sa kgotsofatse.

Rre Gabantese Force o kopile gore dipatlisiso di tseye theko ya dithoto motlhalo go latedisa gore dijo jaaka merogo di ne di lemilwe kae le seemo sa bophepa sa marekisetso a di rekilweng kwa go one.

Kgosi Tshetlha Radimpa ene o ne a kopa gore fa go nale ope yo o ka tswang a itse sepe fela mabapi le go tlhagoga ga seemo a lome mapodisi kana bogogi jwa motse tsebe.

O kopile morafe wa Kgomokasitwa gore mo khutsafalong e e ba aparetseng ba nne keletlhoko kgalhanong le go gogomosana maikutlo kgotsa go supana ka menwana. **BOPA**

Maele defends dignity of Re A Nyalana marriages

“ Those who marry under Re A Nyalana are mostly committed and have a full understanding of their oath, so do not contaminate this programme. ”

Thuso Kgakatsi
HUKUNTSI

The Minister of Higher Education, Mr Prince Maele, has called on the public to respect marriages conducted under the Re A Nyalana initiative, saying they carry the exact same legal rights and dignity as any other union.

Giving a keynote address at a mass wedding ceremony held in Ukhwi on Friday, where 10 couples were solemnized by the Office of the District Commissioner under the Re A Nyalana initiative, Mr Maele said it was unfortunate that some people undermined the programme claiming it was ‘cheap’ or a ‘marriage of handouts’. “Those who belittle such marriages are not wise. How different are these marriages from any other?” he asked. He noted that the truth was that the rights enjoyed under Re A Nyalana marriage were identical to those in any other marriage recognised by law.

The Minister noted that financial constraint was one of the primary reasons many couples delayed marriage, as traditional weddings were often expensive.

Mr Maele further expressed concern over the prevalence of cohabitation, warning that couples who lived together without formalising their union were often not recognised, particularly by the families of male partners.

“Cohabitation is not good and it is dangerous, as couples who cohabit often end up losing property when a partner passes away,” he said. He shared that when couples were legally married, they were recognised in the eyes of the law, and no one could deprive them of the benefits that came with the marriage.

He therefore urged those who cannot afford extravagant weddings to make use of Re A Nyalana to secure their relationships and protect their rights.

However, Mr Maele cautioned the new couples against gender-based violence, describing it as a growing challenge in communities.

“Do not be counted among perpetrators of gender-based

violence.

Those who marry under Re A Nyalana are mostly committed and have a full understanding of their oath, so do not contaminate this programme,” he warned.

Furthermore, Mr Maele revealed that since its inception, the Re A Nyalana programme has facilitated 7 932 marriages, with no recorded divorces to date, a record he attributed to the commitment and understanding of the couples involved.

“The Re A Nyalana initiative was introduced to assist financially disadvantaged couples to formalise their unions with dignity, without the burden of costly wedding expenses,” he said. To this end, he stated that Re A Nyalana gave disadvantaged couples the chance to marry with dignity.

He donated 12 blankets and toys to the newlyweds, while the area Member of Parliament, Mr Reason Lekutlane, donated wedding rings to all 10 couples. For his part, Kgosi Olebile Oatlhotse of Ukhwi, thanked the community



Minister of Higher Education, Mr Prince Maele (right) handing over a wedding certificate to Mr and Mrs Gaompee, one of 10 couples who were solemnised during the Re A Nyalana Mass Wedding in Ukhwi on Friday. Photo: Thuso Kgakatsi

for enrolling and participating in Re A Nyalana in large numbers and expressed hope to see even more registrations for the programme next year.

Kgosi Oatlhotse also urged the

community not to be discouraged by those who undermine the initiative saying it has proven to be very useful.

Meanwhile, Kgosi Oatlhotse raised concerns about the poor state

of the gravel road leading to the village, the lack of electricity, and called for government intervention. “There is also poor Radio Botswana reception in the area,” he said. **BOPA**

Okavango reports high mental health cases

Kedirebofe Pelontle
GUMARE

Okavango District continues to register high numbers of mental health cases, Gumare Primary Hospital chief registered nurse Mr Boikaego Kgaodi has said.

Speaking in an interview during a mental health awareness day held in Gumare last week, Mr Kgaodi who is also psychiatric nurse, observed that 396 mental health cases were recorded from January to September this year, with those of schizophrenia being the highest and with males being the most affected.

The other prevalent conditions after schizophrenia were depression and bipolar affective disorders, he said.

He revealed that seven referrals for specialised care and management were made to Letsholathebe Memorial Hospital

in Maun and Sbrana Psychiatric Hospital in Lobatse during the same period.

According to him, the use of illegal drugs such as Methcathinone especially by the youth, as well as gender-based violence (GBV) were among the top contributing factors to mental health illnesses in the district.

He also observed that one of the many challenges faced by health workers with regard to mental health cases was lack of facilities for patients in Okavango District, hence patients were referred to Maun and Lobatse which negatively affected management of their conditions.

Meanwhile, for most patients and survivors of mental health illnesses, stigma attached to mental health conditions negated efforts aimed at managing the conditions since it drove many patients to relapse as it led to

self-stigmatisation and failure to adhere to treatment.

One survivor, Ms Kebuang Seloka observed that some patients experienced stigmatisation at family level which made it challenging for them to win the battle as many ended up failing to adhere to treatment out of fear of being labelled negatively.

Ms Seloka therefore said it was imperative to have interventions aimed at sensitisation and empowerment of family members regarding mental health illness to ensure support to patients instead of judging them.

One caretaker said looking after a mental health patient, especially a child, was emotionally draining and that as a result there was need for supportive structures to be put in place for caretakers.

Citing an example, she said her child who was recovering from the use of illicit drugs at times

turned violent, posing a danger to them as family, to the community and even to himself.

She said the current regulation required that the family engaged the District Commissioner’s office before the police could assist in the event of such altercations.

She said the process to get police intervention was lengthy and resulted in more lives being exposed to risk.

Stakeholders who shared views during a panel discussion which was part of the activities of the day underscored the need for a mental health facility in the district, saying currently some patients were being temporarily held at Gumare Police station holding cells.

This, they said, was inhumane since the patients were not criminals and deserved to be placed in dignified facilities. **BOPA**

Francistown commemorates World Mental Health Day

Kelebogile Taolo
FRANCISTOWN

Individuals who have experienced depression, substance use disorders and other mental health challenges possess valuable knowledge that cannot be replaced by professional training alone hence must be heard and involved in shaping mental health services.

“When we design mental health awareness campaigns, we must consult people with lived experience. When we review services, we must seek their feedback. This is the practical meaning of our theme, real voices must lead to real change,” said Thrive Work Coaching and Counselling Clinic’s, Dr Risco Gabothobogwe.

He was speaking during the commemoration of World Mental Health Day 2026, Friday in Francistown, an event that was hosted by the Francistown City Council in collaboration with Lions Club District 412 A, Queen of

Peace, World Health Organisation (WHO), civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders under the theme: Lived Experiences Heard: Real Voices, Real Change.

Dr Gabothobogwe said the theme called for a shift from speaking about people with mental health conditions, to listening to them and ensuring their voices influenced decisions affecting their lives.

He said mental health was a basic human right and fundamental to overall well-being. Globally, more than one billion people live with mental health conditions, Dr Gabothobogwe said and called for an end to stigma and discrimination and instead strengthening community-based mental health care, and sustained collaboration beyond commemorative events.

Jubilee Hospital psychiatrist, Dr Kelebogile Kelepile, painted a picture of the current mental health landscape and the challenges facing service delivery. Dr Kelepile

said Botswana had approximately 43 000 recorded cases of mental health conditions, with 53 per cent being males and 47 per cent females while globally one in seven people was estimated to live with a mental health condition, and more than 75 per cent of people in developing countries who need care did not receive it.

She said psychosocial stressors such as financial pressures, unemployment, rising cost of living, balancing family and work responsibilities, harmful gambling and prediction-market platforms continued to trigger mental health difficulties.

Dr Kelepile said Botswana was making efforts to strengthen services with gradual improvement in numbers of psychiatric nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists and counsellors, while the mental health legal framework was evolving following the repeal of the Mental Disorders Act of 1969 and approval of the Mental Health Act of 2023.

However, significant gaps remain including shortage of human resources, geographical inequalities and limited infrastructure.

Consequently, Dr Kelapile said Botswana had a single National Psychiatric Referral Hospital, S’brana Psychiatric Hospital in Lobatse, with capacity of about 300 beds, and there was growing concern of patient congestion as patient load increased.

She said the Jubilee Psychiatric Unit under Nyangabgwe Hospital, which catered for Francistown and peripheral clinics, had only 10 beds for males and seven beds for females, limiting its ability to house patients and often leading to congestion. The four district hospitals with psychiatric units: Mahalapye, Sekgoma, Letsholathebe and Scottish Livingstone, play an important role but are also faced with damaged infrastructure and congestion, while at primary hospitals and clinics there is no designated psychiatric wards.

Dr Kelapile further highlighted limited availability of rehabilitation services and inpatient rehabilitation facilities, particularly for patients with Substance Use Disorders (SUDs), as well as challenges with consistent availability of essential psychiatric medications.

She said at family level, mental health first aid could begin with three actions: talk, support and seek help. Francistown Block 4 Customary Court president, Mr Gunny Moses, cited societal pressure, demands and expectations as triggers mental health problems.

Mr Moses pleaded with young people to desist from the use of strong substances which could cause mental issues, saying they should not resort to such despite encountering challenges.

However, he said for those who naturally have mental health issues, support from the community was vital, and deserved to be listened to, included and walked with through the journey. **BOPA**

Arts & Culture

Boefelo turns poetry into tool for cultural preservation

Keetile Bontsibokae
MOLEPOLOLE

Emmanuel Boefelo, popularly known as Mmasekgethu in poetry circles, regards the art as a vehicle for preserving Setswana heritage, documenting indigenous knowledge and giving a voice to communities whose stories might otherwise go unheard.

A native of Moshaneng with strong Ngwaketse cultural roots, Boefelo has built a multifaceted career as a poet, author, cultural promoter, public speaker and radio contributor.

Through his work, he has positioned himself as a cultural curator who uses literature, performance and community engagement, to keep Botswana's traditions alive.

Although poetry initially remained a casual pastime, his growing appreciation for literature eventually drew him towards a more serious commitment.

"I grew up as a fanatic of different art forms, both as a spectator and a performer, while also being committed to sport. I did poetry casually from a young age, but I took it seriously in 2010," said Boefelo.

His academic journey later saw him obtain a Degree in Information Technology and a certificate in Community Development.

However, formal qualifications did not immediately translate into employment, prompting him to turn his artistic abilities into a means of livelihood.

"I am focused on traditional poetry. I have never been formally employed since graduating, I survive through poetry and other

creative arts," he said.

Boefelo performs at corporate functions, weddings and cultural events, while also writing poetry books, fiction and short stories in Setswana and English.

His work is particularly rooted in indigenous literature and cultural narratives, with a mission to illuminate social issues and amplify voices that are often overlooked.

For him, however, performing poetry before an audience requires more than memorising verses or displaying verbal skill. It demands research, cultural sensitivity, creativity and an understanding of the occasion.

"When I perform, I do not necessarily write everything down beforehand. I stand up and deliver. Before an event, I research, assess the mood, understand the protocol and familiarise myself with the theme and the key people involved. Respecting people's beliefs to avoid offending anyone through recitation is important," he said.

He explained that understanding the beliefs and sensitivities of an audience was essential, particularly when performing at events attended by people from different backgrounds.

He added that creativity was central to an effective performance, alongside professionalism and ensuring that the client's expectations were met.

Beyond the stage, his cultural work has extended to radio, where he has helped popularise Setswana



Emmanuel
'Mmasekgethu' Boefelo

“Before an event, I research, assess the mood, understand the protocol and familiarise myself with the theme and the key people involved. Respecting people’s beliefs to avoid offending anyone through recitation is important.”

heritage and indigenous knowledge through discussions and cultural programmes.

His radio experience includes co-presenting *Sekhutlwana sa Bannye* on Duma FM from 2017 to 2025, co-presenting *Sefalana sa Ngwao* in 2017 and 2018, and presenting *Letlotlo la Ngwao* on South Africa's SAKS Radio in 2024. He has also

contributed to cultural interview, for local and regional stations, including Btv, *Radio Botswana* and stations in Namibia and South Africa.

His involvement in cultural events has also included founding the Ntwa ya Puo Poetry Show in 2019 and The Reading Picnic in 2025. He chaired the Old Naledi Cultural

Event in 2019 and the Bamlete Cultural Festival in 2022, while also participating in the Sekhutlwana sa Bannye Kids Cultural Event across several years.

Boefelo's contributions have not been confined to Botswana.

His profile includes performances at the Ipeleng ka Ngwao Cultural Event in Moruleng, South Africa, the Livingstone Culture and Arts Festival in Zambia, and the Botswana-Sweden Cultural Exchange in Gaborone.

In 2019, he received the Youth Promoting Culture and Heritage award at the Botswana Youth Awards, alongside recognition as a cultural promoter.

His poetry book was also recognised at the Botswana Literature Awards, while the Mulher Forte Literature Awards acknowledged his contribution to poetry and indigenous-language literature.

His more recent literary achievements include the 2024 Botswana Literature Awards recognition for Best Setswana Poetry Book.

In 2025, he received awards for Best Setswana Novel and Best Short Fiction Collection, as well as recognition as Best Indigenous Language Author at the Mulher Forte Literature Awards.

Despite these accolades, Boefelo believes that the sustainability and credibility of the poetry industry required deliberate support, professional standards and stronger organisation.

He is equally concerned about the preservation of the values traditionally associated with poets and believes that while artists must earn a living from their talents, financial considerations should not overshadow the cultural responsibility that accompanies their work. **BOPA**

GaMaila Sports And Cultural Festival October 31

Ketshepile More
GABORONE

The GaMaila Sports and Cultural Festival scheduled for October 31 in Kanye at Mmakgodumo Gardens aims to preserve Bangwaketse culture, norms and traditions.

Event organizer, Monaka Monaka said during a press conference in Gaborone on Thursday, that the cultural festival would feature sport and cultural tourism.

"The event will feature a soccer tournament from grassroots sport

development as a build up to the main event of cultural festivities," said Monaka. Ahead of the festival, Monaka said there would be a heritage drive-through on October 23, to showcase sites that make up GaNgwaketse. He said the tour would start at Polokwe site, proceeding to Mmamokhasi, Dihalana tsa Kanye, Sir Ketumile Masire Monument and ending at Mmakgodumo Dam, where the main festival would take place.

Held under the theme: Re Ipelela Ngwao Ka Go Kopanya Dichaba," he said the cultural festival aims

to cultivate an inclusive platform where young athletes could showcase their talents and equally give space to cultural practitioners to pass down historical traditions.

Furthermore, Monaka said the event seeks to create tangible economic opportunities for youth and small businesses by generating direct income for independent catering vendors, service providers, technical equipment suppliers, and transport teams.

He also said through the event, they will upskill local youth through hands-on volunteer roles in sports

coordination, event logistics, safety monitoring, and guest hospitality.

He said the day would include traditional games and dikhwae featuring groups from GaNgwaketse, Kgatleng and Barolong.

On the evening of the day of the event, Monaka said festivities would continue with a music festival featuring local artists and DJs.

He said some of the proceeds from the cultural showcase will go toward sports development in GaNgwaketse and the Bathoen Trust. **BOPA**

DailySport

FIFA mini-pitch to nurture talent

Thokozani Matiha
MOLEPOLOLE

The Botswana Football Association (BFA) in partnership with Bakwena Community Development Trust (BCDT) and other key local stakeholders has launched the construction of a FIFA Arena mini-pitch project in Molepolole.

The project is a localised effort under FIFA's broader global development initiative and is part of a global campaign by FIFA to install 1 000 accessible mini-pitches in schools and communities globally by 2031.

Situated on an allotted 100x70 meter plot behind Mafenyatlala Mall, the facility will feature a standard 20x40 meter community football pitch.

It is designed to benefit primary school pupils aged four to 14 years. More than that 2 500 children across 11 schools within the local catchment area are expected to utilise the sporting space.

Delivering the opening remarks at the ground breaking ceremony on Friday, Kgosi Kgari Sechele III conceded that while there were many developmental milestones the community wished for, systematic hurdles often stood in the way of achievement.

He commended the stakeholders who came on board to bypass difficult bureaucratic systems, expressing optimism that children would benefit immensely from the programme.

Providing the project overview, BCDT Board Chairman, Reverend

Mosweu Simane revealed that the plot chosen for the precinct was a commercial land that the Trust had initially reserved for lucrative commercial interests, including the construction of the proposed Mafenyatlala hotel.

However, the BCDT leadership saw it fit to pivot and partner with the BFA, recognising that alternatives venues considered by the football governing body faced severe limitations.

Rev. Simane reassured stakeholders that despite sacrificing a portion of the land for the social cause, the strategic partnership would still allow the village trust to introduce secondary commercial activities to generate revenue.

BFA President, Tariq Babitseng highlighted that FIFA Arena initiative aimed to bridge inequalities in sports access by embedding safe, dedicated football facilities directly into underprivileged communities.

Rather than just building infrastructure, Babitseng noted that the programme focuses on creating inclusive, secure environments where children could play freely, cultivate their sporting talent, and enjoy the physical benefits of sports.

"The project is built on a simple belief: every child should have the opportunity to play football, and where a child lives should not determine whether that opportunity is available to them," he stated.

Speaking on behalf of the Minister of Sport and Arts, the



Botswana Football Association president, Tariq Babitseng (left), Kgosi Kgari Sechele III (second left) and other dignitaries during the groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of a FIFA Arena mini-pitch project in Molepolole recently. The facility will feature a standard 20x40 meter community football pitch. Photo: Thokozani Matiha

Director of the Department of Recreation, Moeti Godisamang stressed that government primary mandate remained facilitating sport development and recreation through sound policy direction.

"We believe that through a development structure like this one,

we will build a pipeline of athletes who will be able to transition from the junior to the senior level and ultimately represent our country at a higher level," he said. Beyond the pitch, the precinct is expected to act as a major economic catalyst for Kweneng region.

Godisamang highlighted that under the Botswana Economic Transformation Program (BETP), sport has been prioritised as a key sector targeted to drive the national economy.

In an interview, BFA Project Consultant, Molefi Obenne explained that FIFA was providing full soccer playground packages, including premium artificial turf, perimeter fencing and child-safe containment structures.

According to Obenne, the current development agreement with FIFA mandates the construction of two pilot facilities in Botswana, one in Molepolole and another in Maun.

The Molepolole mini arena pitch is slated for completion within 90 days, targeting a handover date of January 5, 2027.

Obenne added that if the first two infrastructure projects were successfully delivered on schedule, FIFA would unlock funding to add three more mini-arenas in other towns and villages across the nation. Molepolole South, Member of Parliament, Shima Monageng applauded BFA president for choosing Kweneng region as a host site for the mini football arena.

Monageng noted that the selection of Molepolole for a project of such magnitude was a monumental decision that would undoubtedly go down in history.

Monageng emphasised that the project was designed to serve the public good, therefore its long term success relied on collective responsibility and careful management by the entire public. **BOPA**

Maun looks beyond wildlife to attract sport tourists

Esther Mmolai
MAUN

The North West region is exploring pairing tourism and sport, to create opportunities for women and girls by identifying a sporting activity that would lure more visitors to Maun.

To achieve this, stakeholders have proposed to form a working group that would turn the idea into reality.

The idea was birthed during a community engagement workshop themed: Sport Tourism and its Benefits to Women, organised by Women and Sport Botswana (WASBO) in Maun.

The Hospitality and Tourism Association of Botswana tour operators representative, Sethunya Botshabelo, stated that Maun was widely recognised as the gateway to the famous Okavango Delta and a centre of

Botswana's tourism industry but the country's tourism story could extend beyond the experiences for which it was already known.

She said international clients often asked if it was worth spending time in Maun and what was there beyond the wildlife.

Botshabelo suggested that a formed working group could pilot one practical event where women participated, something achievable and its reputation built over time.

In addition, she said it could also help with timing since tourism had a peak season.

The activity, she said should respect natural environment and cultural heritage which were central to Maun appeal.

Botshelo said sport tourism must protect rather than undermine the existing assets because Maun sat on the edge of the Okavango Delta, a protected

UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Furthermore, she explained that a well organised event could attract athletes, officials, supporters and families who would need accommodation, meals, transport, cultural experiences and other services.

"Maun already has a strong tourism identity and we now have an opportunity to connect that identity more deliberately with sport and women empowerment.

We need practical partnerships, fair access to opportunities and consistent attention to safety and quality. Let us build events where women are not only present but are competing, earning, owning businesses and helping to lead," she added.

She also highlighted that the opportunity was not just to bring more people to Maun but to ensure that their presence created value for local communities

particularly women.

Botshabelo also stated that women should not be visible only as volunteers or supporters but should have opportunities to earn, compete and influence decisions.

WASBO chairperson, Keenese Katisenge-Tizhani supported the idea, noting that Maun had the potential to host sport tourism events supported by its status as the gateway to the delta, and eventually contribute to development of the region.

She urged all sporting bodies to work jointly with the tourism sector, the business community, local leadership and other stakeholders to strategise on the envisaged event which could promote sport as an economic driver and empowerment tool.

WASBO is ready to support and ensure women participation and empowerment. **BOPA**