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‘Govt to cut red tape’



Vice President, Mr Ndaba Gaolathe (second left), KGK Diamonds Botswana management, Messrs Sunil Agrawal (left), Rajkumar Baid (second right) and an employee, Ms Tshegetsang Solomon during the Vice President’s familiarisation tour of the company in Gaborone on Monday. Mr Gaolathe said in a move to make it easier for investors to set up and operate businesses in Botswana, government would do its best to cut all the bureaucratic red tape prohibiting investments in the country.
Photo: Felicity Male

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First Lady applauds learners

By Portia Rapitsenyane

KUDUMATSE - First Lady Kaone Boko has applauded some learners in Dikgatlho Junior Secondary School in Kudumatse for doing well in Science though

they did not have laboratory equipment. Ms Boko, who was handing over donations to the school on Monday, said schools should therefore be given appropriate equipment to enhance learning.

She said school facilities were dilapidated and needed urgent attention making learning difficult. Thus, she thanked the Botswana Communications Regulatory (BOCRA) for coming on board

to ensure that her quest to help children became a success. On top of the donated items, which include mattresses, toilet papers and sanitary pads on Monday, Ms Boko said BOCRA had pledged ICT laboratory fully furnished with computers and Internet connectivity.

to help the school. Though, they would not be able to help with all the school's needs, he said it was their hope that once attended to, the learning environment would be conducive for pupils.



First Lady Kaone Boko, on Monday handed over donations including mattresses, toilet papers and sanitary pads to Dikgatlho Junior Secondary School in Kudumatse. She applauded learners for doing well in Science though they did not have laboratory equipment. Photo: Portia Rapitsenyane

Also, she said BOCRA would support the refurbishment of the science laboratory.

Dikgatlho Junior Secondary School Student Representative Council vice president, Kaone Masego said they were committed to making their school a place where every learner felt valued, inspired and respected.

However, she said they faced a number of challenges such as dilapidated science laboratory and a library, which did not have enough books.

She said their school facilities needed maintenance adding that their dormitories were also in a bad state.

BOCRA chief executive officer, Mr Martin Mokgware said their company had a Corporate Social Investment Policy with the objective of sharing some of its resources with the less privileged members of society.

As such, he said they met with Office of the First Lady in February where they visited Dikgatlho Junior Secondary School where they took a decision

He said he was hopeful that the ICT laboratory would bridge the communication gap between the school and the rest of the country.

"It will be used to benefit the students academically and to improve their ICT skills, which will be beneficial in the long run," he said

He further said BOCRA had a mandate to regulate the Botswana's communications sector, which included broadcasting, Internet and ICT, postal as well as telecommunications.

He said the Communications Regulatory Authority Act, 2012 (CRA Act), required BOCRA to ensure that all areas of Botswana were covered with affordable, quality and safe communications services.

He said in discharging its legal mandate, BOCRA was alive to the fact that it was a living social corporate being that owed its existence to the society within which it operated.

"The manpower it employs, the utilities it uses, the roads and other resources that enables it to operate, belong to the society," he said. **BOPA**

Government to reduce red tape - VP

By Lorato Gaofise

GABORONE - - In a move to make it easier for investors to set up and operate businesses in Botswana, government will do its best to cut all the bureaucratic red tape prohibiting investments in the country.

This was said by Vice President and also Minister of Finance, Mr Ndaba Gaolathe following a tour of the KGK Diamonds Botswana in Gaborone on Monday.

This, he said would help in securing investors as government was looking for partners with deep proprietary knowledge, insights and experiences that the country did not have.

The partners, Mr Gaolathe said should have deep pockets and willing to be part of the country's story, culture and narrative.

Also, the Vice President appreciated KGK Diamonds Botswana for the investments it had made in Botswana.

"We consider it our duty to be able to sit down with partners, such as yourselves whenever there are issues that need to be talked about or things to be improved," he said.

Further, Mr Gaolathe commended the diamond

company for its plans to expand into agriculture, which was an important part of government's transformational agenda.

"We appreciate and we are hopeful that all this will bear fruit for our people. We will create massive employment opportunities for our people. We look forward to seeing you and the flowering of your project in Botswana," he added.

For his part, KGK Group director, Mr Navrattan Kothari said the company had intended to venture into agriculture in an effort to contribute to toward the country's food security as well as to diversify its revenue streams.

Mr Kothari said KGK Agro Botswana would support farmers through Contract Farming at Pantamatenga with 400 hectares, which started this year.

In addition, he said the group was also interested in supporting the smallholder cluster farmers through its small farm holders development programme.

"We plan to ensure food security within the country through our Agro Community trading expertise to strike a balance of trade within the agricultural industry in Botswana," he said.

KGK Diamond DMCC chief

financial officer, Mr Sunil Agrawal, also explained that through its Agro Community trading, the company could take care of warehouse management and stock control of Pandamantenga Silos.

With the support of government, Mr Agrawal said the company, with bulk production and storage facility, could ensure volume exports of agro commodity from

the country.

This, he said, would also enhance the profitability for the investor and the government, with the support of their commodity financing institutions.

"We can also import shortfall commodities in Botswana, such as soya beans, black eye peas and cow peas, just to mention but a few," he added.

In terms of skill development,

Mr Agrawal said the company provided comprehensive training on diamond, gemstone and jewellery techniques, through its KGK Academy to equip the trainees with the practical skills needed to excel in the industry.

Furthermore, through its skills transfer and development programme, he said the company trained locals with the latest technologies. **BOPA**



Employees of KGK Diamonds Botswana at work in Gaborone on Monday. Vice President Ndaba Gaolathe said with wages being a contentious issue, it was in government interest to see a highly motivated workforce that was well paid. Photo: Felicity Male



Lack of funds stifles filling of vacancies

GABORONE - Ministry of Child Welfare and Basic Education has created permanent positions for Boarding Assistants in Botswana primary and secondary schools, but has been stifled by lack of funds to fill them, minister Dr Nono Kgafela-Mokoka says.

Responding to questions posed by Member of Parliament for Maun West, Mr Caterpillar Hikuama in Parliament on Monday, she said the ministry engaged 2 244 temporary boarding assistants since 2019.

She said temporary boarding

assistants were appointed on contract terms of 12 months at a salary grade of C4, which translated to P9 037 per month for Diploma qualification holders and C3 translating to P10 591 per month. She said she was not happy with their terms of employment and the plan was to source funds for a permanent solution.

Dr Kgafela-Mokoka said the role of temporary boarding assistants in schools was to monitor the wellbeing of boarding students in a hostel by supervising daily cleaning of hostels, kitchen and its equipment. She said the assistants carried out inspection of kitchen equipment to check losses and damages and made necessary recommendations.

She said they were also tasked with safeguarding all equipment provided to boarding students as well as keeping records of all boarding students and ensuring their whereabouts were accurate and up to date.

She said the assistants were maintaining order in and around the hostels by monitoring boarding students' movement and behavior to ensure they obeyed school regulations.

She said they also managed compliance to Safety Health and Environment (SHE) protocols and standards at the hostels.

Mr Hikuama had asked the minister to explain the role of temporary boarding assistants in Botswana primary and secondary schools and to state the terms and conditions of their employment including salaried per month.

He had further asked her to state the total number of temporary boarding assistants engaged by her ministry since 2019. **BOPA**

GABORONE - Government has revised Mophane user fees including those for utilisation of Phane through Cabinet Directive No CAB7 on User Fees and Services Charges in September 2020, Minister of Environment and Tourism, Mr Wynter Mmolotsi has told Parliament.

He said increase in prices covered Harvest Permit from P2 to P5, Dealers Permit from P50 to P110 and the Exporters Permit, which increased from P500 to P2 200. He said the increase that affected majority of those who were most in need were kept to a minimum; which are harvesters at P5 and traders at P110. He said the P2 200 increase was mainly for commercial operators.

Regarding the price increase on Exporters Permit, Mr Mmolotsi said government would conduct studies to determine the ideal price based on the market forces. He further encouraged local manufacturing companies to venture into processing of Phane products at community level to diversify the product base. He said processed products would bring significantly higher prices and d more jobs than trading in unprocessed Mophane worms.

Member of Parliament for Bobirwa, Mr Taolo Lucas had asked the minister to state the rationale for increasing the export permit of Mophane worm, and if the increase was amendable to reduce. **BOPA**

GABORONE - Ministry of Higher Education is unable to fill lecturers' positions in time due to factors of availability of locals with required qualifications and attractiveness of the post to the qualifying individuals, says Assistant Minister of Higher Education, Mr Justin Hunyepa.

He said currently the number of lecturers at all seven Institute of Health Sciences (IHS) was 225.

He said it was also difficult to retain staff members because of conditions of service and remuneration packages, that were not as attractive as those of

Govt addresses youth unemployment

GABORONE - Botswana continues to come up with strategies and interventions addressing youth unemployment nationally, Selebi Phikwe included, says the Minister of Labour and Home Affairs, Major General Pius Mokgware.

Responding to questions from Member of Parliament for Selebi Phikwe West, Mr Reuben Kaizer in Parliament on Monday, he said one major strategy was to facilitate youth entrepreneurship development in order to stimulate production, secure self-sufficiency and create jobs.

He said it would be done by financing start-ups through Youth Development Fund that capitalised youth entrepreneurs to start businesses and create employment in the process.

Maj. Gen. Mokgware said in the past two financial years, funding preference had been given to sectors with more potential to employ higher numbers of people, especially the youth.

He said such sectors were manufacturing, agriculture and its value chain and innovation. He also said preferential schemes or

affirmative action was extended to youth and their enterprises in order to assist their job creation potential.

He further said procurement, acquisition of land and tender documents had been extended to youth in order to facilitate their economic activities for job creation.

The minister said a long-term strategy remained hinged upon their efforts as a country to achieve economic diversification and industrialisation.

"If that gets achieved, the economy will be able to create more job opportunities, thus curbing unemployment," he said. He said the country adopted first National Employment Policy, which would guide efforts of the country to create decent jobs for Batswana across the various sectors.

He said as per the 2022 Population and Housing Census, Selebi Phikwe had 42 488 residents with an estimation of 11 967 youth between the ages of 18 and 35 making 28 percent of the district population.

He also said Statistics Botswana

Quarterly Multi-Topic Survey Quarter 1 of 2024 showed that the overall labour force for people aged 18 years and above was 1 031 940 while the youth labour force for people aged 18 to 35 years was 500 082.

He further said Statistics Botswana report further indicates that youth labour force for Selebi Phikwe stood at 6 740 out of which 55 per cent were male. As of now, he said government had not considered the introduction of unemployment allowance for youth. He said the introduction of available interventions were meant to unlock employment opportunities.

MP Kaizer had asked the minister to update Parliament on Selebi Phikwe demographic profile and state the youth labour force in the town.

He also asked the minister to state the number of unemployed youth and state interventions in place to curb the skyrocketing unemployed youth in the town. He asked as to whether the government was considering unemployment allowances for the unemployed youth. **BOPA**



Minister of Labour and Home Affairs, Major General Pius Mokgware said in the past two financial years, funding preference had been given to sectors with more potential to employ higher numbers of people, especially the youth.

Conditions of service make retaining staff hard

competitors in the private sector and University of Botswana.

Mr Hunyepa was responding to a question in Parliament from Nkange MP, Mr Motlhaleemang Moalosi on Monday.

In addition, he said the ministry had no plans to engage assistant lecturers to assist students during practicals.

He said IHS utilised preceptors and part time lecturers to augment lecturers during practicals; as and when it was necessary to attain the standard student lecturer ratios as set by the professional bodies.

Regarding maintenance of the

IHS institutions, Mr Hunyepa said experts advised that each institution would require approximately P40 million to P45 million to revamp the infrastructure, or a total sum between P280 million to P315 million.

Therefore, he said funds permitting; the whole maintenance process was envisaged to take up to five years, to restore the state of the infrastructure.

Furthermore, Minister Hunyepa noted that IHS were moved from the Ministry of Health and Wellness to Ministry

of Tertiary Education, Research and Technology in 2020, and, currently he said IHS were under Ministry of Higher Education following rationalisation process in 2024.

Mr Moalosi had asked the Minister to state the number of lecturers at IHS, how long it takes to fill vacant positions and when the ministry intended to match the standards of other universities considering issue of maintenance.

He also asked the minister when IHS would be moved from the Ministry of Health to that of Higher Education. **BOPA**

Ministry to ensure dispensation of justice

By Moshe Galeragwe

GABORONE - Consultations with key stakeholders are ongoing to ensure that delivery of justice is not compromised where the Directorate of Public Prosecutions (DPP) has not yet taken over prosecution of criminal matters, says Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Mr Nelson Ramaotwana.

“We are also in consultation with other stakeholders, in particular Botswana Police Service (BPS) to revisit the issue of delegating DPP’s prosecutorial powers for non-complex cases in order to ensure that justice is dispensed timeously through the completion of cases within a reasonable time,” he said.

Presenting the 2025/2026 budget estimates for the Attorney General’s Chamber, which was passed by Parliament on Monday, Mr Ramaotwana said

the Attorney General’s Chamber existed to provide legal services to government. He said it had four divisions being Civil Litigation Division (CLD), Legislative Drafting Division (LDD), International and Commercial Division (ICD) and Corporate Services Division (CSD). He said office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) aspired to prosecute all criminal cases.

However, Mr Ramaotwana said the ambition was greatly impacted by acute shortage of resources for takeover project, which aimed to relieve BPS of the delegated prosecutorial powers previously bestowed upon them. He said it became even more urgent to review the project to determine whether it was feasible to continue with it without the provision of the necessary resources.

“The DPP has also not been spared by the perennial

high attrition of prosecutors. Consequently, our prosecutors are saddled with high case ratios and this greatly negates our efforts to dispose of cases within a reasonable time which in turn results in backlog which is undesirable,” said Mr Ramaotwana. He said challenges relating to the takeover project was further compounded by the high attrition of prosecutors resulting in an increased workload affecting timeous dispensation of justice.

At this point, Mr Ramaotwana said complete takeover of prosecution duties from BPS had been achieved in Selebi Phikwe magisterial district with six BPS stations. Elsewhere, he said 26 out of 79 BPS stations had been relieved of prosecutorial duties by various DPP offices

being Gaborone (7), Lobatse (4), Francistown (4), Maun (2), Palapye (3), Kasane (5) and Tsabong (1).

He also said DPP would work effectively, prudently in running its affairs and independent budget from that of the AGC. Therefore, he said it was crucial to de-link the DPP from AGC and resource it both financial and non-financial. He said the de-linking would entail the amendment of the Constitution.

He said the proposed budget allocation of P397 584 440 under recurrent and P23 618 951 under development was to fund ongoing projects and takeover of prosecutorial services from BPS among others. Mr Ramaotwana concurred with legislators that Attorney General’s Chamber was losing experienced lawyers as

the workload was overbearing on them. He said Attorney General’s Chamber civil litigation alone had a shortage of over 67 lawyers.

He said the justice system was not all about winning a matter, but was primarily on arriving at the decision in a fair, independent and credible process. Mr Ramaotwana said that where possible it was important to consider the process of out of court settlement.

Mr Galenawabo Lekau, MP for Mogoditshane West said police officers had been prosecutors for the longest time, therefore, if possible they should be transferred to DPP to continue with what they had been doing for many years.

Kgatleng West MP, Dr Unity Dow said civil litigation department must increase the 30 days statutory notice, given to a person who wanted to take government to court, to at least 60 days. She appealed to government to be transparent on hiring of private lawyers as it appeared to favor a few. She said government must establish panels depending on the lawyer’s area of speciality and even engage them on rotational basis.

Mr Victor Phologolo of Kanye South said the country used to have foreign judges, who helped the judiciary grow; a judiciary, which is now mostly dominated by local judges. He said same should apply to lawyers, as currently foreign lawyers dominated the judicial sectors. “We are not saying we should shut the door on them, we should be intentional towards giving the locals opportunities to work and grow,” he said. He said there was no use producing law graduates when the environment was not conducive for them to get employment. Mr Kenny Kapinga, MP for Okavango West, said AGs must have a cohort of lawyers who specialised on drafting of contracts. He said it was concerning that government ended up losing labour matters in courts due to poorly drafted contracts. He said the principles of prosecuting a case were in black and white unless there were realistic prospects of conviction and the matter was of national interest. **BOPA**

Over P450m budget for Administration of Justice

By Pako Lebanna

GABORONE - The National Assembly on Monday through its Committee of Supply authorised close to P450 million budget for the Administration of Justice (AoJ), comprising 428 million for recurrent spending and P16 million-development budget.

Presenting the budget proposal, Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Mr Nelson Ramaotwana said the recurrent budget, which covered personal emoluments and basic administrative costs, represented 5 per cent increase from the previous financial year.

He said the development budget would cover infrastructure projects including the maintenance of court facilities, maintenance of judges’ houses, improvement of magistrate housing, as well as computerisation projects such as e-filing. Mr Ramaotwana said AoJ in partnership with the Ministry of Trade and Entrepreneurship would assist in the establishment of Commercial Courts. “The report is currently under consideration with particular attention to amending the Rules of Court to facilitate the establishment of the Commercial Courts,” he said.

“In response to public outcry over unregulated deputy sherrifs, Parliament passed the Deputy Sherrif’s Act of 2024. The act serves to provide for the appointment, supervision, monitoring and regulation of the conduct of Deputy Sherrifs, the appointment of a board and fidelity fund for deputy sheriffs, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto,” he said.

He admitted that the disposal rate of cases at the high court

and magistrate courts needed to improve, as indicated by the Annual Performance of the courts for the period 2024-25.

In commenting on the AoJ budget, Minister for State President, Mr Moeti Mohwasa called for measures to strengthen the judiciary, as well as to ensure a well-resourced, fair, independent and impartial judiciary.

Minister for International Relations, Dr Phenyio Butale called for the abolition of civil imprisonment as remedial action for debtors who are unable to pay creditors over a period of time. He said such criminalised people who may be poor or struggling financially and genuinely could not pay back their debts.

Okavango West legislator, Mr Kenny Kapinga said the recent Carter Morupisi versus the State appeal case raised concern about hierarchy of courts, with a lower court having overruled a higher court, something he said needed to be clarified to avoid future ambiguity.

Kanye West MP, Mr Victor Phologolo said the backlog of cases before the Department of Justice was worrisome as it takes a long time for cases to be adjudicated, which denied involved parties their right to be served justice timeously. Bobirwa MP, Mr Taolo Lucas, decried delay in administration of estates of deceased persons by Master of the High Court, which he said denied inheritance to deserving families, seeking to meet basic needs of surviving children who may require school fees, food and transportation.

He said such delays in the dispensing deceased’s estate, including property or livestock may lead to such asserts being lost to their rightful owners over time. **BOPA**



Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Mr Nelson Ramaotwana said consultations with keys stakeholders were ongoing to ensure that delivery of justice was not compromised where the Directorate of Public Prosecutions had not yet taken over prosecution of criminal matters.

Kopong JSS expansion priority under NDP 12

GABORONE - The Assistant Minister of Higher Education, Mr Justin Hunyepa has told Parliament that his ministry proposed the expansion of Kopong Junior Secondary School under the secondary schools expansion projects of National Development Plan 11, but it was not done due to budgetary constraints.

Due to the critical need to expand the size of the school, he said the ministry would prioritise the school during NDP 12, adding that the ministry was aware that the net enrolment for Kopong Junior Secondary School was 931,

which exceeded the available instructional space.

“Regarding access and equity, the ministry will include, among other things, water and sanitation infrastructure, modify some pit latrines, and upgrade portable and sewage reticulation inside the school.”

Mr Hunyepa said the ministry would consider, through expansion projects for secondary schools, the construction of additional staff houses, upgrading of toilet facilities, an administration block, hostels, and all academic facilities.

Lentsweletau MP, Mr

Tshenolo Bogatsu had asked the minister whether the ministry would consider upgrading Kopong Junior Secondary School to a 24-stream school, as it was currently an 18-stream school with the infrastructure of a nine-stream school and a small staff room.

He also asked if the ministry was aware of the current total student capacity and whether it was still feasible for the ever-increasing number of students to use pit latrines, and whether building more staff houses at the school, given that there are 29 staff houses and 84 teachers, would be considered. **BOPA**

Makakatlela shines at business expo

By Esther Mmolai

MAUN - The culminating moment of the three-day Maun Youth Business Expo is best summed by the youthful entrepreneur, Ms Lindy Makakatlela who was recognised for her resilience and determination in her journey as a rising entrepreneur.

The 35-year-old Makakatlela who operates a successful beauty therapy business called Sugar

Dolls in Maun, emerged the overall winner during the business expo organised by the Ministry of Youth and Gender Affairs in collaboration with the Mall of Maun. She was also named the best exhibitor under services category and was awarded two certificates.

Ms Makakatlela started her beauty spa in 2014 following funding through the Gender Affairs programme, which is an empowerment initiative aimed at helping beneficiaries to start

their own businesses. Her business offers services among them massage, manicure and pedicure as well as facial treatment.

In an interview, Ms Makakatlela could not hide her excitement saying the exhibition was a step in right direction more so that market access was a serious challenge among youth businesses.

The expo, she said, gave business owners an opportunity to interact with a large audience, answer questions and receive immediate feedback, all of which

were valuable for refining their offerings. She also appreciated the organisers for acknowledging her perseverance and giving youth entrepreneurs a platform to show their capability through their products and services.

"These awards will motivate me to do more to grow my business. They serve as an encouragement to keep striving for excellence and I want to urge other fellow youths to never give up but rather soldier on even if the journey looks tough," she added.

Giving a word of encouragement, the managing director of Kwenatsile Travel and Tours, Mr Thabo Maretlwaneng urged fellow entrepreneurs to exercise patience in order to thrive in the business space.

Patience, he said was key to business growth and fulfillment, noting that some people gave up easily because of negative perceptions. Entrepreneurs were advised never to start business just for money but to bring change, stimulate economic growth and contribute to the development of the country.

"We should not run businesses to brag to our friends but run sustainable businesses that make a positive impact. Every decision you make as a purpose driven entrepreneur must align with your business purpose because the business purpose is the driving force behind your company's success," he added.

Mr Maretlwaneng also motivated fellow youths to have passion for their businesses, highlighting that passionate leaders were willing to fight hard for their businesses because they realise how much was at stake.

Despite the fear of setbacks, he said, they maintained a positive attitude, which kept them in better spirits. He also highlighted that prayer was also key in running a successful business.

"I started small and faced many challenges. At one point I was bankrupt but I soldiered on because I had a vision and a dream to achieve and my aim is to become the best operator in the country," he remarked. However, he pleaded with the organisers to continue with such events like the expo, saying they brought them together to share and exchange ideas on how they could improve their businesses. He also urged entrepreneurs to establish a business portal in which they could advertise their services and products to the world.

The managing director of Okavango Air Rescue, Prophet Thato Elias said the expo provided a valuable opportunity for youth entrepreneurs to connect with industry giants and gain exposure to new products and services.

He encouraged entrepreneurs to believe in themselves and never imitate ideas that were strange to them. Some businesses, he said, failed because owners mimicked others and ultimately leading to a competitive disadvantage.

He also emphasised that benchmarking missions were key in business as they enhanced profit opportunity and advised them to venture into such mission, noting that "every year I go to Asia for 10 days on a benchmarking mission to learn best practices. I was impressed to learn that there is a central market place for entrepreneurs **BOPA**



Ms Lindy Makakatlela who operates a beauty therapy business called Sugar Dolls in Maun emerged the overall winner during the three-day Maun Youth Business Expo recently. She was also named the best exhibitor under services category. Photo: Esther Mmolai

Chobe fishermen denounce fishing prohibitions

By Portia Ikgopoleng

KACHIKAU - Fish farmers in Chobe have raised a concern over the prohibition to catch fish in NG 15 concession within the Linyanti River basin.

They aired their views during a meeting hosted by Chobe MP, Mr Simasiku Mapulanga in Kachikau recently.

Satau fisherman, Mr Boniface Lisehu remarked that the prohibition was unfair in that a Memorandum of Agreement was signed between Wilderness Safaris and Chobe Fresh and Dry Fish Association to allow fishermen to catch fish within the concession.

However, he said this agreement did not follow through as fishermen were chased out of Linyanti resulting in conflict. He said meetings were held between the concessionaire, fishermen and district leadership, but a consensus

was never reached over the years.

Mr Lisehu said catching fish was a means for a sustainable livelihood for the people of Chobe for many decades adding that even their parents raised them from fish businesses.

A fisherman from Parakarungu, Mr Edward Tumedi said Chobe River basin had not received sufficient inflows for many years which resulted in the floodplains drying up quickly. He said the floodplains from Muchenje up to Parakarungu were dry hence no fish spawned within their villages of which Linyanti was their only option.

He indicated that as fishermen they were well aware that there were private campsites in the NG 15 concession hence their activities were only at Zibalianja watercourse without infringing on the operations of the campsites.

He was hopeful however that

the matter would be solved after relaying their concerns to the MP who promised to call all relevant stakeholders from government and Wilderness Safaris.

MP Mapulanga pointed out that the concessionaire Wilderness Safaris banned fisherman from operating in the Linyanti area as this was a private land regulated by the Community Based Natural Resources policy.

He said as far as 1988 Chobe fishermen were catching fish in the Kwando-Linyanti basin up until 2010 when the area was leased through the Community Based Natural Resources Management policy.

He said when the Conservation Act was enacted to regulate natural resources in NG15 it caused conflict between concessionaire and fishermen as the former claimed to own exclusive rights to the shared river resources.

Mr Mapulanga said Zibalianja watercourse in Linyanti was able to hold water for longer period hence fish spawned immensely in those water sources presenting an opportunity to catch fish.

He said due to climate change Chobe River floodplains were not as abundant as they used to as the channels dried up quickly rendering fishing in Chobe Enclave impossible.

He said majority of the Chobe fishermen were elders whose livelihood was sustained from fish and were too old to find employment from concessionaires.

The MP said a resolution had been reached to hold a consultative meeting with all stakeholders involved; Wilderness Safaris, law enforcement agencies, District Commissioners Office, Chobe District Council, Department of Wildlife and National Parks to resolve this matter. **BOPA**



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Chairman - Micheal Mafa



Deputy PS for Ministry of Communications & Innovation - Ambrose Makgonatsothe



BDIH Board member - Thabo Molefe (Right)





IoT Communications Co Founder/Managing Director - Mompoloki Pule



IoT Communications Co Founder/Technical Director - Dr Kabo Elliot Pule

MP appeals for prompt response to pest outbreak

By Kedirebofe Pelontle

NOKANENG - Ngami MP has appealed to government to ensure prompt attendance to animal diseases and pests that disturb animals and crops in the Okavango District when required to do so by farmers.

Mr Philemon Aaron reasoned that in the absence of any manufacturing activities in the area, agriculture was its mainstay.

He was speaking during a kgotla meeting he addressed Monday in Nokaneng where he requested government to introduce more programmes that could advance the agricultural sector. Mr Aaron said the district was lagging behind in developments because many that were planned had been postponed owing to inadequate funds.

He said that it was also

worrisome that some major offices were established in Shakawe instead of Gumare which was the district headquarters.

On other matters, Mr Aaron said the poor academic results in the district might be due to poor accommodation facilities in schools and shortage of food, which led to poor living conditions for learners.

The Village Development Committee chairperson, Mr Justice Ngaruka asked government to assist Nokaneng community with boreholes specifically for agricultural purposes.

Doing so he said would help farmers to increase their yield.

Mr Ngaruka said learners from Nokaneng primary proceeded to Okavango junior school in Gumare for further studies with better academic results but performed poorly when they got there. **BOPA**



Ngami MP, Mr Philemon Aaron has appealed to government to ensure prompt response to pest outbreak noting that agriculture was the district's mainstay.

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DailyNewsbw

Support brings hope - official

By Keonee Majoto

SELOKOLELA - Rendering different forms of support to ill community members can be a great source of hope that could contribute to their respective healing journeys.

Public health specialist at Southern District Health Management Team (DHMT), Dr Christopher Chembe said on Monday during a donation of toiletries to clients of the Selokolela Community Home-Based Care programme that the sick required all the support they could get in order to lessen the impact of their illnesses.

Dr Chembe therefore called on different stakeholders to join hands with the community home-based care programme, the village health committee and health workers in supporting the sick in respective communities.

He said such collaborative efforts would have a greater impact in helping plug any gaps that might exist in the care that the sick were receiving from the healthcare system.

Further to that, he said caregivers carried a huge weight on their shoulders, and that any form of support to their sick loved ones often helped ease their burden, thereby making caregiving bearable.

Dr Chembe commended the Selokolela community home-based care team and the village's healthcare workers for their stellar job of going an extra mile by identifying and meeting the material needs of clients.

Appealing for more donations

to the home-based care committee, a health care assistant at the local clinic, Ms Johannah Khwarae concurred that meeting the non-medical needs of clients could help lift their spirits and encourage their healing.

Ms Khwarae said it was important to restore hope in the sick by making them feel loved and valued, hence the donation by the village's healthcare workers.

She hailed donors who had heeded the committee's call for donations, among whom she cited members of the business community in and outside Selokolela, faith-based organisations, local community leaders and the healthcare workers themselves.

Ward Councillor, Mr Gontekanye Tsie said addressing the needs of the sick by availing to them, necessities such as toiletries was a stepping stone in gently pushing them towards developing hope that they could beat their illnesses.

A client of the home-based care programme, Ms Bonang Sedupenyane observed that the donations had indeed lifted their spirits and were a much-needed reminder that despite their poor health status, they remained valuable members of the community.

Ms Gadifele Moisakamo, a home-based care volunteer said theirs was an act of love towards their clients, particularly since their day-to-day work of caring for the sick had reinforced their sense of responsibility towards fellow humans. **BOPA**

BOTSWANA MAKES HISTORY: A NEW ERA IN FINANCE BEGINS!

THANK YOU, NBFIRA! BOTSWANA BECOMES AFRICA'S FIRST SOCIAL CAPITAL FINANCE REGULATOR

We extend our deepest gratitude to the Non-Bank Financial Institutions Regulatory Authority (NBFIRA) of Botswana for issuing the Social Capital Virtual Exchange (SCVX) "Virtual Assets Service Provider" license on March 3rd, 2025. This ground-breaking decision positions Botswana as the first African nation to regulate Social Capital-backed finance, unlocking unprecedented economic opportunities for the country and the entire African continent.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR BOTSWANA & AFRICA

With the SCVX license, Botswana is now **the official hub for Social Capital-backed digital finance**, allowing businesses, workers, and investors to **convert their time, skills, and contributions into financial assets**. This innovative approach will:

- ✓ **Boost employment** by creating **Custom Social Capital Jobs (CSJ)** - ensuring that **everyone's time has financial value**, reducing job dependency on limited traditional industries.
- ✓ **Enhance trade under AfCFTA** by making Botswana **the central processing hub for Social Capital-backed transactions**, supporting **\$3 TRILLION** in trade among 54 African nations.
- ✓ **Transform Botswana into a financial powerhouse**, attracting **global investors, fintech companies, and entrepreneurs** looking to leverage Social Capital-backed assets.
- ✓ **Empower local businesses and entrepreneurs** by providing new, stable financial instruments like **Social Capital Credit Bond ETFs and QUSD stablecoin**, enabling growth beyond fiat currency limitations.

PROJECTED ECONOMIC BENEFITS FOR BOTSWANA

- \$500 BILLION+ in Social Capital-backed investment & trade over the next decade
- \$50 BILLION in new African trade finance managed through Botswana under AfCFTA
- \$100 BILLION in infrastructure development funding using Social Capital Credit Bond ETFs
- \$75 BILLION in digital economy investment, making Botswana a leader in AI, fintech, and blockchain
- 1 MILLION+ new jobs in Botswana over the next five years through Custom Social Capital Jobs (CSJ)
- \$10 BILLION in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into Botswana as global companies set up SCVX operations

This **direct financial impact will elevate Botswana's GDP, reduce unemployment, and strengthen its economy**, making it a **global leader in financial innovation and digital trade**.

HOW BOTSWANA WILL BENEFIT SECTOR BY SECTOR

- ✓ **Employment & Workforce Development**
 - Custom Social Capital Jobs (CSJ) will create income opportunities for unemployed youth, informal sector workers, and skilled professionals.
 - SCVX training and mentorship programs will equip workers with digital economy skills, allowing them to earn Social Capital Hours instead of relying on unstable cash-based employment
- ✓ **Trade & Investment (\$500 Billion Opportunity)**
 - **Botswana will handle cross-border transactions** for Social Capital-backed finance in AfCFTA, ensuring that trade between **South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Egypt, and beyond flows through Botswana's financial system**.
 - The **introduction of Social Capital-backed investment instruments** will attract **global investors, hedge funds, and multinational companies** to register under Botswana's SCVX framework.
- ✓ **Real Estate & Infrastructure (\$100 Billion Growth)**
 - **Residential Social Capital Ownership Plans (RESCOP)** will allow **Botswana citizens to own property using Social Capital Hours**, increasing home ownership rates.
 - **Infrastructure projects will be funded through Social Capital-backed finance**, ensuring sustainable urban development, roads, and public services.
- ✓ **Digital Economy & Fintech (\$75 Billion Expansion)**
 - SCVX-backed digital finance solutions will **transform Botswana into Africa's Fintech Capital**, creating **thousands of tech jobs** in AI, blockchain, and cybersecurity.
 - **Local startups will receive funding from Social Capital-backed venture capital funds**, fostering innovation and entrepreneurship.

STATEMENT FROM SCVX GLOBAL TECH CEO, SSEMAKULA PETER LUYIMA

"We are honored to receive this license from NBFIRA, a regulator that truly understands the future of finance. This is not just a win for Botswana—it's a win for Africa and the global financial system. SCVX will drive economic growth, create millions of jobs, and ensure that every African can benefit from the power of Social Capital. The world is watching, and Botswana is leading the way."

BOTSWANA: AFRICA'S FINANCIAL FUTURE BEGINS HERE

With NBFIRA's forward-thinking regulatory leadership, Botswana now stands at the forefront of Africa's **most revolutionary economic shift**. By integrating **Social Capital-backed finance with real-world industries**, the country will:

- ✓ Create massive economic opportunities for its citizens
- ✓ Attract billions in new investment from Africa, the UAE, the U.S., and beyond
- ✓ Establish itself as the financial hub for Social Capital-backed trade & investment

This is only the beginning! The **SCVX ecosystem will expand across Africa, unlocking new financial prosperity for all Africans, powered by the value of human time and contributions**.



A new era of financial inclusion, economic empowerment, and innovation begins NOW—starting in Botswana!

THANK YOU, NBFIRA! THANK YOU, BOTSWANA!



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ceo@scvxafrica.co.site



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Kgosi Khama IV appoints trustees

By Tshamiso Mosetlha

SEROWE - Kgosi Khama IV of Bangwato has officially appointed a new board of trustees for the Ngwato Development Trust, marking a significant change after the previous board had served since 2008 without the expected biannual rotation.

The new appointments, include two consultants, Mr Kamogelo Mogale and Mr Godiretse Khumiso, mining surveyor Mr Malebela Oagile, accountant Mr Boago Matheatau, as well as legal advisors Ms Angelinah Seanokeng and Mr Tapiwa Abel.

In a community meeting held recently in Serowe, Kgosi Khama IV expressed confidence in the newly appointed trustees, noting that the outgoing board, led by Mr Keolopile Gaborone, had successfully fulfilled a substantial part of their mandate. Mr Gaborone was re-elected by community members to continue in his general manager role.

“The term that they navigated was longer than anticipated, but I believe it was not without its challenges,” Kgosi Khama IV said.

He urged the incoming board to commit themselves fully to their

duties.

In addition to the board appointments, Kgosi Khama IV committed to promoting arts, culture, and natural heritage within his jurisdiction.

He has initiated the formation of several committees to support these efforts, which will focus on the preservation and promotion of historical buildings, significant sites, and natural heritage.

Kgosi Khama IV called upon relevant authorities to compile an inventory of all monumental and heritage sites in the area and proposed the construction of roads to enhance accessibility to these locations.

He emphasised his role as a custodian of culture and arts, pledging his support for the growth of this sector, which he believed could contribute significantly to economic diversification alongside the country’s diamond industry.

“Batswana are inherently creative due to the vast array of natural heritage around us,” he stated, challenging local artists to leverage their talents for economic growth.

He underscored the potential of the arts as a source of employment, encouraging

individuals to earn a living from their creative pursuits.

The committees will cover a range of areas, including culture and heritage, tourism, agriculture, dignity, media, infrastructure, and youth development and ports.

In his remarks, outgoing chairperson Mr. Charles Kabelo highlighted the trust’s

commitment to community investment, mentioning the donation of chairs to several wards in Serowe as part of their efforts to give back. Since its inception in 2008, the Ngwato Development Trust has focused on safeguarding and generating income from community-owned properties, including Leupane

Ranch, Palapye Warehouse, Serowe Show Grounds, Radihemelo, and Serowe Dam.

Mr Kabelo also pointed out the trust’s efforts to assist the less fortunate, including those who do not qualify for social services, emphasizing their dedication to long-term community benefits.

BOPA

Court remands Zimbabwe man in custody

By Kabo Keaketswe

LETLHAKANE - Letlhakane magistrate court yesterday, remanded Charles Diamond of Zimbabwe origin in custody for exposing pornographic material to a minor.

The 50-year-old man, who is also an illegal immigrant will remain in custody until March 27 when he appear again for plea.

Regarding the legal representation, he said he would engage a lawyer.

The victim is a 14-year-old Form One girl at Motsumi Junior

Secondary School in Letlhakane, who out of discomfort, reported and showed her teacher the explicit content repeatedly sent to her phone by the accused.

Therefore, the teacher escalated the matter with the police and Diamond was arrested on March 9.

Investigating officer on the matter, Detective Constable Goitsewang Tshabadira of gender and child protection unit said upon arrest, the accused’s place was searched and the police discovered explicit pictures as well as pornographic videos in

his phone and laptop.

She pleaded with the court to remand Diamond as investigations were still ongoing and that the police were yet to identify other victims.

Magistrate Tshidiso Molao highlighted that since the matter involved the wellbeing of a minor, and the fact that the court took seriously issues of protection of children in the country, the accused would remain in custody.

Diamond is also charged with another count of unlawful stay in Botswana since October 2021.

BOPA

PUBLIC NOTICE

DETAILED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) STUDY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION OF 2 TENTED CAMPS IN LINYANTI (LINYANTI BUSH CAMP AND SHAILE)

In accordance with Section 7, Part 2 (a) of the Environmental Assessment Act, (Cap 65:07), Champs Botswana (Pty) Ltd, invites members of the following communities to Kgotla meetings to share and discuss environmental issues regarding the proposed development of Two Campsites in the Linyanti-Shaile Area in the CH 1 concession area in the Chobe District.

The proposed projects are: 1. the Development and Operation of a Tented Camp at Shaile, and, 2. the Proposed Demolition, Redevelopment and Operation of the Existing, Linyanti Bush Camp in Linyanti.

Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
Improved aesthetic quality	Disturbance of wildlife
Temporary employment during construction phase of 200 staff	Disturbance of top soil
Increased and Long-term employment	Noise pollution during construction
Increased national income	Water pollution
Destination marketing for brand Botswana	Soil pollution
Improved wildlife research, monitoring and management	Vegetation disturbance

Purpose of the Public Meeting

To facilitate a medium where interested and affected parties (IAPs) will convey their opinions about the project, Champs Botswana (Pty) Ltd has on behalf of Cranes Nest Safaris organized public meeting to be held as scheduled below. All are kindly requested to attend the meeting.

Village	Venue	Date	Time
Satau	Satau Kgotla	31/03/2025	0800hrs
Parakarungu	Parakarungu Kgotla	01/04/2025	0800hrs
Kavimba	Kavimba Kgotla	02/04/2025	0800hrs
Mabele	Mabele Main Kgotla	02/04/2025	1100hrs
Kachikau	Kachikau Kgotla	03/04/2025	0800hrs

Any comments and enquiries regarding the proposed projects and meetings may be sent to: Champs Botswana (Pty) Ltd, Office at Plot 1926, Matshwane Industrial, Maun (Tel: 68404108; Mobile: 72331509/ 71616121; Email: gkhwarae@champsbotswana.co.bw/admin@champsbotswana.co.bw)

The contact person for this project is Geoffrey Khwarae.

KITSISO MO SECHABENG

TSHEKATSHÉKO YA KAMEGO YA TIKOLOGO MABAPI LE TIRO YA GO TLHABOLOLA LE GO TSAMAISA DIKAMPA TSE PEDI TSA BOJAMNALA MO LINYANTI (LINYANTI BUSH CAMP AND SHAILE)

Go ya ka temana ya bosupa ya molao wa tshekatsheko tikologo (EA Act), Cap 65:07, ba kompone ya Champs Botswana ba laletsa sechaba sa metse e e latelang diphuthego tsa kgotla go tla go buisana le go abelana megopolo mabapi le kago ya dikampa tsa Bojanala ko Linyanti-Shaile mo lefelong la botsomelo la CH 1 mo Kgaolong ya Chobe

Ditiro tse di akantsweng, ya ntlha ke go aga le go tsamaisa kampa e ntsha ya Bojanala ko Shaile, fa ya bobedi ele go diga, go aga sesha le go tsamaisa Linyanti Bush Camp eyone eleng teng mo nakong ya gompieno.

Ditla morago tse di eletsegang	Ditlamorago tse di sa eletsegang
Go oketsa bontle le boleng jwa lefelo	Kgoreletsego ya diphologolo tsa naga
Go tlhamega ga ditiro tsa nakwana di ka tshwarang makgolo ale mabedi ka nako ya kago	Kgotlhego ya mmu
Go thama ditiro tsa sennela ruri	Modumo le lerole ka nako ya kago
Tokafalo ya itsholelo e le ka mabaka a ditlamelo tse di botoka	Kgotelesego ya metsi
Go bapatsa lefatshe la Botswana	Kgotelesego ya mmu
Tokafalo ya dikitso, dipatlisiso le tshomarelo ya diphologolo makgabis	Go kgaolwa ga ditlhare

Maikaelelo a Phuthego ya Kgotla

Go ka abelana megopolo le ba ba amegang, le ba ba nang le kgatlhego mo tirong e, kompone ya Champs Botswana (Pty) Ltd mo boemong jwa ba Cranes Nest Safaris, e rulagantse diphuthego tsa kgotla ka fa lenaneong le le latelang : Morafe o kopiwa go tsena phuthego e ka bontsi le ka nako ee beilweng.

Lefelo	Lefelo la Phuthego	Letsatsi	Nako
Satau	Satau Kgotla	31/03/2025	0800hrs
Parakarungu	Parakarungu Kgotla	01/04/2025	0800hrs
Kavimba	Kavimba Kgotla	02/04/2025	0800hrs
Mabele	Mabele Main Kgotla	02/04/2025	1100hrs
Kachikau	Kachikau Kgotla	03/04/2025	0800hrs

Ba ba nang le dipotso kana megopolo mabapi le tiro e le diphuthego tse di rulagantsweng, ba ka leletsa megala kgotsa ba kwalela ko diatereseng tse di latelang;

Champs Botswana (Pty) Ltd ,Office at Plot 1926, Matshwane Industrial, Maun (Tel: 68404108; Mobile: 72331509/ 71616121; Email: gkhwarae@champsbotswana.co.bw/admin@champsbotswana.co.bw)

Motsamaisa wa thulaganyo e ke rre Geoffrey Khwarae.

African Attire on Fleek ignites joy

By Kelebogile Taolo

FRANCISTOWN - African Attire on Fleek aficionados brightened up Molapo Leisure Gardens in Francistown with their elegant and diverse African outfits during the event's fifth edition on Saturday.

Organised by Colourful Entertainment, the event attracted a vibrant crowd from various parts of the country, all eager to immerse themselves in a rich

cultural atmosphere filled with fashion, music, and dance.

Gentlemen adorned a variety of African shirts, including Leteisi and Zulu shirts, often complemented by headbands, creating an atmosphere that truly celebrated African fashion.

The ladies, too, added to the spectacle, with many sporting African tops resembling roses, beautifully designed long and short mateisi, traditional attire, Sotho, and Zulu outfits, all

enhanced by an array of colourful headgears. Obakeng Chabanga, a Francistown resident hailing from the southern part of Botswana, expressed delight in the event.

He appreciated Kalanga songs and dances and stated that although he did not fully understand the lyrics, he was captivated by the rhythm and energy of the performances.

Dressed in black pants and a tailored Leteisi shirt, Chabanga remarked that African Attire

on Fleek was the best event showcasing local culture and was especially excited by the Wosana dance.

Notty Gaokgorwe, who dazzled in an orange flair African dress adorned with a beaded neckpiece, shared her experience as a three-time attendee of African Attire on Fleek in Francistown.

As a business owner, she praised the event for being organised and the quality of music, which she felt created lasting memories.

This year, she purchased a golden ticket for a better view,

enjoying the jubilant atmosphere and commending the security and positive behaviour of fellow attendees. Gaokgorwe said she believed the event fostered significant cultural exchange through the interactions of its diverse participants.

The event featured captivating performances from local artistes, including Tjilenje che Ngwao, Bana Bana ba Ntogwa, local DJs, and South African artiste Mawelele who made the event a memorable occasion for all.

BOPA



Revellers at the fifth edition of African Attire on Fleek in Francistown on Saturday. Photo: Courtesy Colourful Entertainment



Bana Bana BaNtogwa in action. Photo: Courtesy Colourful Entertainment

GIMC Afrotech honours female DJs

By Ketshepile More

GABORONE - To recognise and honour women in the DJ arena, Gaborone International Music and Concert (GIMC) Afrotech 6.0 will host a mini pitso in commemoration of international women's month on March 29 at Game City Marquee.

The month of March is set aside by United Nations to celebrate women's achievements, on March 8.

Women have in some fields experienced biasness, and the creative space is no exception particularly the DJ platform which is predominantly men.

This GIMC Afrotech edition, the ultra-feminine is first of its kind, women only Afrotech gig featuring Botswana's great afrotech female talent in Kele, DJ Mis J, Bo-Kettle, Osaka Sun, DJ Rudo, Kutlo Scope, Nendiyo and DJ Missy.

"We are doing this because we believe female DJs and artists have come of age and we can hold an event on them alone," said Fish Pabalinga, the organiser of GIMC. Pabalinga urged other women to come and support these creative talent on the day and celebrate them as well as their craft.

Each year, the UN comes with a theme to honour women's contributions and advocate for gender equality and women's rights. And, the theme for 2025 is: Accelerate Action, which emphasises the need to speed up efforts to end systematic barriers and biases that prevent gender equality.

Tickets for GIMC Afrotech 6.0 ultra-feminine are on sale at P150 single ticket and P800 double.

The double ticket includes some goodies including two pairs of GIMC/BK Proctor neon socks.

BOPA



The GIMC Afrotech edition billed for Game City Marquee on March 29 will feature Botswana's afrotech female talent in the likes of BO-Kettle. The event recognises and honours women in the DJ arena.

Scribes rally behind Botswana

By Anastacia Sibanda

GABORONE - Africa track and field journalists have put their weight behind Botswana's intentions to host the 2026 World Athletics Relays.

Botswana Athletics Association vice president, Oabona Theetso told *BOPA* that the association had presented a preliminary bid to World Athletics, adding that the second presentation would be done this week.

In that regard Africa journalists are of the view that Botswana is better placed to host and deliver a successful event.

Ghana journalist of *Joy News*, Muftawu Nabila Abdulai, said Botswana's recent bid presents a historic opportunity, not only to bring the competition to the African continent for the first time, but also to reward a nation that was rapidly becoming a powerhouse in athletics.

He said for a sport that prides itself on inclusivity and global representation, World Athletics has yet to honour Africa with hosting rights for its prestigious relay event.

This absence, he said, was increasingly glaring, given the continent's vast contribution to athletics in talent, passion, and audience.

Abdulai said hosting the World Relays in Botswana would

symbolise a shift towards genuine global balance.

He said it would be a clear message that Africa was not just a supplier of talent but also a viable destination for world-class sporting events.

He said Botswana had in recent years grown into a formidable force in track and field, especially in sprint events - a core feature of the world relays.

The

nation has produced standout athletes like Isaac Makwala, Baboloki Thebe, and Letsile Tebogo, who have all competed and won on the international stage.

"Tebogo, in particular, has emerged as a global sprinting star, capturing attention with his performances at the World Championships and Diamond League meets," he said.

He said this success had fuelled massive interest in athletics across the country. Therefore, hosting the World Relays would leverage this momentum and give the sport an even stronger foothold in Southern Africa.

"This nation has also hosted Botswana Golden Grand Prix, a World Athletics Continental Tour event, with efficiency and professionalism," he said.

Moreover, he said, Botswana's government has consistently shown strong support for sports development.

Abdulai said the Ministry of Sport and Arts, along with the Botswana Athletics Association, had actively pushed for international engagement.

"Their bid to host the World Relays is backed not just by logistics, but by political will and financial commitment," he said. "Because Africa deserves a place at the table. Because Botswana has earned it—on the track and off it."

He said

awarding the 2026 World Relays to Botswana would not just be a nod to equity and progress; it would be a bold step forward for global athletics. World Athletics has an opportunity to make history—Botswana is ready to deliver it.

Kenyan freelance journalist and sports media operations consultant, formerly managing editor for Sports at Kenya's Nation Media Group, Elias Makori, said: "It's time for Africa. The World Athletics Relays is not about Botswana, it's an African bid."

Makori said Botswana earned its rightful place as a force in global sprints as epitomised by the exploits of its Olympic champions.

"The amazing Letsile Tebogo, and other great sprinters before him like Isaac Makwala, Fanuel Kenosi, Bayapo Ndori, and Baboloki Thebe is a clear indication that Botswana is a force to be reckoned with," he said.

Makori said bringing the competition to Gaborone would spur the resurgence of sprints not only in Botswana alone, but in Africa as a whole.

He pointed out that Africa had produced sprints stars such as Kenya's Ferdinand Omanyala, Cote d'Ivoire's Marie-Jose Ta Lou, South Africa's Wayde van Niekerk, Cameroon's Emmanuel Esseme and a host of other greats, including legends like Frankie Fredericks of Namibia, Mozambique's Maria Mutola and Senegal's Amy Mbacké Thiam.

Furthermore, he said, Botswana's organisational acumen was not in doubt with the presence of a Continental Tour Gold meeting and an impeccable venue a major boost for the bid.

"Also, the nation's overwhelming spectator interest in the sport, and immense love for track and field, cannot be questioned," he said.

Above all, Makori said, the Botswana government had been extremely supportive to sport, with such guarantees necessary for the development of athletics, especially at a time the country is under the stewardship of a young, vibrant leader in President Advocate Duma Boko.

"Finally, interest in the sport from sponsors will make the hosting of the World Athletics Relays financially viable," he said.

SABC Radio journalist, James Ngomane, said there was need for Africa to hold hands and support Botswana's bid, adding that hosting would also boost the country's economy.

Ngomane said Botswana had what it takes to host and deliver the event.

He however said Africa should be weary of sabotage from other nations.

"One or two people from elsewhere can be bribed to vote against Botswana," he warned. *BOPA*



Oabona Theetso