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FMD interventions in Zone 11 on track



Department of Veterinary Services principal technical officer, Ms Ellen Ntsimane vaccinating cattle at Hildavale yesterday, as part of the ongoing surveillance and Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) vaccination activities in Zone 11. Senior veterinary officer for Lobatse, Dr Vincent Kgathi said the animals were branded with a 'V' to indicate that they had been vaccinated against FMD. Photos: Calviniah Kgautlhe

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Department of Wildlife and National Parks principal wildlife officer, Mr Kealeboga Komanyane has called on members of the public to adhere to the suspension and regulations governing the hunting of cloven-hoofed animals. He raised concern over the surge in poaching incidents, warning that illegal hunting particularly of cloven-hoofed animals posed a significant threat to ongoing efforts to contain the spread of FMD. Photo: Thuso Kgakatsi

Ministry sounds alarm on poaching spike amid FMD outbreak

Thuso Kgakatsi
HUKUNTSI

The Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) in Hukuntsi is concerned with the surge in poaching incidents, warning that illegal hunting particularly of cloven-hoofed animals poses a significant threat to ongoing efforts to contain the spread of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD).

Principal wildlife officer, Kealeboga Komanyane, called on members of the public to adhere to the suspension and regulations governing the hunting of cloven-hoofed animals.

The directive follows the declaration of FMD outbreak in Zone 11, by the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture.

Mr Komanyane told BOPA that despite these restrictions, poaching continued to persist in the district.

He warned that such illegal activities not only threatened wildlife populations but also risked undermining national disease containment efforts.

Recent incidents highlight the severity of the situation and Mr Komanyane revealed that authorities recently apprehended suspects found in possession of game meat from eight gemsbok and one kudu.

The confiscated meat was subsequently destroyed as a precautionary measure to prevent any potential spread of infection the disease.

While emphasising that poaching is a criminal offence, Mr Komanyane stressed that it was even more dangerous during a disease outbreak.

“We are concerned about the number of wildlife being poached, particularly in large quantities. This not only threatens wildlife populations in our management areas but also increases the risk of disease transmission,” he said.

Mr Komanyane said statistics

indicated a worrying shift in poaching patterns from, subsistence hunting to more organised, commercial operations.

He said the plan was to close all gaps to ensure zero poaching and that no game meat was harvested and distributed within and beyond local communities.

Infected meat if not addressed could accelerate the spread of FMD across regions, Mr Komanyane said and warned the public to refrain from transporting or trading in game meat during this critical period.

He said, the suspension of hunting, implemented just a week before the start of the hunting season, had far-reaching socio-economic implications.

Mr Komanyane noted that the directive affected several wildlife management areas in the district, including KDI, KD2, KD6, and KD12, where communities had already been allocated hunting quotas.

“The halt in hunting activities is expected to delay the season and disrupt administrative processes such as licensing,” he explained.

“It also impacts local livelihoods, as community trusts typically benefit from partnerships with safari operators who purchase quotas and provide game meat as part of social support initiatives,” Mr Komanyane added.

As a result, many communities that depend on these arrangements are facing temporary setbacks.

“The delay means communities will not benefit as they usually would during the hunting season,” he said and explained that not all wildlife species were affected by the outbreak.

Predators such as lions and leopards remain unaffected, while hunting of species such as impala and other antelopes will only resume once the suspension is lifted and it is deemed safe to do so.

In addition to halting hunting

activities, the DWNP has also suspended related operations, including game capture, translocation, and culling for commercial meat supply.

Mr Komanyane noted that game ranchers and community trusts had been directed to comply fully with these measures.

“We have advised trusts and game ranchers to halt culling operations and so far, there have been no reported violations,” said Mr Komanyane.

He further noted that licensed butcheries dealing in game meat were under strict surveillance, to ensure compliance, with no major challenges reported to date.

“In our effort to strengthen enforcement, the department has intensified operations across key areas such as Kang, Ukhwi, Phuduhudu, and Hukuntsi. Measures include increased patrols and random stop-and-search operations aimed at curbing illegal hunting and the movement of game meat,” he said.

Mr Komanyane emphasised that these interventions were crucial not only for protecting wildlife populations but also for safeguarding the broader agricultural sector, which remained vulnerable to the spread of foot-and-mouth disease.

He cautioned that continued poaching could derail government efforts to diversify the economy of the Kgalagadi District toward photographic and non-consumptive tourism.

“Reducing wildlife numbers will ultimately affect future hunting quotas and defeat broader conservation and tourism objectives,” he warned.

Authorities have since reiterated calls for public cooperation, stressing that adherence to regulations is essential to preserving the country’s wildlife heritage and preventing further spread of the disease. **BOPA**

Botswana and Zimbabwe partner on FMD vaccination campaign

Goweditse Kome
MASUNGA

Botswana has taken steps to protect the livestock sector by partnering with Zimbabwe to vaccinate cattle against Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in border areas.

This was said by principal veterinary officer, Dr Thito Seomile, briefing the North East District FMD Command Centre recently.

Dr Seomile said the joint operations vaccination campaign would be conducted by veterinary teams from both nations to create a buffer zone within a 10-kilometre radius of the border.

“This initiative aims to reduce the risk of disease transmission resulting from cross-border livestock movements. These efforts are part of a broader and long-standing regional cooperation to secure livelihoods and food security while protecting the regional livestock industry. The project is supported by a P20 million investment designated for at least two rounds of vaccination,” he said.

Giving progress updates on zones 3c and 6b and the third phase of FMD vaccination, which ran from April 8 to 16, Dr Seomile said in Zone 3c (Maitengwe), over 8 400 cattle were vaccinated, while in Zone 6b (North of Bisoli Farm), over 7 400 cattle were vaccinated.

He highlighted that the second booster vaccination was critical for ensuring herd immunity.

“What we have learnt was that we have not recorded a single FMD suspected cases in disease control 6b North of Bisoli farm as well as Zone 3c Maitengwe,” he said.

He also informed the command centre that the border fence had been successfully

closed with a single line from Matopi Gate to the Dikgatlong picket, covering approximately 10 kilometres.

However, he regretted that challenges remained at the Matopi triangle, where cattle from Zones 7, 6a, 6b and Zimbabwe often mixed.

“This is due to elephants vandalising the fence as they travel toward the Dikgatlong Dam for water,” he added.

He also noted that herding and kraaling remained a challenge, as only a few farmers were currently managing their animals in accordance with the law to fight FMD.

Regarding small stock and pigs in Zone 3c and 6b, he said surveillance was ongoing and no cases had been detected.

“There is continued clinical surveillance in Zone 6a and 3c Maitengwe in the 20 kilometres radius and no traces of FMD suspect cases have been identified,” he said.

Additionally, he said wildlife surveillance has commenced among the 6a farms and was currently ongoing.

During the briefing, Mr Ephraim Lesolame inquired about the number of cattle to be vaccinated in Zimbabwe and the timeline for reopening the Botswana Meat Commission (BMC) to the European market.

He also raised questions regarding the testing of wild animals outside of parks and the enforcement of laws concerning shepherding.

Mr Gabriel Seeletso asked for the commencement date of the joint vaccination exercise.

He suggested that, in the event of a resource shortage such as a lack of vehicles, government should consider using horses, donkeys, or dogs to patrol the border and prevent cattle from crossing.

Mr Seeletso also expressed concerns regarding transparency over the P97 million reserved for FMD, suggesting that donor reluctance and Government Purchase Orders (GPOs) delays may necessitate a declared state of emergency.

In response, Dr Seomile explained that research was still ongoing and a specific date for the reopening of the BMC for EU slaughter was not yet available.

He further said the estimated number of cattle to be vaccinated in the joint exercise was 150 000. **BOPA**

Countries shift focus to economic gains

Lorato Gaofise
GABORONE

From shared liberation history to focus on economic gains as Botswana and Angola shift to deliver economic benefits for citizens through bilateral cooperation.

Speaking during a courtesy call by Angola Ambassador to Botswana Sandro de Oliveira in Gaborone, Minister for State President, Defence and Security Mr Moeti Mohwasa said the two countries' long-standing relationship, forged during Southern Africa's liberation struggles, should translate into tangible development outcomes.

He noted that Botswana and Angola had enjoyed cordial relations since establishing diplomatic ties in 1975, a partnership he called pivotal in the wider regional struggle for independence.

Mr Mohwasa said Angola's liberation played a significant role in advancing freedom in the region, contributing to the eventual independence of Namibia and the end of apartheid in South Africa.

While those achievements marked the first phase of liberation, the region has now entered a second phase focused on improving the socio-economic well-being of citizens, he said.

"We are now in the phase where we must deliver for our people and ensure a better quality of life. That is why partnerships, such as the one between Botswana and Angola, are critical," Mr Mohwasa said.

The minister called for enhanced cooperation in key sectors, including energy.

He noted that Botswana could benefit from Angola's oil resources through strengthened bilateral arrangements.

He also reflected on Botswana's historical role in hosting refugees during the Angolan conflict, saying such shared experiences cemented strong ties between the peoples of the two nations.

The minister further acknowledged that language differences, stemming from differing colonial histories, remain a challenge, with Angola being Portuguese-speaking and Botswana English-speaking.

However, he said such barriers should not hinder cooperation, instead it should encourage deeper cultural exchange and regional integration.

Furthermore, Minister Mohwasa

highlighted the importance of consolidating relations within Southern African, stressing that countries such as Namibia and Zimbabwe shared common historical and developmental goals.

He assured that the Botswana government remain committed to exploring avenues to strengthen diplomatic, economic and social ties with Angola, adding that continued engagement at both

Foot and Mouth Disease interventions in Zone II on track

Calviniah Kgauthe
LOBATSE

Following the outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in Good Hope District at Ramatlabama National Artificial Insemination Laboratory and Training Centre, government continues to intensify livestock vaccination and surveillance against FMD in Zone II.

Department of Veterinary Services, senior veterinary officer for Lobatse Dr Vincent Kgathi said so far they have vaccinated over 4 000 cattle in the area.

He said surveillance and vaccination in the communal grazing areas and commercial farms in the outskirts of Lobatse was progressing well.

However, he said the only setback was the rainy weather, which made it difficult to round up cattle.

Additionally, he said livestock farmers cooperated well with veterinary officers by bringing their livestock and opening up their farms for surveillance and vaccination. **BOPA**

political and technical levels was key to unlocking mutual benefits.

For his part, Ambassador de Oliveira expressed appreciation for the warm reception and reaffirmed his country's commitment to strengthening cooperation with Botswana, particularly in areas of mutual interest.

He reaffirmed Angola's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations with Botswana, with a focus on defence cooperation, peacekeeping collaboration and cross-border tourism initiatives.

Ambassador de Oliveira, who was leading the Angolan delegation that is in the country for a high-level working visit, said the visit formed part of ongoing engagements with key government stakeholders.

He noted that the Office of the President was among the most important institutions that the delegation sought to engage with, following their arrival in Botswana.

The Ambassador also emphasised

Angola's interest in learning from Botswana's experience in peacekeeping and humanitarian missions, describing the country as a valuable partner in promoting regional stability.

Mr de Oliveira further commended Botswana's leadership in advancing negotiations on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the field of defence.

Additionally, he expressed optimism that the agreement will be finalised during the upcoming Joint Permanent Commission (JMC) session and signed on the margins of a planned state visit by President Advocate Duma Boko to Angola.

Mr de Oliveira also revealed that Angola's Minister of National Defence was also planning a working visit to Botswana, expected to take place in May 2026, with dates to be confirmed through diplomatic channels.

On wildlife cooperation, the

Angolan Ambassador confirmed that Botswana had offered Angola 1 000 elephants, 'an initiative that has been positively received by the Angolan government'.

He said preparations were underway in Angola's Cuando Province to receive the animals, including efforts to clear landmines and establish safe migration corridors.

Ambassador de Oliveira explained that the initiative will allow elephants to move freely between the two countries in search of food, while also boosting tourism along the shared border.

Regarding oil sector cooperation, he said a bilateral commission was currently working on the matter, adding that further details will be provided by the respective ministers in due course.

He expressed confidence that ongoing engagements will yield positive outcomes for both countries. **BOPA**



Minister for State President, Defence and Security, Mr Moeti Mohwasa (left) and Angola Ambassador to Botswana, Mr Sandro de Oliveira during a courtesy call in Gaborone on Monday. Mr Mohwasa said Botswana and Angola should move beyond their shared liberation history and strengthen cooperation to deliver economic benefits, particularly in sectors such as energy. Photo: Gaseitsiwe Moruakgomo

FMD fight: Race against time

Thandy Tebogo
MMATHETHE

The fight against Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) is no longer just a policy issue, but a race against time.

Addressing concerned residents in Mmathethe recently, acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti, said while vaccines were a vital tool, they were not a panacea.

"Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) vaccination is primarily designed to prevent the severity of the disease, but animal movement restriction and kraaling is the strategy to alleviate the virus," Dr Dikoloti explained.

That was in response to one resident, Ms Doreen Moabe, who had called for increased funding for cordon fence maintenance and the re-introduction of the stray cattle programme to raise capital.

However, while he acknowledged the importance of infrastructure, Dr Dikoloti informed residents that while a government-led cordon fence was a long-term project that required significant logistics,

budget and time and local kraal construction offered faster and more immediate method to throttle the spread of the virus.

He indicated that the primary route for transmission was not lack of medicine, but that of management.

He said the uncontrolled mingling of cattle at shared watering holes allowed the virus to hop from infected to susceptible animals with ease and the solution was proactive herding.

Dr Dikoloti also revealed that this year, the Botswana Meat Commission (BMC) procured cattle at a total fee of P166 million at European Union (EU) selling prices. However, he said the subsequent FMD breakout had slammed the door on that lucrative market.

He urged farmers to prioritise the fight against FMD, saying it was a mammoth task that required concerted efforts.

"This is the time for all stakeholders to work in unison with government in combating FMD and treat the disease with the

seriousness it deserves.

If farmers could stand in unison in the fight against FMD, in a period of six months, Botswana will be able to defeat this virus and regain the EU market," he added.

For his part, Mr Peter Siele, a former Minister of Local Government and Rural Development and Ngwaketse South Member of Parliament, proposed a total war approach, which involved the House of Chiefs, Members of Parliament and mephato.

Mr Siele also highlighted the need to put hunger and national interest above partisan lines.

"Politics will not feed Botswana. An empty stomach should respond to food available at that moment, poultry meat and cabbage is now an alternative," Mr Siele said, highlighting how the outbreak had severely impacted the local beef industry and forced Botswana to radically change their diets.

One resident, Mr Shima Rathlageng called for containment areas and better cattle crushes, while Mr Kagiso Mathiba had asked if there was any way possible

to allow the public to slaughter cattle when they had events.

However, the veterinary services director, Dr Segale Kobedi, reminded the public that infrastructure was only as good as the people using it and that re-zoning was critical but focus should currently be prevention of the FMD spread.

Responding to concerns about dilapidated facilities, Dr Kobedi noted that many crushes were not falling apart due to age, but were being vandalised by the public. He warned that the law would be firm, owing the high volume of movement in Zone II and informed residents of the hefty P5 000 fine for allowing cattle to cross into an FMD-free zone.

The director also informed residents that government would continue vaccinations with or without cattle crushes. The burden now shifts to the farmers.

To win back the EU market and protect the P166 million investment, the strategy is to keep cattle apart, kraaled and watched. **BOPA**

DailyNews

Published by: Department of Information Services
37795 Wellie Seboni Drive
Private Bag BR 139 Gaborone

Printed by: Government Printing and Publishing Services

Online Edition: <https://dailynews.gov.bw>
email: bopa@gov.bw email: dailynews@gov.bw

Circulation 20 000 per day except Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays.

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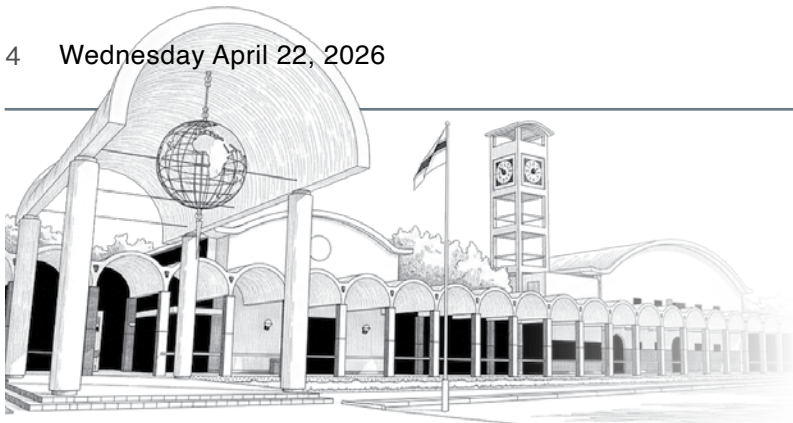
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PARLIAMENT 2026

Funding shortfall stalls Lobatse integrated office block

GABORONE

The proposed government integrated office block in Lobatse has been suspended due to lack of funding, Assistant Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Mr Ignatius Moswaane told Parliament recently.

Mr Moswaane said while the ministry appreciated the importance of the project and its timely implementation, the necessary funding to start development was not yet available, despite government's commitment to fulfilling community requests.

"Since the tenure of the late Honourable Ronald Sebege, the office block has not been consistently included in subsequent Urban Development Plans (UDPs) and National Development Plans

(NDPs)," the assistant minister said.

He acknowledged that the project would positively impact local economies, efficient service delivery and the quality of life for residents of Lobatse and its hinterlands.

"However, current financial constraints have forced its suspension," he said.

He assured Parliament that government remained committed to undertaking the project once the country's finances improved.

This was in response to a question by Member of Parliament for Lobatse, Mr Kamal Jacobs, who had asked the minister to state whether it was time to consider constructing government integrated offices in Lobatse, that were promised during the late Sebege's tenure. **BOPA**

No plans to phase out A1 salary scale

GABORONE

Government currently has no immediate plans to phase out the A1 salary scale within the public service remuneration structure.

Responding to a question in Parliament on Wednesday, Assistant Minister for State President, Defence and Security, Ms Maipelo Mophuting-Dikoloti, said the A1 salary scale formed part of broader and structured grading system based on the paterson job evaluation framework, which classified positions according to the nature, complexity and requirements of work.

"This scale is primarily applicable to semi-skilled roles that support core functions. Semi-skilled jobs include positions such as cleaners, messengers, security personnel and gardeners," she explained.

She, however, indicated that government remained fully cognisant of the concerns relating

to employee welfare, dignity and morale across all levels of the public service.

"It is also important to note that within local labour market, government remuneration for comparable roles at A salary grade remains competitive and, in many instances, provides greater stability and benefits that similar in other sectors," she added.

Notwithstanding, she said government had over years made significant efforts towards enhancement of salary levels, including conditions of service for low earning employees, through the existing negotiations structures. Kgatleng Central MP, Mr Mpho Morolong, had asked the minister to state when government would phase off the A1 salary scale in the salary payment structure since it was very low and it degraded public service morale on the affected public servants. **BOPA**

Rainfall and contractor performance delay Mmadinare-Robebelela Road completion

GABORONE

The contract for reseal of Damuchujenaa and Mmadinare access including surfacing of 40km Mmadinare-Robebelela Road project was awarded to Ocean Cables (Pty) Ltd at the amount of P95,356,092.50.

This was revealed by Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Mr Noah Salakae when responding to a question in Parliament on Wednesday.

Minister Salakae said the to date, P27,644,811.93 representing about 29 per cent of the total project budget had been expended.

The minister said the project commenced on February 12, 2024 and was due for completion on February 11, 2026 and the overall project progress had reached 51 per cent of its 100 per cent target.

He noted that the Serule-Selebi Phikwe road marking (16km) was finished and the Mmadinare access road (13.6km out of 14km) was 97 per cent complete, the Mmadinare-Robebelela Road (40km) had only seen minimal earthworks (1.2km base and 2.5km subgrade) and the resealing of the Damuchujenaa access road (6.5km) was yet to

begin.

"The project experienced delays primarily due to the contractor's performance and rainfall, which affected consistent progress on site.

A variation in the scope of works specifically change of the base layer material from crushed stone to G5 resulted in the contractor submitting a claim for an Extension of Time (EOT) and this claim is currently under review in accordance with the relevant provisions of the contract," he said.

Mr Salakae said in an effort to compel the contractor to improve performance, the ministry issued Notices to Correct in October 2025 and January 2026.

"In addition, a notice was issued to charge the contractor delay damages for the delays incurred," he added. He also said in response to the Notices to Correct, the contractor undertook such remedial actions as provision of bulk fuel storage facilities and the mobilisation of key personnel to site in October 2025.

Further to that, he said, in January 2026, the contractor mobilised additional resources to the site and the required EOT was likely to push project completion

to August 2026. "Despite these interventions, progress, particularly on the Mmadinare-Robebelela section remains slow and the ministry will continue to monitor progress with a view to coming up with a workable solution," the minister said.

Mr Salakae said rainfall delay claim had not been submitted but on site the contractor had to rework some section. He said due to the omission of cement stabilisation in the Bill Of Quantities (BOQ), the road base material was being changed from crushed stone to G5 to avoid stabilisation requirements, a variation expected to extend the contract completion date to August 2026. Member of Parliament for Selebi Phikwe West, Mr Reuben Kaizer, had asked the minister to appraise Parliament on the status of the construction and upgrading of the Mmadinare-Robebelela Road.

He also asked the minister to state the total budget allocated to the project and how much had been expended so far and whether the project had experienced any delays and the causes. He also wanted to know the measures the ministry had put in place to ensure timely completion of the project. **BOPA**



Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Mr Noah Salakae revealed to Parliament that the reseal of Damuchujenaa and Mmadinare access road including surfacing of 40km Mmadinare-Robebelela Road project, which commenced on February 12, 2024 and was due for completion on February 11, 2026 was at 51 per cent.

Ministry registers Shadishadi general plan at Deeds Registry

GABORONE

There is currently one general plan registered at the Deeds Registry for Kweneng District, being the Shadishadi General Plan, which was approved on August 19 last year.

Answering a question Parliament on Wednesday, on behalf of Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Assistant Minister of Trade and

Entrepreneurship, Mr Baratiwa Mathoothe said the Lephephe Sub Land Board was currently transacting in respect thereof for the production of Secure Land Titles.

Mr Mathoothe said the GP comprised a total of 446 plots, including 425 residential plots, of which 415 had already been allocated. "To date, 35 Secure Land Titles have been registered at the Deeds Registry," he said. He

further highlighted that General Plans for other settlements within the district were at various stages of development, while in Molepolole two General Plans for Magokotswane and Suping were submitted to the Deeds Registry on March 20 and March 26 this year, respectively.

In addition, Mr Mathoothe said five General Plans comprising 917 plots were at different stages of approval by the Department of

Surveys and Mapping, with final submissions having been made on March 27 after addressing all comments.

Upon approval, he said plans would proceed to conveyancing and registration at the Deeds Registry.

In Lentsweletau, he said two General Plans comprising 658 plots were awaiting submission to the DSM following clearance by the Department of Environmental Protection.

Molepolole North MP, Mr Arafat Khan, had asked whether the Deeds Registry had approved any General Plans recently within Kweneng District, and if so, what factors were preventing the relevant landboards from proceeding with the allocation of plots in areas where such GPs had already been approved.

He had also wanted to know the total number of GPs that had been approved in Kweneng District to date. **BOPA**

Angola and Botswana set to facilitate tangible business opportunities

Mpho Mosojane
GABORONE

If preliminary talks are anything to go by, Angola will start enjoying more of Botswana prime beef while Botswana will supplement their diet with fish from Angola.

This follows discussions between the two governments to strengthen collaboration and explore possibilities of trade and investment within critical economic sectors particularly beef production, fish and meat processing.

Besides their geographical ties, Botswana and Angola share a mutual need to revitalise trade exchanges with each other as a first step in creating opportunity bases for small, medium and large scale business investments.

Through the recent establishment of the Angola-Botswana Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ABCCI) Ad-hoc Committee, businesses from both countries will have a permanent, comprehensive platform that will facilitate ease of doing business between the two countries.

According to the Ambassador of Angola to Botswana, Mr Sandro De Oliveira the establishment of the ABCCI follows a directive from a meeting of presidents of the two nations earlier this year and was a strategic alliance of nations that had a mutual interest in collaborating to grow their economies.

“From the meeting, there were specific directives for both governments to immediately implement tangible actionables that will open opportunities for businesses in both countries to start directly trading with each other,” he said.

Ambassador De Oliveira was speaking at a breakfast meeting hosted for all stakeholders in the value chain including a business delegation from Angola.

The Committee’s mandate promises to be a first step in eliminating barriers for businesses to thrive as well as create trade bases to support the growth of SMEs thereby creating much needed employment in the process. This goal will be facilitated by the Special Economic Zone Authority (SEZA), which promises to be a one-stop-shop to support business that seeks to trade in their gazetted SEZs. “We will provide a competitive, investor-friendly environment. Angolan consumers and businesses can immediately import products such as agro-processed foods such as maize-meal and flour, construction

materials, pharmaceuticals and consumer household goods from Botswana businesses.” says Tapiwa Masie, Acting Chief Executive Officer of SEZA.

Ministry of International Relations deputy permanent secretary bilateral diplomacy, Mr Clifford Maribe described the session as not just as a culinary convention of stakeholders but a strategic platform to unlock investment flows and advance a shared agenda of growth and prosperity.

“We meet here at a pivotal moment when Botswana government, through the Botswana Economic Transformation Programme, is embarking on an ambitious plan aimed at restructuring the economy through diversified and export-led growth.” he said. **BOPA**



Business Botswana CEO, Ms Tumi Mbaakanyi (left), Ministry for International Relations deputy permanent secretary - bilateral diplomacy, Mr Clifford Maribe (centre) and Angola Ambassador to Botswana, Mr Sandro De Oliveira during the Working Breakfast Meeting on business and investment opportunities in Angola and Botswana. Mr De Oliveira said Angola had potential, which was largely under-explored, particularly agriculture, tourism, transformative industry, health, education, transport and information technology. Photo: Felicity Male

Depletion of phane worm raises concerns

Chendzimu Manyepedza
DAMUCHUJENAA

For generations, phane was more than just food; it was a symbol of seasonal rhythm, cultural identity, and community cooperation. Families would venture into the bush during harvesting season, carefully collecting caterpillars, ensuring that enough were left behind to sustain future populations.

Knowledge about when and how to harvest was passed down through elders, preserving a delicate balance between use and conservation.

Recently, the narrative has changed. The increasing recognition of phane’s nutritional value and its appeal in village, urban, and cross-border markets has made it a highly sought-after commodity.

While it is a success story, it also

raises concerns about its depletion in areas such as the North East and Central Districts, which have always been regarded as hotspots of abundance. A visit to the Moshakabele cattle post, located on the outskirts of Damochujenaa, revealed a sombre atmosphere permeating the area.

This was typically a bustling site in every harvesting season.

Harvesters from different regions would converge here, setting up temporary camps to rest amid the flurry of their work.

However, this time, the mood was heavy with disappointment.

The harvesters, who had travelled long distances, wore expressions of worry and dismay as they surveyed the diminishing worms.

The expected usual excitement of the harvest season was replaced by a palpable sense of unease,

and the reality of returning home with little to show after a long journey slowly transformed into a challenging ordeal. One of the harvesters and a pioneer settler at Moshakabele cattle post, Ms Segopotso Bathudi, said that what was once a productive harvest has become a daunting challenge.

A week’s worth of my work used to yield nearly 50kg of produce, she said, evidence of the abundance she once enjoyed.

“In the past, I could easily harvest close to home, but now I find myself having to journey long distances only to discover that my efforts are in vain. It feels as if I’m embarking on a fruitless expedition each time,” Ms Bathudi said.

“Now, I struggle to fill a single 25-liter bucket over the course of an entire week. Each day feels like an uphill battle, and the satisfaction

of a fruitful harvest has become a distant memory,” she said.

Mr Modiri Gashala, who often camps during the harvest season, expressed that he no longer sees the value in camping out for the harvest. He noted that the once-thriving areas, abundant with phane, have been severely depleted, and what once brought bountiful yields now exists only in his memories.

Despite the continued abundance of mophane trees, which provide rich foliage that sustains the phane worms, Mr Gashala also expressed that the overzealous harvesting practices were threatening the future of this valuable resource.

In an interview with a technical officer with the Department of Forestry and Range Resources in Selebi Phikwe, Mr Loago Sita, he confirmed that there was a depletion of phane worms.

Mr Sita said the situation raised concerns not only for the sustainability of the phane population but also for the livelihoods of those who depend on it for their income and sustenance.

He explained that the rush to maximise profits leads to premature harvesting practices employed by some individuals who target the worms before they have fully matured, disrupting the natural life cycle of the phane and impairing the reproductive potential of the species, ultimately leading to a decline. Mr Sita further said climatic changes and overcrowding in phane harvesting spots also contribute to the depletion of phane.

He said that although the harvesting of phane is not restricted to specific territories, they often face a situation where people from distant areas come to the squatter settlements to harvest.

Efforts to address the issue have been implemented, including the use of harvesting permits during harvest seasons. Mr Sita noted that this measure is making a difference, particularly in monitoring the harvest and ensuring compliance with the specified harvest period. **BOPA**



The growing recognition of phane’s nutritional value, along with its appeal in village, urban and cross-border markets, has made it a highly sought-after commodity. This has led to its depletion in traditionally abundant areas such as the North East and Central districts.



Daily Business

Project collaboration strengthens bilateral relations

Esther Mmolai
MAWANA

The partnership between Botswana and Sultanate of Oman reflects a shared vision, one built on trust, mutual respect and commitment to sustainable development.

The Oman Investment Authority president, Mr Abdulsalam Al Murshidi made the remarks at the recent ground-breaking of the Maun solar energy plant integrated with 500 MWh battery storage.

The project stems from a partnership between the two countries to reinforce Botswana's renewable energy capacity which was managed under the country's Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) to ensure energy security, improved access and sustainable economic development.

Mr Murshidi stated that Oman was proud to stand alongside Botswana in the journey and appreciated that the initiative was not only Botswana's largest renewable energy facility but also a clear sign of the country's leadership in embracing a clean and resilient energy future.

"For us at the Oman Investment Authority, this marks a meaningful extension of Oman's global investment footprint, one that goes beyond capital. It is an investment in partnerships, in knowledge exchange and in building platforms that create long-term value for nations and their people," he said.

Mr Al Murshidi also highlighted that the initiative formed part of a broader vision, the development of the Botswana Energy Trading Platform, a transformative



Botswana Power Corporation CEO, Mr David Kgoboko (right) and O-Green CEO, Mr Mustafa Al Hinai (left) signing a Power Purchase Agreement at the groundbreaking of the Maun 500MW Solar PV Plant with Battery Storage at Mawana recently. Looking on are President Advocate Duma Boko (second row centre), Oman Investment Authority president, Mr Abdulsalam bin Mohammed Al Murshidi (second row left) and Minister of Minerals and Energy, Ms Bogolo Knewendo. Photo: Ogopoleng Kgomoethata

programme that positioned Botswana as a regional energy hub within the Southern African power pool.

Through such a platform, he said Botswana had the potential to transition from an energy importer to a competitive energy exporter, unlocking new economic opportunities and strengthening its role in regional power markets.

For her part, Minister of Minerals and Energy, Ms Bogolo Knewendo said the ministry remained committed to delivering on the renewable energy targets as set out in the national priorities.

Minister Knewendo said through the accelerated implementation

of the IRP, they were focused on translating policy into tangible outcomes that would expand energy access, strengthen energy security and unlock economic opportunity.

"This project reflects a deliberate and bold commitment to reposition Botswana's energy sector in line with our aspirations for a modern and resilient economy. In 2024, Botswana had less than 10 per cent of renewable energy and yet by 2030, we are due to meet our goal of 50/50 and beyond," she added.

The minister thanked their partners from the Sultanate of Oman and O-Green for their vision and investment, which she said would make the project possible.

However, the project would be executed by Botswana Power Corporation (BPC) in collaboration with Okavango Solar on behalf of the Sultanate of Oman.

BPC chief executive officer, Mr David Kgoboko explained that the project would be developed through an Independent Power Producer (IPP) model citing that the power plant would be owned and operated by Okavango Solar, a company wholly owned by Naqaa Sustainable Energy of Oman, represented by O-Green, under a 30-year Power Purchase Agreement with BPC as the off-taker.

Meanwhile, BPC had, over the last two years, undertaken two other utility-scale Solar PV projects in Mmadinare and Jwaneng, both rated at 100 MWp.

To date, Mmadinare Solar has been in commercial operation, generating 100 MW of solar power during the day, while Jwaneng is undergoing commissioning and is scheduled to be in commercial operation by mid-2026 at the latest.

Such projects, Mr Kgoboko said were without Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), which allowed some of the electricity generated to be stored and used when there was no sunshine or during evening and early morning peak hours.

"I am pleased to announce that the Maun Solar Project entails the development, financing, construction, operation and maintenance of a 500MW solar PV plant, with a BESS of 500 MWh, equivalent to four hours of storage at a capacity of 125MW," he said. **BOPA**

Govt prioritises Pandamatenga water supply

Portia Keetile
KASANE

Government has reaffirmed its commitment to transforming Pandamatenga into a leading agricultural hub through strategic investments in water and energy infrastructure.

The Chobe-Zambezi Water

Transfer Scheme has been identified as a key driver of economic growth in the Chobe Region, supported by the Water Utilities Corporation's (WUC) ongoing investment in large-scale water infrastructure.

Speaking at a recent business meeting in Kasane, WUC Business Development Manager, Kagiso Lobeko, said the project's significance was reflected in its

prioritization within the national budget speech as it was delivered by the Minister of Finance Mr Ndaba Gaolathe. He explained that the initiative aimed to draw water from the Chobe-Zambezi River basin to unlock Pandamatenga's full agricultural potential, positioning it as a premier agronomy hub while enhancing long-term food security and industrial development.

Mr Lobeko further noted that through the Botswana Economic Transformation Programme labs, the water transfer scheme had been identified among 186 priority projects expected to stimulate economic activity nationwide.

He added that the project was currently under review ahead of implementation, as other key initiatives, including agro-processing developments led by Special Economic Zones Authority, depend on its successful delivery.

To fast-track implementation, a multi-sectoral governance structure has been established, bringing together WUC, SEZA, the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture, the Ministry of Water and Human Settlement, and Botswana Railways.

Mr Lobeko said the team was prioritising Phase One of the Kazungula-Pandamatenga link,

focusing on reviewing operational frameworks and technical strategies in line with recent project adjustments.

Meanwhile, Botswana Power Corporation is ramping up efforts to ensure energy security in the region. BPC Strategy and Transformation Manager, Kethebe Sethunyane, said the corporation was working towards energy self-sufficiency by integrating regions such as Chobe, currently reliant on electricity imports from Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe into the national grid.

He highlighted that Phase One of the project, which extended the grid from Morupule to Maun and Shakawe, had already been completed.

Phase Two will extend the grid from Selebi Phikwe to Pandamatenga, Kasane, and the Chobe Enclave.

"This extension is a strategic move to power the growing agrotourism sector and support local agricultural developments," said Mr Sethunyane.

He further revealed that the Engineering, Procurement and Construction contract had already been awarded, with construction expected to commence soon. **BOPA**



BERA CEO, Dr Nevah Tshabang (left) and Water Utilities Corporation business development senior manager, Mr Kagiso Lobeko during a panel discussion at the Chobe Connect in Kasane recently. Mr Lobeko said Chobe-Zambezi Water Transfer Scheme aimed to transform Pandamatenga into an agronomy hub. Photo: Ogopoleng Kgomoethata

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Dutch gov't announces packages to ease high energy prices impact

THE HAGUE - The Dutch government announced on Monday a US\$1.14 billion economic support package to mitigate the impact of rising energy prices on households and businesses following the outbreak of conflicts in the Middle East. The package includes US\$739 million in spending measures to support purchasing power. To finance these measures, the government will introduce several tax adjustments, including scaling back the small-scale investment allowance by lowering the maximum eligible investment amount, abolishing the start-up allowance from 2027, and increasing alcohol exercise duties from the same year, the statement said. **Xinhua**

IMF resumes ties with Venezuela

CARACAS - Venezuela has resumed relations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) after years of suspension, acting President Delcy Rodríguez said Thursday. Speaking on state television, Rodríguez welcomed remarks by IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva indicating that Venezuela will reactivate its representation at the organisation. Rodríguez said the move would help normalise administrative processes tied to Venezuela's rights and obligations as an IMF member. Rodríguez described the development as a 'major diplomatic achievement' and thanked countries that supported Venezuela's return to the IMF. **Xinhua**

New Zealand and India set to sign free trade deal

WELLINGTON - New Zealand and India will formally sign a free trade agreement on April 27 in India's capital of New Delhi, the New Zealand government announced Monday. Legal verification of the New Zealand-India free trade agreement has been completed, New Zealand Trade and Investment Minister Todd McClay said in a statement. The agreement will eliminate or reduce tariffs on 95 per cent of New Zealand's current exports to India, the statement said. From the day it enters into force, nearly 57 per cent of exports, including lamb, wool, coal, leather and most forestry and industrial products, will become duty-free, and the ratio shall rise to 82 per cent when fully implemented, according to the statement. **Xinhua**

Dikgang

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Motshwarelela tona wa lefatshe le temo thuo, Dr Edwin Dikoloti (bobedi mojang), Mopalamente wa Ramotswa, Rre Boniface Mabeo (boraro mojang), Kgosi Mosadi (boraro molemeng), bagolwane go tswa kwa lephateng leo le bogogi jwa GaMalete jaaka tona a ne a ile go buisa phuthago kwa Ramotswa bosheng. Tona Dikoloti o boletse fa lephata le loga maano a gore bolwetse bo kganelwe fa bo tshwerweng teng go hema kanamo. O kopile Balete gore ba seka ba loba dikgomo tse ba di belaelang. Senepe: Mmoniemang Motsamai



Kgosi o rotloetsa tshwaragano mo twantshong tlhako le molomo

Mmoniemang Motsamai
RAMOTSWA

Kgosi ya GaMalete, Kgosi Mosadi o rotloeditse morafe go netefatsa gore ba lwantsha tlhako le molomo. Mo phuthagong ya kgotla e neng e buisiwa ke motshwarelela tona wa lefatshe le temothuo, Dr Edwin Dikoloti kwa Ramotswa ka Labobedi, o

tlhalositse fa lefatshe la Botswana le le mo mathateng morago ga gore le welwe ke seru sa bolwetse jwa tlhako le molomo.

A re puso e ntse e mekamekane le dikgwetlho morago ga gore theko ya diteemane e le kwa tlase.

Kgosi Mosadi a re dintwa tse ditsweletseng kwa mafatsheng di kokonetse itsholelo le go feta ka jaana dithwatlwa tsa leokwane di gakaditse seemo.

Ka jalo o ne a ba kopa gore ba seka ba kgala puso, mme ba e thuse mo mathateng a kana kana a.

Kgosi Mosadi o kopile dikomiti tsa temothuo mo motseng go netefatsa gore di bereka le marara ka jaana bolwetse jo bo tla ka methale e mentsi, bangwe ba bo tliša ka go tloa terata, ba sa tlole kwa molelwane.

A re go netefadiwe gore gangwe le gape go tlhokomelwa kwa go

nang le kgonagalo ya gore batho ba tlolele teng e le maiteko a go itsa kanayo ya bolwetse.

Mo go tse dingwe, o kopile Tona Dikoloti go buisanya le balekane ba gagwe kwa South Africa gore Balete ba letlelelwe go tsoa terata e kgaoganyang mafatshe a mabedi.

Morago ga gore bolwetse bo tlhage mo kgaolong e e tlwaelegileng ka Zone 11, Tona Dikoloti o sianye le kgaolo eo go

lekodisana Batswana ka seemo se.

Fa a ba ema ka molaetsa, Dr Dikoloti o ba kopile gore ba nang le pelaelo ya bolwetse kwa masakeng a bone, ba seke ba sia ka bolwetse, mme ba itlhagise ba matlhoko a leruo. A re o swabisitswe ke gore go na le barui bangwe ba go supafalang ba nse ba beile bolwetse botsetse, ka jaana dikgomo dingwe di fitlhelwa di na le dipadi tsa bolwetse. **BOPA**

Metshameko e nowa moro

Cathrine Simane
TSABONG

Go inakanya le motshameko wa kgwele ya dinao ke bomme le bana ba basetsana go supiwa e le kgatelopele e e tlaa thusang go emisa kgetholola ka bong.

Le fa go tswa goo-lowwe kgwele ya dinao e ne e lebege e le motshameko wa borre, bana ba basetsana ba itshupa fa le bone ba na le bokgoni, ka jalo ba dira ka natla go itshetsa ka yone. Seo, se senoga jaana ka e rile bosheng mongwe wa bomme ba ba katisang kgwele ya dinao a ne a iphitlhelwa a le fa gare ga borre ba bakatise ba ba neng ba nopolwa ka lenaneo le le rulagantsweng ke Tautona Advocate Duma Boko go ya go tlhatlhelwa mo go tseneletseng kwa setlhopheng sa Manchester United kwa England.

Mme Kesego Kgaudi wa Tsabong ke mosimolodi gape ke mokatise wa setlhophha sa kgwele ya dinao sa Makgabz City.

E rile a bua kwa moletlong wa tsamaya sentle wa ga mokatise

Kgaudi, mongwe wa masika, e leng kgaitadie, Rre Molemi Kgaudi o supile fa gole gantsi batsadi ba itllhokomolosa ditalante tsa bana bogolo jang mo go tsa metsahameko.

Rre Kgaudi o ne a tlhalosa fa go ya go ithuthuntsha mo go tsa bokatise ga ga Mme Kgaudi, go ba dirile motlotlo thata, bogolo jang ka e le mme a le nosi yo a nopotsweng go ya go emela kgaolo ya Kgalagadi le lefatshe la Botswana ka bophara.

O ne a supa fa kgaitadie a tswa kgakala a rata bobo kgwele ya dinao mme batsadi ba sa lemoge bokgoni jwa gagwe, e bile ba ne ba sena thotloetso e kalo mo go se a se dirang.

Le fa go ntse jalo a re lerato la gagwe la kgwele ya diano, ke selo se

se rotloeditseng batsadi ba bangwe go ema ka dinao ba rotloetsa bana kgatlhegela metshameko e ba e ratang ka e ka nowa moro.

Rre Kabo Lekhutlile, yo e leng mokatise mo setlhopheng sa Makgabz City go tswa k a

2022, o tlhalositse fa Mme Kgaudi e le mongwe wa bomme ba ba itsetsepepseng mo kgweleng ya dinao.

Modulasetilo wa lekgotla la kgwele ya dinao mo kgaolong ya Tsabong, Rre Moruti Osenoneng a re ba motlotlo thata ka Katlego ya ga Mme Kgaudi, ka a tswa kgakala a ikiteile sehuba go fitlhelwa se a se batlang mo motshamekong wa kgwele ya dinao, mme seo sa dira gore a felele a tlhamile setlhophha. **BOPA**

Mosimolodi gape e leng mokatise wa setlhophha sa kgwele ya dinao sa Makgabz City, Mme Kesego Kgaudi.



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Mandunyane Nnakgolo Social Club: Building community and helping the needy

Kelebogile Taolo
MANDUNYANE

In the heart of Mandunyane, a small village with a big impact, lies a social club that keeps scoring goals for community development.

Established in 2000, Mandunyane Nnakgolo Social Club is on a mission to promote health, wellbeing, and socio-economic growth.

The club, which began to gain momentum in 2019, uses football as its driving force for efforts to promote good behaviour through educating people about crime and safety protocols.

This, it does in conjunction with law enforcement organisations.

Similarly, Nnakgolo aims to improve the socio-economic status of the village through giving back to the community.

According to club chairperson, Mr Kgositsile Moabi, the club works closely with village leaders in assisting the less-privileged and advancing the interests of the village.

“Our aim is to work closely with the Social and Community Development (S&CD) office to help the needy in our village and beyond,” says Mr Moabi.

The club has so far made some strides in giving back to

the community, a noticeable achievement in as far as its mandate is concerned.

Recently, the club managed to refurbish 90 tables in Mandunyane Primary School and vowed to always maintain them when needed.

“We also donated 51 chairs and the area councillor added five more to make a total of 56, which were handed over together with the tables and a siren,” he said.

The donation stands so far as one of the Nnakgolo’s most notable achievements, which Mr Moabi emphasised as one of many, which are yet to come as they have finally adopted the school.

“The adoption means we will work hand in hand with the school; we want to take part in helping the school in various activities such as the prize giving ceremonies, school tours and others,” he stated.

They also pledged to carry out the school maintenance as well as to establish an orchard, acts which Mr Moabi believes will impact the school positively.

In a nutshell, the club will be an important stakeholder to the primary school, maintaining close contact to help in various departments.

“We will be close to the school

to help in every department such as in guidance and counselling, which deals with destitute and needy students.

We will also be working with various heads of departments responsible for school feeding, and school resources such as stationery

and furniture,” explained Mr Moabi.

Going forward, the club has other good intentions of donating 10 food hampers for distribution to deserving people.

It is also planning on embarking on clean-up campaign in the

village. With the persisting occurrence of issues of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), the club strongly condemns the societal ill and discourages all its manifestations, and to contribute to the fight against the problem, the club working on striking collaborative partnerships with other key stakeholders in addressing the monster.

The club’s vision remains clear, to transform Mandunyane’s socio-economic status and inspire other social clubs to do the same.

“We want to encourage other clubs to join us in making a difference,” says Mr Moabi.

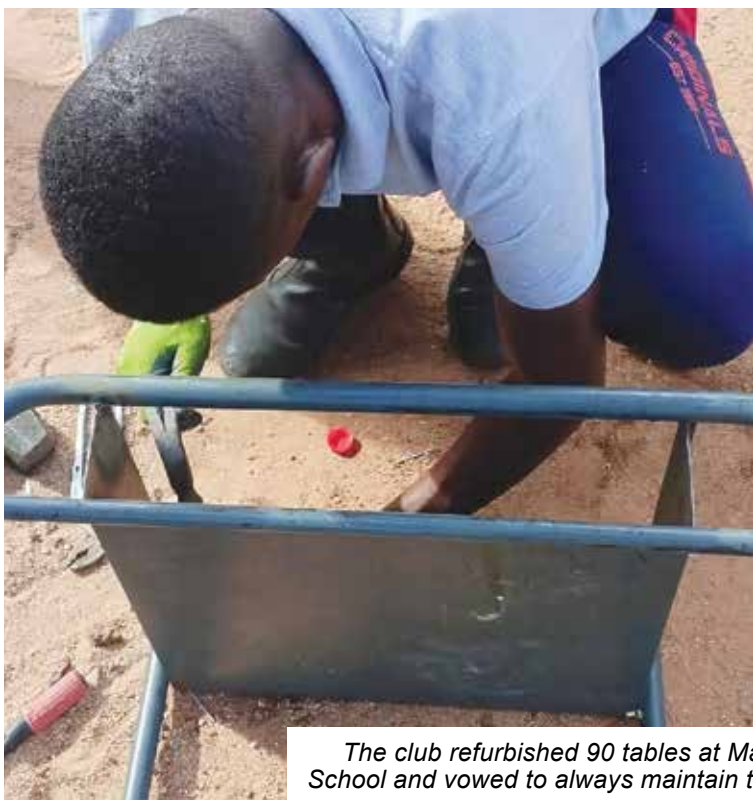
With a strong team behind it, including its vice chairperson Mr Senza Makhanye and secretary Ms Violet Moabi, the club is open to anyone willing to join the movement.

The club’s activities include fundraising tournaments and hosting community events.

Despite challenges like club members facing difficulties in raising money for the required club contributions due to many being unemployed, Nnakgolo perseveres.

“We hope people will see what we really do and support us,” says Mr Moabi, sharing the hope that many members carry.

As the club looks to the future, plans are underway to add volleyball and netball to its sport codes, catering to more members and expanding its community impact. **BOPA**



The club refurbished 90 tables at Mandunyane Primary School and vowed to always maintain them when needed.



Mandunyane Nnakgolo Social Club member, Mr Bokamoso Nkane fixing a learner table at Madunyane Primary School. The club aims to improve the socio-economic status of the village.

Tanzania lion population reaches 17 000

DARES SALAAM

Tanzania lion population has reached about 17 000, the largest in the world, an official said on Monday.

The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism Hassan Abbasi made the announcement during talks with Uganda’s Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities Doreen Katusiime, who is leading a delegation on a study tour in Tanzania.

The visit is part of a knowledge-sharing programme aimed at exchanging experiences on combating poaching and illegal wildlife trade among countries implementing similar conservation projects.

Abbasi said that Tanzania conservation efforts have led to a significant decline in poaching and a steady recovery of wildlife populations, particularly lions.

Both sides agreed to strengthen cooperation in wildlife conservation, tourism and natural resource management to boost the sectors’ contribution to sustainable development. **Xinhua**

African scholars and civil society welcome Togo new Sahel strategy

LOME

African scholars and civil society groups have hailed the launch of Togo’s new 2026-2028 Sahel Strategy, according to a statement issued on Monday by the Presidency of the Council of Togo.

In the statement, Franklin Nyamsi, director of the Institute of Africa’s Liberties, hailed Togo’s diplomatic approach as a model for inclusive African dialogue on pressing regional challenges.

He highlighted the importance

of a shared-responsibility framework in addressing terrorism and strengthening long-term cooperation.

Bassolma Bazie, president of the National Commission of the Confederation of Sahel States, conveyed messages of solidarity and fraternity from leaders of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES), commending Togo’s engagement in fostering dialogue around regional priorities.

Bakary Sambe, president of the Timbuktu Institute-African

Center for Peace Studies, noted that Togo’s initiative provided a platform for closer collaboration between policymakers and researchers in addressing security and development challenges across West Africa.

The new 2026-2028 strategy aims to take into account geopolitical and security changes in the region, replacing the one adopted in 2021.

It is structured around five pillars, including political dialogue with the AES, regional

and international cooperation, the fight against terrorism, and the strengthening of regional economic integration.

In September 2023, Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso signed the Liptako-Gourma Charter in Bamako, the capital of Mali, agreeing to establish the AES.

On July 6, 2024, the three countries announced the creation of the Confederation of the AES in Niamey, marking a significant step toward establishing an economic-military bloc. **Xinhua**

Arts & Culture

First Little Miss Junior Idol World Botswana honorary judge

Benita Magopane
GABORONE

Former and first Little Miss Junior Idol World Botswana, Kimberly Matheakgomo has been invited to participate as honorary judge in the 5th Junior Idol World 2026, which will be held from April 29 to May 4 in Bangkok, Thailand.

The 13-year-old has also been selected to receive The International Amazing Kids Award 2026, under the theme, Bringing Fame and Honor to the Country.

The award recognises Kimberly for her outstanding achievement as the first titleholder of Junior Idol World and as an inspiring role model to young participants worldwide.

Kimberly will join other special guests from Thailand and Indonesia including Thailand's Miss Preteen Junior Idol World 2024 1st Runner up, Sirachayaphorn Pholchai and Indonesia's Putri Humaira Paysa who was crowned Little Miss Junior idol World 2025, among other special guests.

Kimberly told BOPA that she was grateful to be recognised in an international platform and for their vote of confidence in her ability to provide valuable contribution to the programme.

"I mean they chose me. I feel incredibly honoured," said Kimberly.

For the Molapowabojang budding talent, this recognition comes as no surprise.

Her pageantry journey began at the tender age of five when she was crowned Little Miss All Preschools Botswana in 2018. Since then, she has remained committed to giving back to her community.

Her 'Beauty With A Purpose'

initiatives have included donating printers to pre-schools and primary schools around Gaborone, as well as providing building materials such as cement to support churches in establishing themselves.

"I'm always striving to build a strong relationship with God and I believe He should be at the centre of everything we do; hence my donations to churches," she said.

The elderly have also remained a priority in Kimberly's outreach efforts.

As part of her previous monthly initiatives, she dedicated herself to providing breakfast to pensioners while they queued to receive their stipends.

Such noble acts have earned her several accolades, including the Miss Royal 2022 Role Model Award and the Women Awards' Young Woman of the Year title in 2023.

Kimberly revealed that she aspired to build her own modelling school and become a professional modelling coach in the near future.

However, she shared that from time to time, she reminds herself that it's not always about winning, but about having fun too and learning to leave all things to God.

She said that she was ready to represent Botswana at Thailand and is excited to contribute meaningfully as a judge.

Wendy Setswammung, aged 16, will represent Botswana as a contestant under the Miss Teen Junior Idol World category, as well as nine year-old, Isago Ralethaka, who will compete in the Mini Miss Junior Idol Botswana category, while 10 year-old Tatiana Reetsang eyes the Little Junior Idol crown and Anele Ramaja the Preteen Junior Idol crown. **BOPA**



Wendy Setswammung (left) will represent Botswana at Miss Teen Junior Idol World, while former and first Little Miss Junior Idol World Botswana, Kimberly Matheakgomo has been invited to participate as an honorary judge at the 5th Junior Idol World 2026, to be held from April 29 to May 4 in Bangkok, Thailand. Photo: Pheny Moalosi



GABORONE - Attendants celebrating the United Nations (UN) Chinese Language Day in Gaborone on April 20. They enjoyed the Chinese language, culture and interesting games. Photo: Xinhua

Botswana celebrates UN Chinese Language Day

GABORONE

The Confucius Institute at the University of Botswana (CIUB) on Monday celebrated the United Nations (UN) Chinese Language Day in Gaborone, with participants enjoying the Chinese language, culture, and interesting games.

Co-organized by the Chinese Embassy in Botswana and the CIUB, the event drew about 60 people, including university students and some children.

The event aimed to provide a platform for local people to learn

the Chinese language and gain more understanding of traditional Chinese culture to deepen China-Botswana friendship, according to Pu Durong, Chinese director of the CIUB.

Established with the support of China's Shanghai Normal University, the CIUB is the first Confucius Institute in Botswana.

The UN Chinese Language Day is observed annually on April 20, a day chosen to pay tribute to Cangjie, a mythical figure in China credited with the invention of Chinese characters. **Xinhua**

DailySport

Manchester...here comes Kesege



President Advocate Duma Boko (left) with the founder and coach of Makgabaneng Football Club, Kesego Kgaudi during the unveiling of seven coaches selected to travel to Old Trafford for a benchmarking mission with Manchester United Football Club recently. The Tsabong community gathered in large numbers at the kgotla to bid her a heartfelt farewell.

Leticia Nnokotema
TSABONG

The Tsabong community gathered in large numbers at the kgotla to bid a heartfelt farewell to Kesego Kgaudi, who departs tomorrow for Manchester, England to further her coaching career.

Kgaudi, founder and coach of Makgabaneng Football Club, popularly known as Makgabz City, has distinguished herself nationally after being selected by President Advocate Duma Boko as the only female coach among a group of seven.

The coaches are set to undergo an intensive training course aimed at enhancing their technical expertise, strengthening their respective clubs, and contributing to the development of football in Botswana.

Born and raised in Tsabong, the

38-year-old developed her passion for football on the village's open fields, where she first discovered her talent as a goalkeeper.

She later transitioned into coaching, demonstrating a commitment to personal growth and community development. She holds a Preliminary Certificate in Coaching, with a focus on grassroots football development.

Speaking at the farewell event, Kgalagadi South MP, Tokyo Modise, commended Kgaudi for her achievement, emphasising that her selection was based purely on merit.

He expressed confidence that her accomplishment would inspire young people, particularly women, across the country.

He further noted that he had known Kgaudi since primary school and attested to her discipline, dedication and passion for the sport.

Botswana Football Association (BFA) National Technical Development Officer, Barodi Ngwako, highlighted the evolving nature of football.

She said while the sport was once perceived as exclusively for men, it is now more accurately described as male-dominated, with increasing opportunities for women.

She emphasised the role of sport in addressing social challenges,

noting that football platforms are used to educate young people about issues such as alcohol and drug abuse, teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS.

"We use football to address challenges that negatively impact the lives of youth," she said.

Women and Sports Botswana (WASBO) Kgalagadi Regional chairperson, Magdeline Shadikong, described Kgaudi as a resilient and patient leader committed to uplifting others through sport.

"Remember that you are carrying more than bags, you carry our dreams, strength and hope," she said.

In her remarks, Kgaudi expressed gratitude to the Tsabong community for their unwavering support.

She acknowledged the women who organised the farewell and everyone who contributed, saying their encouragement had played a crucial role in her journey.

Her participation in the prestigious coaching course at Old Trafford marks a significant milestone, not only for her career but also for the Tsabong District.

The achievement reflects growing recognition of local talent and serves as an inspiration to aspiring coaches and athletes across Botswana. **BOPA**



Black Lions goalkeeper, Ryan Brown was the hero of the day as he denied Morupule Wanderers goals on several occasions during the Orange FA Cup encounter at Royal Aria Stadium in Tlokwen on Sunday. He saved two penalties in the shootout to help Black Lions secure a 7-6 victory and advance to the quarter-finals, where they will face Mochudi Centre Chiefs. Photo: Phenyio Moalosi