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on Sunday

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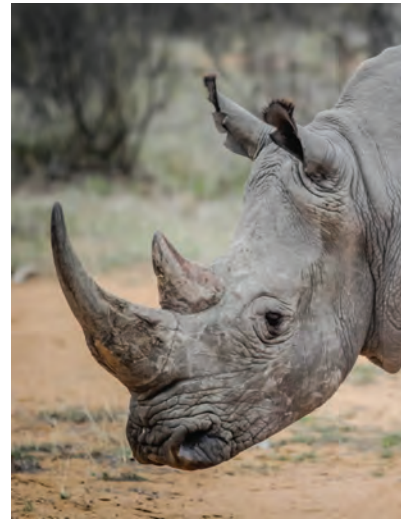


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Botswana explains rhino horn exports



Rhino

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BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT officials have moved to explain the export of some live rhinos and their derivatives to different countries in Southern Africa and abroad, which was threatening to brew into a controversy ahead of the looming CITEs meeting.

According to data that The Patriot on Sunday retrieved from CITEs trade database, Botswana exported a black rhino horn to Saudi Arabia in 2019 and another to South Africa for personal use in 2023. The Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) could not account for the rhino horn exported to Saudi Arabia safe to state that Botswana only exported a rhino horn to South Africa in 2023.

DWNP Director, Moemi Batshabang said Botswana has no records indicating that there was a rhino horn exported to Saudi Arabia. "The country has consistently adhered to stringent conservation policies and international regulations governing the trade and movement of endangered species and their derivatives," said Batshabang, confirming that Botswana exported a black rhino horn to South Africa in 2023 for personal use. He, however, denied that the rhino horn was a trophy, emphasizing that there is no trophy hunting of rhinoceros in Botswana.

CITEs trade database identifies a rhino horn as a trophy. "The trophy that was exported in 2023, which you refer to, was a Pre-Convention Specimen, which the owner obtained through inheritance. The owner of the trophy had all the legal documentation required to validate his inheritance of the rhino horn. The exporter first applied for the import permit from South Africa, which he was granted and thereafter an export permit was issued on the Botswana side," Batshabang explained.

He reiterated that given the historical context and the fact that

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Cabinet hurts Speaker, MPs

- Keorapetse decries ministers' disrespect for Parliament
- MPs demand stern action as ministers miss Friday sessions



Speaker of the National Assembly, Dithapelo Keorapetse

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PARLIAMENT BUSINESS ON Friday was brought to a standstill as majority of cabinet ministers missed the session without issuing any apology, despite that some had to respond to questions, a development that irked the Speaker of the National Assembly, Dithapelo Keorapetse and other Members of Parliament (MPs). Only two (2) ministers and four (4) assistant ministers attended the Friday session when it commenced, whilst few others joined in late towards the end of the proceedings. Minister of Infrastructure, Noah Salakae and his assistant Keogile Atamelang's absence stirred a debate as their ministry had to answer a question posed by Chobe MP, Oscar Mapulanga about Civil Aviation Authority of Botswana (CAAB) in relation to important operational issues at Air Botswana.

Mapulanga demanded answers on how much (budget) has been allocated to CAAB from 2019 to 2024; how many airplanes were

bought by Air Botswana in the same period and the total cost. He also sought to know if the airplanes were bought as new and how many planes are in operation, if none what are the challenges for them not being in operation. After several minutes of waiting but in vain for the minister or his assistant to show face, Keorapetse indicated that he has been observing how ministers continue to take Parliament business for granted. He said it was surprising that only few ministers attended Parliament when the order paper was loaded with motions that was supposed to be responded to by the ministers who at the time were not present.

Keorapetse said he enquired with the Clerk of Parliament about the whereabouts of absent ministers and to his surprise there was no formal apology lodged by the ministers of Transport and Infrastructure. "I have tried on this situation of ministers not attending Parliament without any formal apology to the Speaker or Clerk," said Keorapetse as the MPs expressed disappointment with the conduct of the ministers.

Keorapetse warned that the trend was a serious problem because the ongoing winter session focuses on the formulation of laws.

Arrogance

Opposition Whip in Parliament Caterpillar Hikuama said the failure of ministers to attend parliament, leading to unanswered questions from members, without proper communication to the Speaker is a serious threat and a deliberate attack on the integrity not only of Parliament but also of the whole UDC led government.

Hikuama said it is an issue that strikes at the heart of democratic governance, adding that it is an unacceptable practice by all standards; firstly, it undermines the principle of accountability. "Secondly, it is detrimental to a functioning parliamentary system. It needs to be nabbed on the bud before it can mutate into full-blown culture within the governance of the UDC led government," said Hikuama on Friday, warning that if questions are not answered during the Friday session, the legislative process is

stalled and the weekend approaches without any sustainable progress made by Parliament.

He said the UDC ministers need to be reminded that answering questions is not a matter of courtesy or choice by the minister but a fundamental pillar of democratic accountability and show of respect to the voice of the electorates who send an MP to represent them in Parliament.

"This behavior by the UDC government and its Ministers shows contempt for the Parliament and the people. Consistent absenteeism by the UDC Ministers in parliament sends a powerful and damaging message of disrespect for the people and parliament as an institution. To a certain extent, undermining the authority of the Speaker as the head of Parliament.

Government whip in Parliament, Boteti West MP Sam Digwa said he was in South Africa while reached for a comment noting briefly that it was unfortunate for the situation to have unfolded adding that the government is sorry about it.

TO PAGE 2

BNF emerges from congress



Boko

LETTICIA MAKUKU

THE BOTSWANA NATIONAL Front held this year's congress in Palapye from the 20th to the 22nd of July as the party was also celebrating 60 years of existence. The three day congress will go in the history books as the President of Party is now the President of Botswana and some members of the central committee are cabinet ministers.

Giving a keynote address during the official opening, President Advocate Duma Boko lauded Dr Micus Chimbombi, who has been the vice president

of the party until 2024 General elections. Boko highlighted that Dr Chimbombi is currently battling health issues and wished him a full recovery so that he can rejoin the frontlines of the struggle. He thanked the central committee for having diligently led despite all the challenges they encountered. Boko acknowledged their partners in the coalition which is Botswana People's Party (BPP), who he described as a dependable ally for the BNF. He said their biggest cry has been allocation of land, they want to see control and ownership of land resting in the people of this country.

FULL STORY ON PAGE 5

HIV/ AIDS fight compromised?

- Monitoring in limbo due to CD4, viral reagents shortage

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BOTSWANA WAS HIT BY A shortage of CD4 and viral screening reagents in the past two months, raising concerns about HIV/AIDS patient monitoring among people living with HIV (PLHIV). *The Patriot on Sunday* has learnt.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) admitted in response to our inquiry that they have been experiencing shortages for the past two months, while non-profit organizations leading the battle against HIV maintain that this has been going on since last year. Now, government is racing against time to address the shortage. MoH spokesperson, Dr Christopher Nyanga admitted that there is a shortage and emphasized that the deliveries were made in June 2025 with some more deliveries expected in July.

He denied that the shortage could



Dr Nyanga

spell disaster for patients who are on ARV treatment in Botswana, indicating that for now, the CD4 and viral reagents are available in most facilities around the country. He conceded that the situation could have an impact on the monitoring of HIV treatment and care but maintained that all precautions are being taken to ensure that it does not.

"The Ministry is engaging stakeholders to help expedite procurement and delivery of expected medical consignments," said Dr Nyanga, who could not deny that the situation has potential to

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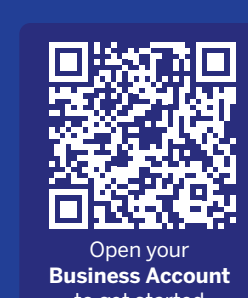


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2025 DTEF sponsorship season

AS THE DEPARTMENT OF Tertiary Education Financing (DTEF) sponsorship season gets underway, ISBS enters this pivotal period with a compelling track record—boasting a strong alumni base, employer-aligned qualifications, and a reputation for producing job-ready graduates. The July 2025 intake represents a decisive window for Form 5 and Form 6 graduates to select their preferred institution for government-funded tertiary education, and ISBS is firmly positioning itself as the first-choice destination for students who want both quality and opportunity.

Sponsorship Window
Each year, the DTEF sponsorship programme allows thousands of eligible students to pursue higher education without the financial burden. For institutions like ISBS, this period is not only critical for enrolment but also pivotal in shaping the next generation of skilled professionals across diverse disciplines. ISBS encourages prospective students to consider ISBS as their preferred choice when completing DTEF sponsorship forms, recognising ISBS's commitment to quality



ISBS, Nidheesh Sharma

[PIC: PINO KILANO]

education and student success. "By choosing ISBS, students are choosing a forward-looking academic environment that prepares them for success beyond the lecture hall," added Sharma. Managing Director

of ISBS, Mr. Nidheesh Sharma, says the institution's focus is on delivering practical, quality education that helps bridge the gap between classroom learning and the realities of the job market. "We recognise that today's

students are tomorrow's leaders, innovators, and professionals," said Sharma. "ISBS provides not just academic instruction, but real-world preparation for careers in sectors that are crucial to Botswana's

economic transformation. From business to logistics to public health, our programmes are tailored for relevance and impact."

ISBS Courses

ISBS's academic offerings span professional qualifications, undergraduate degrees, diplomas and post graduate programmes, all of which are fully BQA-accredited and HRDC-recognised. The institution's approach is built on accessibility, flexibility, and alignment with market demands.

Programmes offered include Professional Courses: AAT, ACCA, CIMA, Commerce Degrees: BCom in Business Management, BCom in Digital Marketing, BCom in Finance and Banking, Management Degrees: BBA in Entrepreneurship, BBA in Logistics and Transport Management, BBA in Tourism Management, Science Degrees: BSc in Public Health, BSc in Occupational Health and Safety, Postgraduate: Postgraduate Diploma in Management, Diplomas and Certificates: Early Childhood Education, Health and Safety, Logistics, Marketing, Project Management, Human Resource Management, Social Psychology, and more

BRICS represents global majority - Zakharova*



Zakharova

BRICS HAS EVOLVED FROM AN informal platform for dialogue into an association capable of responding to global challenges with practical actions. This was stated by Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova in an exclusive interview at the TV BRICS

According to her, BRICS represents the global majority, which possesses real leadership qualities. She also noted that the countries of the group unite a significant part of the world's population. "This is an association that has brought together representatives of the global majority under its

umbrella, who through their work and achievements truly demonstrate leadership qualities and, accordingly, occupy leadership positions," she added.

The official representative of the Russian Foreign Ministry added that BRICS does not need any additional assessments, as it demonstrates everything based on real facts. "This is a group of countries that are the largest in terms of their territory. And terms of population, and in terms of area, and in terms of achievements in science, technology, and culture," she said.

* Maria Zakharova is Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson

BIUST, BIHL Trust celebrate GEMS

a journey of empowerment through STEM



ON 24TH JULY 2025, BIUST proudly hosted the final GEMS Project Presentation, marking the culmination of the Girls Excelling in Mathematics and Science (GEMS) programme, a bold and transformative initiative that has shaped the futures of over 100 young women in STEM.

At the heart of this programme is our main sponsor, the BIHL Trust, whose visionary three-year sponsorship made this groundbreaking journey possible. With unwavering belief in the potential of Botswana's girl child, BIHL Trust invested in nurturing

the next generation of scientists, engineers, and innovators from the grassroots igniting a legacy that will impact generations to come.

In partnership with six pioneering schools, Mahupu Unified, Tsabong Unified, Matsha College, Shakawe Senior, Maun Senior, and Gantsi Senior Secondary Schools, the programme empowered each school to produce 18 STEM ambassadors, all now champions of change in their communities.

Congratulations to Gantsi Senior Secondary School, who have successfully defended their title as the top STEM project winners for

the second year in a row! You've made history and ended the programme on a powerful high note. This celebration was also a moment to honour BIHL Trust for their foresight, generosity, and deep commitment to building a knowledge-based economy through empowering girls in STEM, School coordinators for their tireless dedication and mentorship, Volunteer mentors for their selfless contributions and guidance, And above all, the GEMS themselves young women who've defied odds, broken barriers, and shown what's possible when opportunity meets

determination. Prof. Nhleikisana, Board Member of the BIHL Trust, shared a heartfelt reflection: "Three years ago, the BIHL Trust made a bold decision to believe in what Botswana girls can achieve when given the opportunity. And year after year, they have amazed us. I am filled with pride in the journey we've travelled, the spark we've ignited, and the legacy we're leaving behind."

To our GEMS: You are more than students, you are trailblazers, the light-bearers of Botswana's STEM future. Go forth and ignite change, leading the nation boldly into the 4th Industrial Revolution.

Botswana explains rhino horn exports

FROM PAGE 1

the rhino horn was acquired before the establishment of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the export was done in accordance with the Pre-Convention conditions of the text of the Convention. A pre-Convention specimen of rhino horn refers to a horn that was acquired before the provisions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) (CITES) applied to it.

CITES has regulated international trade since 1977. Meanwhile, Batshabang has refuted that Botswana exported live black rhino to Namibia despite CITES trade database showing the export of the rhino in 2023. He stated that there were no live rhinos exported to Namibia according to their 2023 annual report. "Instead, ten white rhinos were relocated from Botswana to

South Africa. This relocation was part of a collaborative management agreement between South Africa and Botswana. The agreement was established in response to the high levels of poaching in the region, which posed a significant threat to rhino populations," he said, adding that Botswana is recognized for her robust anti-poaching measures, and was chosen to serve as a secure holding base for these rhinos under a custodianship arrangement.

Batshabang said that the objective of the arrangement was to provide a safe environment where the rhino population could grow and benefit from the species population growth as a country. He indicated that under the terms of the agreement, a proportion of the founder population is returned to the owner after an agreed period and the offsprings retained by the custodian.

"This partnership highlights the importance of regional cooperation in the conservation of endangered

species and ensuring the long-term survival of rhinos in their natural habitats. The export was for management purposes, which is in line with CITES conditions of species international trade," said Batshabang.

Botswana has also defended the exports of rhino pieces to Zambia. Batshabang said there was no expectation that the six horn pieces that were exported to Zambia in 2019 for scientific purpose will be returned back to Botswana. He indicated that the specimens were not complete rhino horns.

"It was four horn shavings and two rhino horn scrapings. These are laboratory samples with no trade value and issued specifically for research work. Samples were to be utilized in the laboratory and there was no expectation of samples to be returned to Botswana," he said, arguing that the materials were collected and designated exclusively for research purposes related to Botswana's rhino population.

Cabinet hurts Speaker, MPs

FROM PAGE 1

One Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) MP who pleaded for anonymity in fear of reprisals, said the ministers have made it a norm to defy Keorapetse as he consistently engaged them about their attitude to Parliament business.

He said the ministers often fail to answer questions in a comprehensive manner on several occasions with that prompting Keorapetse to reprimand them on Parliament floor hence that makes some of the ministers felt attacked by the Speaker. "He is serious about Parliament business and that make some of ministers feel uncomfortable to

faces Parliament and account. Our colleagues in cabinet most of them are crybabies and don't want to be held accountable rigorously," said the MP.

Sitting Allowance

Political analyst, Kitso Morekisi said quite often some MPs and even ministers show up on Parliament and excuse themselves after a few minutes having fulfilled their necessities of claiming the day's sitting allowance. He said they have developed a tendency of absconding on Fridays just after registering for the seating allowance, warning that the MPs should desist from such

act as it compromises the quality of Parliament outcomes as well as wasting time.

He said the trend of breaking quorum and fleeing the Parliament would soon become a serious problem therefore Speaker has to take appropriate measures against absent MPs or ministers.

"It has been happening several times on camera MPs complaining about some ministers for not taking their questions serious by not attending Parliament or either asking for postponements of questions through the later date dispensation. Such behaviour would compromise quality of Parliament," he said.

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Debswana Jwaneng mine, partners donate to Mahotshwane

IN A BID TO SHOW OBEISANCE TO the sentiment of the President of Botswana, Advocate Gideon Duma Boko, that the country's diamonds must benefit even the lowest in societal strata, Debswana Jwaneng Underground Project, together with business partners heeded the call.

TKM Engineering, Excavator Hire, Redpath Mining, Ontrock Engineering, Kgaga Belting and Royal Engineering on 18th July 2025, took a great stride and donated amenities valued at over P100,000.00 to the community of Mahotshwane, which is in the area of influence for Jwaneng Mine.

The gesture comprised of the refurbishment of an existing kgotla structures (leobo) wholly sponsored by TKM Engineering valued at over P50, 000.00. Paraphernalia necessary for the improvement of learning at Mahotshwane Primary School from the other business partners as follows; Redpath Mining donated books worth P87, 234.00.00, while Ontrock Engineering and Royal Engineering donated books worth P6,705.14 and P6,889.01 respectively. Kgaga belting donated printing accessories worth over P10,000.00 to



which Team Engineers added over P2000.00 in stationery.

The handing over was made by Mr Obert Chombo, Senior Project Manager, in the company of the Head of Jwaneng Underground

Project Exploration Access Development, Mr Benjamin Swartz and representatives from the business partners. Both Messrs Chombo and Swartz emphasised the importance of books in learning, shaping the

future and making life brilliant. Mr Chombo further emphasised the importance of the kgotla as the traditional meeting place for the community. Some of the business partners,



Kgaga Belting, Excavator Hire and Redpath Mining were reported to have used the kgotla for recruitment of unskilled and semi-skilled labour. The move signifies and cements the need to have a sound structure

to enhance togetherness and social cohesion.

The Regional Education Director, Mr Tuelo Monty Rakgabo and Kgosi Mohurutshi Maipolelo each received the gift appropriate for

their offices. Mabutsane District Council Chairman, Hon Tuelo Zulu closed the ceremony with words of gratitude and appeal to continue the benevolence for the lifespan of the mining operations.

Botswana seeks control of De Beers

Botswana's government wants to take a controlling stake in De Beers, the country's mining minister said, casting another shadow over the sale of the diamond producer by owner Anglo American.

Bogolo Kenewendo told the Financial Times on Wednesday that President Duma Boko "remains resolute in his quest to increase Botswana's stake in De Beers to ensure Botswana's full control over this strategic national asset and the entire value chain including marketing". Boko said last week that De Beers, which sources the majority of its diamonds from Botswana, was not selling enough and "maybe we should take over and sell them ourselves", complicating what is already a challenging process for London-listed Anglo.

The comments come ahead of an early August deadline for bids to be submitted to Anglo from potential buyers of the diamonds business. Kenewendo said any sale of the company "without our support will be difficult to achieve". She added: "Our partners at Anglo American have, regrettably, failed to manage the process transparently or in co-ordination with the government and with our support."

While De Beers said in February that Botswana was considering increasing its stake, the comments appear to mark a shift in tone and ambition. Anglo is under pressure to complete its exit from De Beers this year as part of a restructuring promised after it last year rebuffed



President Boko with Mineral Minister Kenewendo

[PIC:PINO KILANO]

a £39bn takeover bid from BHP. Botswana currently owns a 15 per cent stake in De Beers.

The African nation also owns half of Debswana, the joint venture with De Beers that underpins the miner's diamond supply from the country. Anglo is pursuing a "dual-track" process, seeking bids for the diamond company while considering a public listing of De Beers if an

attractive offer fails to emerge. But the sale process comes in the midst of a slump in the diamond market. The sector has been hit by growing competition from lab-grown alternatives to naturally occurring precious stones, and a pullback in demand from markets including China.

The slump has pushed De Beers to amass its biggest stockpile of

diamonds since the financial crisis. Anglo said in a statement: "As our long-standing partner, we are of course engaging the government of the Republic of Botswana on a regular basis and at all appropriate stages of our process in which we will either sell or list and demerge our 85 per cent shareholding in De Beers." In spite of Boko's comments, analysts have questioned whether Botswana's

government will be able to raise the money needed for a bid for De Beers.

Kenewendo said the financing to buy out De Beers "is not an issue", without explaining how the country might raise funding.

The budget deficit of Botswana, which depends on diamonds for roughly two-thirds of exports, is expected to widen to 7.5 per cent by 2026. Speaking this month, Boko said Botswana was "broke" because of the slump in diamond exports. Botswana has a rare investment-grade credit rating in Africa but has little experience borrowing on international bond markets, versus concessional loans from development banks.

Recommended The Big Read How the diamond industry lost its sparkle The country recently borrowed \$300mn from the African Development Bank to help tackle the budget deficit. Any firm opposition by Botswana's government to Anglo's plans would be dire for a potential sale. "Without Botswana and Debswana, De Beers are nowhere. If the Botswana government is not on board, they could kibosh the whole thing — Botswana is approximately 70 per cent of De Beers' production," said a person familiar with the bidding process. Boko's comments about taking greater control were "aimed towards Debswana, as opposed to the whole business", said one analyst, noting that what happened to both was intensely political. Source: Financial Times

Leshibitse declared Special Economic Zone



Dow

[PIC:PINO KILANO]

BAKANG TIRO

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PARLIAMENT ON FRIDAY adopted a motion by Kgatleng West MP, Dr Unity Dow declaring Leshibitse village in Kgatleng district a horticultural special economic zone in the country. She also proposed for recognition of residential homesteads and small horticulture holdings in the village, facilitate the drilling and equipping of communal boreholes and support the necessary infrastructure and generally undertake efforts for the success of the programme.

Presenting the motion, Dr Dow said Leshibitse village is a strategic location for unlocking the horticultural sector potential taking into consideration the vast fertile land and water abundance in Leshibitse. She said setting up a special economic zone in Leshibitse particularly for horticulture purposes would be critical in meeting the country's target of being food secure as well cutting import bill associated with the importing of horticulture produce.

Dr Dow said horticulture is important because it is not a standalone in nature but supports other industries around. "Leshibitse already has portable water. So, there is clean water and there is no chance of contamination. I am

asking government to drill boreholes strategically in Leshibitse so that everyone in the village can access water especially the small farmers so that they can join in the horticulture space too," said Dow, adding that for the Leshibitse horticultural zone to become fully functional, there must be a political will with the ministries responsible must say how they do it and how they cost it so that it can fully works. Dr Dow said the project could in future be replicated in another area in Botswana because it entails learning as part of its implementation.

According to Dow, this kind of economic activity will turn Leshibitse into an economically vibrant village as the project will bring more people to the village and setup industries leading to a developed economic hub.

MPs endorsed the motion and affirmed that horticulture is one of the important sectors that Botswana can attain food security with and creation of jobs. Maun West MP Caterpillar Hikuama said Leshibitse horticulture farm will complement the government ambition to produce food amidst import ban on some vegetable products. Hikuama said being self sufficient in food production demonstrates that the country is independent and progressive as it will not be spending more money in importing food even those that can be produced locally.

Forward-Looking Move

ISAAC RAMATSHABA*

Understanding the Opportunities of the Pula Adjustment

SINCE THE MINISTRY OF Finance announced that the downward rate of crawl will be increased to 2.76% from 1.51%, there have been many discussions on what this could mean for Botswana. The government has made it clear on their motivation for this change, which is to essentially give local producers a fighting chance in global trade by allowing our exports to be more competitive.

To contextualise what this new policy change means to Botswana, below are some key points to understand:

1. How will this change affect the prices of things we buy every day? - The changes as announced by the Ministry of Finance, mean that prices may rise immediately for the importers. Prices from the everyday items such as food, fuel, clothes and electronics are likely to be affected as they become more expensive to bring into the country due to a weaker Pula.

2. Does this mean goods from South Africa and other countries will now become more expensive? - Precisely yes. Goods bought outside the country (imports) will cost more since it now requires more Pula to pay for the same amount of goods.

3. Should we expect prices to rise faster because of these changes? - Yes. Inflation will go up since businesses will pass on the higher cost of imports to consumers. However, the Central Bank is monitoring inflation with an objective of keeping it within the 3-6% range.

4. Will this adjustment help or hurt efforts to keep inflation under control? - Initially, it might push inflation higher, but over time, it could help by reducing reliance on imported goods, thus encouraging local production, which can stabilize prices in the long run.

5. How does this affect loans or debt repayments, especially if we borrow in foreign currencies?

- Borrowers with loans in foreign currencies may face higher repayment costs in Pula terms. It's important for businesses and individuals to review their exposure to foreign debt.

6. How will this help local businesses that export goods to other countries? Could this help protect or even create jobs? - Yes. Local exporters benefit because their goods become cheaper for foreign buyers. This makes Botswana's exports more competitive and could lead to business growth and job creation.

7. What does this mean for businesses that rely on imports — will they face higher costs? - Yes. Import-reliant businesses will see increased costs. Some may pass these costs to customers, while others may seek local alternatives or renegotiate supplier terms.

8. How can ordinary Batswana prepare or plan financially for these changes? - People can prepare by budgeting more carefully, avoiding

unnecessary debt, supporting local products, and seeking financial advice to manage any foreign currency exposure.

9. Why is the government making this change now? How will it help the country in the long run? - The government aims to preserve the foreign exchange reserves by encouraging interbank activity, enhancing the competitiveness of domestic industries, with the potential to improve economic diversification in the long run.

10. How will this change help Botswana's economy become stronger and more self-reliant in the future? By making imports costlier and exports more competitive, the economy will be encouraged to produce more locally. This shift can promote industrial growth, reduce dependence on imports, and build a more sustainable economy. Also, when Botswana's produce becomes cheaper in other countries, they will be more competitive.



In as much as the short to medium term effects may seem daunting, there is a real opportunity that the country can benefit from in the long-term. These are part of the building blocks in the nation's bold economic recovery plan. There will be discomfort and learnings along the way, but adjust we must and adjust we will.

*Head of Strategic Business Analyst at Standard Chartered Bank Botswana

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BNF emerges from congress

LETICIA MAKUKU

THE BOTSWANA National Front held this year's congress in Palapye from the 20th to the 22nd of July as the party was also celebrating 60 years of existence. The three day congress will go in the history books as the President of Party is now the President of Botswana and some members of the central committee are cabinet ministers.

Giving a keynote address during the official opening, President Advocate Duma Boko lauded Dr Micus Chimbombi, who has been the vice president of the party until 2024 General elections. Boko highlighted that Dr Chimbombi is currently battling health issues and wished him a full recovery so that he can rejoin the frontlines of the struggle. He thanked the central committee for having diligently led despite all the challenges they encountered. Boko acknowledged their partners in the coalition which is Botswana People's Party (BPP), who he described as a dependable ally for the BNF. He said their biggest cry has been allocation of land, they want to see control and ownership of



land resting in the people of this country.

He also acknowledged the Alliance for Progressives Party (AP) led by Ndaba Gaolathe who he says has faced challenges in the political space because they were new on the

opposition ranks. He said fierce circumstances conspired to drive a wedge between BNF and AP but they navigated those challenges as what united them was a lot stronger than what divided them. He said BPP and AP represent the essence

of BNF is about hence the coalition. Boko said coalition is the future of politics and encouraged the representatives from Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and African National Congress (ANC) to rise above differences and come

together for the betterment of their people. Boko stated that BNF was written off after the party split in Palapye in 1998 and the Botswana Congress Party (BCP) was formed. He said they survived and stabilized the party with previous leaders and built the BNF to what it is today.

Boko also noted that after achieving success, one must guard against entitlement, complacency, laziness arrogance and other ills. He noted that the party's ideology of "Puo Phaa" has been used as a vehicle to shield vulgar and abrasive actions and communications by some members and the Party itself. Boko highlighted

that heading to this congress, there has been crisis after crisis. There have been errors, miscommunication, inexplicable decisions being taken by members of the incumbent executive committee which has caused unrest and unease amongst the membership.

"There has been unsavory verbal exchanges between members, where we stand now, we grapple with issues of divergent nature. We allow petty squabbles to distract us from the task at hand. You must govern yourselves at national and international levels. It is by your guidance and escorts to steer me when I have strayed that we have arrived at this moment. It is only through our sustained and continued unity and cooperation at all levels that we can resuscitate this country. The country we inherited was treading a fine line between economic chaos and social collapse. We have not been afforded the luxury of relaxation, we have come into a war zone where everything has been tough and more," he said.

Boko noted that they have begun a National Transformation Program that amongst other things will spread wealth to all persons in this country even to that previously demonized the party and continue to do so. Boko said a group of students are threatening strikes over the promised P2500 and stated they will be soon be granted their request.

On the second day of the congress, President Boko addressed party members ahead

of the election process. He chastised party members who leak confidential and internal information about the party. He also dismissed claims that the bye election meeting which was held before the election process was about compromise, he critiqued some media houses for being quick to write untruthful information without checking and verifying facts.

After a long election process and counting, Bantsi Moses won the Chairmanship of the party while the Deputy Secretary General position was taken by Shawn Nthatile. Minister of State President, Moeti Mhswa emerged victorious on the Vice presidency seat after locking horns with the Minister of Justice and Correctional services, Nelson Ramaotwana. The Minister of Health, Dr Stephen Modise scooped the Secretary General position defeating the Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Kethlalefhe Motshegwa, who was holding the position ahead of the congress.

Arafat Khan won the treasure position while Johannes Motsamai took the Organizing Secretary position. The information and publicity seat was taken by Carter Joseph and the Political Education seat was taken by Mompoti Seleka. Happy Bashe emerged victorious over the Health and Social Welfare position. International Affairs position was taken by Bakang Lesole while the Labour Affairs position was taken by Lasten Modu and Chimbombi took the Economic Affairs position.

HIV/AIDS

FROM PAGE 1

affect treatment adherence and viral suppression among people living with HIV.

Non-government organizations (NGOs) leading fight against HIV/AIDS fear that the shortage could lead to challenges in providing timely and accurate testing for patients. The Director of Success Capital -an NGO, Dumiso Gacha said precautions should be taken to prevent any negative impacts on patients. "Many of our clients long reported shortages in treatment and PrEP as far back as January 2025 in Gaborone and end November 2024 in underserved rural areas such as the Okavango district Funding cuts have only worsened the situation. We had sent our volunteers to check availability of services, and in some facilities noted that HIV testing and counseling is only carried out on specific days or times by specific staff due to staffing and resource shortages," said Gacha.

Meanwhile, BONELA Vice Chairperson, Kennedy Mupeli applauded MoH transparency in addressing the concerns about the shortage of CD4 and viral load reagents. "It is encouraging that deliveries resumed in June and more are expected. Disruptions in access to these tests can affect trust in the health system and have an impact on treatment outcomes. It is important that the ministry continues to update the public and works closely with civil society and people living with HIV organizations," he said, indicating that the two-month gap highlights the need to strengthen procurement and supply systems to avoid future disruptions.

Onica on a Journey of Hope

Q: Kindly introduce yourself.

OL: My name is Onica Lekuntwane. I am the PR Manager at Journey of Hope Botswana.

Tell us about Journey of Hope as an organisation.

OL: Journey of Hope Botswana is a volunteer-based NGO which is focused on breast cancer awareness. We spread awareness about the importance of early detection, through the distribution of breast cancer information, teaching the self-breast examination technique and offering free breast screening services to the general public.

Q: Take us through some of community development initiatives that the organisation has undertaken in recent years.

OL: The NGO has been around since 2009. Over our 16 years of existence, we have consistently undertaken an annual trip known as the Big Journey - to different Districts throughout the country, where we offer free awareness and screening with permission from the Ministry of Health.

We have distributed breast cancer awareness posters and pamphlets - written in English and Setswana - to many clinics and offices throughout the country.

We also offer a free monthly breast screening clinic in Gaborone, and when funds permit, we take this service to other towns and villages throughout the country.

Q: Journey of Hope is a partner (beneficiary) of Mascom 2025 Batanani Charity Walk, what does this mean for the organisation?

OL: Being a beneficiary is a great honour! It tells us that we are doing the right thing, and encourages us to keep going despite our challenges. We look forward to using the proceeds from the Mascom 2025 Batanani Charity Walk to provide more screening opportunities throughout the country.

We hope to also work with other stakeholders to facilitate quicker turnaround times for diagnosis and to support patients in their healing journey, so that we are truly stepping in unity against breast cancer

Q: What are some of challenges that Journey of Hope Botswana is facing?

OL: As a volunteer-based NGO, we rely on the empathy, time and skills of individuals.

A volunteer based Non-Government al Organisation (NGO) Journey of Hope Botswana will be the beneficiary of the annual Mascom 2025 Batanani Charity Walk scheduled for 9th August 2025 in Francistown. Public Relations Manager at Journey of Hope Botswana, Onica Lekuntwane fields questions from **STAFF WRITER BAKANG TIRO.**



Lekuntwane

This is done without pay, and also dictates that most of our activities take place on weekends. We are grateful that many of our volunteers - including Doctors and Nurses - have stuck with us over the

years in spite of this. We also rely on sponsorship to maintain our office, service our bikes and kombi, and to travel around the country offering free awareness and screening. Sometimes patients struggle to find money

for transport, accommodation and meals when travelling to Gaborone or Francistown to access diagnostic or oncology services. This then makes our efforts towards early detection seem futile. With funding, we are able to reduce this challenge.

Q: What else can you tell us

OL: Breast cancer affects both men and women. Making healthy lifestyle changes such as exercising regularly, reducing our alcohol intake, making healthy meal choices and removing all smoking from our lives can go a long way in fighting non-communicable diseases like breast cancer. Let us not wait until there is something wrong, before we touch, look and check any changes to our breasts - even if there is no pain.

VACANCIES

Pennywise Investments (Pty) Ltd is looking for the following professional;

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- Collaborate with design and sales teams to ensure that requirements are met.
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- Possess a strong understanding of our products, our competition in the industry and positioning.
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QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE:

- A bachelor Degree in any business field is required.
- A minimum of 2 years in a post at a senior level.
- Experience in marketing, finance and sales tools.
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Apply with your CV, References and certificates to the:

Manager- Human Resources
Pennywise Investments (Pty) Ltd
Private Bag 00278
Gaborone or call 3900406 for inquiries

You can hand deliver the application to Plot 880, Unit 3 Gaborone International Commerce Park, Gaborone.

Closing Date: 11 August 2025

DE BEERS GROUP

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) – STANFORD SEED BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION ADVISORS

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

De Beers Group in collaboration with Stanford Graduate School of Business deliver the Seed Transformation Program (STP) in Botswana, Namibia and South Africa- a business leadership program designed to help entrepreneurs to transform and scale their businesses. The partnership is looking for interested parties to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) for the work of Business Transformation Advisor (BTA) for a period of twelve (12) months.

EOI REQUIREMENTS

Submissions are requested on a non-committal basis and are intended to assist DBGSS to assess the suitability to offer business transformation services. All interested parties should submit an EOI indicating their capability, resources and experience in delivering services of this nature. Shortlisted parties will be invited to submit more detailed proposals at a later stage.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Successful candidates will be able to effectively deliver the following responsibilities:

- Translate the intensive curriculum of the STP into actionable insights for business leaders and management teams of small to mid-sized companies through in-person and online workshops.
- Provide one-on-one and small-group guidance to address individual and group learning gaps.
- Organize and facilitate regular business leader network meetings for assigned groups of participants.
- Through cross-regional collaboration, contribute to the development of supplementary learning materials to support Stanford Seed programs (tools, regional case studies, frameworks, etc).
- Support De Beers' mission to collaborate with various stakeholders in its producer countries including but not limited to government and entrepreneurship development agencies.

CRITERIA

- A degree in management, business administration, economics, statistics or related field at an accredited university is required.
- Master's degree in business, organizational design, leadership, or project management at an accredited university strongly preferred.
- Seven or more years of relevant business management experience in a small to mid-sized company, or within a division of a large company, preferably in Botswana, South Africa and Namibia.
- An advanced level of fluent English skills both oral and written, including active listening and interpersonal skills needed to be an excellent facilitator.

SUBMISSIONS

All submissions should be sent via email and titled **Provision Of Business Transformation Advisor Services for the Stanford Seed Transformation Program** and must be emailed to **&DBGSSProcurement@debeersgroup.com** no later than **17:00hrs on the 8th of August 2025.**

Late submissions, physical submissions, facsimile, telephone or telefaxed submissions will not be accepted.

LIMITATIONS

This is an Expression of Interest (EOI) only; it is not a procurement document nor is it a request for tender. The information contained in this EOI is intended for information purposes only to assist interested parties in assessing whether to respond to such request. No representation or warranty express is made by De Beers Group or any of its agents, as to the accuracy or completeness of such information. Neither De Beers Group nor its agents will be responsible for, and hereby expressly disclaim, any and all liability for any errors, omissions or inaccuracies in connection therewith. In its response to this EOI, the respondent must disclose to De Beers Group, any potential conflict of interest that might compromise this process. If such a conflict of interest does exist, De Beers Group may, at its discretion, refuse to consider the response in question.

Stanford | Seed Southern Africa
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

In collaboration with De Beers Group

CHOPPIES

CLASSIC COMBO

PAN OR EXCELLA Cooking Oil + TASTIC Rice + SUPER A1 OR CHOPPIES Maize Meal OR CHOPPIES Sorghum + ROBERTSONS Spices + CHOPPIES Macaroni + ALL GOLD Tomato Sauce + C&B OR EXCELLA Mayonnaise

ALL FOR 334⁹⁹

ESSENTIAL COMBO

PAN Cooking Oil + EXCELLA/CHOPPIES Rice + CHOPPIES Maize Meal + CHOPPIES OR MAMAS Mayonnaise + WELLINGTON OR MAMAS Tomato Sauce + LAGANE Macaroni + ROBERTSONS Spices

ALL FOR 299⁹⁹

FAMILY FEAST COMBO

PAN Cooking Oil + ALL GOLD Tomato Sauce + SUNBLEST Macaroni + EXCELLA OR CHOPPIES Rice + CHOPPIES Sorghum Meal OR CHOPPIES Maize Meal + EXCELLA OR NOLA Mayonnaise

ALL FOR 324⁹⁹

Megasave THE TRUSTED TRADING CLUB **WINTER: SAVE POSSIBLE**

1x12.5kg 105⁹⁹

WHITE STAR Super Maize Meal

1x12.5kg 119⁹⁹

CHOPPIES White Bread Flour

BUY 5 OR MORE 123⁹⁹ each

TASTIC Rice

1x8kg 121⁹⁹

CHOPPIES White Sugar

1x2Ltr 47⁹⁹

CHOPPIES Sunflower Oil

5kg 114⁹⁹

DAAWAT Rozana Basmati Rice

250g 22⁹⁹

CHOPPIES Loose Tea each

10 PACK

10x50g 37⁹⁹

KNORR Soup

1kg 34⁹⁹

JUNGLE Oats each

450g 34⁹⁹

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Opinions, Reviews & Analysis

Comment

WHAT TOOK PLACE AT THE recent presidential press conference was not just a briefing, it was a blurring of lines, a public event that unraveled into a masterclass in how not to host a media engagement in a functioning democracy. While the President came prepared with answers, sometimes long-winded, sometimes reflective, the setting in which it all took place revealed a deeper rot in Botswana's approach to media-government engagement, protocol, and institutional decorum.

The sight of high-ranking civil servants, some of whom had no speaking role or technical reason to be there, cramming the room and clapping on cue, turned what should have been a sober dialogue with the fourth estate into something resembling a cabinet reunion with a cheering squad.

This wasn't a press conference. It was optics. And not the good kind. "Press conferences are not rallies, and they are certainly not platforms for civil servants and government sympathizers to clap for executive pronouncements".

When senior bureaucrats abandon their

Claps, Cameras and Chaos

■ When Press Conferences Become Political Theatre

desks to sit in press briefings, only to sit idle, applaud, and crowd out working journalists, it sends a chilling message: media scrutiny is being stage-managed, not respected.

A journalist attending to ask hard questions should not have to wade through layers of political handlers, comms officers, and off-duty PSEs treating the session like a front-row seat at a public lecture. Unless they are briefing, civil servants have no place in the press pool. Their presence is not only unnecessary, it distorts the atmosphere, intimidating reporters and undermining the very independence such platforms are supposed to ensure.

That the Director of Proceedings was Benson Phuthego, a respected media person (newsreader and presenter at Botswana Television), adds another layer of discomfort. While he may be competent, journalists should not host government press conferences. The conflict of interest is glaring. It compromises perception and priority.

Indeed, the questions were filtered.

Government media were given the floor. Independent and critical voices were, once again, pushed to the background, both literally and figuratively. And worse still, the emcee/reporter at one point urged the audience to clap hands for the President. That alone should be disqualifying.

Presidential Monologue

For a President who's promised transparency and accountability, it was telling that he spoke for nearly 90% of the session, leaving time for only one round of questions, despite the significance of the trip he had just returned from. Media briefings should not be presidential monologues. They are, by design, supposed to invite public interrogation through the media. A two-hour session dominated by executive narration, punctuated by applause and perfunctory questions, is no substitute for real dialogue. The Mass Media Complex, under the Ministry for State President, has become the de-facto venue for presidential pressers. But the optics here are problematic. BTV controls the narrative,

prioritizing camera angles and coverage, while sidelining independent media in both airtime and access. The very setup breeds a culture of control, not collaboration.

If the President is truly committed to media freedom, he should consider holding press briefings at neutral venues, at Mmegi boardroom, The Voice conference room, or even in the press gallery at Parliament. Obviously, impossible. Let the message be: this presidency meets the media on common ground, not on a state-owned stage.

Optics of Applause

It may seem trivial, but it isn't. The sound of hands clapping during what's meant to be an interrogation of national policy is jarring, especially for a listener tuned in via radio or livestream. It begs the question: who are these people clapping? Why are they here? Are they staff, sycophants, or both? Worse, it seems like its journalists clapping!

It undermines the credibility of the moment. When public servants, whose duty is to the people, not the party,

applaud during a policy defence, it begins to look like a loyalty parade. And that perception kills the seriousness of the event.

Across Party Lines

According to insiders, most of these civil servants were not formally invited. They were merely informed that there would be a press briefing, and they showed up, unfiltered, unrestrained, and unbriefed.

This raises a governance concern: who is managing these platforms, and who allows such free-for-alls to continue?

Some media veterans recall how, during previous presidential handovers, similar resistance occurred. Cameras were forcibly moved to make way for "big people." Many journalists refused. It was, in their words, "a silent stand for integrity." The same must be done now. Let us not pretend this began with the UDC government. Cadres of the BNF of old have been crowding out journalists, cheering and clapping during press briefings by their leadership from time immemorial. The same obtains at Botswana Congress Party (BCP) press briefing, where party activists often fill the room for whatever reason. The BDP was infamous for stacking press briefings with party activists masquerading as journalists or "stakeholders." Under President Masisi, media dinners turned into public relations

carnivals. This is a cross-party bad habit, and it must stop now. If not, the media must take a unified stand: if a press conference begins to look like a rally, walk out.

Tone and Emotions

Some observers took issue with the intensity of the President's tone during parts of the briefing. He was visibly frustrated, especially when challenged about his 100-day report. It's understandable. The President is human, and Botswana's socio-political atmosphere is heavy with expectation. But leadership requires composure. Transparency requires two-way communication, even when the questions sting. A leader doesn't need to be soft, but he must be accessible, even under pressure. The current government has inherited a fragile media environment. It must decide whether it will fortify or further fracture it.

Presidential press conferences are not just communication exercises. They are democratic rituals. When they are polluted with applause, cluttered with civil servants, and hosted like fanfare, they lose their purpose. And the public sees right through it.

Let the President lead boldly, but let the media do its job. Without fear. Without clapping. Without compromise.

Hunyepa dismisses media reports

IT HAS COME TO THIS OFFICE ATTENTION that an online publication, Ghetto Metro Online, has published a series of stories containing serious misrepresentations about our Member of Parliament's role and work in the Tati West constituency.

These reports claim that:

- He is absent from the constituency,
- He has done nothing regarding the transport challenges affecting constituents, and
- He was unavailable for comment.

These accusations are false, misleading, and deeply regrettable but offer us the opportunity to bring to light as follows:

1. On the 'Transporters' Matter

The MP has never had a standoff with the Francistown-Ramokgwebana transport operators as alleged. To the contrary, he has actively engaged the transporters and taken up their concerns with relevant authorities, including border and police officials. There is formal correspondence from the office which has been shared with the publication.

2. Availability for Comment

The claim that the MP was not available for comment is disingenuous. On the said day, the MP was in Cabinet, a national duty which understandably limits phone access. His phones recorded missed calls that he later returned, but were not picked up. In addition, there are no further calls, WhatsApp messages, or emails received from the Ghetto Metro. They are unable to produce proof because there was no attempt made. This raises questions about the intent



Hunyepa

and editorial ethics.

3. On Constituency Engagement
The narrative of an "absent MP" is an insult to the hard work and extensive engagements that our MP has consistently undertaken. In the past few weeks alone, his itinerary does not fit the 'absent MP' tag:

3.1. Community consultations: He has conducted Kgotla meetings across all 27 villages in Tati West, including Ramokgwebana, Jackalas No. 1, and the last meetings were in Masunga and Nlaphwane on the 3rd July 2025.

3.2. Stakeholder engagement: he has hosted stakeholder meetings with 27 VDCs, 27 Dikgosi, Council officials, trade unions, and held Labour Day events in Makaleng and Masunga and the Moroka cluster fencing project

4. Social engagement: the MP has joined community social activities such as the BTC Masunga activation Marathon; beauty pageants and football tournaments

4.1. Sponsored walk: He recently

participated in the 10km sponsored walk at Ramoja CJSS; officiated at events in local schools, including Nlaphwane Primary School Victory Party.

5. Tour of infrastructure Developments: He inspected road and bridge projects like Letsholathebe-Sechele-Vukwi, and visited facilities including Masunga Hospital, Masunga Snr school, Batanani CJSS, Ramoja CJSS, Zwenshambe CJSS, Zwenshambe Brigade, Pelaelo CJSS, Moroka Primary School (Special Education), Masunga stadium, BPC, WUC, Labour and Wildlife offices, Tati Landboard, Moroka Cluster Fencing, Masunga Police, Ramokgwebana border, Mbalambi border line, etc.

6. Crime: He has toured illegal mining sites in Kalakamati.

7. Economic opportunities: the MP also visited the newly acquired 45,000 ha land from Tati Company to assess economic opportunities for our people.

8. Media relations
The role of the media in our democracy is crucial. We welcome scrutiny at any given time and also appreciate the opportunity to set records straight where necessary. The MP remains committed to serving the people of Tati West with integrity, and urges the media and in this case, Ghetto Metro Online to be part of this journey of transforming the constituency. Our doors and in particular that of the MP are open all the time for verification of news.

Access to the MP is assured in Masunga and at the Ministry of Child Welfare and Basic Education, as well as through his Private Secretary and the constituency team.

Let us build Tati West—together.
Office of the Member of Parliament, Tati West

A new dawn for labour relations



MBOKI CHILISA

BOTSWANA IS ON THE VERGE OF A transformative shift in its labour relations framework. On 6 June 2025, the Employment and Labour Relations Bill No. 10 of 2025 was published

in the Government Gazette. It consolidates the Employment Act [Cap 47:01], The Trade Union and Employers' Organisation Act [Cap 48:01] and the Trade Disputes Act [Cap 48:02].

From an individual employment law perspective: it increases maternity leave from 12 to 14 weeks; it introduces 4 days of family responsibility leave; in addition to the 20 minimum sick leave days that an employee is currently entitled, it introduces 20 days of hospitalisation leave. It also introduces 5 days of paternity leave; 10 weeks of adoption leave.

It strengthens job security, by requiring a fair procedure to be followed in terminating employees who are still on probation. It requires that, unless there is a commercial rationale, a worker should not be employed for a fixed-term contract for more than 12 months. The failure to renew a fixed-term contract where there is an expectation of a renewal constitutes an unfair dismissal.

On the collective labour law front, in future recognition will not be a precondition for a trade union to enjoy organisational rights.

On the dispute resolution front, the Bill establishes an independent dispute resolution structure, namely, the Mediation and Arbitration Commission. The party referring the dispute is the one who decides whether it goes for arbitration or the Industrial Court.

Batswana must bear responsibility for collapse of cattle industry

■ Our environment is fragile, we must conserve it at all costs

GRAHAME MCLEOD

THE CATTLE INDUSTRY IS THE BACKBONE of Botswana's rural economy, and is a crucial source of income for many farmers, the majority of whom are small scale subsistence farmers. In a recent address, President Duma Boko told Batswana that the national cattle herd has plummeted from 3.5 million to only 1.1 million now. It is now a shadow of its former self. That's bad news! He also promised to reverse this decline and to boost cattle numbers to some 5 million by the end of this year.

Reasons for decline

Most farmers are aware that Botswana has a semi-arid climate and has an average annual rainfall of just 450mm. And in the south west of the country rainfall dips as low as 200mm, or even less. Also, droughts are all too common, and even during years with above average rainfall, long dry spells can occur. For example, most places received above average rainfall in the 2024/25 rainy season. Although I recorded 400mm between mid-December and mid-January in Tonota, I recorded no rainfall at all in the month of March, despite this being a rainy season month! Plus, a long dry season, high summer temperatures, diseases such as foot and mouth, parasites like ticks and liver flukes... The list is endless; no wonder, then, that the odds are stacked heavily against our cattle farmers. Botswana has, indeed, a fragile environment!

And yet despite such problems, both the government and our farmers have failed to heed the warning signs that have been all too obvious for everyone to see for decades, since before independence. In the past, cattle farmers were eager to increase their herds in spite of the challenges that they face. And now they are paying the price for such foolish decisions; they only looked at the short term, the income that they could earn this year... Having large herds would surely mean a fat and healthy bank balance?

But not so; we reap what we sow! The collapse in cattle numbers is nature's way of showing us that keeping large cattle herds is not sustainable in the long run. Why did we not see the writing on the wall? After all, experts have been exhorting us to take action before it is too late! And for decades, the Botswana Meat Commission (BMC) has slaughtered farmers' livestock, and they have always been encouraging farmers to increase the offtake of their cattle by selling more animals to the BMC. In most years, the BMC has slaughtered far fewer numbers of cattle than what they are capable of doing; there has been excess capacity. One reason for this is that many farmers have complained about the lower prices that the BMC pays them for their animals. And this has resulted in financial losses for the BMC, plus less income for farmers which makes it difficult for them to modernise their cattle farming operations and implement sustainable methods of raising livestock. Now if farmers were to sell more animals to the BMC, then the BMC would become more profitable and so might be able to pay farmers more for their livestock.

The truth is that we have neglected the environment to our cost. Now farmers should consider a number of things before they buy cattle. Firstly, the stocking rate. This is the number of animals in a given area, and is usually expressed in the number of hectares per livestock unit. Now one livestock unit is equivalent to one mature cow, or bull, with a live weight of 450kg. So, the stocking rate may be calculated if the farmer knows the area of his farm and the number of animals that he has. For example, let us say that a farmer's farm in eastern Botswana has an area of 1000 hectares and he keeps 500



cattle on it. That means that the stocking rate will be 2 hectares per cow/bull.

Carrying capacity

This is the area of land that is needed to support an animal without damaging, or using up, natural resources such as grass, soils and water supply. Such an animal will be able to produce efficiently (for example, beef or milk) and yields will be high. In other words, it is the best stocking rate for an area.

Now if a farmer knows the carrying capacity of his land, then he can determine if his present stocking rate for the area is good, or bad. For example, the carrying capacity for much of eastern Botswana is about 15 hectares per cow/bull. Now if we compare this carrying capacity with the stocking rate of our farmer (2 hectares per cow/bull) we can clearly see that the amount of land for each animal is much smaller (2 hectares) than should be the case (15 hectares). Hence there is overstocking.

Now this will mean that the resources in the local environment are not sufficient to support all his animals. That is bad news! His animals will quickly eat up all the good grasses which will be replaced by grasses of lower quality. And that means that his animals will now have to eat larger quantities of grass to absorb the same amount of nutrients such as nitrogen, calcium and magnesium. And in time, even these poor grasses will be eaten up and disappear resulting in areas of bare soil. Finally, these areas will be invaded by weeds and acacia thorn bushes such as mosunyane and mongana which may form dense, impenetrable thickets. Now very little land will be available for grazing by cattle. So, overstocking has resulted in overgrazing. Clearly, stocking the land with too many animals is not sustainable; after only a few years the results of overstocking will be seen. And the rangelands over much of eastern Botswana are, sadly, in this condition.

And the situation may be worse in the drier Kalahari. Here the carrying capacity will be much lower and may average 25 or more hectares per livestock unit. This is because this area has lower rainfall which will result in less vegetation for animals to feed on. Also, there are no rivers in this area and borehole water is often salty. Finally, much of the area is covered with deep sand. These soils are not fertile and, therefore, do not support very nutritious grasses. Hence, animals here will be forced to eat larger amounts of vegetation to maintain their body mass.

Now what would we see if our farmer's stocking rate was the same as the carrying capacity in his area? He would now be stocking his land correctly. Now with an area of 1000 hectares and a carrying capacity of 15 hectares per animal, he would now keep just 66 cows/bulls

on his farm, and not 500! This would mean that the resources in the local environment would be enough to support all his animals. Therefore, the good quality grasses will not die out, and there will be enough water for his animals. He will now begin to farm sustainably! This will result in his animals being of better quality which, in turn, will attract higher prices at the BMC. And more cash in his pocket! Advice from the experts will not have fallen on deaf ears!

However, unfortunately, few farmers have followed suit. Now why is this so? Firstly, many small farmers rear cattle in communal areas. Such areas are owned communally by the tribe and not by the farmers who farm the land. And many farmers may graze their cattle on the same area of land. For these reasons, individual farmers are not motivated to improve the condition of rangelands and to implement good farming practices. Secondly, communal farmers may attach more importance to quantity than quality of animals. A farmer with a large herd may be well respected and enjoy much social prestige in his village. And he may also keep animals for use in traditional ceremonies, as draught power, or simply because he enjoys them. The thought that keeping so many cattle may have adverse effects on the environment may not even cross his mind!

Five million unrealistic

Boko's prediction that he can increase the size of the national cattle herd to 5 million is far-fetched – it is both unachievable and unrealistic! Just a pipe dream. Why? Let us look at the mathematics. If the present national herd stands at 1.1 million head, then we can assume that half of this number will be female – about 500 000. And of this number, perhaps only half, 250 000, will be able to give birth to calves; the rest will either be too young, or too old, to become pregnant. But that's not all!

Of this number, not all will be pregnant at present. And since the gestation period (the duration of pregnancy) for cattle is long (about 285 days), then many cattle which are now pregnant may only give birth next year! And even if all the 250 000 cows were pregnant now, and will give birth before end of the year, that number of calves will only increase the national herd by 250 000 to make a total of 1.1 million + 250 000 = 1 350 000. And cattle are not well known for being in the business of producing twins, triplets, quadruplets...! So, for the national herd to reach 5 million so soon will take several years, or even decades; unless, of course, we import millions of cattle this year from other countries! But the Umbrella for Democratic Change often complained about former president Masisi buying just a few dozen animals from the U.S.A. and Australia when they were in opposition!

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We invite readers to write Letters to the Editor on various issues, be they social, political, economic or entertainment related. Although we support and encourage healthy debates and sharing of alternative views, we will not publish any letter that is slanderous or libelous.

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JULY - SEPT 2025



MOTSETE-PHILLIPS
MOVES TO
GENEVA

TRAITS OF
SUCCESSFUL
WOMEN

BOTSWANA'S
MATHS
WHIZZKID

OODI
WEAVERS'
LEGACY

De Beers and Debswana have stepped in to help protect Oodi Weavers' cultural legacy and boost efforts to create a new generation of weavers

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Business

DISASTER

Foreign reserves get depleted

- Significant drop linked to decline in diamonds revenue
- Reserves went down by P0.9 billion as 31st May 2025
- Govt forced to borrow more and more
- Ndaba believes economic recovery is attainable

BAKANG TIRO

editors@thepatriot.co.bw

AN ECONOMIC BRIEFING BY THE BANK of Botswana (BoB) executives on Friday painted a gloomy picture for the country's economic prospects as foreign exchange reserves continue to drastically get depleted driven primarily by weaker demand for diamonds which has led to significant reduction in mineral income.

The foreign reserves had been considered to be strategic investment for the country as Botswana continues to grapple with economic crisis that forced the government to look for money elsewhere – borrowing.

Prior to the BoB briefing, Parliament on Thursday approved a loan worth P6.7 billion comprising of P4 billion (304 million US dollars) loan from African Development Bank (AfDB) and P2.7 billion (200 million US dollars) from OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID).

The loans followed the P8.3 billion loan acquired from BoB and Botswana Public Officers Pension Fund (BPOPF) earlier this year. Presenting the highlights of the bank's financial statements for the year 2024 during BoB economic briefing, Acting Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Thatayaone Magole said as at 31st May 2025, foreign exchange reserves recorded a P0.9 billion decline from the balance of P42 billion in December 2024.

Overall, Magole said the level of foreign exchange reserves decreased about 24 percent from P63.7 billion in December 2023 to P48.1 billion in December 2024, mainly on account of withdrawals during April 2024.

Magole said the decline in the foreign



Vice President and Minister of Finance Ndaba Gaolathe

exchange reserves was as a result of the weaker global demand for the natural diamonds amongst other factors.

Magole also said the bank distributed P4.1 billion in 2024 to the government as

compared to P860.5 million in 2023 after a transfer of the unrealised currency gain to the fair value revaluation and the currency revaluation.

The distribution to government

comprised P838 million pre-set dividend and P3.2 billion residual income. He said the total assets of the bank decreased by P11.5 billion (17.5 percent) to P54.2 billion from P65.7 billion in 2023.

Speaking on the Foreign Exchange Reserves Management, Director of Financial Markets Department Baitshenotse Nnana Mmopelwa said the foreign exchange reserves are in a steady decline, attributing

the decline to weaker sales of Botswana's rough diamonds.

She said Botswana accumulated significant reserves mainly from diamonds but recently there has been depletion, with the government now relying mostly on revenue from South African Customs Union (SACU).

Mmopelwa said in the past, SACU revenue was a small contributor to foreign exchange reserves but now there is a significant shift owing to slump in diamond sector performance.

She said foreign exchange reserves are used to pay for imports, building confidence with external investors as it underpins credit ratings as well as being of good use for cushioning the economy against external economic shocks.

Amidst the current economic difficulties, Mmopelwa said as part of remedial action there is an urgent need to expedite diversification of the economy to shift from overdependence on the minerals (diamonds).

Gaolathe

Meanwhile, Gaolathe said the government is continuing to come up with measures to secure economic recovery.

He told Parliament on Thursday following the approval of the AfDB and OPEC loans that the government is cautious of its borrowing and will ensure that the loans are used appropriately for intended purposes.

Gaolathe, who is also the vice president, said there are ongoing strategies implemented by government to turnaround the economy, citing the recently launched Economic Transformation Plan (ETP) as one of the important national blueprints in the quest to achieve economic recovery.

Unsecured loans drive household debt

- Household debt increased by 6.2% in March 2025
- Central bank attributes increase to personal loans
- Botswana overall household debt is at P61 billion



BAKANG TIRO

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FIGURES CONTAINED IN THE BANK of Botswana's (BoB) Financial Stability Report (FSR) for the month of May 2025 indicate that Botswana's household debt grew by 6.2 percent in March 2025.

The report said the household debt was driven by personal loans, which contributed 4.2 percentage points to the total household debt growth while the other loan categories drove the remaining two percentage points.

According to the report, this trend captures the historical dynamics of household debt where most of the borrowing has been by public sector employees with deduction from source scheme arrangements.

This arrangement increases repayment and recovery rates, but the current macroeconomic conditions marred by growing fiscal pressures presents a challenge for banks in the treatment of household loans under the expected credit loss models.

In addition, BoB indicated that failure by government to process timely third-party payments amid growing fiscal pressures could disrupt the banks' day-to-day operations, including liquidity management.

As such, the continued dominance of unsecured borrowing in household credit presents growing structural vulnerabilities with the potential to amplify credit losses in case of insurmountable fiscal strain and failure.

"On the other hand, households are net savers when considering their

non-discretionary contractual long-term pension savings and other assets," said BoB. FSR also said the pension assets are important for mortgage debt relief under the Retirement Funds Act of 2022, but also improve the long-term financial welfare of households and in general, underpin wealth creation and financial security for retirees.

"The estimated net worth of households as a percentage of GDP increased to 56 percent in the fourth quarter of 2024 from 51.4 percent in the fourth quarter of 2023, reflecting a higher increase in net worth compared to the growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP)," BoB added.

Overall, Botswana's household debt – according to the Household Indebtedness Survey conducted by the Bank of Botswana for 2023-24 year – was estimated at P61 billion, comprising P54.1 billion (88.6 percent) commercial bank loans, P6.4 billion (10.5 percent) micro-lender loans and P526 million (0.9 percent) being hire purchase loans. Compared to the 2022 survey, BoB said the total household loans grew by 4.6 percent from P58.3 billion. As a percentage of GDP, total household debt was 23.1 percent in December 2023 from 23.2 percent in December 2022.

ECONOMIST VIEW

Independent economist Lame Bothata has warned that the household debt situation will soon go out of control given the current economic challenges besieging the working class.

Bothata said the increase in the household debt margin means that workers are struggling to service their loans which are currently high following adjustments of rates by some commercial banks recently.

"The increased household debt in many instances is attributable to high unsecured loan borrowings by lower income working class in households which sought to maintain rising cost of living in the short to medium term and unfortunately they end up being broke," he said.

In addition, Bothata cautioned that the substantial size of unsecured loans has the potential to cause household financial distress while the banks are also facing risks of failing to recover their monies smoothly.

BSE in record-breaking market turnover



BSE CEO, Aupa Monyatsi

BOTSWANA STOCK EXCHANGE (BSE) is celebrating a robust and unprecedented performance in the first six months of 2025. The local bourse saw total trading across all listed instruments surging to P7.1 billion compared to P3.6 billion in H1 2025, a remarkable 96.9% increase.

The BSE is enjoying an equity boom which jumped by a whopping 488.6% year-over-year increase, an all-time high driven primarily by pension-fund driven institutional transitions. These levels surpass the total equity turnover for 2024 which was P1.7 billion.

"Bonds made up 29.2% of total turnover at P2.1 billion, down slightly from H1 2024 which amounted to P2.6 billion, but still demonstrating strong investor interest in these lower-risk assets; ETFs accounted for roughly 3.9% of total turnover, surging by

80.0% year-on-year, with NewGold ETF leading the charge," said the BSE, which is led by Aupa Monyatsi as CEO.

The BSE has attributed the good performance to among others the Pension-fund transition mandates.

"Revised regulations in 2023 have prompted a shift in pension fund investments, and pension funds continue to re-align and re-allocate their portfolio assets. With equity markets performing strongly for years, institutions are shifting strategies, selling some holdings to optimise holdings against prudential thresholds and benchmark allocations. Even individual investors are participating more actively, buoyed by low inflation that contributes to competitive real returns. Significant inflows into ETFs by retail have risen, particularly in NewGold ETF that has continued its previous years' rally into 2025," said the BSE.

- Trading surges 96.9 per cent to P7.1 billion
- Equities jump 488.6 per cent
- Pensions transition behind the surge

executives in a report reviewing the bourse's six months performance

This performance is set to increase opportunities for investors as it will be easier to buy and sell without material price drops, giving retail investors more flexibility.

"The rise in ETFs availability, especially with new listings in the pipeline, opens doors to international markets, without needing specialised offshore investment platforms. The BSE anticipates to close the year with new ETFs listings that provide more diversity to complement the currently listed ETFs. Institutional trades and broad-based participation help to stabilise price swings, smooth performance and improve liquidity across the entire bourse. In the current low inflation environment, this presents entry opportunities for other investors and profit-taking opportunities as well, potentially with returns above the low inflation," said the BSE.

The BSE said even with a slight dip, bonds remain a dependable investment, offering a safer balance against equity volatility, adding that is working on ways to improve retail participation in this relatively safer asset class, especially government bonds.

"With turnover more than doubling, broader asset participation, and evolving regulatory support, such as pension fund reforms contributing to the trading surge. Retail investors are now entering a deeper, more liquid, and increasingly diverse market. Whether you're an equity enthusiast, a bond seeker, or ETF-curious, this might just be the moment to explore your investment options on the BSE with the extensive help of our brokers," said the BSE.

Minet, Hollard launch Yabotlhe Motor Lite Cover

IN A BOLD MOVE TO MAKE MOTOR insurance more accessible, Minet Botswana, one of the country's leading insurance brokers, in partnership with Hollard Insure a trusted insurance provider and underwriter of the product, has launched Yabotlhe Motor Lite Cover. This smart, affordable motor insurance solution is designed specifically for imported and vehicles over five years old.

The launch of Yabotlhe Motor Lite Cover reflects the strength of collaboration between Minet and Hollard Insure, built on a shared commitment to providing customer-centric solutions. The two entities continue to demonstrate the power of partnership between a proactive broker and an agile insurance underwriter, working together to meet market demands with innovative products that bring real value to clients.

Yabotlhe Motor Lite Cover provides essential protection for drivers of older cars, offering peace of mind at a fraction of the usual cost. From just P125 per month, policyholders receive coverage that includes: Up to 40 percent contribution towards vehicle repairs; Protection against total write-offs up to P100,000; Third-party liability cover up to P1 million; Fast cash payouts instead of complex repair approval

processes.

Upon welcoming the guests present Minet Botswana's, Business Units Manager – Marketing, Khumo Badisang said “ We are thrilled to unveil Yabotlhe Motor Lite Cover which is a revolutionary new product designed to redefine motor insurance for the modern driver; build for simplicity, affordability and flexibility that's more than just a motor insurance but a smarter way to stay protected on the road.”

Speaking at the launch, Michaelson Chonyera, CEO of Minet Botswana, said, “Yabotlhe means ‘for us all’ and that is exactly what this cover represents.

It brings financial security within reach of everyday Batswana who own imported or older vehicles.

We are proud to partner with Hollard Insure to introduce a solution that is simple, accessible, and responsive to market needs.” He continued to say “anything that has value has to be insured.”

In emphasizing the product's relevance to the market, Key Account Manager at Hollard Insure Botswana, Diphuka Maganu said “It's quite evident to see that the majority of passenger vehicles on our roads are grey imports or older models. Further to that, we understand that many drivers in Botswana rely on these vehicles for their

livelihoods and general life needs.

With Yabotlhe Motor Lite Cover, we are offering a practical solution that provides real value, protects against common risks, and ensures drivers remain on the road with confidence.”

The launch of Yabotlhe Motor Lite Cover comes at a time when many vehicle owners are seeking affordable yet meaningful cover in a challenging economic climate.

The product has been designed with flexibility in mind, providing straightforward terms, fast claim settlements, and peace of mind for those driving older or imported vehicles.

The Head of Mass Markets and Distribution – Minet Botswana Itumeleng Ntalabgwe outlined the key elements of Yabotlhe speaking to the key features and product overview as well as the readiness and availability as of today.

This product also underscores the agility of both Minet Botswana and Hollard Insure in responding to evolving customer needs. By introducing innovative, market-relevant solutions like Yabotlhe Motor Lite Cover, the two brands reaffirm their positions as forward-thinking entities committed to delivering accessible protection for a dynamic market.

In closing the briefing, Pako Morapedi,

Yabotlhe Motor Lite Cover?
The Motor Lite cover is a low-cost insurance cover designed specifically for imported vehicles and hand vehicles. It offers essential protection at affordable premiums.

Who qualifies for this cover?
This cover is designed for vehicles older than 5 years, not under any finance agreement, and no longer covered by a manufacturer's warranty, service plan, or motor plan.

Is theft or hijacking covered?
Yes. If your vehicle is stolen or hijacked and not recovered, it is treated as a total loss, subject to a P200,000 maximum indemnity (less excess).

Are there any excess payments required?
Yes. The standard excess is 5% of the claim (minimum P1,500). Additional excesses apply for:
• Drivers under 25 years: P1,000
• Drivers with less than 3 years experience: P1,000
• Policyholders with more than one claim within one period of insurance: P1,000
• Single vehicle accident exceeding hitting an animal: P1,000

What does the cover exclude?
• Vehicles still under manufacturer's plans.
• Use for hire or reward (e.g. taxis).
• Vehicles used for business purposes.
• Replacement vehicle hire/loss of use.
• Windscreen claims.

How are repairs handled?
• Two quotations are submitted for the damages of the vehicle.
• No repair authorisations are required.
• Settlement is by cash-in-lieu at 40% of the repair quote (you get a payout to repair your vehicle).
• The insurer may request independent estimates if your chosen repairer quotes above market rates.

Are windscreen claims or towing included?
Windscreen claims are not covered. Towing is covered up to P1,000 within Botswana, upon presentation of a paid invoice. The Towing is to cover the vehicle to the nearest police station and/or panel beater.

How much does it cost?
Premium Rate: 2.00%
Annual Premium: Minimum P1,500
Monthly Premium: From as little as P125

What does the policy cover?
Insured: The cover is for vehicles up to P100,000.
Damage (Section A): The cover covers 40% of repair costs for partial damage (less the applicable excess).
Write-Offs: If repair costs exceed 75% of the insured value, the vehicle is written off, and you are paid the lesser of the sum insured or market value, less excess.
Third Party Liability (Section B): Covers liability for damage, injury, or death up to P1,000,000.

Head of Sales and Distribution of Hollard Insure, reaffirmed the company's commitment to customer-focused solutions, stating, “Our purpose is to enable more secure futures for our clients. With Yabotlhe

Motor Lite Cover, we are delivering a flexible and affordable option that truly speaks to the needs of Batswana and helps ensure that fewer people are left uninsured on our roads.

This product reflects our belief that everyone deserves access to meaningful protection.



Know Your Corporate Leader

Full Name: Basebi Jacqui Mosinyi
Position: Deputy Director Spectrum Management
Institution: BOCRA
Date Started: April 2019
Nature of business: regulation of the communications sector

Business Botswana concerned about the economy

BUSINESS BOTSWANA REMAINS deeply concerned about the current state of the economy and the recent policy pronouncements and reforms implemented without adequate consultation with the private sector. Meaningful stakeholder engagement is critical to ensure that policy decisions are informed by balanced risk assessments and aligned with the realities faced by businesses.

Several recent policy shifts have had far-reaching implications for the business environment, including: Adjustments to exchange rate policy parameters aimed at supporting economic growth, preserving foreign exchange reserves, and enhancing the international competitiveness of locally produced goods and services; Suspension of Government Purchase Order (GPO) generation through the Government Accounting and Budgeting System (GABS); Amendments to the Employment and Labour Relations Law; Electricity tariff adjustments introduced by the Botswana Energy Regulatory Authority (BERA); Restrictions on cement importation; and Increased rejections of work permits and visa applications, particularly affecting the Tourism and Education sectors.

Whilst these interventions may be driven by good intentions, their cumulative effect, if not well-considered, risks increasing the cost of doing business in Botswana. At this critical time, policy focus should be on creating a more enabling business environment, stimulating private sector growth, and supporting job creation. Measures that could be perceived as



Mphahle Tsholofelo, Head of Policy and Research at Business Botswana [PIC: PINO KILANO]

unfriendly to local and foreign investors may discourage much-needed investment and innovation, ultimately affecting the livelihood of ordinary Batswana.

As Business Botswana, we firmly believe this is the time for the private sector to step forward with leadership and resolve. In this regard, we have submitted a comprehensive set of economic recovery proposals, comprising policy and legislative reforms from the private sector's perspective. We are also facilitating the submission of high-impact, transformative projects across various sectors, working collaboratively with line ministries to align business development efforts with national economic priorities.

Furthermore, we are actively working

to revive and facilitate the Sub High-Level Consultative Councils (SHLCCs) to ensure regular, structured engagements that address the current impasse. These consultations align with the agreed process of conducting Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIA), which help identify and mitigate unintended consequences of policy decisions. While progress has been challenging across many sectors, we remain committed to advancing these dialogues through ongoing engagement with the government.

We acknowledge that progress in some sectors has been slow and challenging. Nonetheless, we remain committed to our efforts to engage the government and key stakeholders in resolving the current impasse.

EXTERNAL VACANCY DISTRIBUTION CENTRE MANAGER

We're seeking an experienced and results-driven Distribution Centre Manager to optimize our distribution centre in Gaborone.

Key Responsibilities:

- Lead all warehouse, logistics, and fleet operations.
- Drive efficiency, optimize processes, and ensure quality standards.
- Manage inventory, costs, and achieve key performance targets.
- Develop and empower a high-performing operational team.
- Implement continuous improvement strategies.

Requirements:

- 15+ years of progressive experience in senior logistics/DC management, preferably in retail or FMCG.
- Relevant Diploma in Management, Logistics, or Operations.
- Demonstrated expertise in warehouse and fleet management.
- Strong leadership, financial acumen, and problem-solving skills.

Interested candidates should forward their CV and qualifications to vacancies@choppies.co.bw, referenced "DC MANAGER" in the subject line, before **August 12, 2025**.

Absa sponsors the 2025 Ghanzi Agricultural Show



ABSA BANK BOTSWANA IS PROUD TO once again be a partner of the 2025 Ghanzi Agricultural Show. This landmark event underscores the bank's unwavering commitment to Botswana's agricultural sector, a critical driver of economic diversification, food security, and sustainable development.

The Ghanzi Agricultural Show serves as a vital platform for farmers, agri-businesses, and stakeholders to showcase innovations, adopt modern technologies, and strengthen Botswana's agricultural value chain, particularly its world-renowned beef industry. Absa Bank's continuous partnership with the show reaffirms its role as a key enabler of economic growth,

aligning with national priorities to reduce reliance and foster agri-business excellence.

Recently honoured as Best Agri Business Bank Botswana 2024 by the Global Banking & Finance Review Awards, Absa Bank Botswana has been recognised for its bespoke financial solutions designed to empower farmers and agri-entrepreneurs. These accolades highlight the bank's dedication to innovation, client-centric services, and sustainable sectoral growth.

Keabetswe Pheko-Moshagane, Managing Director of Absa Bank Botswana, emphasised the significance of such partnerships: “Agriculture is the backbone of Botswana's economy, and Absa is proud to stand with our farmers and agri-businesses as they innovate and

grow. Our continuous partnership with the Ghanzi Agricultural Show reflects our belief in the sector's full potential to transform livelihoods and drive national prosperity. Through tailored financing, capacity-building, and strategic collaborations, we are committed to unlocking opportunities that propel Botswana forward.” she added. “Our involvement in initiatives like the Ghanzi Show isn't just sponsorship, it's an investment in Botswana's future. By bridging financial gaps and fostering sectoral resilience, we help build an economy that thrives through multiple sectors.”

Absa's participation in the Ghanzi Agricultural Show demonstrates the critical role financial institutions must play in supporting high-impact sectors.

PART 1: BOTSWANA'S \$8.1 BILLION IMPORT DEPENDENCY

The high-stakes gamble of import substitution



BAKANG PHUTHEGO
BUSINESS WITH BK

IN 2024, BOTSWANA SPENT AN ASTONISHING \$8.1 billion on imports—equivalent to approximately 45% of its GDP—highlighting a heavy reliance on foreign goods, especially from South Africa, which supplies about 70% of its imports. This high level of dependency exposes the country to external shocks and exchange rate fluctuations, which can impact economic stability in the long term. While not an immediate crisis, sustained reliance on imports limits domestic industry growth, drains foreign reserves, and hampers Botswana's efforts to diversify its economy away from diamond exports. Addressing this challenge requires a strategic shift from simple import substitution towards building competitive export-led industries that leverage local strengths, skills development, and better access to markets.

The Reality of Botswana's Heavy Imports

Botswana's dependence on imports has been driven by several factors: underdeveloped domestic industries, limited technological capacity, infrastructure gaps, and a skills shortage. The country's manufacturing sector accounts for just about 5% of GDP—a stark contrast to successful regional examples, where industries have been built to support exports and national competitiveness. As resources from diamond mining decline—revenues fell by 30% in 2023—Botswana cannot rely solely on its resource wealth for growth. Instead, the country must cultivate industries that can produce competitive exports; creating jobs and reducing dependency gradually.

The Limitations of Traditional Import Substitution

Historically, many countries have attempted import substitution industrialization (ISI) to protect domestic industry, promoting policies like tariffs, quotas, and local content requirements. While these strategies can foster initial industry growth, they often fall short of long-term sustainability unless complemented with export-oriented reforms. Brazil's experience from the 1950s to 1980s demonstrates how poorly managed ISI can lead to inflation, inefficiency, and economic stagnation. Conversely, some African countries like Ethiopia and Rwanda have shown that a transition from ISI to export-led growth can be achieved by focusing on competitive advantages, skills development, and regional trade integration.

African Success Stories

Ethiopia's Textile and Garment Industry: Since the early 2000s, Ethiopia has prioritized export-oriented manufacturing, attracting over \$1.8 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI)

last year. Strategic policies, infrastructure investments, and skill development have enabled it to become a key apparel exporter to the US and Europe, creating thousands of jobs.

Rwanda's ICT and Services Sector:

Rwanda's government has prioritized digital transformation, building data centers, tech hubs, and fostering a startup ecosystem that exports digital services regionally and globally.

Kenya's Flower Exports: Kenya has leveraged its access to European markets and invested in agro-processing to establish a resilient export sector worth over \$500 million annually.

Botswana can draw lessons from these countries, emphasizing that sustainable industrialization requires combining strategic industry targeting with robust skills, infrastructure, and market access strategies.

Critical Factors for Success

Turning these sectors into vibrant, export-focused industries requires immediately addressing several critical challenges:

Skills Gap: The Urgent Priority

One of Botswana's most pressing issues is its skills gap. Currently, many firms cite a shortage of talent—62% identify skills deficits as a top constraint. The problem is compounded by a low number of engineering graduates (just 12% of total graduates), compared to leading regional peers like Nigeria and Kenya, where engineering accounts for roughly 30-34%. This skills gap hampers industry development, innovation, and technology adoption.

Why This Is a Critical Priority

A large, skilled labor force is essential for attracting FDI, developing high-value industries, and competing regionally and globally. Countries producing over 60,000–100,000 engineers annually—like Malaysia, Nigeria, and South Korea—are leaders in automotive, electronics, and manufacturing sectors. Without a strategic push to increase Botswana's talent pool, the country risks falling further behind regional peers and missing opportunities in emerging industries like renewable energy and digital services.

Building a Sustainable Talent Ecosystem

Addressing the skills gap is not a short-term fix but a long-term investment in Botswana's future prosperity. The country must view this as a strategic imperative, embedding STEM education at all levels and fostering a culture that values innovation, engineering, and technical expertise.

Three-Year Action Plan for Botswana to Bridge Its Skills Gap and Foster Industrial Growth

Given the urgency, Botswana can implement a focused, high-impact strategic plan over the next three years by drawing inspiration from successful country initiatives. Here are concrete solutions and examples:

1. Establish Specialized Technical & Engineering Training Hubs

What to do:

Create or expand vocational and technical training institutes dedicated to sectors like renewable energy, manufacturing, ICT, and mining beneficiation.

Talent Structure in Manufacturing Countries

Skill Level	Typical Roles and Functions	Examples of Countries & Sectors
Highly Skilled Professionals	Engineers (mechanical, electrical, industrial), researchers, product designers, project managers	Germany (automotive), South Korea (electronics), China (high-tech manufacturing)
Skilled Technicians	Skilled trade workers, CNC machine operators, electricians, maintenance technicians	Germany, Japan, Malaysia (electronics and automotive)
Mid-Level Managers	Production managers, quality assurance leads, supply chain managers, lean manufacturing experts	All leading manufacturing economies
Entry-Level & Support Staff	Assembly line workers, machine operators, packaging, logistics, warehouse staff	Emerging markets, developing economies

Partner with international educational institutions (e.g., China, India, South Korea) to set up joint programs, twin-degree offerings, and faculty exchanges.

Introduce industry-led apprenticeships to ensure skills match local industry needs.

2. Enhance University & College Capacity with Fast-Track Engineering Programs

What to do:

Increase university intake for engineering and STEM programs by 50%–100% within three years.

Introduce fast-track or sandwich programs for mid-career professionals and technicians (e.g., 2-year diplomas converting into bachelor's degrees).

Secure international funding and technical assistance to upgrade labs and faculty expertise.

3. Attract and Retain Expatriate and Regional Experts

What to do:

Develop targeted incentive packages (tax breaks, housing, tax-free stipends) to bring experienced engineers, managers, and trainers into Botswana temporarily.

Establish "knowledge hubs" and mentorship centers linked directly with local industries.

4. Launch a National Digital Learning & Certification Platform

What to do:

Partner with global EdTech platforms like

Benchmark of Engineering and Technical Graduates of Manufacturing Countries

Country	Total Graduates Annually	Engineering & Technical Graduates (%)	Estimated Number of Engineering Graduates
Germany	600,000	15-20% (approx. 90,000–120,000)	110,000
South Korea	520,000	12-15%	62,000–78,000
China	8 million	10-12%	800,000–960,000
India	11 million	12%	1.3 million
Malaysia	400,000	20-25%	80,000–100,000
Nigeria	1.2 million	8-10%	100,000–120,000
South Africa	400,000	10-15%	40,000–60,000

Coursera, edX, and Udacity to launch free or subsidized online courses in key skills (coding, robotics, renewable energy tech, data analytics). Offer industry-recognized certifications to rapidly upskill thousands of workers.

5. Implement Immediate Policy & Incentive Measures

What to do:

Provide tax incentives and grants to companies that invest heavily in local skills training or establish internships.

Mandate industry participation in curriculum development at universities.

Establish industry advisory councils to align skills training with market demands.

6. Invest in Pilot Projects in Critical Sectors

What to do:

Launch pilot manufacturing or renewable energy projects where skill training is integrated directly into industrial development.

In conclusion, Botswana's success in industrializing and exporting high-value goods hinges on one critical factor: the rapid and sustained growth of its engineering and technical talent. By adopting aggressive targets, expanding educational infrastructure, forging international partnerships, and incentivizing skills development, Botswana can build a workforce capable of powering a new, diversified economy—delivering economic resilience and prosperity for generations to come.



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Parallel lessons from the Greece recession for Botswana

LETLHOGONOLO MOSANAWA

BOTSWANA HAS LONG BEEN CELEBRATED AS an African success story, a beacon of stability and prosperity in a continent often beset by political and economic turmoil. Its secret? A diamond-rich economy managed with remarkable prudence and foresight, leading to decades of strong growth, sound fiscal management, and the establishment of a robust social welfare system. But a new reality is setting in, and a disquieting question is emerging: Is Botswana's diamond-led sparkle beginning to fade?

The signs are becoming harder to ignore. Global demand for natural diamonds is weakening, challenged by rising competition from synthetic alternatives and shifting consumer preferences. This downturn has had a direct and painful impact on Botswana's economy. Recent reports from the IMF and others paint a grim picture: a contracting economy, falling export revenues, a widening budget deficit, and persistently high unemployment. The government has acknowledged this new pressure, launching initiatives like the Botswana Economic Transformation Programme (BETP) to accelerate diversification.

It is at this critical juncture that Botswana can look to a cautionary tale from another corner of the world: the Greek debt crisis. While their contexts are vastly different, the core economic vulnerability is a striking parallel. Greece's pre-recession economy was heavily reliant on tourism and shipping, sectors that, while lucrative, proved highly susceptible to external shocks. When the 2008 global financial crisis hit, these industries faltered, exposing a house of cards built on poor fiscal discipline, excessive public spending, and a lack of economic diversification. These are all accusations that the government of the day now directs at the former regime. The result was a devastating recession, crippling austerity measures, and a profound loss of national sovereignty as international lenders dictated the terms of recovery.

Botswana, of course, is not Greece. The institutional strength, lack of rampant corruption, and prudent savings built over decades through the Pula Fund and other sovereign wealth vehicles set it apart. Botswana's leaders have historically shown a keen awareness of the need to diversify away from its finite mineral wealth. However, the current economic headwinds are testing that resilience in a way not seen before. The recent downturn has led to a significant drain on the nation's savings and is

forcing the government to consider spending cuts and potentially increased debt.

So, what are the specific lessons Botswana can draw from Greece's ordeal?

1. The Perils of Single-Pillar Economies:

Greece's over-reliance on a few key sectors made its economy brittle. Botswana's dependence on diamonds, while previously a source of immense strength, now presents its greatest risk. The current slump in the diamond market is a powerful and urgent reminder that the long-promised economic diversification is no longer a strategic goal, it is an existential necessity.

2. The Cost of Inaction and Delayed Reforms:

Greece's crisis was exacerbated by a failure to address structural weaknesses and an over-bloated public sector for years. The time for Botswana to act decisively on its diversification plans is now. While the BETP and other initiatives are a step in the right direction, they must be implemented with speed and unwavering political will. The nation must move beyond rhetoric and translate its plans into tangible, high-impact projects that create jobs and generate sustainable revenue streams outside of mining.

3. Fiscal Prudence is Not a Given:

While Botswana's history of fiscal discipline is a point of national pride, the temptation to dip into reserves and increase borrowing in tough times is real. Greece's story is a stark warning of how quickly a nation can lose control of its public finances, leading to a loss of economic autonomy. Botswana's leadership must navigate this delicate balance carefully, ensuring that any borrowing or spending is directed towards productive investments that will fuel long-term, diversified growth, not simply to plug short-term budget holes.

Botswana's diamonds have been a blessing, but they were never meant to last forever. The sparkle they provided gave the nation a precious window of opportunity a chance to build a resilient, diversified economy that could thrive long after the mines run dry. The current economic climate is not a death knell, but a blaring alarm. By heeding the parallel lessons from Greece's recession and acting with renewed urgency, Botswana can ensure that its future is not defined by the fading brilliance of a diamond, but by the sustainable, multifaceted glow of a truly diversified and resilient economy. The time to polish its new sparkle is now.

Lethlogonolo Mosanawe is an Independent Consulting Business Statistician with BSc, MA and is currently reading towards a PhD in Business Mathematics and Informatics.

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Lucara Botswana at the 2025 TVET Pitso & Expo

Building skills for a future-ready Botswana

In boardrooms, workshops, classrooms, and community halls, the same question is being asked across Botswana: Are we doing enough to prepare our people for the future of work?

At Lucara Botswana, we believe the answer lies not only in what we teach but in how we collaborate to shape learning itself. That belief is what took us to the 2025 TVET Pitso & Expo, where industry, academia, and government came together to reimagine technical and vocational education for a new era.

The conversation could not be more timely, as the race for talent is intensifying across the globe and right here at home. Job mobility is rising, the skills gap is widening, and the competition for specialised knowledge is fiercer than ever. In the mining sector, especially, the need for innovation-ready, digitally literate, and environmentally conscious professionals is no longer a 'nice-to-have' but a necessity.

As a company rooted in Botswana's soil and committed to its long-term prosperity, Lucara Botswana sees this shift as a call to action. Our participation at the TVET Pitso was about actively contributing to a national agenda that places people at the centre of sustainable economic growth.

We understand that a strong workforce does not materialise overnight. It is built, deliberately, through early exposure, practical learning, industry insight, and partnerships that extend beyond policy into real-world action. That is why we continue to engage with educators, policy makers and vocational institutions to help shape curricula that reflect the realities of today's workplace and anticipate the demands of tomorrow, and ultimately empower young Batswana to see themselves not as job seekers, but as problem-solvers, innovators, and entrepreneurs.

In doing so, we are contributing to more than just our own talent pipeline. We are advancing Botswana's national aspirations under Vision 2036, supporting a diversified, knowledge-based economy. Lucara Botswana is answering the call to place skills development and youth employment at the heart of economic recovery in alignment with global goals such as SDG 4 (inclusive, quality education), SDG 9 (industry and innovation), and SDG 17 (cross-sector partnerships).

At Lucara Botswana's core is the belief that the most sustainable investment a business can make is in the potential of its people. As Botswana navigates a complex and competitive global landscape, Lucara Botswana draws its value from being part of the solution, bridging the gap between learning and livelihoods, and helping to build a future where no one is left behind.

lifestyle

Dr. Chiepe and Tigerkloof: The lost interview

DONALD MOLOSI AND SHIRLEY MOULDER

THE LATE DR. GAOSITWE Chiepe's legacy stands out not just in politics, but she remains also a beacon of hope for all Batswana who dare to defy the constraints of identity and expectation. When she first entered Parliament in 1970, Dr. Chiepe became the first woman to hold such a position in Botswana.

Her journey began at the prestigious Tigerkloof Educational Institution in South Africa, a school that played a pivotal role in shaping her enduring commitment to education and social justice. Over her remarkable 24-year political career, Chiepe held several key ministerial portfolios, including Minister of Education, where she led the introduction of free primary education in 1994. This bold policy significantly boosted national enrollment rates—from 73% in 1990 to over 90% by the year 2000.

As Minister of Foreign Affairs, she was instrumental in shaping Botswana's international relations, advocating for regional stability and the empowerment of women across southern Africa. Among her notable legacies is the Women's Finance Initiative, which provided microloans and business training to over 20,000 women entrepreneurs—helping them transition into the formal economy and claim space in male-dominated sectors. In today's world, still weighed down by persistent gender inequality—where, according to the World Economic Forum, women hold only 23% of parliamentary seats globally, and Botswana ranks 102nd out of 156 countries in gender parity—Dr. Gaositwe Chiepe's legacy remains both instructive and inspiring. Her story urges us to continue pushing boundaries, to ensure that the next generation of leaders—especially

women—are not only seen but celebrated, not only heard but heeded. Shirley Moulder and I, Donald Molosi, had the privilege of interviewing Dr. Chiepe in 2016 at her residence in Gaborone, as Botswana prepared to mark 50 years of independence. She was then nearing her 94th birthday. With us during the conversation was Mrs. Shirley Moulder, representing the Tigerkloof Board, who also contributed questions.

Dr. Chiepe's educational journey began at Tigerkloof in the early 1940s, following in the footsteps of her older siblings. "There were actually about four members of the family who had been Old Tigers," she shared, explaining how she earned a bursary and how natural the choice was for her parents especially given her father's passion for education.

That passion ran deep. Her father, she told us, famously "stole his education" by climbing trees to eavesdrop on lessons being taught to younger children under the tree. "He stole his education!" she said with a laugh. He also defied social norms by ensuring that his daughter received a formal education at a time when most Batswana girls were not given the same opportunities as boys.

Her love of learning and early academic excellence were clear from the start. "I was gifted at school and had done very well," she recalled. "In Standard 4 there was a nationwide essay competition, which I won. The first prize was FIVE POUNDS! So many things were bought—a piece of cloth, as my mother used to make my dresses—and my first pair of shoes."

At Tigerkloof, it wasn't long before her leadership qualities were recognized. "In my second year I became a prefect. I was so scared of the bigger girls, but for some reason Miss Bryson [the then Boarding Mistress] made me a prefect. My last two years I was Head Prefect and I

thoroughly enjoyed it." Tigerkloof, she reflected, shaped her into the leader she became. "We all wore uniforms, boys and girls, regardless of whether your father had cattle—because cattle were our wealth—or whether we were the future king or chief of the Bangwato, like Sir Seretse Khama. We all wore khaki." She emphasized how the school promoted equality, unlike others at the time that charged different fees for different facilities. "We were very united, very proud of each other and very supportive of each other. There was no class distinction at Tigerkloof." One story that has become part of national lore is that she was the first Motswana woman to own a car. We asked her what that was like in the 1960s, when no other Motswana woman even had a driver's license. "It was a blue car.

The first person I gave a lift to was my mother. She died a few months later a very happy woman!" she said. But that same car would later be associated with heartbreak. "When I left for Bristol University for further education, I left the car with my younger sister, who was also an Old Tiger. She was a nursing sister in Lovedale. She was going back there in the car, being driven by someone, when they met with an accident and she died." What struck her most about Tigerkloof was its commitment to equality. "We all wore uniforms, boys and girls, regardless of whether your father had cattle—or whether you were the future king of the Bangwato, like Sir Seretse Khama. We all wore khaki," she reflects. "There was no class distinction. No one was treated differently because of their background." In a world where differences in wealth and status often dictated one's future, Tigerkloof was an anomaly. It was an institution that gave all its students, regardless of their social standing, the same opportunities.



Turning Back The Clock: The Reverses of the 5-D Regime

New book by David Magang
Review by Prof. Christian John Makgala

DR DAVID MAGANG HAS HAD A truly remarkable political and business career in his beloved Botswana. He was a long-serving cabinet minister, and his real estate enterprise makes him one of the most successful indigenous business personalities in Botswana's history.

After retiring at the turn of the new millennium, he also turned his hand to writing. Although a few Batswana public figures, in the form of politicians, have published their memoirs or other books on their vocations, David Magang has become the most prolific. His first book, which appeared in 2008, was an autobiography aptly titled *The Magic of Perseverance*. It is a compelling tour de force detailing the travails he endured in his political and business odyssey, in which efforts by Batswana are often undermined and even sabotaged by those supposed to be their supportive comrades.

The autobiography's educational nature and popularity warranted a revised version, which Rre Magang published in 2024. He followed up *The Magic of Perseverance* with a gripping two-volume treatise on the political economy of Botswana titled *Delusions of Grandeur: Paradoxes and Ambivalences in Botswana's Macroeconomic Firmament*. The voluminous offerings were a well-reasoned and robust critique of the country's economic development, which Magang figured out was flawed. Hence, the myriads of challenges such as poverty and unemployment, weak citizen economic empowerment, despite Botswana being lauded by some international commentators as 'an African Miracle' or 'African success story'. In *Delusions of Grandeur*, Magang is not merely engaged in an academic exercise but also proffers a corrective blueprint to Botswana's economic planners and bureaucrats/technocrats to follow in order to achieve a productive development trajectory for wealth creation and meaningful prosperity for the citizenry.

Sadly, in Botswana, retired luminaries are often forgotten by the powers that be. Their vast reservoirs of knowledge and experience are seldom sought and made use of by those in the corridors of power. This is compounded by the syndrome of 'book famine' or poor reading culture in the country. However, while this situation may discourage many luminaries from sharing their knowledge with the public through books, David Magang has not despaired as he continues with his

passion for writing. For instance, for a while, he was a regular columnist for the local Weekend Post newspaper, publishing insightful and incisive commentary on local and international political and economic issues.

Just like *The Magic of Perseverance* and *Delusions of Grandeur*, *Turning Back The Clock* is also a voluminous magnum opus. It is a treatise on the leadership of former President Lt. Gen. Seretse Khama Ian Khama or Kgosi Khama IV of Bamangwato. He joined politics in 1998 as Vice President to President Festus Mogae, who appointed him. Magang deftly prefaces the Ian Khama story with an insightful account of all Botswana Vice Presidents before him. The reader is offered a rich history lesson in the dynamics leading to the appointment of these Vice Presidents and their role or performance in office. This is quite commendable because in a country that does not quite value its history, save for occasional celebratory events and speeches, the book comes in handy.

Magang's deep appreciation of Botswana's history is evident in all his books, with *The Magic of Perseverance* and volume one of *Delusions of Grandeur* even delving into the precolonial period. His incisive writings, in addition to his contributions to the governance and economy of Botswana, saw the country's premier higher institution of learning, the University of Botswana, bestow upon him an Honorary Doctor of Letters (DLitt) in 2022.

Ian Khama has been seen by many as an enigma who defies well-known and sacrosanct official government protocols. His leadership style has been very controversial and polarizing at the national level and within the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), which ruled Botswana from 1966 to 2024. His upbringing, in which he was insulated from the local community despite being a tribal leader, deprived him of the socio-cultural experience needed to prepare him for leadership, thus resulting in his deculturalisation. His only employment was as a police officer, deputy commander, and then commander of the Botswana Defence Force (BDF).

Being in the disciplined forces, where orders are obeyed without question, also had an adverse impact on him. Hence, as a civilian leader and

politician, the necessary compromises and horse trading were alien and unacceptable to him. Additionally, having been headhunted into the vice presidency, which he accepted on his own unusual and cumbersome terms, did not help matters. Rules had to be modified to accommodate his personal preferences, even when it was abundantly clear that such development undermined the rule of law and customary practice. The result was a Vice President who appeared to overshadow

the President. Moreover, matters were not helped by the fact that the President was Ian Khama's tribal subject. Therefore, Khama's public life can be described as having been one of power and privilege over duty. For instance, his robust and sustained campaign to collapse the country's economy by collaborating with international forces after he fell out with his anointed successor, President Mokgweetsi Masisi in 2018, bears testimony to his character.

However, in Botswana's presidential system, where the constitution gives the sitting President massive powers which engender an imperial presidency, it did not take long for Khama to engage in fierce skirmishes with colleagues in Cabinet, Parliament, BDP, and the private media, among others. As was becoming custom, he normally triumphed over his adversaries because of the country's power dynamics. Whereas previous Presidents had been circumspect in exercising their presidential powers, after becoming President in 2008, Khama, who was used to getting his way under almost all circumstances, exerted his powers to the fullest. Although he appeared to be insensitive and ruthless, he was well within his constitutional rights to resort to such 'extreme' measures. Nevertheless, he also portrayed himself as a benevolent leader who spent a considerable amount of time attending to the poor and underprivileged. Furthermore, he started a practice of spending evenings by the fireside with village elders. He attached so much value to such populist undertakings that he had no time to attend important international summits such as the United Nations General Assembly and the African Union.

The consequence of Khama's approach to governance was a culture of fear entrenched by the intelligence apparatus that seemed to serve his interests. Elite corruption and mismanagement in government became rampant, and so was the erosion of civil liberties, overspending

on the military with his family members as the main beneficiaries, the erosion of the traditional culture of consultation, political intolerance, compromised independence of the judiciary, and extra-judicial killings became common to a point where former Presidents Sir Ketumile Masire and Festus Mogae openly criticised his leadership style. Despite his inadequate scruples and Botswana being a very small country, Khama's 'Wild West' approach to governance extended to foreign

relations, whereby his grandstanding saw him pick up ill-advised fights with major powers such as the United States and China. His robust and sustained campaign to collapse the country's economy by collaborating with international forces after he fell out with his anointed successor, President Mokgweetsi Masisi in 2018, whom he sought to dislodge, bears testimony to his propensity for power and control. In this book, Magang provides a blow-by-blow account of almost every aspect of Khama's leadership and how it negatively impacted the country's governance, economic, and political development. He shares his personal experience of how Khama's undue anger affected his ministerial duties, private business, and political career, as well as that of his first-born son and BDP activist, Lesang. One cannot help but sympathise with the Magangs, especially

considering the widely held belief that Khama is a highly vindictive man who rarely relents once he takes a dislike to someone. For instance, when the University of Botswana's hierarchy agreed to award him an Honorary DLitt and even informed him of the exciting news, interference from the presidency prevented the honour from being bestowed upon

him. It was only in 2022, after Khama retired in 2018, that the University finally honoured him with the same doctorate without any hindrance. The book is a welcome addition to the political literature on Botswana, and it is written in Magang's characteristic erudite style, with elegant and engaging language. He also highlights themes that could be explored and documented by writing biographies of other key historical figures in the country, such as the now overlooked late Vice Presidents Linyeetse Seretse and Peter Mmusi, among others. The book is highly recommended not only for students of Botswana's history, politics, and public governance but also for general readers who will find it quite enriching.

* *Turning Back The Clock* will be launched on July 25 at Phakalane Hotel

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Team Botswana has been leaving no stone unturned during the group stages of the Davis Cup Group V competition held at the National Tennis Centre in Gaborone. Botswana will face Madagascar in a highly anticipated promotional playoff match which will determine who goes to Group IV in 2026. Let's all meet at the National Tennis Centre and witness our youthful team rewrite history on home soil.

[PIC: BOTSWANA TENNIS ASSOCIATION]

A tribute to Clever Hunda

ASHFORD MAMELODI*

THE LAST TIME I MET WITH CLEVER Hunda was at Manor Resort Hotel in Harare on Sunday 30 March 2025 where together with Jethro Hunidzarira commonly known as Shemi and who is also presently serving as Technical Director of the Zimbabwe Football Association. Also in our company was Michael Nees, the current National Team coach of the Warriors of Zimbabwe. Although I was expecting Michael, Clever was a huge surprise encounter. Shemi met with him at a football match earlier, knowing how close I had been with Clever he just invited him along to come with him to meet and old friend. On arrival at the hotel Shemi and Clever headed straight for my room. To Clever and I it was a shock, excitement and disbelief all wrapped in one followed by a warm embrace. After a few exchanges we went to the dining room to meet Michael who was already waiting for us. I was in Harare to conduct two very engaging on-boarding workshops for ZIFA Standing Committees and the ZIFA Executive Committee. Given that there was much to talk about there was very little time to get stuck into our dinner. Ironically we all ordered the famous Zimbabwe whole bream. I recall that whilst the three of us took it with vegetables or chips Hunda ordered sadza. I had met Michael Nees in South Africa where he served at SAFA as Technical Director. There was plenty to reminisce about at the same time getting stuck into a scrumptious meal. I had no idea that this would be the last that I would meet with Clever nor that is

would be the biblical 'last supper' that I would share with him who was looking as lively and as energetic as ever. Clever had been amongst a handful of foreign coaches that I could describe as close. This of course is apart from the late Ben Koufie, Fred Mwila, Thomas Zero Johnson and Tizzah Sekgapane. The latter two having passed on and who had become citizens of Botswana. Clever Hunda's football history particularly in his home country Zimbabwe has been well documented. He was a born midfielder, both attacking and defensive. He played for Dynamos juniors and later seniors with the likes of George Shaya and Ernest Kamba. He then went to be part of the birth of Black Aces with David Muchineripi, Rodrick Muganhiri, Simon Mudzuzu, Booker Muchema to mention but a few. His coaching career started at Smirnoff tigers, started State House Tornadoes FC with the then President Canaan Banana of Zimbabwe. Importantly as a player he went through all the developmental stages including Under 16 and Under 18. He is also said to have dawned the colours of Rhodesia U16, U18 and U21 select sides. At the panicle of his playing career at Dynamos FC he played alongside legendary players such as David Madondo and Stephen Chimedza. After doing the business in Zimbabwe he left for Botswana to continue his coaching career there in 1984 where he started a decade long association with Police XI FC where he rubbed shoulders with the likes of Sthandwa, Junior, Summer and Pikati amongst others. Clever must rank as the most nomadic



Clever Hunda

coach in Botswana, having coached at one point or another most Clubs in Botswana's top flight football. He must also rank as amongst the most well-dressed local coaches. He had a penchant for smart dress especially suits which he sometimes even wore when sitting on the bench. He believed in Football Development as a pre-requisite to elite football. Regrettably most of clubs that he coached in Botswana were all about instant results and this perhaps best explains why he moved from

club to club. Clever was a hard working coach and very disciplined. Clever came across as a respectful and well-mannered gentleman He was also a likeable character with an excellent sense of humor. By all accounts he lived and died for football. He joined BMC FC and got them promoted to the then Super League where he coached amongst the likes of Jones Mfakose, Gotlop, and Collins Zulu to mention a few. He won the Coca Cola cup with Flamingo Santos FC with the likes of

Tsotso Ngele amongst others. He had two stints with Extension Gunners FC with the likes of Marshlow Motlogelwa and Chicco Nare. He had a big hand in grooming a good number of coaches who include Sthandwa and Junior at Police XI FC, Chicco at BMC FC, Mandivenga from Extension Gunners FC, Gilport Lions FC and City Polar FC. Sadly, as he ran out of football coaching jobs and as it was becoming increasingly challenging to sustain himself in Botswana, he knew time was right for him to return

home ending a forty year stay. He still loved Botswana and would have loved to stay even longer. Upon his return home he was being persuaded to consider a vacant position as Chief in his home village, something that he could not warm up to. He was a football coach nothing more nothing less. Clever returned home in February 2024 whilst assisting Tlokweng United only to meet his tragic end when he was said to have collapsed at home, where he stayed alone. His body which had started to decompose was removed by police after being discovered by his nephew who had to break in after neighbors reported that there had witnessed a swarm of flies which were suspiciously hovering around the house. He was buried at his home village of Murehwa, 100km from Harare on Saturday. His cause of death was not conclusive but heart failure was suspected. We salute some of his friends who made the funeral from Botswana. We also understand deservedly that a memorial is being planned in his honor in Botswana. Clever shall be sorely missed by people that he played the game with, those he touched and mentored through his coaching together with his many friends. Thank you bro, for sharing with me our 'last supper' at Manor hotel in Harare. When the history of football is written for both Botswana and Zimbabwe the name of Clever Hunda is bound to feature regaling his laudable contribution to the game in both countries. Rest well my dear brother. *Ashford Mamelodi is the former Secretary General of Botswana Football Association (BFA) and FIFA Development Officer for Southern Africa.



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