

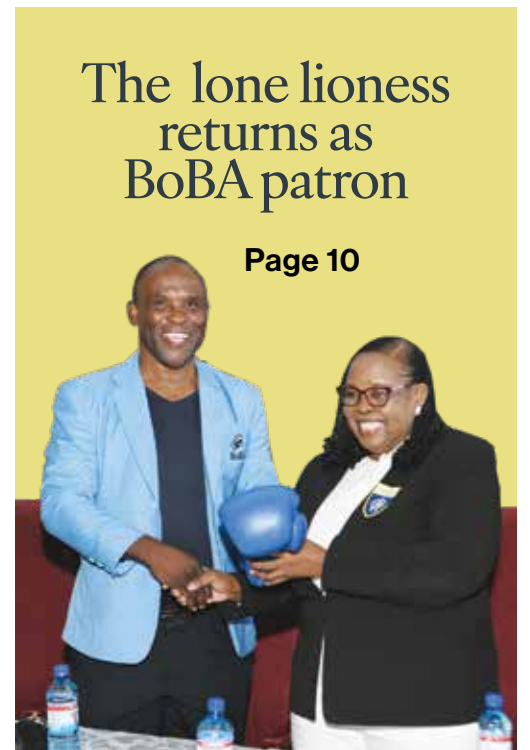
BOTSWANA Daily News

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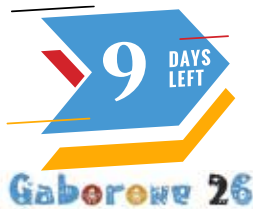
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Coaches hone skills in Manchester



A team of Botswana football coaches comprising, William Monene from Gaborone United (left), Seemo Mpatane from Jwaneng Galaxy (second left), Mochudi Centre Chiefs assistant coach, Alex Maletle (third left), Kesego Kgaudi from Makgabz City (centre), Godfrey Ranthoka from Eyes on the Ball Club (third right), Edwin Moalosi from Township Rollers, (second right) and Thatayaone Sonny from TAFIC FC during their departure for Manchester, England yesterday. This follows a partnership initiated by President Advocate Duma Boko and Manchester United owner, Sir Jim Ratcliffe early last month. They are set to undergo an intensive training course aimed at enhancing their technical expertise to strengthen respective clubs and contribute to the development of football in Botswana. The team is expected back home next week Thursday. Photo: Washa Bofelwang

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DPP prioritises cases of national interest

Ndingililo Gaoswediwe
GABORONE

The Directorate of Public Prosecutions (DPP) has prioritised cases of national interest, a move its Director, Mr Kgosietsile Ngakayage says has helped address the country's economic strain caused by widespread corruption.

Addressing a press briefing in Gaborone on Tuesday, Mr Ngakayage stressed that provided case dockets were submitted, no distinctions would be made, and all those involved would be held accountable, whether they were political leaders, senior public officers, or ministers.

Furthermore, he urged those in government to shun corruption, warning that no one would be immune from prosecution.

Meanwhile, information from the DPP indicates that from April last year to April this year, more than P50 million in cash was recovered as proceeds of crime, including funds linked to contractual disputes.

Of this amount, P17 million was recovered from Ecoplexus, with recovery efforts reported to be progressing well.

In addition, the DPP cautioned Batswana against participating in pyramid schemes, noting that, aside from incurring financial losses, individuals would also be committing a criminal offense punishable by law.

Turning to matters of public safety, Mr Ngakayage said that cases of rape and defilement involving minors would not be withdrawn.

He expressed concern over victims of gender-based violence who withdraw cases, making it difficult for the DPP to secure



Directorate of Public Prosecutions director, Mr Kgosietsile Ngakaagae (left) and deputy director, Mr Kabo Leinaeng addressing the media in Gaborone on Tuesday, where they outlined efforts to prioritise cases of national interest in the fight against corruption and recover proceeds of crime. Mr Ngakaagae said all suspects would be prosecuted regardless of status once dockets were submitted. He said over P50 million was recovered since April last year. Photo: Washa Bofelwang

justice, a situation that has, in some instances, resulted in deaths.

He further noted that societal pressure was among the reasons complainants withdraw cases, often after considerable effort by investigating officers and the completion of procedural processes.

Also he attributed the collapse of some cases to a lack of witnesses.

In the ongoing effort to combat gender-based violence, Mr Ngakayage said the DPP would engage traditional leaders.

On other matters, he revealed that there was a backlog of cases

dating back as far as 22 years. He also highlighted challenges hindering progress, including a shortage of human resources and transport.

Additionally, DPP Assistant Director Mr Mmapatsi Tshimologo reported that, for the past five years, 1 077 cases of rape have been concluded, while 1 568 remain ongoing.

Over the same period, 261 murder cases were concluded, with 936 still ongoing, while for defilement, 845 cases have been concluded and 1 094 remain in progress. **BOPA**

Government intensifies efforts to review policy

Gaolethoo Kgatitswe
MAUN

Government has intensified efforts to review the National Gaming and Gambling Policy of 2002.

Research fellow at the Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis (BIDPA), Dr Keneilwe Marata, explained during a stakeholder consultative meeting in Maun that the existing policy was overtaken by technological advancements, particularly the rise of online gaming and gambling.

She said while the 2002 policy aimed to establish an effective governance framework, it did not anticipate the scale and complexity of digital platforms, which had since increased the need for robust consumer protection measures.

Dr Marata noted that although the gaming and gambling sector presented opportunities for revenue generation and economic diversification, it also posed significant risks including addiction, financial crime and social harm.

The industry, Dr Murata said, could expose the country to money laundering, financing of terrorism and proliferation of illicit financial activities.

"At household level gaming and gambling sector contributes to financial distress, mental health challenges and reduced productivity," she added.

Gambling Authority internal audit manager and member of the policy review team, Mr Tumelo Batshu, said the revised policy sought to promote responsible gambling, mitigate social harm and expand revenue streams while fostering

citizen participation in the sector.

The policy also aims to strengthen regulation and compliance across all gaming activities, including digital platforms, while enhancing cooperation at national, regional and international levels to curb illicit financial flows.

Mr Batshu added that the review proposed mandatory age verification systems across all platforms, to prevent access by minors and other ineligible persons.

He further said the policy would introduce national self-exclusion and cooling-off mechanisms, including 24-hour helplines and provisions for family-initiated interventions to support individuals struggling with gambling.

Meanwhile, Mr Kabo Katse, a youth in Maun urged authorities to ensure that policy interventions were inclusive and responsive to regional disparities.

He said mitigation measures such as counselling services were not equally accessible across the country, particularly in northern regions, and called for partnerships with non-governmental organisations to extend support services to underserved communities.

"There is need for the policy to reflect the realities of all Batswana," said Mr Katse, noting that effective implementation would require accessibility and community-based support systems.

Stakeholders called for a stronger regulatory framework, to address emerging challenges in the sector.

The consultation forms part of a nationwide stakeholder engagement process led by the Ministry of Trade and Entrepreneurship in partnership with the Gambling Authority and BIDPA. **BOPA**

Manyeneng unveils in-house tutoring school programme

Thokozani Matihla
METSIMOTLHABE

A strategy to support system, pioneered by the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly has been rolled out at Ikageng Junior Secondary School in Metsimotlhabe, to bolster performance toward improved results.

Ms Helen Manyeneng said steps must be taken to ensure learners adequately prepare for their final examinations.

Ms Manyeneng, who is also Member of Parliament of Mmopane/Metsimotlhabe Constituency unveiled the learner performance support initiative, which will be delivered in the form of tutorials, at a parents' workshop on Monday.

"This tutoring programme is a partnership between the school, university volunteers, and parents. The school provides structure, volunteers provide academic support, and parents provide supervision.

If all partners work together, real change will be achieved," she said.

Following the school's poor academic results of last year, the Deputy Speaker emphasised the

need to convene parents, teachers and all other concerned stakeholders to restore confidence in the learners' performance.

Ms Manyeneng was adamant that the tutoring school programme represent a significant step toward enhancing educational outcomes and providing learners with the tools they need to succeed academically.

"This comprehensive initiative is supported by four tertiary school tutors and will cover core subjects which are vital for students to progress to form 4.

The subjects included are Mathematics, Science, English and Setswana," she said.

University of Botswana Student Representative Council (SRC) deputy president and programme facilitator, Mr Modiri Motshegwe said the pilot project was to start with Ikageng JSS Form 3 learners.

Mr Motshegwe said their intention was not to burden the parents with extra costs, such as transportation fees; hence learners will receive tutoring during study time.

Mr Motshegwe further noted that the initiative has been well received by teachers, many of whom have

expressed their relief and gratitude.

He highlighted that teachers have found the programme to be beneficial, as it will provide much-needed support and guidance during a period when some learners felt uncertain and unprepared in their studies.

One of the tutors, Lesego Ramothala, a final year UB student in Mechanical Engineering, added that they would provide mentorship to Form 3 learners covering study skills, reading techniques and career guidance.

Thamaga/Mogoditshane sub-region Chief Education Officer, Ms Margaret Koko attested that indeed the Ikageng CJSS grades were less than the region's targeted 40 per cent junior secondary school performance rate.

However, she stated that under project Bula Buka, which allows students to re-write exams for form 4 admission, only 56 out of the 256 JCE graded D students in the region were included in the learner profiling.

She commended MP Manyeneng and the community for the initiative and expressed optimism about its future and improved results. **BOPA**



Minister for State President, Defence and Security, Mr Moeti Mohwasa (left), Minister of Water and Human Settlement, Mr Onneetse Ramogapi (right), Assistant Minister of Water and Human Settlement, Mr Motsamai Motsamai (second row right) and other officials during the tour of Botswana Police Service aircraft hangar workshop and associate site works at Sir Seretse Khama International Airport on Monday. The project's physical progress is at 97 per cent and is anticipated to be completed in June. Photo: Gaseitsiwe Moruakgomo

Airport police hangar handover June

Mpho Mosojane
GABORONE

The long-awaited Botswana Police Service air hangar at Sir Seretse Khama International Airport is expected to be handed over in June after more than five years since construction began.

Work on the facility officially started in January 2021 and was originally slated for completion within 52 weeks, by January 2022. However, the project faced multiple setbacks and is currently 97 per cent complete.

The project includes a command block, aircraft maintenance facilities and other ancillary structures. Total expenditure to date stands at P46,247,066. The initial budget was P45,455,130, while the final estimated cost is P54,916,629, an increase of about 29 per cent.

Botswana Housing Corporation Chief Operations Officer Professor Selinah Busang said the project was commissioned during the COVID-19 era, which contributed substantially to the delay.

"Cash flows, procurement challenges, material cost escalations and general logistical challenges experienced during the COVID-19 era are some of the factors significantly attributed to the overall substantial delay of the project," Prof Busang said during a tour of the facility.

She added that logistical hurdles in securing travel permits and visas for skilled professionals, including international consultants, also slowed progress. Worker absenteeism due to sick leave further contributed to loss of production time.

Minister for State President, Defence and Security, Mr Moeti

Mohwasa said government was intensifying project monitoring to ensure timely delivery of national investments.

"These tours are one of the few approaches we use to push for the timely delivery of government projects. Despite the challenges experienced causing the delay of this particular project, this oversight strategy will ensure future projects are delivered on time," Mr Mohwasa said.

Once complete, the more than 2 400 square meter structure, plus ancillary buildings measuring around 230 square meters, will have capacity to house about 20 helicopters.

Besides the clear-span structure designed for maximum flexibility in maneuvering aircraft, the facility includes offices, workshops, parts storage, locker rooms and a spacious gym. **BOPA**

Botswana to rollout Polio vaccination campaign

GABORONE

Botswana is set to roll out a nationwide vaccination campaign using the novel oral polio vaccine

Type 2 to boost population immunity and prevent potential outbreaks.

According to a press statement from the Ministry of Health, the move follows a recent risk assessment conducted with support from the Global Polio Eradication Initiative.

The assessment was prompted by the detection of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 through environmental surveillance in neighbouring countries, including districts bordering Botswana.

The release says the assessment evaluated the risk of importation of the virus into Botswana, population immunity levels against polio and the performance of national polio surveillance systems.

"Findings indicate that, due to high cross-border mobility for trade, employment and social activities, coupled with low

immunity levels among children, Botswana is at high risk of polio transmission," the statement said.

The release informs the public that preparations for the vaccination campaign are underway and further details on the rollout and implementation will be communicated by the Ministry of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, which is responsible for coordinating and delivering primary health care services in the country.

The Ministry of Health further urges all stakeholders and members of the public to cooperate fully with upcoming vaccination efforts to safeguard the health and well-being of all children and communities across the country.

It says both the Ministries of Health and Local Government and Traditional Affairs will continue to give updates on this matter. **BOPA**

Boko opens Zimbabwe Global Exhibition today

Baleseng Batlotleng
BULAWAYO

President Advocate Duma Boko will today officially open the 66th edition of the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF) in Bulawayo.

reinforcing the idea that exhibitions could serve as bridges of diplomacy.

His presence today (Thursday) is expected to inject momentum into bilateral relations, paving way for stronger collaborations in trade, investment and industrial development.

The ZITF opened earlier this week with a strong international presence and Botswana exhibitors at this year's exhibition are expected to use the platform to unlock strategic investment opportunities.

The trade expo offers an opportunity to showcase investment potential, strengthen bilateral and multilateral relations and facilitate meaningful dialogue between governments, business and the diplomatic community.

The exhibition has attracted close to 500 direct exhibitors with about 46 from 29 countries including Botswana, Belgium, China, European Union, Belarus and Denmark, among others.

The country's premier trade showcase runs until Saturday and brings together international businesses under one platform.

Held under the theme "Connected Economies, Competitive Industries" the trade fair has been seen as testament to the region's re-engagement policy of translating diplomacy into tangible economic benefits.

The theme resonates with the growing push across Africa to link economies, enhance productivity and create resilient cross-border value chains.

Zimbabwe has strategised through inviting Heads of States to officiate at ZITF as a hallmark of its diplomatic outreach.

Mozambique's President Daniel Chapo presided over last year's edition while Kenya's President William Ruto opened the preceding one. With a strong international participation, high level diplomatic engagements and a clear focus on economic cooperation, the trade fair begun on a high note reaffirming its status as a premier gateway for trade, investment and global partnerships. **BOPA**



President Advocate Duma Boko arrived in Bulawayo from Harare where he undertook a state visit and co-chaired the fifth session of the Botswana-Zimbabwe Bi-National Commission. He is expected to officially open the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair today.

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Botswana autism community calls for urgent reform

Lesedi Thatayamodimo
GABORONE

Government leaders have been urged to redefine disability policies and prioritise autism awareness as a national issue on par with economic development and public safety.

Addressing a recent Pan-African Conference on Autism in Gaborone, Mr Kgosi Tau emphasised that only through systemic change could Botswana ensure that no community was left behind.

"The time for awareness has passed, now is the time for action," Tau, a 21-year-old, who was diagnosed with autism at the age of four. On one hand, Tau may have cleared his A-Levels with over 40 points, but he refuses to let his success be used as a simple feel-good story.

He said his academic milestones were only made possible by years of intense therapy and private schooling. He said resources remained a 'costly luxury' out of reach for the average Motswana family.

Mr Tau ignited renewed conversation on inclusion and policy reform by reframing his journey.

Instead of a standard victory narrative, he emphasised the significant financial strain and specialised support that underpinned his achievements.

While he credited institutions such as Thornhill Primary School and Maru-A-Pula School for providing inclusive environments, he acknowledged that such elite opportunities remained a dream for many.

The reality, he said, was that behind every milestone were "intense and costly challenges," often invisible to the public eye.

He argued that his experience highlighted a stark disparity in Botswana, where access to quality support systems remained limited and prohibitively expensive.

Central to his address was lack of government recognition for neurodivergent conditions within existing disability frameworks.

He pointed out that current policies tended to prioritise physical disabilities, leaving many autistic individuals without access to essential financial aid and educational support.

"This is not just a policy gap, it

is a systemic oversight that affects thousands of families," he said.

Beyond the legislative technicalities, Mr Tau spoke about the emotional and financial toll on parents and caregivers.

He cited the hidden struggles of mental exhaustion and social isolation that came with providing specialised care in a system that offered little to no safety net. "Parents are breaking silently," he said.

The young advocate also challenged societal perceptions, noting widespread lack of understanding and persistence of misinformation.

This stigma, he said, continued to marginalise neurodivergent individuals, particularly in public schools where resources and teacher training were often insufficient. Despite such hurdles, Mr Tau shared a vision for a more inclusive Botswana, a place where neurodivergent individuals were empowered to contribute meaningfully to society.

Sharing his personal ambition, he revealed hopes of establishing a world-class film and television production company to showcase local stories on a global stage.

BOPA



Founder and executive director of Centro Ann Sullivan del Peru, Dr Lilian Mayo during Pan-Africa Congress on Autism in Gaborone recently. She shared insights on how families and professionals in Peru were transforming the lives of children with autism through inclusive approaches. Photo: Gaseitsiwe Moruakgomo

'Engagements of retired vets critical in FMD fight'

Marvin Motlhabane
KANYE

In a plea for stronger action, Kanye residents have urged the Department of Veterinary Services to engage retired veterinary officers.

The move will bolster efforts against the Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak that continues to threaten livestock in the district.

They made a call during a kgotla meeting in Kanye addressed by Acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr Edwin Dikoloti.

Community members argued that retired officers, with decades

of practical experience in managing FMD outbreaks, could inject critical expertise into the ongoing response.

They expressed deep concern that while farmers work hard to contain the disease within their herds, wildlife, particularly wildebeest in the Lorolwane-Gasita area could easily undermine these efforts by spreading the highly contagious virus.

They pointed to the numerous natural pans (water points) in the Gasita- Lorolwane vicinity as high-risk hotspots, where livestock and wildlife inevitably mix while drinking, and creating ideal conditions for transmission.

Residents called for the urgent expansion of FMD surveillance to include active monitoring of wildlife.

One of the residents, Mr Mpho Kenosi further demanded for intensified surveillance measures, including blood testing of healthy cattle, to enable early detection and prevent silent spread.

Demonstrating community resolve, Badisa Kgomo Society secretary, Mr Kedibonye Laletsang pledged that the society would mobilise its members and farmers to actively herd cattle and join patrols aimed at supporting disease control.

In his address, Dr Dikoloti

appealed to the community to revive and repair old barricade or drift fences and traditional barriers used to regulate livestock movement.

He warned that Zone II currently lacked sufficient infrastructure to effectively control animal movements. "Zone II has weak infrastructure for regulating livestock movement," the acting minister said, urging residents to organise traditional regiments (work groups) to restore the fences.

Dr Dikoloti struck a note of cautious optimism, stating that with full community cooperation, Zone II could regain its Green Zone status: free from FMD restrictions within three to six months.

He confirmed that vaccination of cattle in affected areas was underway, running parallel with heightened surveillance outside the containment zone.

Dr Dikoloti further urged farmers to strictly adhere to veterinary guidelines by herding and kraaling their livestock, describing these age-old practices as vital weapons in the fight to stop further spread.

The meeting underscored a growing partnership between government and local communities, blending modern scientific tools like vaccination and laboratory surveillance with grassroots actions such as fence repairs, enhanced herding and community patrols.

With Botswana's beef industry and rural livelihoods at stake, the people of Kanye made it clear that defeating FMD would require every available hand; from experienced retired professionals to ordinary farmers ready to roll up their sleeves.

Before FMD outbreak, Zone II was part of Botswana's large FMD free zone without vaccination, often called the "Green Zone".

The zone covers roughly two-thirds of the country and holds about 85 percent of the national cattle population.

Being FMD-free without vaccination allowed Botswana to export high-value beef to premium markets like the European Union, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. **BOPA**

Lerala Police Station project nears completion

Omphile Ntakhwana
LERALA

The on-going construction of the new Lerala Police Station and staff houses is on schedule and expected to be complete this month.

"The new Lerala Police Station is part of a works contract for the development of 28 new Police stations and staff houses across the country on turnkey model for Botswana Police Service," said Unik Construction Engineering clerk of works, Mr Samson Masvora.

He was speaking during the last site tour of the project by Botswana Police Services (BPS), village leadership and other stakeholders, explaining that the project was 96 per cent complete.

Mr Masvora said the station had successfully transitioned from a civil-heavy phase to a high-level architectural and system-integration phase.

Mr Masvora explained that the physical progress and architectural compliance had been fully achieved, with the office building, community centre and all four staff houses having reached a 100 per cent completion for superstructures and roof coverings.

"The buildings are now fully watertight, secured and painted

in the final finish colors," he said, adding that with external civil works, all major infrastructure such as roadway paving, refuse bay, main sewer line installation and residential apron slab were complete, with the conservancy tank now at 100 per cent done.

He further noted that final testing and clearing were being performed to ensure a functional connection.

On mechanical, electrical and turnkey systems, Mr Masvora said residential units had achieved 100 per cent completion for second-fix electrical fit-out and works are now transitioning to the installation of 3rd-fix components and final circuit testing.

"Installation of indoor mid-wall units is 100 per cent complete and ongoing monitoring is in place to ensure internal finishes are protected as the final mechanical components are secured," he said.

He further noted that the radio communication tower was 100 per cent erected and ready for the final mounting of telecommunications hardware while the equipment room installation was done.

On utility services, Mr Masvora said water connection was done and running and all house metres and tap installation was also done.

"Botswana Power Corporation

reticulation works installation of the transformer, poles and cables is done. We were just waiting for a dry testing on our side and they have commissioned the transformer and we are now connected," he said, adding that the backup generator installation - plinths and foundation was done.

On outstanding works, Mr Masvora said testing of mechanical works such as air conditioners, electrical works office block commissioning, water tank, pump and its accessories installation and the furnishing of the equipment room was outstanding.

He further said the total cost of the project is P34,922,454 and to date they were still within budget.

"After the project is handed over, there will be a 12-month warranty period of which we will attending to the project for any corrections, if need be," he said.

For her part, Safety, Health and Environment officer, Ms Goitsemodimo Montsholepelo said since the project started to date, they had not registered any cases of theft, serious medical injuries or serious incidents.

"The project had 25 local workers from Lerala and other surrounding villages, 17 men and eight women," said Ms Montsholepelo. **BOPA**



Mr Kgosi Tau

GUC defends law degree credibility

Ndingililo Gaoswediwe
GABORONE

Gaborone University College of Law and Professional Studies (GUC) has defended the credibility of its law programme following a recent High Court ruling that rejected a graduate's bid to practice.

Addressing a press conference on Monday, GUC Director of Academics, Dr Upenyu Chiparo, said the judgment did not invalidate qualifications awarded through the institution's partnership with Leeds Beckett University in the United Kingdom. Instead, he explained, the case centred on procedural shortcomings.

The briefing followed an April 15, ruling involving Mr Kagiso Stephens, whose petition to practise law was dismissed. Dr Chiparo said the court found that Mr Stephens had failed to submit key academic transcripts and legal arguments addressing objections raised by the Law Society of Botswana.

As such, the court did not interrogate the legitimacy of the degree itself, which remains accredited by the Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA).

Dr Chiparo outlined that GUC's partnership with Leeds Beckett University was formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding in 2018. In 2019, the college sought guidance from the Law Society of Botswana regarding the eligibility of graduates to practise locally.

He said the Society confirmed in writing that graduates would qualify under the Legal Practitioners' Act of 1996.

He further noted that Leeds Beckett University was registered as an awarding body in Botswana by BQA in 2019, with its LLB (Hons) degree offered through GUC under a franchise model and formally accredited in March 2020.

Dr Chiparo emphasised that Leeds Beckett University retained full control over curriculum design, assessments and moderation, and was solely responsible for awarding degrees.

He further said that all teaching staff were vetted and trained by the university, while admissions were conducted in line with UK requirements.

He added that GUC's role was limited to programme delivery, with assessments externally moderated prior to the conferment of degrees.

The programme is also subject to regular quality assurance reviews, including biannual inspections conducted in February and October in line with BQA standards.

The first cohort graduated in 2023 and successfully completed bar examinations the following year, gaining admission to practise before Botswana's courts.

However, Dr Chiparo acknowledged that four graduates from the 2024 cohort, who passed the bar examinations in June 2025, were facing opposition from the Law Society of Botswana.

The Society has filed affidavits challenging their qualifications, arguing that they are GUC graduates rather than Leeds Beckett University alumni and questioning the programme's standards. Dr Chiparo dismissed these claims as inaccurate.

Meanwhile, three similar petitions remain pending before judges in Lobatse.

Dr Chiparo expressed confidence that the cases would be determined on their merits.

For his part, Mr Stephens criticised the ruling as unfair, alleging regulatory overreach and describing the process as a waste of public funds.

In closing, GUC Managing Director, Professor Antoney Joseph, maintained that all due processes were followed in establishing the programme and that it meets the standards set out under Section 4 of the Legal Practitioners' Act. **BOPA**



Gaborone University College of Law and Professional Studies (GUC) director of academics, Dr Upenyu Chiparo (centre), managing director, Professor Antoney Joseph (left) and vice chairperson of board of governors and GUC law clinic legal overseer, Professor Kholisani Solo during a media briefing on the non-recognition of GUC LLB Degree in Botswana on Monday. Dr Chiparo said three additional petitions were currently pending before different judges in Lobatse, with the expectation that they would be adjudicated on their merits. Photo: Phenyo Ramatu

Magistrate dismisses application to withdraw GBV case

Gaolethoo Kgatitswe
MAUN

The growing trend of withdrawing gender-based violence (GBV) cases in the name of reconciliation is raising alarm, amid evidence that forgiveness without accountability can place victims at risk.

Acting Station Commander of Maun Police Station, Assistant Superintendent Moutlatse Ikobeng, has warned that some perpetrators returned to inflict more severe harm, including fatal

attacks, after cases against them were withdrawn.

He said policing patterns show that withdrawal often removes the only safeguard that could prevent escalation, leaving victims exposed to repeat violence.

Assistant Superintendent Ikobeng explained that many complainants viewed reconciliation as the most humane option, but remained unaware that the justice system provided alternative measures to hold offenders accountable without imposing the harshest penalties.

"Abandoning cases entirely denies victims protection and allows offenders to escape consequences that could otherwise correct behaviour," he said.

In a separate case before the Maun Magistrate Court on Tuesday, a complainant, Ms One Sikwa, withdrew charges against her former partner after he approached her with his parents seeking forgiveness. She said she feared a conviction would destroy his future.

The matter was dismissed, reflecting a decision rooted in compassion, but one that mirrors a broader pattern in GBV cases.

Presiding Magistrate Gofaone Mosweu cautioned that such outcomes should not be taken lightly, stressing the need for accused persons to reflect on their conduct.

She also urged complainants not to feel ashamed to pursue justice, warning that cases would not always be dismissed and that silence could embolden abuse.

Mr Ikobeng said prevention must begin within families, calling on parents to raise children with values that reject violence, noting that failure to do so, contributed to recurring abuse in adulthood.

He further urged the public to allow the justice system to run its full course, warning that interference through premature reconciliation weakened efforts to curb GBV.

"While reconciliation may appear to restore peace, without structured accountability, it can become a dangerous compromise that sacrifices long-term safety for short-term relief," he said. **BOPA**

Court denies Toteng and Banoge bail in Lesetedi murder case

Lindi Morwaeng
MOLEPOLOLE

Chief Magistrate Thebeetsile Molalu of Molepolole Magistrate Court has denied bail to Gaokgakala Toteng (46) and Rosinah Banoge (44), who are accused of murdering 61-year-old Kagiso Lesetedi, ruling that their release could endanger their lives due to heightened emotions within the family and community.

Delivering the ruling on Tuesday, Magistrate Molalu said the two accused, who were jointly charged with a single count of murder, first appeared before court on January 26. He noted that the prosecution had consistently opposed their release on bail, supported by both the investigating officer and a representative of the deceased's

family.

The court heard that investigations into the matter were still ongoing, while the community remained 'incensed and angry' over the alleged offence.

The investigating officer warned that granting bail could put the accused at risk.

A representative of the Lesetedi family also expressed fears that relatives, still overwhelmed by grief and emotion, could resort to revenge if the accused were released.

Magistrate Molalu observed that the accused persons did not cross-examine the witness nor make submissions in support of their bail application.

In his ruling, the magistrate emphasised that the court must determine bail based on the interest

of justice, balanced against the accused persons' right to personal liberty.

While acknowledging the seriousness of the charge, which carried the possibility of capital punishment upon conviction, Magistrate Molalu said there was no indication that Toteng and Banoge would abscond trial, interfere with investigations, or commit a similar offence if released.

However, he said the decisive factor was the potential threat to their safety.

"The only factor limiting their release is the concern that their safety cannot be guaranteed due to highly charged emotions," he said.

He added that although the court cannot predict future conduct, it must act cautiously. "No one, including this court, can say for

certain what will or will not happen. It is therefore prudent to err on the side of caution," he said.

He further noted that the accused had been in custody for about three months, which he said was not an unreasonably long period given the circumstances, adding that time was needed for emotions to subside.

The court concluded that the interest of justice outweighed the accused persons' right to personal liberty at this stage and ordered that they remained in custody.

Toteng and Banoge were informed of their right to appeal the decision before the High Court within 14 days.

The matter would return to court on May 26 for a status hearing as investigations, including forensic and post-mortem reports, continued. **BOPA**



DailyBusiness

Officials warn of illegal phane harvesting

Tshiamiso Moseitha
TSHIMOYAPULA

Hordes of people across the country flock the environs of Tshimoyapula for Phane harvesting leaving the area depleted.

Forestry and Range resources officials have raised concern about illegal harvesting and that harvesters were not considerate about sustainable methods of harvesting.

Officials also raised alarm about the risk of getting lost during the exercise, pointing a significant number of people lost during phane harvesting was registered.

Approximately over 3 000 people were spotted at lands and farms near Tshimoyapula and cattle posts near Serule betrothed in phane harvesting deemed to be a lucrative business.

Meanwhile, Mophane worm harvesting is a highly profitable, yet unpredictable business in Southern Africa offering significant income generation for rural households and creating a vibrant cross-border trade.

Forestry and Range Resources' District Coordinator Officer based in Serowe, Ms Wananani Makgopa raised suspicions that some foreigners might be harvesting phane illegally and selling it in their native countries after tax evasion, thus costing Botswana millions that could have been accrued as revenue.

Furthermore, she said border posts were critical revenue collection points with Customs and Exercise contributing a significant amount to the country's total revenue in each financial year.

In addition, she said they made sporadic surveillance in the prairies of Tshimoyapula, pointing the department was grappling with challenges of illegal harvesting of the Mophane worm and that environmental pollution was not helping the situation at harvesting camping sites.

During BOPA visit, Phane harvesters were spotted in different locations in the plains of Tshimoyapula. However, most of the people were from Tswapong, Selebi-Phikwe, Mahalapye, Topisi and Serule areas as well as areas from the North East. Zimbabweans and South Africans were also part of the assemblage.

"It is surprising to find out that Mophane worm harvesters braved torrential rains and elephants in search of the profitable mophane worm," said Ms Makgopa. She noted that many people were not deterred by distance and thus flocked harvesting spots at Tshimoyapula leading to friction with local cattle farmers citing the move elicits cattle diseases citing measles.

She decried that some Batswana had a tendency of harbouring and engaging illegal immigrants to harvest phane for them, warning such comes with repercussions. Reinforcing their surveillance, she said they had engaged law enforcement officers to deal with those who were selling illegal traditional concoctions and drugs at camping sites.

"Harvesters often leave behind litter, plastic bags and gloves, which poses a risk to the livestock industry and was also a health hazard and an eye sore to humans," she said.

To exacerbate the situation harvesters also damage the fence along Serule – Tshimoyapula road, resulting in animals roaming the road, thus posing safety hazards to motorists.

Ms Makgopa stated that harvesting has also led to safety incidents, including fatalities from wildlife encounters citing deadly snakes. She had observed that people tend to concentrate more on collecting the phane worms from trees and paying little attention to their whereabouts, hence they get lost.

To this end, she urged harvesters to exercise caution at all times, adding it was risky to get lost during the rainy season and given that elephants were also roving in the area. Moreover, she said issuance of harvesting permits were on-going, noting Tshimoyapula local leaders had observed some harvesting practices that were uncalled-for thus calling for sustainable harvesting approaches.

Ms Makgopa said they also raised concerns about batter trade involving exchanging mophane worm for alcohol and clothes, describing such a practice as indecent.

She warned phane traders to get permits to facilitate trading locally and with neighboring countries, or face a jail term. Harvesters were also advised to seek permission from landowners or ranchers to enter their territory for harvesting purposes.

Ms Makgopa noted that the decision was reached as a conservation strategy to allow phane to pupate or burrow into the ground and become stock for the next season. She expressed concern over the dangers of plastic bags and gloves left behind, which might be ingested by livestock and reduce carcass quality.

One of phane harvesters, Ms Botsang Dikalanyane from Lecheng

was of the view that phane harvesting season currently underway, hundreds of harvesters were aiming to collect as much as they can and sell in the local and regional markets.

Ms Dikalanyane complained about the prices of permits, indicating that they were expensive for local harvesters.

In Botswana, phane harvesting permits are mandatory for trade and subsistence gathering that should be obtained from Department of Forestry and Range Resources with dealers' permits costing P110 while exporters and foreigners are charged P2 200 to obtain their permits.

As for subsistence, individuals are charged P5 for harvesters' permit and only citizens are eligible.

She said harvesters need a central depot where they could sell their phane rather than battering in the bush.

She said unemployed Batswana should be given special dispensation to harvest phane without permits to improve the standard and quality of their life. Ms Segolame Gaerogwe pointed out that, together with her business partner, Ms Kebuang Garogwe from Ramokgoname, sold phane in the local market, where it is consumed in large quantities, as well as to

commercial farmers in South Africa who feed it to their cattle.

However, Ms Thabang Motsumi from Mmadinare said they encountered challenges such as lack of potable water and transport, risk of getting lost in the bush, and risk of being bitten by deadly snakes, when harvesting phane.

A farmer Mr Obed Kenosi, complained bitterly about harvesters who trespasses in the cattle posts and farms without consulting them.

He said they cut their farm fences and some stole water from their boreholes.

He said the water in rivers, dams and ponds were contaminated because some harvesters left garbage excreted from phane in those water outlets. "There were no toilets. They brought in children and home based care patients at the camps," Mr Kenosi lamented.

BOPA

Approximately over 3 000 people were spotted at lands and farms near Tshimoyapula and cattle posts near Serule betrothed in phane harvesting deemed to be a lucrative business.



BUSINESS BRIEFS

Malawi considers loan for fuel procurement

LILONGWE - The Malawian government is considering borrowing US\$120 million from the African Export-Import Bank to procure fuel as the country grapples with acute foreign exchange shortages, a senior official said on Tuesday. Minister of Information and Communications Technology Shadric Namalomba, who is also the government spokesperson, told local media that the country's fuel reserves were dry as the conflict in the Middle East had disrupted global oil supplies, and the Malawian government has no foreign exchange to pay importers for petroleum products. He said the loan would cater for the procurement of 120 million liters of fuel. **Xinhua**

Kenya moves to cut transit time on corridor trade

NAIROBI - Kenya on Tuesday announced major reforms to speed up cargo transit along the Northern Corridor, a vital trade route connecting the Port of Mombasa to landlocked nations in East and Central Africa. Caroline Karugu, principal secretary for the State Department for East African Community Affairs, said reforms such as the removal of police roadblocks aimed to reduce transit times for cargo between Mombasa and Malaba from the current 76-80 hours to 36-48 hours. She said the Northern Corridor remained a lifeline for regional trade, handling more than 35.84 million metric tonnes of cargo annually. **Xinhua**

ICT Africa Summit kicks off in Algeria

ALGIERS - The ICT Africa Summit kicked off on Tuesday in Algiers, bringing together policymakers, industry leaders and startups to explore Africa's accelerating digital transformation and the future of its technology ecosystem. Smart cities, digital infrastructure and telecommunications development are among the key themes of the summit, alongside efforts to modernize urban systems and expand access to digital services. Key discussions at the summit focus on artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, blockchain and the Internet of Things, as African countries seek to strengthen innovation and expand digital infrastructure. **Xinhua**

Dikgang

PAMPIRI YA THUTO LE DIKITSISO

IPAPATSE FA



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261 0480 | 241 3402 | 365 3500

Banni ba Chobe ba tthagisiwa ka kgonagalo ya morwalela

Portia Keetile
KASANE

Banni ba mafelo a a tshabelwang ke go amiwa ke morwalela fa noka ya Chobe e tshela, ba tthagisitse go nna kelothoko jaaka selekanyo sa metsi se tswelitse ka go oketsega.

Mogolwane wa Lephata la Metsi le Kgotlesego mo Kasane, Rre Othlathusa Tshkiso o tthaloseditse BOPA fa noka ya Chobe e kwadisitse selekanyo se se kwa godimo mo dingwageng tse tlhano ka jalo se se baka metsi go tshologela kwa ntle ga lotshitshi.

A re go ya ka mekgwa ya pula, selekanyo sa monongwaga se tshwana le sa dingwaga tsa 2009/10, 2017/18 le 2019/20.

O tthalositse fa mo dingwageng tseo tsotlhe, selekanyo sa metsi kwa Mowana Station se se dirisiwang ele sekale sa beke le beke mo pegong ya lefatshe se fitlhile 5.35m, yo e leng ene bolekanyetso.

Rre Tshkiso a re go ya ka tebelopele ya bone go solofetswe metsi a mantsi mo nokeng ya Chobe mo pakeng e, se se bakwa ke dipula tse di namagadi tsa monongwaga le tshelagelo ya metsi ka masheta go tswa Zambezi.

Mogolwane o buile fa mafelo a boroko jwa bajanala a a bapileng le marekisetso a Shoprite le Chobe Big Five kwa Kasane a tshwanetse go nna kelothoko thata ka gantsi a tshabelwa ke merwalela ka ntlha ya gore a mo lefelong le le kwa tlase ka jalo metsi a kgokologela teng motlhofo.

O supile fa tselo ya Kachikau-Satau ga mmogo le motse wa Satau le tsone di le mo diphatseng bontsi jwa dinako fa metsi a tshela ka bokete ka jalo go nne merwalela.

Rre Tshkiso o tthalositse fa lephata le tsenelela komiti ya Kgaolo ya Chobe ya Dibetsa tsa Tlholego ka jalo ba bereka ka natla go tsibosa banni ba Chobe ka kgonagalo ya morwalela jaaka noka e tshela. "Komiti ya Kgaolo ya Chobe ya dibetsa tsa tlholego e tswelitse ka go tshwara diphuthogo le go tsena mo dikolong go ruta le go tsibosa Batswana ka bodiphatsa jwa noka jaaka e tshela le kgonagalo ya merwalela mo mafelong mangwe."

A re komiti e e dirile dipatlisiso go tlhodumela bodiphatsa jwa bao ba ba mo mafelong a a tshabelwang ke merwalela a tlatsa ka gore mo nakong ya gompiano, ga gona ope yo o fudusitsweng mo bonnong jwa gagwe ka lebaka la go tshela ga noka.
BOPA



Mothusa Tona wa lephata la metsi le bonno, Rre Motsamai Motsamai (boraro molemeng), moemedi wa banana ba Tsootsha, Rre Motlasaping Olatse (molemeng), modulasetilo wa khansela, Rre Baduetse Setswalo (bobedi molemeng), mothusa modulasetilo wa Ntlo Ya Dikgosi, Kgosi Mbao Kahiko III (bothano mojeng) le bagolwane bangwe ba kgaolo, ba amogela diterata di le masome a mararo le borataro go tswa kwa bananeng ba Tsootsha kwa Charleshill bosheng. Rre Motsamai o iteetse banana bao legofi mabapi le mowa wa boithaopo o ba o supileng go ema puso nokeng ka nako ya tthagogo ya bolwetsi jwa tlhako le molomo.
Senepe: Malebogo Lekula

Banana ba Tsootsha ba sega tema mo twantshong matlhoko a leruo

Malebogo Lekula
CHARLESHILL

Banana ba Tsootsha, ba intshitse leswe dinaleng ka go reka terata e e kganelang metsamao le taolo matlhoko a leruo go dirisiwa kwa molelwane wa Mamuno.

Fa a rola mpho eo, kwa Charleshill, Mothusa Tona wa Lephata la Metsi le Bonno, e bile le Mopalamenete wa Charleshill, Rre Motsamai Motsamai, o tthalositse fa diterata tseo, di ka tshwara masome a mararo le borataro.

A re di tlaa thusa go menagane go tsosolosa terata ya taolo matlhoko a leruo kwa molelwane, e a supileng go le dingwaga e sa baakangwe le mororo morafe o ne o bua ka tshenyego ya yone.

O kaiile fa tiego ya go baakanya terata ya kwa molelwane e jesetsa barui mo kgobedung ka bogodu jwa leruo fa gare ga Botswana le Namibia bo ile magoletsa.

Ka jalo, Rre Motsamai o iteetse komiti ya twantsho bogodu jwa leruo ya Matlho a Rona le banana ba Tsootsha legofi ka seabe sa bone, go ema puso nokeng go leka go tsosolosa terata ya taolo mesepele le matlhoko a leruo.

O gwethlile banni ba metse e mengwe le dikomiti ka go farologana go tsenya letsogo ka go reka tse di tshelang go itsa seemo go bifela pele.

Mothusa modulasetilo wa Ntlo Ya Dikgosi, Kgosi Mbao Kahiko III, o gwethlile morafe go tshwaraganela kago ya terata ya molelwane, go fokotsa dikgang tsa bogodu jwa leruo jo bo diragalang fa gare ga molelwane, le go kganela metsamao ya leruo go thibela kanamo ya malwetse.

O supile fa go le dingwaga ba lela ka tshenyego ya terata kwa molelwane mme a re fa barui ba iteka, go ne ga nna gore ba tloa ditsamaiso tsa mafatshe oo mabedi, ka jalo a gwethlile baeteledipele le ba maphata a a maleba go sekaseka dikgang tseo, go kgontsha

barui go tsosa terata go sa le nako.

Kgosi Kahiko o gwethlile barui go tthatlhela leruo la bone le go le disa ka dinako tsotlhe.

Mo go tse dingwe, o gwethlile baeteledipele ba kgaolo go tshwaragana le bana-le-seabe ba bangwe, go tla ka methale ya go netefatsa gore melao e e tlhomilweng ya go laola kanamo ya bolwetse e a obamelwa.

Mogolwane kwa lephateng la matlhoko a leruo, Dr Olorato Tshireletso, o supile fa bolwetse bo simolotse go thubega kwa kgaolong ya bokone mme ka lesego ba kgonne go ba laola ka go kenta dikgomo mo kgaolong tseo.

A re ka maswabi, bolwetsi bo ne jwa thubega kwa kgaolong ya Good Hope kwa kampeng ya Ramatlabama, mme a supa fa ba tswelitse ka go gatisa dikgetsi mo metseng e mo tikolong ya Good Hope.

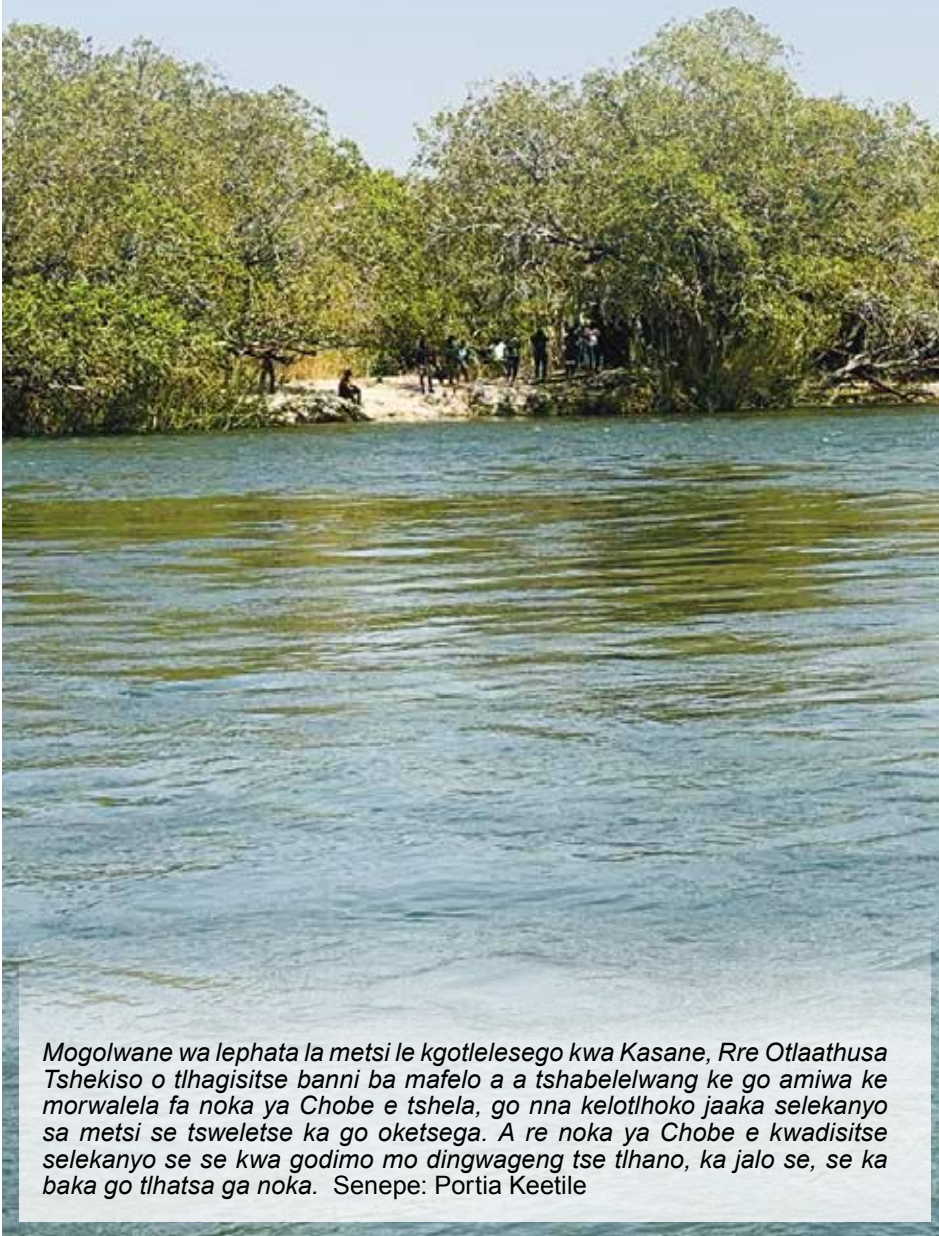
O supile fa ba ne ba tshwara bolwetse gape kwa polaseng nngwe gaufi le Hildavale, mme go supagala fa go na le dikgomo go tswa kwa mafelong a a farologanyeng mo melwaneng ya Zone 12 le 13, fa ditlhotlhomiso di santse di tswelletswe.

Dr Tshireletso o gateletse bothokwa jwa go obamela melawana e e beilweng e e iletsang go tlhabiwa ga diphologolo tsa tlhako e e maphatha le go phatlalatsa ditswa-kgomong jaaka nama, matlalo le mashi.

O gateletse fa ba itemogetse gore ga gona dikganedi kana fa go gatiwang teng melemo ya tsa taolo matlhoko a leruo, fa gare ga molelwane ya Zone 11, 12 le 13 mme a supa fa dipuisano di tswelitse go baakanya seemo.

Modulasetilo wa khansela ya Charleshill, Rre Baduetse Setswalo, ene o ne a gatelela tshwaragano ya morafe go ema kgatlhanong le kanamiso ya bolwetse jwa tlhako le molomo.

O supile fa bontsi jwa banni ba tshela ka thekiso le theko ya kgomo ka jalo, go le mo maruding a morui mongwe le mongwe go tsenya letsogo fa go tlhokafalang teng go dibela kgomo. BOPA



Mogolwane wa lephata la metsi le kgotlesego kwa Kasane, Rre Othlathusa Tshkiso o tthagisitse banni ba mafelo a a tshabelwang ke go amiwa ke morwalela fa noka ya Chobe e tshela, go nna kelothoko jaaka selekanyo sa metsi se tswelitse ka go oketsega. A re noka ya Chobe e kwadisitse selekanyo se se kwa godimo mo dingwageng tse tlhano, ka jalo se, se ka baka go tlhatsa ga noka. Senepe: Portia Keetile

Chinese steel giants drive ambitious cross-border water project in Lesotho

MASERU

In early autumn, the highlands of Lesotho still simmer beneath a relentless midday sun.

Roads wind through peaks rising more than 2000 meters above sea level in the mountainous Mokhotlong district, east of the capital Maseru.

Halfway up a slope, deep inside a tunnel carved through solid rock, a 425-meter-long tunnel boring machine (TBM) is hard at work, its steady roar echoing through the mountain.

Named Dayu Xuedun, the machine was launched into operation on Monday.

It is the second TBM custom-built in China for the Polihali Transfer Tunnel, a key component of Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP).

About 34 km away, at the tunnel's far outlet, its twin, Dayu Changfeng, has been grinding steadily through rock for more than a year.

Together, the two machines form the mechanical backbone of the project.

A landlocked country in southern Africa, Lesotho is defined by its rugged terrain, with roughly three-quarters of its eastern territory covered by mountains.

Rich in water resources, the country plays a pivotal role in the region's cross-border infrastructure schemes.

The LHWP is designed to channel water from Lesotho's highlands to water-scarce regions of neighboring South Africa.

Led by Chinese firm Yellow River and implemented jointly with Sinohydro Bureau 3, the

Polihali Transfer Tunnel project is widely seen as a world-class hydraulic engineering challenge because of its harsh construction environment and high technical demands.

The tunnel passes through hard rock, deep cover and complex geological conditions.

To handle these conditions, the two TBMs are equipped with heavy-duty cutterheads, forward-probing drill systems and other China-developed technologies to improve safety and efficiency.

Weighing about 1 500 tonnes, with a cutterhead diameter of 5.35 meters, Dayu Xuedun was manufactured and tested in China before being dismantled into 126 components.

It was shipped by sea to Durban Port in South Africa and transported overland to the project site over two months.

With limited space outside the tunnel, builders then moved and assembled it section by section inside the mountain over more than four months.

The greater test lies underground, where the two TBMs must meet in the middle of the 34-km tunnel with breakthrough error controlled to within millimeters.

"Even the slightest deviation is unacceptable," said Zhen Qian, deputy chief engineer of the project.

The project is also deploying advanced technologies such as two-component grouting, in which cement slurry and sodium silicate are injected between the tunnel lining segments and surrounding rock to improve tunnel stability and construction efficiency.

For workers inside the tunnel, these technical challenges are matched by harsh conditions.

Zhao Xusheng, production manager of the project, said temperatures can reach 40 degrees Celsius when the TBM is in operation. "Our clothes get soaked, then dry, and then get soaked again," Zhao said, adding that the team remains focused on delivering the project to a high standard. Beyond engineering, the project is reshaping local livelihoods.

The transfer tunnel project has created more than 2000 local jobs and launched skills training in areas such as first aid, concrete work, and plumbing, with a target of training 3 500 skilled workers.

Among them is 26-year-old Manaha Naha. When she joined the project in 2023, she worked as a cleaner. After receiving training, she now manages the lamp room.

"The project gave me skills and changed my life. My family has raised cattle and sheep for generations. After finding a job here, I can now support my family and even help pay school fees for my sister's child," Naha said.

She said many nearby families had benefited from the project through jobs, annual distributions of food and daily necessities and improved local facilities.

Since 2023, the project has built roads and renovated a football ground and a clinic, with more community facilities such as public toilets, a daycare center and standardised stalls for small vendors planned for 2026. Environmental protection has also been a priority.

Given Lesotho's fragile ecosystem, the project has installed wastewater treatment systems and introduced third-party monitoring to ensure compliant discharge or reuse. Contaminated soil from oil leaks is promptly treated and later restored through hydroseeding. "We want to leave the place in the same condition as when we arrived," said Wang Yong, the project's safety director.

At the launch ceremony, Chinese Ambassador to Lesotho Yang Xiaokun said the project is an important outcome of cooperation between Lesotho and South Africa, as well as between China and Lesotho.

He described it as not only a major infrastructure undertaking, but also a key driver of livelihoods and economic growth. Lesotho's Minister of Natural Resources Mhloni Moleko thanked all parties involved for their contribution to economic development, job creation, business support and livelihood improvement, saying the project also underscored deepening regional cooperation between South Africa and Lesotho.

Once the second phase is completed, Lesotho's annual water transfer capacity to South Africa will increase from 780 million cubic meters to 1.27 billion cubic meters, while the country's hydropower generation is also expected to rise.

Under the bilateral agreement, the project will help ease water shortages in five South African provinces, while generating revenue for Lesotho.

"The hopes of the builders are embedded in the names of the two machines themselves; Changfeng, a sharp blade to cut through mountains and Xuedun, a shield to stand the test of time," Zhao said. *Xinhua*



ABIDJAN - A worker weighing processed rubber blocks at a rubber processing factory owned by China's Mainland Group in San Pedro, Cote d'Ivoire recently. Africa's leading producer of natural rubber, Cote d'Ivoire, regards the crop as "white gold." In 2024, its output reached about 1.8 million tonnes, ranking third globally. Yet the industry still relies heavily on raw material exports, with limited processing capacity and vulnerability to global price swings. Photo: Xinhua

UNGA starts interactive dialogues with UN secretary general candidates

NEW YORK

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) began its two-day interactive dialogues with candidates for the position of the next UN secretary general on Tuesday, starting with Michelle Bachelet, former Chilean president and former UN high commissioner for human rights.

UNGA President Annalena Baerbock said the selection of the secretary-general has widespread consequences that resonate far beyond the UN building.

"Our choice will shape the direction of the world's unique multilateral organisation and demonstrate whether the United Nations truly represents the more than 8 billion people around the world, who are half women and girls," Baerbock said.

She said the need for global cooperation has never been more urgent, especially given the fact that in their interconnected world, what

unfolds in one region echoes across all others.

Baerbock cited the many challenges facing the world today, including shifting geopolitical dynamics, a rise in violence and conflicts and accelerating climate crisis, rapid technological transformation, a global health pandemic, and widening inequalities between nations, as well as the unprecedented political and financial pressure on the UN.

The next secretary general will be entrusted not only with navigating the challenges, but also with advancing essential reforms to ensure an organisation born around 80 years ago from the ashes of two World Wars is capable of meeting 21st-century challenges, Baerbock said.

"Our choice will shape the direction of the world's unique multilateral organisation and demonstrate whether the United Nations truly represents the more than 8 billion people around the world, who are half women and girls."

During the three-hour dialogues, candidates will have the chance to highlight their vision for the UN and by answering questions from the 193 UN member states.

They will also be given the opportunity to demonstrate their proven leadership abilities, experience and skills to lead a strong and fit-for-the-future organisation, as well as their capacity to deliver across all three UN pillars: peace and security, sustainable development, and human rights, she said.

To date, four candidates are in the running for the next UN secretary-general.

Bachelet, nominated by Brazil and Mexico; Rafael Grossi, current director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, nominated by Argentina;

There is also Macky Sall, former president of Senegal, nominated by Burundi and Rebeca Grynspan, economist and former vice president of Costa Rica, nominated by Costa Rica.

The UNGA will hold its interactive dialogues with Grossi on Tuesday afternoon, Grynspan on Wednesday morning, and Sall on Wednesday afternoon.

Antonio Guterres, the current and ninth secretary-general of the United Nations, took office in January 2017.

The next UN secretary-general will take over the role from January 1, 2027. *Xinhua*

Malaysia to review carbon tax plan amid Mid-East tensions

KUALA LUMPUR

Malaysia will review its plans to impose a carbon tax on industries as the economic spillover from the Middle East crisis continues to pose challenges, Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability Minister Arthur Joseph Kurup said on Tuesday.

While the plan to impose the carbon tax on polluters as a penalty was scheduled to begin this year, the government will instead first work on setting up the framework to gather carbon credits and avoid further burdening Malaysians, Arthur said on the sidelines of the Climate Change and Sustainability Conference 2026.

"The government wants to implement a carbon tax but we have to take into account the timing. The announcement of the carbon tax in the 2026 budget was made prior to the Middle East

conflict," he said.

Arthur said as the government, they have to stay in touch with reality and taking into account the geopolitical situation, they do not want to put any extra burden on industries and the people.

In the meantime, the government will focus on ensuring that carbon credits are verifiable and only then will it introduce legislation to ensure compliance by industries and establish a carbon registry to gather data to enable measuring, pricing and trading carbon internationally.

Carbon trading is a market-based system designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by putting a price on carbon. It allows countries and companies to buy and sell credits or permits that represent the right to emit a specific amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) or other greenhouse gases. *Xinhua*

Arts & Culture

Peo Ya Sechaba promotes service excellence culture

Ketshepile More
GABORONE

The Directorate of Public Service Management (DPSM) in collaboration with the Botswana Public Officers Pensions Fund (BPOPF), has launched a radio drama initiative, Peo Ya Sechaba designed to promote a culture of service excellence, strength and work ethic across the public service.

Peo Ya Sechaba is a 12-episode radio drama series, with each episode running for 10

minutes, and is scheduled to air on Wednesdays at 19:50 hours on Duma FM, Radio Botswana, Yarona FM, and Gabz FM. It will be aired on RB2 on Thursdays at the same time.

The programme, launched on Monday is aimed at empowering citizens with a clear understanding of pension benefits as a cornerstone of social security.

"The series speaks in a language that resonates, tells stories that reflect our reality and inspires change in a way that is both accessible and deeply profound.

And what makes this initiative impactful is the medium, which has a unique power of reaching people in their homes and in their daily lives. It is communication at its most human," said Assistant Minister of State President, Defence and Security Maipelo Mophuting-Dikoloti at the premiere of the drama series.

She stated that Peo Ya Sechaba would ensure public officers were empowered to make sound decisions regarding their future.

Interim CEO of BPOPF, Kwenantle Otukile said the initiative reflected the strength and value of strategic collaborations.

"By working closely with DPSM, we have integrated our messaging around service

excellence, accountability and professionalism, thus ensuring that we address both the financial well-being and the workplace experience of our members," Otukile said.

Through the drama series, Otukile said DPSM and BPOPF would be able to meet people where they are, speak their language and address real-life situations that resonate with everyday experiences.

BOPA

Celebrated poet, Moroka Moreri delivering a special rendition at the event.



Assistant Minister for State President, Defence and Security, Maipelo Mophuting-Dikoloti (centre), acting Permanent Secretary to the President, Matshidiso Bokole (left) and Directorate of Public Service Management director, Gaone Macholo at the premiere of Peo Ya Sechaba drama series in Gaborone on Monday. The series is designed to promote a culture of service excellence, strength and work ethic across the public service. Photos: Phenyó Ramatu

Farmers to exchange insights at Kokotsha letlhafula day

By Leticia Nnokotema
KOKOTSHA

The Kokotsha Farmers Committee and the Village Development Committee (VDC) will host the highly anticipated Letlhafula Day on April 24 to celebrate the

annual harvest season and promote regional agricultural development.

Scheduled to begin at 9am, behind the main kgotla, the cultural festival serves as a strategic platform for farmers and stakeholders to exchange agricultural insights while preserving the cultural

heritage.

The event aims to strengthen the local economy by providing a dedicated market for vendors and showcasing the community's agricultural output.

The day would feature an extensive lineup of cultural

activities, including traditional performances, choral music and bonfire events.

Beyond entertainment, it will focus on the preservation of traditional practices through displays of local cuisine, heritage attire and indigenous games.

Organisers emphasised that the initiative was designed to encourage active community participation in farming and ensure continuity of cultural traditions.

The public is invited to attend the festivities, which would run throughout the day. **BOPA**

The lone lioness returns as BoBA patron

By Moshe Galeragwe
MOCHUDI

In the 1990s, Nono Kgafela-Mokoka was a lone lioness in a lions' den. As a pioneer of women's boxing in Botswana, she spent years training relentlessly alongside men, mastering the art of the punch. Yet, she eventually retired from the ring without a single official bout to her name. As the only woman in the sport at the time, she simply had no one to spar with.

Today, that 'boxing giant' has been awakened from her deep slumber after the Botswana Boxing Association (BoBA) appointed Kgafela-Mokoka, now the Minister of Child Welfare and Basic

Education, as its patron, solidifying her transition from a solo pioneer to a national leader.

The announcement took place this past Saturday at Molefi Senior Secondary School, the very place where Kgafela-Mokoka and current BoBA president, Dirang Thipe, first discovered their love for the sport.

"As a patron, I pledge my support in advancing the development of boxing and ensuring that it

'As a patron, I pledge my support in advancing the development of boxing and ensuring that it continues to positively impact the lives of many young Batswana.'

continues to positively impact the lives of many young Batswana," Kgafela-Mokoka said.

Her history with the sport is deep-rooted. While working as a teacher in 1991, her passion reached its peak. She began training with BDVC (now DTCB), the stable she credits with turning her into a real-time boxer. Her connection to the school is equally personal.

"This is the very soil that nurtured me as a boarding student from Form 1-5. I was not only into boxing. I was also an athlete, doing short sprints, 100m and 200m, as well as engaging in volleyball and ballroom dance," she recalled.

She added that after tertiary education, she was posted back to the school to teach. "One man, a boxer of note, France Mabiletsa, brought me into the

sport."

When lack of female competitors prevented her from fighting, Kgafela-Mokoka refused to leave the sport.

"After mastering the art of boxing and having acquired the necessary skill, knowledge and precision, I diverted to the technical side," she explained.

She rose through the ranks to become a referee and judge at the continental level. By 1997, she had made history.

"I was pioneered as the first woman in the world to become an international boxing referee and judge. The boxing ring was now my home. I started getting worldwide recognition," she said.

Her resurrection comes at a time when female boxing in Botswana is flourishing, with stars like Lethabo Modukanele and Keamogetse Kenosi leading the charge.

Though she was asked in 1997 to start a women's boxing

league, she was then overwhelmed with other responsibilities. Now, she sees this as her moment. "I believe that the time is now. Interacting with a woman who has been with boxing for many years will encourage more women and girls to join the sport," she added.

Kgafela-Mokoka remains a firm believer in the power of sport to transform society and protect the vulnerable, particularly regarding gender based violence (GBV) and discipline.

"Gape mo nakong tsa gompieno tse e leng gore re bona GBV e ya ko godimo, bana ba basetsana le bomme ba tshwanetse ba traina gore ba kgone go iphemela. I am not saying they must go around fighting, but they must have an element of self-defense," she said.

Ultimately, she believes the sport builds essential character.

With heavy national assignments weighing her down, she will not be returning to the ring to release combinations of jabs and uppercuts.

"I am ready and willing to assist and guide whenever the need arises. I accept it with humility and deep appreciation, especially that boxing is not new to me," she said. **BOBA**



Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education, Nono Kgafela-Mokoka (right) and Botswana Boxing Association president, Dirang Thipe after the former was endorsed as patron of the association in Mochudi recently. Minister Kgafela-Mokoka pledged her support in advancing the development of boxing and ensuring that it continued to positively impact the lives of many young Batswana. Photo: Phenylo Moalosi