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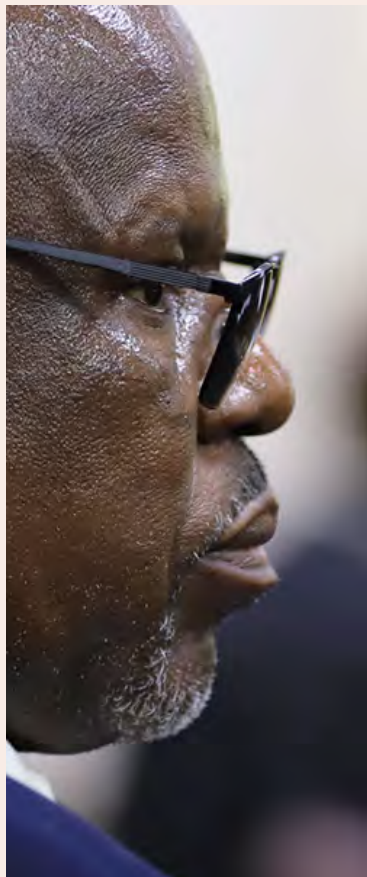
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Noose tightens on Morupisi

- Swift justice in hearing, dismissal of Morupisi's recusal application
- Appeals court blocks bid to challenge empanelment of judges
- State appeal against Morupisi's release hearing on Tuesday



Morupisi (PIC: PINO KILANO)

STAFF WRITERS
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AFTER THROWING tantrums and making all sorts interlocutory applications in court, which extended his freedom, Carter

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'Prioritise healthcare funding'

- Trump stops external healthcare funding, NGOs left stranded
- Jobs on the line, Botswana's fight against HIV/AIDS tested
- Can UDC's universal health insurance save the day?

STAFF WRITER
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WHEN HE STEPS UP TO THE podium on Monday to deliver the first ever budget for the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) led government, Minister of Finance Ndaba Gaolathe will be alive to the mammoth task at hand.

Botswana from all walks of life are watching with keen interest if the UDC will deliver the lofty promises they made to the electorates ahead of the 2024 general election, which ushered them into office. Already, the Minister and the President, Advocate Duma Boko have used different for a to tell Botswana that government coffers are empty, predominantly due to the prolonged depression in the diamond market - Botswana's biggest



Vice President and Minister of Finance Ndaba Gaolathe

contributor to the Gross Domestic Product.

Secretary General of Botswana's leading labour federation - Botswana Federation of Public, Private and Parastatal Sector Unions (BOFEPUSU) - Robert Rabasimane has raised expectation on Ndaba's national budget due on Monday. Top of the list, he has urged the UDC government to prioritise funding for the ministry of health.

"Health is not a choice. No one chooses when to be sick. But anyone can choose whether to be a unionist or not. It cannot be denied anymore than health is a security organ which many countries have used as a bio-war and made economical advance through robustness of their healthcare systems to advance their

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Gambling Authority's headache

- Over 510 000 punters involved in illegal Online betting
- Licensed companies still setting up online betting sites



PstBet Chief Executive Officer, Advocate Ogone Gaboutloeloe

LOCAL GAMBLING WATCHDOG - Gambling Authority (GA) of Botswana is huffing and puffing in an attempt to curb illegal online betting, a thriving lucrative venture operating on illegal offshore online betting sites.

The Authority is racing against time to regularize the online betting which has attracted punters from all walks of life in Botswana. Of the ten (10) companies awarded gambling licences in Botswana last year, none of them has set up online betting, leaving punters to rely on illegal betting sites.

The authority has already found that over 510 000 punters are involved in illegal gambling in Botswana.

Gambling Authority mouthpiece, Moruntshi Kemorwale disputed that they have issued a seize and desist notice to offshore online betting sites following the awarding of gambling

licences in Botswana. "We were empowered to do so, but we could not just do it because we have the power. There are many people using those online betting sites. We have not taken any action against those illegal online betting sites prior or after we issued licenses," said Kemorwale.

He explained that they will continue to monitor developments relating to online betting since two companies that were recently awarded gambling licences are setting up online betting sites in Botswana. He said Betway is the only offshore online betting company that seized to offer betting to punters in Botswana following the granting of the license to Betway Botswana by the gambling watchdog last year. Betway is among companies that

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NEW

STREETWISE FEAST

109⁹⁰

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Struizendam Primary joins the Digital Economy

ON FRIDAY 24TH January 2025, Struizendam Primary School received from Botswana Communications Regulatory Authority (BOCRA) a state-of-the-art computer laboratory to enhance its learning environment.

The newly built computer laboratory that cost P2, 834, 461.58 to construct and equip, is complete with Local Area Network, 40 student tablets, 10Mbps dedicated Internet connectivity and an IT Officer for support and maintenance as well as to facilitate digital literacy among the school community.

Officiating during the official handover ceremony, Shawn Ntshale, Assistant Minister of Communications and Innovation who performed the handover on behalf of the Minister, David Tshere said; "Through this ICT laboratory, we are opening doors to countless opportunities for these young learners. The facility will serve as a hub of creativity, innovation, and learning, where students will not only acquire essential digital



Struizendam Primary School students

skills but also develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration abilities that are vital in today's world".

Ntshale added that the initiative dovetailed with the Millennium Development Goal No.2 on Achieving Universal Primary Education which required the Botswana primary schools education to evolve to be relevant to the 21st century learners.

Speaking during the occasion, Ms. Lenah Babaile, Struizendam Primary School head, praised the relationship the school had with BOCRA which followed adoption of the school in 2015. She said that BOCRA supported the school for such important activities, as study camps, educational excursions, prize giving ceremonies and even uniform items such as school shoes.

Martin Mokgware, BOCRA Chief Executive added his voice by highlighting that the school was adopted following the Adopt-A-School initiative. He underlined that in providing the facility, BOCRA intended to make a positive contribution to ICT literacy and usage of ICTs in the country by targeting the youth who are the main consumers of digital technology. The Struizendam Primary School computer laboratory was delivered under the BOCRA Corporate Social Investment initiative that aimed at facilitating internet connectivity for primary schools to enhance education. The laboratory added to similar facilities built for other primary schools including Molefe Primary School in Kopong, Ditshegwane Primary School, Molete Satellite Primary School (Goodhope District) and the four Tlokweng primary schools of Batlokwa National, Botsalano, Mafithlakgosi, and Kgosi Kgosi, and Etsha 6 Primary School in Okavango District. More laboratories will be built for other schools around the country.

Ministry takes steps to address staff shortage at facilities

THE MINISTRY OF Health is pleased to announce that as at end of January 2025, it had recruited nearly 300 employees. From this number 161 were nurses and midwives, 75 were medical doctors while the balance included other cadres like clinical psychologists, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, medical scientific officers, as well as those

performing various corporate service functions. Minister of Health Hon. Dr Stephen Modise and Assistant Minister Hon. Lawrence Ookeditse, have since November 2024, been visiting health facilities across the country, where one of the main concerns raised by staff, was shortages in their various work places.

Most of these newly absorbed employees have already taken

up their offers and reported to their duty stations, while others will be reporting in the coming days and weeks.

The Ministry has taken the initiative to fill all existing vacancies in order to mitigate the shortages in its facilities across the country. Those who have been absorbed include temporary employees, interns and graduates.

The Ministry will continue

absorbing more professionals in its fold as vacancies become available. It is anticipated that these small steps will eventually help relieve many health care workers who have had to be overly stretched on account of staff shortages in their areas.

Thank you.
Yours faithfully
Dr Christopher Nyanga
For Permanent Secretary

Moseki is the new BoB Deputy Governor

LESEGO CASTER MOSEKI has been appointed Deputy Governor of Bank of Botswana for a term of five years with effect from 1 February 2025.

The appointment of Mr Moseki is in accordance with the requirements of Section 13 of the Bank of Botswana Act, Cap 55:01 as read with Bank of Botswana (Amendment) Act, 2022, that empowers the President, in consultation with the Minister of Finance, to appoint a Deputy Governor of the Bank, who shall be a person of recognised experience in economics and financial matters.

The Deputy Governor's appointment is for a term not exceeding five years and shall be eligible for re-appointment for a further term not exceeding five years. Moseki joined the Bank in September 1994 as an Assistant Supervisor working in the Foreign Exchange Reserves Management Unit of the Bank. He rose through the ranks to Director of the Financial Markets Department effective



Lesego Caster Moseki has been appointed Deputy Governor of Bank of Botswana [PIC:PINO KILANO]

September 2020.

Moseki holds a Bachelor's Degree in Economics from the University of Botswana, an Associate Diploma in Banking 1 and 2 from the then Institute of Bankers (now Botswana Institute of Banking and Finance) and a Master of Science in Money, Banking, and Finance from the University of

Birmingham, United Kingdom, obtained in 1994, 1996, and 1998, respectively.

He has attended several professional courses and seminars in central banking, leadership (Oxford Business School), foreign exchange reserves management, and financial markets. The Bank of Botswana Board, Management,

and Staff congratulate Mr Lesego Caster Moseki on his appointment and look forward to his valuable contributions towards organisational leadership of the Bank and attainment of its mandate (including price stability and safeguarding integrity of the financial and payments systems). [PRESS RELEASE]

PPRA capacitates public officers on Public Procurement



PPRA Acting Chief Executive Officer, Lucas Kennekae and BPSA Executive Director, Kitso Kemoeng

BOTSWANA PUBLIC Service College (BPSA) and the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) have renewed their Memorandum of Understanding aimed at

capacitating public officers in the area of Public Procurement. The partnership is geared towards promoting public service effectiveness through public procurement training, skill development and

knowledge building. BPSA Executive Director, Kitso Kemoeng says the renewal of the MoU will help the organization to achieve its mandate of building public service capacity at all levels.

"This broad mandate will never be achievable without leveraging on collaborative efforts, as is one of our core values. We need a combined effort of relevant stakeholders with the requisite expertise, appetite and experience to assist in designing and delivering programmes that will enable the public service to efficiently and effectively deliver services to the populace," Kemoeng said at the signing ceremony on Friday.

He noted that public procurement should ensure efficient use of government resources and that government derives value for money in all spending. Kemoeng further said this can only be derived through timely project implementation, avoiding compromised quality of services delivered, ensuring ethical delivery of services to obviate potential frauds and delivery risks as well as avoiding corrupt practices. For his part, PPRA Acting Chief Executive Officer, Lucas Kennekae said the MoU plays a huge role for his organization as it facilitates achievement of a broad based public procurement capacity building footprint across the entire public service.

He said it provides a centralized training point to address current and future capacity gaps for public procurement professionals. "This will further improve access to knowledge acquisition and improve compliance to the Public Procurement Act and Regulations," he added.

The partnership between the two organisations started in 2015 and it was renewed twice in 2019 and 2021 before transition to the third renewal was interrupted by challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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ROLE OVERVIEW

The successful candidates will focus on driving growth and profitability within our company. They are responsible for identifying opportunities to expand the brand's presence, enhance customer acquisition, and improve overall market competitiveness. The BDM works on developing strategies to increase sales, improve operational efficiency, and foster strong relationships with customers and other stakeholders.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Build and nurture relationships with key suppliers, distributors, and partners to secure advantageous terms and ensure product availability.
- Work with the marketing team to create compelling promotional campaigns that resonate with target customers to strengthen the brand's position in the marketplace.
- Monitor retail performance across various channels and locations, providing insights on sales trends and growth opportunities.
- Work with the operations, finance and logistics team to improve store efficiency, reduce operational costs, and streamline supply chain processes.
- Prepare regular reports for senior management, highlighting key achievements, challenges, and recommendations for improvement.

REQUIREMENTS

- A Bachelors' Degree in Business, Commerce or related field. Masters' Degree will be an added advantage.
- 10 years of experience in sales, marketing, or a business development role, with proven success in generating revenue and business growth.
- Familiarity with e-commerce platforms, digital marketing, and online retail strategies

Interested candidates should forward their CV and qualifications to vacancies@choppies.co.bw, referenced "BDM02" not later than the 24th of February 2025.

Bank of Baroda (Botswana) Ltd.

Month - February 2025

Effective from 22nd August 2024

| Type of Deposit Account | Nominal Interest Rates (%) | Actual Interest Rates (%) | Minimum Opening Balance |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| BWP | (Lowest-Highest) | (Lowest-Highest) | (P' 000) |
| Current | 0.00-0.00% | 0.00-0.00% | 3000 |
| Call | 0.00-1.00% | 0.00-1.01% | 1000 |
| Savings | 0.00-2.00% | 0.00-2.02% | 100 |
| 91-Days Fixed Deposit | 1.25-1.25% | 1.25-1.26% | 500 |
| 6 months | 1.50-1.50% | 1.50-1.51% | 500 |
| 12 months | 3.25-3.25% | 3.25-3.56% | 500 |
| 24 months | 4.00-4.00% | 4.00-4.07% | 500 |
| Over 24 months | 4.25-4.25% | 4.25-4.33% | 500 |
| USD | (Lowest-Highest) | (Lowest-Highest) | (USD) |
| 3 months Fixed Deposit | 0.00-0.25% | 0.00-0.26% | No Minimum Balance |
| 6 months | 0.00-0.50% | 0.00-0.52% | 5000 |
| Over 12 months | 0.00-0.75% | 0.00-0.76% | 5000 |
| ZAR | (Lowest-Highest) | (Lowest-Highest) | (ZAR) |
| 6 months | 1.75-1.75% | 1.75-1.76% | 1 million |
| Over 12 month | 2.75-2.75% | 2.75-2.78% | 1 million |

Baroda Prime Lending Rate (BPLR) 6.01% p.a. w.e.f 22.08.2024

| Lending Rates | Nominal Interest Rates (%) | Average Effective Interest Rates (%) |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| MoPR | 1.90% | 1.90% |
| Baroda Prime Lending Rate | 6.01% | 6.01% |
| Mortgage Facility | 6.01-11.50% | 9.57% |
| Overdraft Facility (Revolving Credit Lines) | 6.01-11.25% | 8.84% |
| Credit Card | NA | NA |
| Lease Loans | NA | NA |
| Unsecured Personal Loans (excluding overdrafts, mortgages, and credit cards) | 8.00-14.25% | 12.59% |
| Other Long-Term Loans | 6.01-11.25% | 9.84% |

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G-West Branch: Kamoshungo Road, Gaborone, Ph: 3992705, Email: gwest@bankofbaroda.com.
Francistown Branch: Haskins Building, Francistown, Ph: 2413440, Email: francistown@bankofbaroda.com.
Palapye Branch: Madiba Complex, Palapye, Ph: 4920041, Email: palapye@bankofbaroda.com.

ADvTECH powers GIS to success

GABORONE INTERNATIONAL School (GIS) Executive Head, Mrs. Hannelie Raubenheimer has hailed the takeover of the school by ADvTECH – a JSE listed company in 2015.

Ten years later, she tells The Patriot on Sunday that the school is very proud of being part of ADvTECH because it is the largest provider of private education in Africa with footprints in Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya and South Africa, boasting of 118 schools in its portfolio. ADvTECH's primary focus is on nurturing innovation and excellence.

Raubenheimer says it is a privilege working with a company that speaks and lives education, and has a vision to nurture innovation and excellence. She pointed out that GIS is testimony to that, and this is proved by the continued investment in the school. The institution believes that as education is a dynamic space, it will continue to evolve.

GIS was revamped last year and now has a brand-new pre-primary school following the expansion. This exercise increased the number of students to about 3000 at pre-primary, primary and high school levels.

Some of the infrastructural developments which added to the new shape of the institution include a new classroom block in the primary school and a science and technology center now consisting of seven (7) ICT laboratories and seven (7) physical science laboratories.

"Our equipment is unprecedented, we have laptops and projectors in every classroom, we have equipment such as VR headsets, which don't just bring the world into the classroom, but literally takes our students outside into the world," said Raubenheimer.

She pointed out that the ADvTECH-GIS project does not only focus on equipment and infrastructural developments but also emphasizes continuous investment in staff development. This is done through up-skilling their qualifications and offering continuous professional development throughout the year.

The main aim of the institution is for each child to achieve their aspirations. This, however, differs with each student hence a personalized learning journey kind of approach. "Each one of our students matters in terms of their talents, in terms of their strengths. We have unique platforms such as guided readers and ADvLEARN, which uses adaptive technology, meaning both of those programmes can see as to where the child is in terms of reading (guided readers) or in terms of math and science (ADvLEARN)," said Raubenheimer.

This, she explains, gives personalized assessments and exercises to get students to where they need to be at the end of the year. She calls on parents to invest



Gaborone International School (GIS) Executive Head, Hannelie Raubenheimer

[PIC:PINO KILANO]

in the future of their children by enrolling them at GIS to afford them an opportunity to experience a personalized learning journey.

Open Day

GIS recently held their annual Open Day on Saturday (11th January 2025) at their campus in Block 8, Gaborone where parents were taken on a tour of the academic and sports facilities. "We held the Open Day to give parents a glimpse into what education looks like at GIS, thus alleviating the pressure of searching for a perfect school for their children," said Raubenheimer.

Personal Profile

Full names: Mrs. Hannelie Raubenheimer
Position: GIS Executive Head
Role at GIS: To support key role players, ensuring they have the necessary resources to perform their duties.
Qualifications and background: Bachelor of Human Movement, Science and Nutrition, Honors Degree in Curriculum Development, Postgraduate Certificate in Education, and currently enrolled in Masters in Educational Law and Policy.
Work Experience: 20 years in the Education sector. Before joining GIS, she was a principal at another ADvTECH school. She previously served as a Curriculum Manager of a group of private schools, and was an English Lecturer prior to that.

'Prioritise healthcare funding'

FROM PAGE 1

economic advantages. Botswana's continued reliance on foreign aid and trained specialists can never potentiate the health security of the country. Any biochemical warfare cannot be defeated or apprehended beforehand with the current healthcare state of high medical care dependency," warned Rabasimane.

He said as a security organ healthcare should be prioritised and funded like BDF, DISS and report weekly to the President, adding that with that Botswana will be safer and life expectancy would increase.

His comments come at a time when the United States Government under newly elected President Donald Trump has announced plans to stop funding to foreign countries – a move that has plunged many NGOs locally that depended on American grants into the doldrums. A high number of local NGOs that have been set up for health-related interventions such as the fight against stereotypes on HIV, provision of medical support and HIV testing centres and relied heavily on grants from the American Government.

Services suspended

The Ministry has released a statement on the back of the US's pull back to assure the public that services will continue to be offered.

"There are multiple Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) operating in the health space that were directly affected by the decision to suspend support. Following this decision, most



Rabasimane

[PIC:PINO KILANO]

CSOs and NGOs especially those performing functions in the HIV/AIDS area, both the prevention and treatment arms, have since closed for business, like Tebelopele Voluntary Testing and Counselling centres across the country, in compliance with the decision. As of now, it is not known how long the closures will

take. The Ministry therefore, advises members of the public and all clients who have been receiving services from these CSOs and NGOs to seek services from the nearest public health facilities. Every effort will be made by the Ministry to provide these services as before. Fortunately, in some cases some of these partners

have been providing services within the public health facilities.

The Ministry also wishes to inform the public that all possible efforts will be made to avail lubricants, condoms and other preventive devices at both public and private facilities so that no gap is experienced. Although provision of ARVs at post offices has

also been temporarily halted, the Ministry will make arrangements and communicate as to what patients can do for continued service provision," said the Ministry.

Increase healthcare funding

Despite this, consecutive budgets have predominantly supported the ministry of health with the country having had to spend heavily in the fight against HIV/AIDS and subsequently from 2019 in fighting the Covid-19 outbreak.

In the 2024/25 total recurrent budget proposal for ministries stood at P63.74 billion while the development budget was P29.77 billion. The ministry of health received the fourth largest share amounting to P9.46 billion.

The budget presentation is also coming at a time when the new Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) has announced the setting up of the Universal Health Insurance to deal with the exclusion of sections of society from quality health care services. It will be seen whether the current budget will reflect the first steps taken to fund the setting up of the insurance scheme.

This budget also comes in the midst of standoff between the Ministry of Health and the Botswana Nurses Union (BONU) which has threatened to pull the nurses from doing any non-nursing duties. The nurses have been covering for the shortage of pharmacists in their areas of operation by dispensing off medication. They have constantly called for proper financial rewards for this but government has not budged.

Gambling Authority's headache

FROM PAGE 1

have been awarded gambling licences and are in a process offering online betting service in Botswana.

Kemorwale said one of the requirements for licensed gambling companies was to set up a brick-and-mortar office before they could start offering online betting services. He is confident that so far two companies-Betway Botswana and PstBet Botswana that were granted licences last year were about to complete the first phase that required companies to set-up brick and mortar gambling sites. Kemorwale did not deny that they may turn screws against online illegal betting sites once legally registered gambling companies complete setting up and meeting legal requirements to operate.

After the seizure of Betway many people migrated to other betting sites such as the British Gambling company betting site known as Bet365 which offers products such as sports betting, online casino, online poker, and online bingo. Kemorwale confirmed that Bet365 continues to operate illegal Online betting sites in Botswana. He emphasized that once the legal registered companies set up online companies, they will device means to stop online illegal betting sites such as Bet365.

"The companies that were awarded licences are preparing to commence operations and after opening the betting shops they will be allowed to offer online betting. To-date out of the ten companies that were awarded licences two have commenced operations and they are yet to activate their online betting platforms," he added, explaining that companies that have been awarded licences have a 15-month period to

develop and commence operations.

"Since the licences were awarded in August 2024, the prescription period has not elapsed yet, in terms of the legal prescripts there a no delays," said Kemorwale.

Meanwhile, PstBet Botswana Chief Executive Officer, Advocate Ogone Gaboutloeloe remains optimistic that they will have rolled out online betting sites in a few weeks. "We were required to build two betting sites where people can walk in. We have since opened two betting sites in Gaborone and Palapye recently," he said, adding that once they satisfy those requirements to set up brick and motor betting site, they are good to go online. Gaboutloeloe hailed the need to regulate online betting in Botswana. "This will bring the needed results such as tax collection while also protecting customers from rogue online betting sites," added Gaboutloeloe, saying regulating the industry will facilitate collection of much needed revenue, which is lost through illegal online betting operations. He warned that illegal betting poses security risks to the country where proceeds of crime could use the platforms as a conduit for money laundering. His expressed concern over mushrooming illegal betting sites which are not KYC compliant, which opens up opportunity for people in illegal activities to use the platforms. "As new entrants we have already started complying to KYC and the government will benefit from our operations," he said. "We have created employment which is good for our economy and our citizens because people work in our operations," he noted.



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

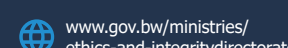
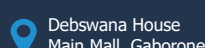
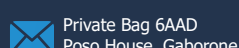
ETHICS AND INTEGRITY DIRECTORATE

IS IT NECESSARY TO DECLARE UNDEVELOPED PLOTS?

Yes. It is necessary to declare undeveloped plots



PROMOTING AND REINFORCING INTEGRITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN PUBLIC OFFICE



Botswana's Education System: A Looming Urban-Rural Divide



LAGAGO TAMOCHA*
EDUCATING THE 21ST CENTURY LEARNER

West regions, which are largely rural, lag significantly behind. This disparity is not a new phenomenon. It has been a persistent challenge for Botswana's education system for many years, and despite various interventions, the gap seems to be widening. This raises serious concerns about the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities in the education sector.

Several factors contribute to this divide. Rural schools often face challenges such as limited access to qualified teachers, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of essential resources like textbooks and technology. These factors create a learning environment that is far from conducive to academic success. In contrast, urban schools generally benefit from better infrastructure, a wider pool of qualified teachers, and greater access to resources.

This creates a more favorable learning environment, which is reflected in the higher academic performance of urban students.

The implications of this divide are far-reaching. It perpetuates a cycle of disadvantage, where rural students are less likely to access higher education and well-paying jobs, further exacerbating the socioeconomic gap between urban and rural communities.

Addressing this disparity



Minister Nono Kgafela-Mokoka

[PIC: PINO KILANO]

requires a multi-pronged approach, and research from trusted journals provides valuable insights into targeted interventions that can help bridge the achievement gap.

Targeted Interventions for Teachers:

- * Professional Development: Investing in high-quality professional development programs for rural teachers is crucial. These programs should focus on enhancing pedagogical

skills, content knowledge, and the use of innovative teaching methodologies. A study published in the journal "Teaching and Teacher Education" found that effective professional development programs can significantly improve teacher quality and student achievement in rural areas.

- * Mentorship and Support: Providing mentorship and support to rural teachers,

especially novice teachers, can help them navigate the challenges of teaching in rural environments. Mentorship programs can pair experienced teachers with novice teachers, providing guidance, feedback, and emotional support.

- * Incentive Programs: Implementing incentive programs to attract and retain qualified teachers in rural areas can help address the shortage of teachers in these

regions. Incentives could include housing subsidies, loan forgiveness programs, and salary differentials.

Targeted Interventions for Students:

- * Early Childhood Education: Expanding access to quality early childhood education in rural areas can provide children with a strong foundation for future learning. Research has shown that early childhood education can have a significant impact

on cognitive development and school readiness, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- * Remedial Education Programs: Providing remedial education programs to students who are struggling academically can help them catch up with their peers. These programs should be tailored to the specific needs of individual students and should provide individualized support.

- * Technology Integration: Integrating technology into the classroom can provide rural students with access to a wider range of learning resources and opportunities. This could involve providing students with laptops or tablets, setting up computer labs, and providing access to online learning platforms.

The upcoming budget speech presents an opportunity for the government to demonstrate its commitment to addressing this issue. Historically, the education sector has received a significant share of the national budget. However, it is crucial to ensure that these funds are allocated equitably and that they reach the schools and students who need them the most.

In recent years, there has been a growing focus on improving access to education in rural areas where government has implemented initiative such as the construction of new schools.

However, more needs to be done to address the underlying factors that contribute to the urban-rural divide.

It is expected that the upcoming budget speech will include further measures to address this issue. This could involve increased funding for rural schools, targeted programs to improve teacher quality in rural areas, and initiatives to address the socioeconomic challenges faced by rural communities.

The success of these measures will depend on effective implementation and monitoring. It is crucial to ensure that the funds allocated to education are used efficiently and that they reach the intended beneficiaries.

Furthermore, it is important to track the progress of these initiatives and to make adjustments as needed.

The JCE results serve as a stark reminder of the persistent challenges facing Botswana's education system. The widening urban-rural divide is a serious concern that requires urgent attention.

The upcoming budget speech presents an opportunity for the government to demonstrate its commitment to addressing this issue and to ensuring that every student in Botswana has the opportunity to reach their full potential, regardless of their background or location.

Noose tightens around Morupisi

FROM PAGE 1
Morupisi - who stand convicted on there counts of corruption, money laundering and abuse of abuse, will finally have his day at the Court of Appeal on Tuesday.

On Thursday afternoon, the Court of Appeal (CoA) dismissed yet another recusal application by Morupisi where the former Permanent Secretary to the President wanted Justices Leatile Dambe and Isaac

Lesetedi to leave the case. The dismissal comes with costs awarded against Morupisi. The other judges hearing the state appeal against Morupisi are Edwin Cameron, Johan Froneman and Goemekgabo

Tebogo-Maruping. The CoA also refused to grant Morupisi permission to launch a review application over the empanelment of the Court of Appeal judges by Judge President Tebogo Tau.



Former PSP Carter Morupisi in court

[PIC: PINO KILANO]

Morupisi wanted to challenge the constitution of the bench hearing an appeal against him by the state, arguing that Judge Tau was part for the bench that convicted him in the main corruption case.

The state is appealing a decision by the High Court to reverse a sentence of seven years imposed by the Court of Appeal on the grounds that Morupisi was sentenced unfairly, when judge Lakhvinder Singh Walia mentioned that his judgment was in line with the President's desire to curb corruption.

Morupisi challenged judge Walia's utterances, arguing that his constitutional right to a fair trial and justice was violated since the CoA sentence against him was influenced by political interests of the Executive (represented by the President).

The state appeal

Judge Mercy Garekwe granted the state and expedited appeal of the decision of the High Court of January 3, which effectively set Morupisi free. In a scathing judgment, she expressed disappointment over the decisions of judge Dr Zeinub Kebonang and

judge Reuben Lekorwe who set Morupisi free, saying such decisions seriously dented the integrity of the judiciary and undermine judicial hierarchy.

Judicial Hierarchy The state argues that the High Court judgment hits at the very centre of the integrity of the Court of Appeal on account of it painting a damning and alarming picture about the apex court, which is the pinnacle of the judicial arm of government.

Further, Tshiamo Ranatao- the attorney representing the state will argue that the High Court judgment not only puts into question the rule of law in Botswana, but also the legitimacy of the apex court, as well as the principles of functus officio and res judicata and that therefore there is an urgent need to put to rest these issues.

He will also argue that because Morupisi claims that the CoA judges who sent him to jail were biased in favour of the 'desires of the President', an allegation that hits at the centre of the principle of separation of powers, it is paramount for the Court of Appeal attend to the appeal and conclusively resolve

all these issues.

Ordering an expedited appeal, judge Mercy Garekwe had also ruled that "the weight of the allegations made against the Justices of this Court who presided over the sentencing of the Respondent (Morupisi), and premised on a statement that appears in the sentencing judgment, cannot be overlooked for they indeed paint a deem, damning and alarming picture about the integrity of the said Justices and therefore the Court of Appeal in general. It is important that I reproduce some of these allegations and contentions.

They also do not spare the President of this Republic, insinuating, as they do, that he is interfering with the judicial arm of government".

Kebonang decision

Judge Garekwe also observed that there has also been a suggestion by Dr. Kebonang J. that the Court of Appeal was not seized with any existing or on-going matter between the parties when the subject matter litigated upon was placed before them, suggesting therefore, it would seem, that such absence

had the absolute effect of taking the matter out of the purview of the Court of Appeal's jurisdiction. She said such finding is not only confusing but appears absurd with the utmost of respects.

"It is a fact that, the Court of Appeal had finalised the criminal matter that was before it upon pronouncing its sentence. However, the subject matter being litigated upon before the High Court emanated directly from the very matter that was before the Court of Appeal. If the matters are divorced, as seems to be the suggestion by the court a quo, one then wonders why its decision has had such drastic effects on the final decision of the Court of Appeal. The mere act of the Respondent challenging the decision of this Court, placed, in my preliminary view, him within the purview of the decisions cited above which categorically oust the High Court of any jurisdiction either in respect of final decisions of the High Court itself and more so final decisions of this Court," judge Garekwe observed.

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African countries with the fastest-growing military strength in 2025

BUSINESS INSIDER AFRICA

ANY AFRICAN countries are prioritizing advanced training, acquiring sophisticated weaponry, and fostering regional collaborations to enhance their capabilities. Leading the charge is Tanzania, which ranks as the fastest-growing military power in Africa, with a Power Index score of 2.0416, placing it 9th globally in this category.

African countries with the fastest-growing military strength in 2025

According to the Global Firepower Index, Egypt is Africa's strongest military power, ranked 19th globally with a Power Index (PwrIndx) score of 0.34. Following closely



is Algeria, ranked 26th globally with a score of 0.35. Nigeria ranks third in Africa and 31st globally with a score of 0.57.

Based on the Global Firepower (GFP) formula, which assesses military strength based on various factors, including

manpower, equipment, logistics, finances, and geography, Africa's military prowess is becoming increasingly evident.

The defence landscape is marked by rapid modernization, increasing investments in technology, and the restructuring of armed forces to address evolving security challenges.

Many nations are prioritizing advanced training, acquiring sophisticated weaponry, and fostering regional collaborations to enhance their capabilities.

Although still playing catch-up compared to western countries, several African countries are making major military advances. In the Powers on the Rise (2025) annual defence review, which highlights countries with rapidly growing military capabilities, Africa has made a significant mark with 9 of the 19 featured nations coming from the continent. Leading the

charge is Tanzania, which ranks as the fastest-growing military power in Africa, with a Power Index score of 2.0416, placing it 9th globally in this category. Cameroon follows closely

as the second fastest-growing on the continent, with a score of 2.0501, ranked 10th. South Sudan, showing notable progress despite its challenges, ranks 12th globally with a score

of 2.4321. [BUSINESS INSIDER AFRICA]

Below are the African countries with the fastest-growing military strength in 2025:

| Rank | Country | Power Index | Power on the rise (global rank) |
|------|-------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Tanzania | 2.0416 | 9th |
| 2 | Cameroon | 2.0501 | 10th |
| 3 | South Sudan | 2.4321 | 12th |
| 4 | Namibia | 2.6384 | 13th |
| 5 | Niger | 2.6689 | 14th |
| 6 | Republic of Congo | 2.7282 | 15th |
| 7 | Botswana | 2.7509 | 16th |
| 8 | Mauritania | 2.7977 | 17th |
| 9 | Senegal | 2.8116 | 18th |

P27 BILLION DEVELOPMENT MANAGER MODEL SERIES

Public funds must be accounted for publicly

Article 2

GUEST WRITERS

TRADITIONALLY ALL public works were procured through the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Board (PPADB) which had systems in place and had power to amongst others award works, listen to grievances and provide de-briefing to help the losing contractors improve. Most importantly, PPADB publicly accounted by regularly publishing tender awards including the amounts of awards either on their website,

Facebook page or even on the user Ministry socials. A typical example of award publication will be as follows:

Tender No: DS/PRI 047/2024-2025
Tender Title: A Works Contract for the Refurbishment of Central Prison (Electrical Installation Works) – PRISON
Supplier: Joe's Electrical Contractors (Pty) Ltd
Amount: BWP4,856,313.08
Adjudication Decision: Approved
(Source: Ministry of Defence and Security Facebook page)
Where there were changes,

these would be published as well with reasons. This so that the public is taken into confidence as to where their taxes are being spent.

In a move that now must be viewed with suspicion, the Mokgweetsi Masisi led Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) government, with very minimal consultation with stakeholders, created the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA), a regulatory body which has very minimal powers. They also have very little participation on the process of procurement of

service providers throughout the project implementation lifecycle. It was under this porous procurement environment that the Development Manager Model (DMM) was introduced. With no guardrails this led to "secrecy" which in turn led to "exclusion" and hogging of public works by very few entities which can only breed corruption and incestuous relationships where some companies appoint themselves or subsidiaries throughout the whole project value chain. **SECRECY: How Much**

do these projects really Cost the Taxpayer? One of the assertions made by the previous government in pushing the DMM through was that IT WILL SAVE THE TAXPAYER MONEY!! The lack of publicly accounting, however, has denied the nation an opportunity to scrutinise and put this assertion to the truth test.

The fact of the matter is that this is simply not true. Empirical evidence bears testimony to a totally different picture. DMM projects are a lot more expensive than the

| | CONVENTIONAL (TENDERING UNDER PPADB) | DEVELOPMENT MANGER MODEL |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Project | A. Road from Thamaga to Kubung | B. Road from Gabane to Tloaeng |
| Size | 22 km | 18 km |
| Contract Amount | BWP250 000 000.00 (BWP250 million) | BWP1 500 000 000.00 (BWP1.5 billion) |
| NOTE: Road A is 4 km longer than Road B. However, Road B costs five (5) times more than Road A. | | |

ones procured through the conventional method. Take for example the case of Thamaga – Kubung Road (A) and compare it with the Gabane – Tloaeng Road (B): Where is the cost saving? This staggering anomaly must be accounted for to the nation.

EXCLUSION: Appointment of Service providers
Government has literally fully outsourced its responsibilities to a few, mostly foreign companies at the exclusion of well over 80 percent of citizen companies.

This has stunted any growth of the local construction industry which was already under distress due to the devastating impact of the COVID 19 pandemic. When works were procured through the PPADB there was a fairly equitable distribution of work.

In contrast, the DMM allows, as evidenced by the answer recently given in parliament by the Minister of Transport and

Infrastructure Noah Salakae, that the Development Managers are in fact at liberty and in fact in some instances did appoint their subsidiaries to participate down the value chain. This was done despite the previous government, through the Catalyst Project Team (CPT), having made assurances to the construction sector to the effect that appointed DMs would subcontract work to them as a way of ensuring inclusive participation of the wider private sector in these projects. That was never to be! The CPT refused to even share the form of contract used, not even blank documents. Which begs the question; what are they hiding?

All other forms of contract like BIDD, FIDIC, JBCC, NEC and others are readily available online to peruse. Why is this one used on the DMM top secret? Assurances made by CPT was that these

requirements for inclusivity were infused into the DM contracts as a contractual obligation to the DMs. However, as demonstrated by the answer given in Parliament by the Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Noah Salakae, at least one DM has gone as far as appointing its subsidiaries to do construction works. Also associated with this is what criteria was used to select who participated on these projects? Were government procurement guidelines followed or friends and families were favoured instead? It is even alleged that some DMs have also even appointed their subsidiaries to supply aggregates (gravel, sand, etc) to be used for road construction under their, DM, portfolio. The DMM has promoted the proliferation of construction cartels at the expense of other industry players, particularly citizen youth.

Too little, too late

What a Pepfar waiver can't do

IN 2003, THE YEAR IN WHICH Pepfar – the US government's Aids fund which Donald Trump brought to a halt last week – was launched, I moved to Kenya for four years, to head up an HIV radio journalism project funded by the US government. The programme, run by the international media development organisation I worked for, was initially funded through democracy and governance money of the US Agency for International Development. But five months into the project, Pepfar, the President's Emergency Fund for Aids Relief, was launched.

The fund meant more resources – and longevity. Pepfar support allowed us to do what most other media programmes could only dream of: expensive, hands-on long-term mentoring.

We had enough money to roll out weekend workshops for small groups of reporters at a time; we could provide journalists with the latest recording equipment; we could give them travel grants to provinces and free access to a radio newsroom with sound editing programmes, computers, fast internet, phones and a resource centre with a wealth of HIV information. But most importantly, we could afford the salaries of a full-time sound technician and experienced story development and scripting mentors, with whom local journalists could work to produce their reports. But I was sceptical.

It was the first time I had worked for a nonprofit. And I certainly had no prior experience with making a living from a project funded by the US government – and for that matter a Republican-run administration (George W Bush was president at the time).

I was worried that Pepfar would interfere with the contents of the stories, and that there'd be an expectation for the radio inserts to glorify the US's goodwill; it was the year in which the fund started to buy antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) for countries like Kenya, and help them roll it out.

But, surprisingly, things played out very differently. Impact that transcends the HIV field

The quarterly meetings with Pepfar officials were new to me, and so were the donor and impact reports. But our interactions were respectful and constructive. When I explained that to be credible, media reports had to be produced independently, and that no stories would be cleared with Pepfar before publication, they listened.

Mostly, the only "rules" were that the radio programmes had to be of a high enough quality to make an impact, so that listeners found the information digestible enough to do something with it, such as getting tested for HIV or getting onto treatment – and that the stories

On Saturday, the US state department issued details of what qualifies for a limited waiver during the Trump administration's 90-day pause of foreign aid. The waiver, however, doesn't allow for US government-funded anti-HIV pills, unless they're given to pregnant women, **Writes MIA MALAN**

needed to hold the government and HIV organisations accountable for their actions.

That investment produced remarkable results.

Within months of the start of the media project, reporters' HIV stories were aired in prime-time slots; mostly because they were of a considerably higher standard, and therefore more interesting, than the content radio stations produced without access to the resources reporters could use for HIV stories. HIV-trained journalists started to win awards, the kind political or investigative journalists had previously won; listeners began to call into radio shows reporting HIV projects that were run badly; media consumers contacted reporters after the airing of their stories to find out where to get tested or treated; and from the second year of the project, the media professionals we worked with started to get promoted to more senior positions, such as news editors, within their newsrooms.

When the funding for the programme eventually ended after just over a decade (I left in year four), the training model was used for projects in other countries and ones that focused on different subjects, and mediums such as print and TV journalism. HIV-trained reporters in Kenya had become editors at influential media houses; some became communication managers or directors at health NGOs; others moved to take up journalism lecturer positions.

In the end, the programme's impact transcended the field of HIV. Waivers can't restore trust

That's the case with almost all Pepfar health projects I've interacted with. Because they're funded for many consecutive years, and also address the social determinants of health, the programmes contribute to far more than HIV; they build health systems, create jobs, help young people finish school and help to make our planet a safer place.

To Mitchell Warren, the head of the New York-based advocacy organisation Avac – one of hundreds of Pepfar-funded organisations that received stop-work orders last week – their HIV-related work in East and Southern Africa is about "global health and development. It's about democracy, about the way we think the world should be."

So when Trump issued his executive order to freeze foreign assistance to programmes for three months so they can be re-evaluated and potentially scrapped, he didn't only interrupt lifesaving HIV services. He destroyed almost 22 years of partnerships, "literally

with the stroke of a pen", Warren explains.

On Saturday, the US state department issued details of what qualifies for a limited waiver during the 90-day pause – HIV treatment programmes do, but when it comes to preventative anti-HIV medication, only projects dealing with the prevention-of-mother-to-child transmission are covered.

But the waiver is likely too little, and way too late. "Many programmes have started to shut down and have begun with massive layoffs," Warren says. "The abrupt freeze has also resulted in trust being broken down. And that doesn't get undone because of a waiver." In South Africa, at least three Pepfar-funded programmes – transgender clinics of the Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute, the Anova Health Institute's Ivan Toms Centre for Health in Green Point and OUT's Engagement Men's Health clinics in Gauteng and the Eastern Cape – let staff and patients know they were temporarily shutting their doors last week. Pepfar pays for 17% of the health department's annual HIV budget, health minister Aaron Mokoaleli says. Cutting those funds could lead to 15,000 health workers losing their jobs. Pepfar's annual meeting with the health department and the South African organisations that it funds, during which the country's operational plans are finalised – the event was scheduled for May – is now highly unlikely to take place, Warren says.

Instead, by then, organisations would have heard whether the Trump administration will continue to fund them at all. Change was coming, regardless – but not like this. It's not that Pepfar-funded organisations weren't prepared for change. They knew the fund was going to become smaller; regardless of who was in charge of the US government. It is, after all, an emergency fund, and, with access to treatment, HIV has become a manageable disease over the past two decades, despite the epidemic being far from over.

Last year, one of the most obvious warning signs emerged when the US Congress authorised only one year of Pepfar funding – which comes to an end in March 2025 – as opposed to the normal five years. That meant projects could only be funded – and plan – for a year at a time.

"It's not about the fact that the Trump administration wants to re-evaluate projects," says Warren. "It's about the cruel display of inhumanity. You don't just replace hundreds of millions of dollars of

investments in a country by turning to the minister of finance to say: 'Oh, Pepfar withdrew yesterday. Can you fill our coffers?'" explains Warren. "It doesn't work that way. And that's why these transitions need to take time and be done responsibly and strategically."

Ironically, scientists and activists were hoping they could convince Congress to authorise the fund for five years again in 2025 – in line with the five years that are left to achieve the UN sustainable development goal of ending Aids as a global health threat by 2030. "We expected and hoped this administration would be responsible and identify a five-year strategy to begin to decline investment," Warren says. What's more, projects have no idea how they will be evaluated – and by who and for what. Only that the US government would check they're "efficient and consistent with US foreign policy under the America First agenda".

"We need to know what the metric is," says Warren. If the metric is loyalty to the new president, many programmes will be evaluated quite negatively. "It's almost like giving people an exam but not telling them how you'll grade them. The professor just says: 'Oh, I don't like you, you get an F, or I like you, you get an A.'" Pepfar is what makes America great

Ironically, says Linda-Gail Bekker, who heads up the Desmond Tutu Health Foundation at the University of Cape Town, which receives US government funding for HIV research, Pepfar is exactly what makes America great. "It's about global security, global diplomacy and global wellbeing.

"To undermine that legacy at this point, and in many ways the investment, I would hope is something the Trump administration would think carefully about."

But, as things stand, it seems as if Trump is prepared to do exactly the opposite.

A few years ago, the Pepfar programme refocused its funding, based on scientific research, to zoom in on population groups with the highest chance of getting HIV. "It's how you get the biggest bang for your buck," Bekker explains. "And how you have the greatest impact: you go where the epidemic is." This meant specific grants for high-risk groups such as transgender people, gay and bisexual men, sex workers, injecting drug users and, in Africa, teen girls and young women.

But the Trump administration now believes there are only two genders – male and female – and everything else is socially

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The UN Charter as the legal foundation of a multipolar world

PART 1
SERGEY LAVROV*

EIGHTY YEARS AGO, ON February 4, 1945, the leaders of the victors of World War II – the Soviet Union, the United States, and Britain – opened the Yalta Conference to determine the contours of the postwar world. Despite ideological differences, they agreed to eradicate German Nazism and Japanese militarism. The agreements reached in Crimea were reaffirmed and elaborated upon at the Potsdam Conference in July-August 1945.

One result of the negotiations was the creation of the United Nations and the approval of the UN Charter, which to this day remains the main source of international law. The Charter set forth goals and principles for countries' behavior, which are designed to ensure their peaceful coexistence and sustained development.

The principle of the sovereign equality of states laid the foundation for the Yalta-Potsdam system: none may claim dominance, as all are formally equal regardless of territory, population, military capabilities, or other metrics.

For all its strengths and weaknesses, about which scholars still argue, the Yalta-Potsdam order has provided the international system's normative-legal framework for eight decades.

The UN-based world order fulfills its main task – safeguarding everyone against a new world war. Truly, "the UN has not brought us to paradise but saved us from hell". The veto power enshrined in the Charter – which is not a "privilege", but a burden of special

responsibility for safeguarding peace – serves as a solid barrier against reckless decisions and provides room for finding compromise based on a balance of interests. The political core of the Yalta-Potsdam system, the UN has served as a unique universal platform for developing collective responses to common challenges, maintaining international peace and security and promoting socio-economic development.

It was at the UN that, with a key role played by the USSR, the foundation was laid for the multipolar world that is now emerging before our eyes. In particular, the process of decolonisation was legally implemented through the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, adopted in 1960 at the Soviet Union's initiative. In that era, dozens of peoples, previously oppressed by the colonial powers, for the first time obtained independence and a chance of establishing their own statehood. Today, some of these former colonies can claim to be centers of power in the multipolar world, while others belong to supranational unions with regional or continental civilisational reach.

As Russian scholars rightly note, any international institution is, above all, "a way to limit the natural egoism of states". The UN, with its consensus-agreed and adopted Charter, is no exception. The UN-centric order is thus based on international – truly universal – law, from which it follows that every state should abide by that law.

Russia, like the majority of the world community, has never had any difficulty



Sergey Lavrov

doing so. But the West was never cured of its syndrome of exceptionalism, and retains its neocolonial habits, i.e. living at the expense of others. Interstate relations based on respect for international law were, from the very beginning, not to the West's liking.

Former US Under Secretary of State Victoria Nuland once frankly admitted, in an interview, that "Yalta was not a good deal for us, it was not a

deal we should've cut".

This sort of attitude goes a long way in explaining America's international behavior; in 1945, Washington was practically forced to grudgingly agree to the postwar world order, already perceived as a hindrance by the American elite, which soon sought to revise it. The revision began with Winston Churchill's infamous Iron Curtain speech in Fulton

in 1946, which essentially declared a Cold War against the Soviet Union. Perceiving the Yalta-Potsdam agreements as a tactical concession, the United States and its allies have never followed the UN Charter's fundamental principle of the sovereign equality of states.

The West had a fateful chance to right its course, to show prudence and foresight, when the Soviet Union collapsed along with the world socialist camp. However, selfish instincts prevailed. Addressing Congress on September 11, 1990, intoxicated by "victory in the Cold War", US President George H.W. Bush proclaimed the advent of a new world order, an order that American strategists understood as complete US dominance in the international arena, as a window of opportunity to act unilaterally without any regard for the legal

restrictions embedded in the UN Charter.

One manifestation of the "rules-based order" was Washington's policy of geopolitically absorbing Eastern Europe. Russia has been forced to eliminate its explosive consequences with the special military operation.

In 2025, with Donald Trump's Republican administration back in power, Washington's interpretation of international processes since World War II has taken on a new dimension, as vividly described in the Senate by new Secretary of State Marco Rubio on January 15: not only is the postwar world order outdated, but it has been turned into a weapon against US interests.

In other words, not only the Yalta-Potsdam order is undesirable; so, too, is the "rules-based order" that

had seemed to embody the selfishness and arrogance of the US-led West after the Cold War. "America first" is alarmingly similar to the Hitlerite slogan "Germany above all", and a wager on "peace through strength" may be the final blow to diplomacy. Not to mention that such statements and ideological constructs do not show even the slightest bit of respect for Washington's international legal obligations under the UN Charter.

However, today is not 1991 or even 2017, when the incumbent US President took the helm for the first time.

Russian analysts rightly note that "there will be no return to the previous state of affairs, still sought after by the US and its allies, because demographic, economic, social, and geopolitical conditions have changed irreversibly". There

is also probably truth in the prediction that eventually "the United States will understand that it should not overstretch its area of responsibility in international affairs, and will live quite harmoniously as one of the leading states, but no longer a hegemon".

Multipolarity is gaining momentum and, instead of opposing it, the US could in the foreseeable future become a responsible center of power along with Russia, China, and other states in the Global South, East, North, and West. For the moment, it seems that the new US administration will be launching cowboy raids to test the existing UN-centric system's limits and durability versus American interests. But I am sure that this administration, too, will soon understand that international reality is much more complex than the caricatures that it is free to deploy before internal American audiences or obedient geopolitical allies.

While we wait for the Americans to sober up and realise this, we will continue to work conscientiously with our like-minded partners to adapt the mechanisms of interstate relations to multipolarity, and to the Yalta-Potsdam international legal consensus that is embodied in the UN Charter. It is worth noting the BRICS Kazan Declaration of October 23, 2024, which clearly reaffirms the World Majority's united "commitment to multilateralism and upholding the international law, including the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter as its indispensable cornerstone and the UN's central role in the international system".

This approach has been formulated by leading states that shape the modern world and represent the majority of its population. Yes, our partners in the South and East have quite legitimate wishes regarding their participation in global governance. Unlike the West, they, and we, are ready for honest and open discussions on all issues.

*Russian Foreign Minister

The UN Charter as the legal foundation of a multipolar world

PART 2
SERGEY LAVROV*

OUR POSITION ON UN Security Council reform is well known. Russia seeks to make this body more democratic by expanding the representation of the World Majority: Asia, Africa, and Latin America. We support the applications of Brazil and India for permanent seats on the Security Council, while also working to correct – by means agreed upon by the Africans themselves – the historical injustice towards the African continent. Allocating additional seats to countries of the collective West, already overrepresented in the Security Council, is counterproductive. Germany and Japan, having delegated much of their sovereignty to their overseas patron, and having begun reviving the ghosts of Nazism and militarism at home, cannot bring anything new to the Security Council's work.

We are strongly committed to the inviolability of the UNSC permanent members' prerogatives. Given the unpredictable policy of the Western minority, only the veto power can ensure that the Council's decisions take into account all parties' interests.

The UN Secretariat's personnel policy remains insulting to the World Majority, as Westerners still predominate

in all key positions. Alignment of the UN bureaucracy with the geopolitical world map cannot be delayed, as stated quite unambiguously in the above-mentioned BRICS Kazan Declaration. We shall see how receptive the UN leadership, accustomed to serving the interests of a narrow group of Western countries, will be to this call.

As for the UN Charter's normative framework, I am convinced that it optimally meets the needs of the multipolar era, an era when everyone must observe – not only in word, but in deed – the principles of the sovereign equality of states, non-interference in their internal affairs, and other fundamental principles. Such principles include the right of peoples to self-determination, the consensus interpretation of which is enshrined in the 1970 UN Declaration on Principles of International Law: a state's territorial integrity must be respected if its government represents its entire population. It goes without saying that, since the February 2014 coup, the Kiev regime does not represent the people of Crimea, Donbass, or Novorossiya any more than the Western powers represented the peoples of the colonial territories that they exploited.

Brazen attempts to reorder the world in one's own interest,

violating UN principles, may bring instability, confrontation, and even catastrophe. Given the current level of international tensions, a reckless rejection of the Yalta-Potsdam system, with the UN and its Charter at its core, will inevitably lead to chaos. One often hears that it is premature to speak of the desired world order at a time when we are still fighting to suppress the Western-supported forces of the racist regime in Kiev. This is, in our view, a baneful approach. The contours of the postwar world order, and the key points of the UN Charter, were discussed by the Allies at the height of World War II, including at the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers and the Tehran Conference of heads of state and government in 1943, and during other contacts between the future victorious powers, up to the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences in 1945. Although our allies already had a secret agenda, this did not detract from the enduring importance of the supreme principles of equality, non-interference in internal affairs, peaceful settlement of disputes, and "respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion".

The West evidently subscribed to these principles with ulterior motives, and then grossly violated them in

Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya, and Ukraine, but that does not mean that we should relieve the United States and its satellites of moral and legal responsibility, or should abandon the unique legacy of the UN's founders as embodied in the UN Charter. If, God forbid, someone tries to rewrite it (under the pretext of getting rid of the "outdated" Yalta-Potsdam system), the world will have no common guiding values left.

Russia is ready for joint honest work to balance parties' interests and to strengthen the legal principles of international relations. President Vladimir Putin's 2020 initiative for a meeting of the leaders of the UNSC's permanent members, who bear "special responsibility for the preservation of civilisation", sought an equitable dialogue on all these issues. For well-known reasons beyond Russia's control, this initiative did not go any further. But we keep our hopes up, although the participants and format of such meetings may now be different. The most important thing, according to Putin, is "to regain an understanding of what the United Nations was created for, and to follow the principles that are set forth in its founding documents". This should be the foremost guideline for regulating international relations in the multipolar era that has dawned.

*Russian Foreign Minister



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Opinions, Reviews & Analysis

COMMENT

Donald Trump - a tornado in trousers!

MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN IS THE motto on newly elected Republican president Donald Trump's cap. And to achieve his goal, Trump on his first day in office signed countless executive orders reversing the 78 signed by the previous Democratic president, Joe Biden, plus countless new ones, especially on immigration. Such a move has been considered as dictatorial by some, and that too much power lies with the Executive arm of government. No wonder, then, that some political commentators have referred to him as a Category 5 storm, or a tornado in trousers!

Fireworks began with his inauguration speech on January 20th in the Capitol building in Washington. During his speech, he came across as someone who was proud, pompous and arrogant. Across the ocean, the UK also held an election in 2024 where the ruling Conservative party, led by prime minister, Rishi Sunak, was heavily defeated by the Labour party. The new prime minister, Sir Keir Starmer, did not launch a scathing attack but gave Sunak credit for that he had achieved whilst in office, especially since he was the first UK prime minister of Asian origin.

And here in Botswana we also saw a change in government following the victory of the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) over the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) which had been in power for close to 60 years. The new president, Duma Boko, credited former president Masisi for the peaceful, seamless and orderly transfer of power which showed that the country was a true. He repeated the remarks during the recent World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland.

Throughout his entire speech, Trump showed that he is the only one who is right and everyone else is wrong. He was going to be the only one who could begin "The complete restoration and

the revolution of common sense." Everything was about Trump the infallible!

He also lied that the US has defeated communism and has overcome every challenge that they have faced. Not true! The US was defeated by the communist Vietcong forces when they invaded South Vietnam from communist-ruled North Vietnam during the Vietnam war in the 1960s. Also, despite the Korean war in the 1950s, half of the Korean peninsula is still in the control of a communist government - Kim Jong Un's North Korea. Plus, communism is still alive and kicking both in China and Cuba!

Many conservative Republicans see Trump as God's servant to save America and the world. Trump, who had been president from 2016 to 2020, was defeated by Biden in the elections in November 2020 but he refused to concede defeat. And to prevent the new government from assuming power, his supporters on January 6th 2021 stormed and ravaged the Capitol building, the centre of government in Washington. Much damage was caused and some 200 police officers were injured and five died. That is treason!

But he has now released some 1500 of these rioters from gaol, claiming that they were 'patriots' who were peacefully demonstrating and that any damage done was 'very minor'. One of their leaders calls himself the 'Qanon Shaman'. Now shamans in some countries are witchdoctors who can control good and evil spells; they are demonic!

Trump wants to rid America of the 'millions of criminal aliens' who are residing in the US. Already Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials are rounding up suspected aliens and deporting them. And Trump is boosting US military presence along the southern border with Mexico to prevent immigrants entering from that country. Despite his claims that Biden did little to curb illegal immigration, ICE is

now arresting only 700 immigrants a day whilst Biden deported an average of 743 each day last year. And Trump is now facing some lawsuits from 24 Democratic states and cities over this hot potato. Also, he has revoked the right of immigrants born in the US to have American citizenship, something that is enshrined in the constitution. Such people might then become stateless. Trump claims that all immigrants are criminals - prostitutes, drug traffickers... How xenophobic!

The US is a violent country as statistics show. In 2024, the Global Peace Index ranked the US in position 132 out of a total of 163 nations, and even nations such as Libya, Brazil and South Africa fared better. Also, it is ranked far below all other developed western countries. And US citizens account for a staggering 46% of the worldwide total of civilian held firearms, despite only being home to 5% of the world's population. That is 120 firearms for every 100 American residents! After all, it is very easy for anyone to buy a gun - gunshops exist in every town across the US! In theory, a buyer should be subject to a background check but, in reality, it may not be carried out - gunshops want to make money! Furthermore, the US is the only developed country where any resident is allowed to own one, and gun sales have risen sharply in the US since 2000.

No wonder, then, that we hear so often of people being gunned down in public places and schools in the US. And only a few days after his inauguration, there were shootings in Nashville, Tennessee. But we did not hear of any message of sympathy for the relatives of the deceased; Trump only found sympathy for the Capitol rioters, despite the fact that some of the rioters smuggled guns into the Capitol. And Trump is very unlikely to enforce stricter gun control laws since he is a buddy of the National Rifle

Association, a gun rights advocacy group in the US.

It may be true that some immigrants smuggle drugs into the US. But Mexican drug cartels only make money if there is a demand for drugs in the US. So, Trump has to admit that the US is also part of the problem. He needs to enforce much stricter penalties against those who use and distribute drugs, and young people need to be informed more of the dangers of drug abuse.

Trump attended an inauguration church service on January 21st. And the preacher, the Archbishop of Washington, chastised him saying that he has polarised America instead of unifying the nation. In his speech, he made no attempt to reach out to Democrats but only rubbished them. She then told him that leaders should be honest, humble and people of integrity; characteristics sorely lacking in Trump. And she said that "We are most dangerous to others and ourselves when we think that we are absolutely right and others are absolutely wrong." But that was not all. She then asked him to show mercy to those who are now scared in the US, especially immigrants, even if they are undocumented. She told him that the vast majority of them are law abiding, and pick your vegetables, serve you in hotels and restaurants, work night shifts in hospitals, and pay their taxes. Many of them come from war or persecution in their homelands. Of course, Trump cannot feel for such people since he is highly privileged, and a multimillionaire owning mansions, hotels, golf courses and jumbo jets.

All the while Trump was feeling distinctly uncomfortable in his pew, and after the service condemned the archbishop saying "She was nasty in tone and not good at her job" and that she must apologise to him for her comments. What cheek; Trump must realise that no one is above criticism! God says that those in

authority will be judged more severely. And in his inauguration speech, Trump claimed that he would bring back free speech to America. But according to Trump, free speech is fine if you do not criticise him!

Trump is also planning to change the world map by renaming the Gulf of Mexico the Gulf of America, invade Panama and take over the Panama Canal, and even invade Greenland for 'strategic reasons'. And on the international stage at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Trump was once again on his high horse telling world leaders what they must do: follow me or pay! He expects everyone to follow him without question. They should invest in the US or else they may face sanctions, taxes and tariffs. This is blackmail! And he insisted that he would impose tariffs on goods from other countries, in particular, China, Canada and Mexico since this would 'protect' industries in the US. However, such a move may be met with those countries also imposing tariffs on American goods - tit for tat!

And trade wars may result which benefit no one! He also threatened to impose tariffs on Colombia if they did not accept deportations of their nationals from the US. Trump also claimed that he would end the war in Ukraine on this first day in office but a public communique issued by the Kremlin stated that 'nothing has changed'. Trump is likely to get a frosty reception when he finally meets Vladimir Putin. He has also suggested that the Gaza Strip be cleaned out of Palestinians; such comments promoted outrage across the Middle East. Also, the Iranian foreign minister has warned the US not to attack nuclear facilities in his country otherwise Iran would take action and a dangerous situation could develop in the region.

Trump has also withdrawn from the Paris Climate Accord, which focuses on ways of

dealing with climate change, and also the World Health Organisation (WHO). The latter action will have likely negative consequences for the health sector in the US since WHO member states receive much vital information concerning medical issues, including any pandemic outbreaks, etc. In so doing, the US is increasingly becoming isolationist - but we live in a global village where countries are dependent on one another!

Trump has also been criticised for his choice of cabinet members. His first choice for Attorney General has been charged with defiling an under-age girl. His Secretary for Defence, Pete Hegseth, admitted in Congress last week that he paid US\$50 000 as part of a confidentiality agreement with a woman who alleged that he had sexually assaulted her, and he is also well known for drunkenness. But that is not surprising since Trump is well known for his sexual adventures in the past, and has been labelled a sexual predator and an insurrectionist. Birds of a feather flock together! Members of Cabinet should be well vetted before being appointed since they hold high office and should be exemplary in their conduct.

Trump may be bad news for Botswana and Africa. No mention of the continent was made in his speech and no African leaders were invited to his inauguration. Furthermore, he has now cut almost all foreign aid. He has snubbed Africa big time!

The US under Trump faces a turbulent journey over the next four years, and it remains to be seen if the president will heed the Biblical warning that pride comes before a fall. Trump is putting down a lot of markers that could be seen later by large chunks of the US electorate as overreach and more than they bargained for, and so he may be trumped by the Democrats in 2028 if he does not come up trumps in the meantime!



ADAM PHETLHE
ON SUNDAY!

THE UMBRELLA FOR DEMOCRATIC Change (UDC) President Advocate Duma Boko has on many occasions, told us that his government will be on the human rights tagline. The tagline was repeated by the President when he swore in His Lordship the Chief Justice Gaolapelwe Ketlogetswe. It is also this tagline that recently led to government abandoning the Court of Appeal (CoA) decision to bury Rre Pitseng Gaoberekwe inside the Central Kgalagadi Game Reserve. Well and good.

But the reality from recent conduct by different governments indicate that they do not always walk the talk on human rights because they end up being the biggest violators. I will give the UDC the benefit

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Govt must jealously protect human rights

of doubt on the singular ground that it has just come into office. That said, the ravaging conflict between Botswana Nurses Union (BONU) and government over the decision of the CoA on the on-duty call which government seems not eager to implement could be a telling sign of what awaits us. The issue borders on a violation of employment as the right to work, which is recognised as a fundamental human right by numerous international documents like the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Human rights is a broad subject whose meaning refers to rights every human being should enjoy without undue hindrance just because they are human beings. The subject is further categorised into first generation and second-generation rights. In the former are located your civil and political rights like the right to freedom of speech; the right to life; the right to a fair trial and the right to the freedom from torture; freedom from arbitrary detention. These rights are referred to as non-derogable meaning government does not have no discretion to violate them. In the latter category are located the right to education; the right to employment and, the right to shelter/healthcare. Legal gurus tell us that there is remedy to your rights if you deeply feel they have been violated. The place to restore one's rights is in courts.



President Advocate Duma Boko (PIC: PINO KILANO)

How do governments become the biggest violators of human rights and, have citizens been able to restore them?

Governments violate human rights mainly through State actors like intelligence agencies and the police. Here at home, the stories about how the intelligence agency being the Directorate of Intelligence Services (DIS) ably assisted by the police has over time violated various human rights of citizens and residents are well

documented. Notable among these is how the agency subjected its own employees to these violations by, in some instances, arbitrarily arresting them and how former Member of Parliament Dr Thapelo Matsheka was publicly humiliated by DIS for no good cause. He had to restore his right to freedom and liberty through court. The common thread by the DIS to justify human rights violations has consistently been in the interests of national security.

It has since emerged the national security argument is some ploy to mask the bad intentions of State actors in furtherance of the political leadership intentions to persecute political opponents.

Given the socio-economic circumstances we encounter on a daily basis with respect to the dire and jaw-dropping conditions our public health facilities; primary and secondary schools; prison services which conditions are inconsistent with the intensions of the human rights in a general sense, it is reasonable to argue that government as the principal protector of these rights violate them by not adequately protecting them through the delivery of good quality services. It should be borne in mind that when political parties seek to win political power in order to form government, they overpromise to uphold human rights. When they fail to do so, they seek refuge in resource constraints. While this argument could be persuasive to some extent, the reality is that once they have tasted the trappings of political office, all else becomes secondary.

That governments have committed through so many international instruments to prevent human rights boggles the mind why this should be a topic for discussion. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action says that "The international community should devise ways and means

of remove the current obstacles and meet challenges to the full realisation of all human rights and prevent the continuation of human rights violations resulting therefrom throughout the world."

The cost of restoring violated human rights for ordinary citizens and residents is so prohibitive in terms of legal costs such that people end up not finding the purpose of restoring them. Some of those who may attempt to restore their human rights via the legal route end up abandoning the route. Like I said, it is only populist talk that governments are committed to upholding human rights while the sad reality is the direct opposite. The world is deeply saddled with unending violations of human rights.

It is incumbent upon the UDC government to demonstrate that its human rights tagline is not mere talk to endear itself to Batswana and the world but honest talk to ensure no Motswana human rights are violated under its watch. The judiciary is in place to defend human rights as and when evidence shows such have been violated in one form or the other. Mindful of the prohibitive nature of litigating, it is desirable that UDC government delivers on the human rights front through demonstrable action. I expect the President to pronounce more broadly on the matter in his promised 100 days' timeframe. I am prepared to be persuaded otherwise as always. Judge for Yourself!

adamphetlhe08@gmail.com

Update on status of schools

NONO KGAFELA MOKOKA*

ON 14TH JANUARY 2024 PUBLIC schools opened, some schools could not open due to the widespread rainfalls which affected some of our infrastructure. I am also happy to note that all schools have opened after having been affected by the previous floods.

Severance benefits

The Ministry prioritizes welfare issues for both teachers and students. Last year towards the end of December I made a declaration that we want to have all the salaries and severance benefits for temporary teachers paid but we were not able to source funds. However, when processing the payments, we ran into some hurdles which amongst others include the formula used to calculate the benefits where eventually in some cases the revenue or labour office rejected the documents. In some instances, the officers who were supposed to initiate and sign-off the payments had already gone on leave. In other cases, schools had not submitted the required documents on time to help initiate



Minister of Child Welfare & Basic Education, Nono Kgafela (PIC: PINO KILANO)

payments.

Sadly, the above scenario delayed the entire process. We have since overcome this, we impressed upon our Regions to expedite the process and only a few teachers remain to be paid. I would like to apologize profusely for the delay but we are on task to close this chapter.

Temporary teachers, Teacher aides

Due to the expansion of schools following increased enrolment at Junior Secondary School, the need for extra teachers is attended to by employing contracted/ temporary teachers. In view of this school expansion, while a lasting solution is being sought, the Ministry will be engaging temporary teachers to assist during this term without any delay. In addition, there are learners who have disabilities and physical challenges that require that Teacher Aides be availed. We have started the process to engage them so that learning can progress. The delay in engaging both the Contracted Teachers and Teacher Aides is as a result of funds. This is a challenge we hope to resolve in one way or the other.

We have also embarked on an assessment regarding the current teacher workload

versus school establishment so that we can have a very clear manpower picture after which we can motivate for vacancies in a timely manner. Our goal is to ultimately have all the contracted teachers absorbed permanently.

School infrastructure

We acknowledge that infrastructure in our schools across all levels leaves a lot to be desired as highlighted during the State of the Nation Address of the 19th November 2024 by the President. The recent rains across the country have made the situation worse and more urgent than before. To address this quickly, there is need for a paradigm shift in the way we approach and do maintenance at schools. The Ministry together with the relevant stakeholders are working around the clock to develop a programme that will address maintenance in a quick and efficient way. This is taking into account the country's weak fiscal position. The reality on the ground is that our schools are in a bad state and this is a matter that calls for expediency so that we can offer quality education.

*Minister of Child Welfare & Basic Education

Upskill through Open & Distance Learning



IGNATIUS NJOBVU
HEART OF THE MATTER

HAVE WE EVER WONDERED why our communities are defined by the disparities between the affluent and those that are less fortunate? The gap between the affluent society and those struggling seem to be increasing and we seem not to have a solution to it. The good thing is that we have the desire to improve the situation as a general community. That is why we have a plethora of public initiatives geared towards uplifting those that are less fortunate. Government social programs are some of those in line

with the idea of bridging that gap. But whether we are making positive strides or not is something we are yet to observe. One measure that could be used to determine success for all is the literacy rate. I understand that we currently are standing at 86% for the adults and 97% for the youth (Countrymeters.info). These numbers are very high comparatively and they reflect positively on us. The literacy rate is defined by the percentage of the population of a given age group that can read and write – UNESCO Institute for Statistics. However, this definition and many others alike do not capture the level of knowledge and skill acquisition as an aggregate. We might be doing quiet alright when it comes to reading and writing, but that is not the knowledge and skill that most affluent communities go after. Most of those that are fortunate in society go after the skills that expedite their effectiveness and efficiency at work, enable adaptation to the ever changing work environment and

strategy formulation for the emerging issues. We therefore need to ask: do we have such programs in Botswana? The answer is a resounding yes. Are these programs accessible to all Batswana or at least the majority? I cannot really tell. This is because as a society we are used to face-to-face learning as the soul model of acquiring knowledge. We believe that one is acquiring an education only when they are found in a classroom (brick and mortar) with a teacher standing in front of them. We believe that a teacher standing in front of us must determine the pace for our learning, determine when to write assessments and choose the educational resources to be used during our learning process. This mindset is limiting and creates self-barriers. Open and Distance Learning (ODL) is the provision of distance education opportunities in ways that seek to mitigate or remove barriers to accessing education, such as finances, prior learning, age, social, work or family commitments.

'Open' refers to a commitment that removes any unnecessary barriers to access learning. Distance education refers to teaching and learning that temporarily separates teacher and learner in real time and/or place; using multiple media for delivery of instruction – UNESCO 2005. This model gives opportunity for an education to any person regardless of the barriers that are associated with face-to-face model of learning. The only needed tool to access learning is the internet access. In this regard, the Government has initiatives in place to see to it that internet is accessed by the majority. Besides, most individuals are seeing value in subscribing for their own family WiFi nowadays. With internet at your disposal, anybody can get an education and training in the comfort of their homes. One is not required to take a study leave to go and further their education. Educational resources are freely available online to those in need. Those with busy life schedules can resort to asynchronous platforms which are equally effective. This is

where modern learning is heading to and we ought to take advantage, familiarize and utilize it fully. Botswana Open University (BOU) is the local leading learning institution using this latest model. Through BOU, Batswana have managed to access education from all corners of this country. Thousands of people are now graduates because of BOU. Being the leading institute in this arena, International learning bodies are now finding value in partnering with BOU in order to advance the access and equity agenda as described in many of our local, regional and international declarations. The latest partnership with Botswana Teaching Professional Council (BOTPECO) is a giant step towards advancing Teacher Continuous Professional Development. Botswana Teachers will have access to develop professional skills that will improve their curriculum delivery in modern times. I must commend BOTPECO (as a teacher regulatory body) for bringing BOU on board in advancing

teacher CPD. Of course all things have some limitations. ODL requires some self-discipline. It requires some basic skills on ICT usage. It also limits learning affections and socialization. I must end my submission by advocating for a serious consideration by Government to look into availing tertiary public funding/sponsorship for Open and Distance Learning. This would go a long way in cutting the public tertiary education expenditure. When a Government Employee is on ODL for example, the employer is not under pressure to hire a replacement because the substantive officer would be available. Besides, it is much easier to apply and test that which one is learning to real work. Scaling up citizens that would access tertiary education is a feasible dream with ODL. Let us go the ODL route as a cost cutting measure, an inclusive education measure and most importantly an access and equity measure.

Perennial War in DRC is a Scorn at Africa's sovereignty



MIKE OMUDO

APHONE VIBRATION DREW MY attention to an incoming message – a friend had sent a message with an attachment and a note reading, "This is so sad and needs to stop! The message was followed by some crying emojis. Curious, I opened the attachment. It was a photo of some of the carnage in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) – to be precise, the photo of corpses of those killed in the DRC's never-ending war, piled like some wastes from a city garbage truck. My heart bled for the children and women of DRC, the main victims of this horrendous war! The war in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which has killed over 6 million people over decades, stands as a stark reminder of the continent's internal and

external challenges. Despite Africa's rich history, cultural diversity, and growing potential, the persistent violence in the DRC represents a failure of both African leadership and the international community to address a crisis that undermines the very notion of African unity, independence, and self-determination. The DRC, endowed with an abundance of natural resources—diamonds, gold, copper, coltan—should be one of Africa's most prosperous countries. Instead, it has become a battlefield where local militias, foreign corporations, and regional powers exploit its riches, leaving its people in poverty and suffering. This is a direct affront to the vision of African sovereignty, which seeks to ensure that African resources benefit Africans and not external actors or corrupt elites. The inability of African nations to decisively intervene and resolve the conflict in the DRC highlights a painful reality: while African leaders have championed unity and cooperation through platforms like the African Union (AU), they have largely failed to protect one of their own from decades of exploitation and war. The silence and inaction of many African governments on the DRC crisis is a scorn to the idea of Pan-Africanism, which promises solidarity and collective action in the face of injustice. The war in the DRC is also a reflection of how foreign interests



continue to meddle in African affairs, undermining Africa's sovereignty. Since colonial times, external powers have exploited the DRC for its natural resources, leaving the country in a state of perpetual conflict. Today, multinational corporations and foreign governments continue to benefit from the illegal extraction of the DRC's minerals, funding armed groups and prolonging instability. African leaders have a moral and political obligation to assert Africa's control over its own resources and territory. Allowing foreign actors to dictate the fate of one of the continent's richest nations not only diminishes the sovereignty of the DRC but also weakens the entire continent's ability to defend its

economic and political interests. Failed Governance At the heart of the DRC crisis is the failure of governance. While external actors have played a significant role in the conflict, internal divisions, corruption, and weak leadership within the DRC have exacerbated the situation. Successive governments have struggled to maintain control over vast portions of the country, allowing warlords and militias to fill the power vacuum. However, the broader failure lies in the inability of African leaders to come together and address these internal issues through diplomatic pressure, peace-building, and robust intervention. Instead, some regional powers have been accused of further destabilizing the

country by supporting rebel groups and exploiting the chaos for their own gains. This lack of leadership not only prolongs the suffering of millions of Congolese but also erodes trust in Africa's ability to solve its own problems. Strategic Imperative This war shouldn't be seen merely as Congo's problem but as a moral and strategic imperative for the entire African continent. The ongoing conflict undermines Africa's collective goals of peace, security, and economic development. It destabilizes a region that is critical to the future of Africa, limits economic growth, and diverts attention from pressing continental issues such as poverty alleviation, infrastructure

development, and healthcare. Allowing the DRC to remain in a state of war or even degenerate further into the abyss reflects poorly on the African Union and regional organizations like the East African Community and Southern African Development Community (SADC), which have the capacity to mediate and intervene. If African leaders do not act now to stop the violence and build sustainable peace, it will signal a failure to live up to the founding principles of these organizations and African independence itself. Reclaiming sovereignty This war is not just a humanitarian catastrophe; it is a direct challenge to Africa's ability to assert control over its own destiny. The conflict has exposed the fragility of African sovereignty and the vulnerability of the continent's vast resources to external exploitation. To truly live up to the promise of a united, independent, and prosperous Africa, African leaders must rise to the occasion, reclaim the DRC's sovereignty, and bring an end to this senseless war. Inaction or passive diplomacy will only deepen the wounds and prolong the suffering. It's time for Africa to lead by example, assert its political will, and save the DRC from becoming a permanent scar on the continent's legacy. The war in the DRC cannot be allowed to continue as a scorn upon Africa's sovereignty. The writer is a pan-African Public Relations and Communications expert based in Nairobi, Kenya.

TAEF concerned about impunity against journalists in Ghana

THE AFRICAN EDITORS FORUM (TAEF) strongly supports the Ghana Journalists Association's (GJA) ultimatum to Ghanaian authorities to provide a definitive update on the murder investigation of investigative journalist Ahmed Hussein-Suale by the end of March 2025. TAEF also urges swift action on the brutal assault of journalist Latif Iddrisu, warning that continued inaction undermines press freedom and public trust in law enforcement. TAEF President, Churchill Otieno

emphasizes that the unresolved murder of Hussein-Suale and the lack of accountability in the assault on Iddrisu represent a profound failure to uphold justice and protect press freedom in Ghana. "These cases are not just about individual journalists—they reflect broader issues of impunity and the safety of all media workers. The inability to conclude investigations or prosecute offenders sends a chilling message to journalists, emboldens perpetrators of violence, and erodes Ghana's hard-earned reputation as a beacon of democracy and press

freedom in Africa," says Mr. Otieno. TAEF stands ready to collaborate with the GJA and international stakeholders to amplify calls for justice and accountability. If concrete progress is not demonstrated, TAEF will fully support GJA's plan to escalate both cases to the ECOWAS Court of Justice. Ensuring justice in these cases is not just a moral and legal obligation but a critical step in reinforcing the principles of democracy, freedom of expression, and the safety of journalists in Ghana and across the continent.

A nation on edge: Zimbabwe's fight for survival

THE AIR IN THE CAPITAL crackles with a tension that borders on the electric. Whispers of dissent snake through the crowded marketplaces, while the once-vibrant streets now echo with the hollow footsteps of those too afraid to speak their minds against Zanu-PF. Emmerson Mnangagwa and his cabal of cronies, Zanu-PF, a grotesque caricature of a government, clings to power with the desperation of a drowning man, its grip tightening as the people's patience wears thin. Emmerson Mnangagwa must go. Under his leadership corruption festers like a cancer, eating away at the foundations of the nation, while the unpatriotic elite, consort with well-known crooks and are more concerned with lining their own pockets than serving their country, Zanu-Pf revel in the suffering of their own people. The spectre of regime change looms large, a dark shadow cast by the growing discontent, and the question on everyone's lips is Mnangagwa must GO!! no one cares about his 2030 agenda, more people await by their sit-edge to see when, the dam will finally break. Zimbabwe is crying out to the whole world and neighbouring countries for immediate attention and intervention in helping the nation, while it fights for survival against the regime. Oppression of the Zimbabwean People: The government's systematic suppression of dissent, restriction of freedom of speech, and use of force against peaceful protesters are clear violations of fundamental human rights. This oppressive environment stifles progress and breeds resentment, undermining the very fabric of society.

Rampant Corruption: Zanu-PF's corruption is deeply entrenched within the government, with officials at all levels engaging in bribery, embezzlement, and abuse of power for personal gain. This pervasive corruption diverts public resources, erodes trust in institutions, and impedes development. Nepotism in Government: The appointment of unqualified family members and cronies to key government positions leading to mismanagement of national resources, and a disregard for the needs of the Zimbabwean people. Illegal Recalls of Elected Officials: The arbitrary and politically motivated removal of elected officials through dubious legal processes and subverting the democratic will of the people as seen with shameful previous elections. This disregard for the rule of law has destabilised the political system and eroded public trust in Zanu-PF and the electoral process. Land Grabbing by the Ruling Family: The acquisition of vast tracts of land by the ruling family through questionable means, special mining grants issued to President Mnangagwa's sons, deprives communities of their livelihoods and resources with unmitigated looting of resources at the highest level. This blatant disregard for property rights and equitable distribution of wealth exacerbates inequality and fuels social unrest. Poor Salaries for Workers: The failure by the current government to provide fair wages to workers perpetuates poverty and undermines economic growth. This exploitation of labor creates a cycle of hardship and

prevents citizens from achieving a decent standard of living. Widespread Unemployment: The lack of job opportunities, particularly for young people, creates a sense of hopelessness and despair. This widespread unemployment contributes to social instability and undermines the potential of an entire generation. Neighbouring countries like South Africa, Zambia, Mozambique and Botswana feel the burden through excessive migration with Zimbabwean people fleeing their country for better living. Unconstitutional Actions by the Zanu-PF: Their disregard for the constitution and the rule of law sets a dangerous precedent. President Mnangagwa and his cronies with their unconstitutional actions erode the foundations of democracy and create an environment of impunity. These issues paint a grim picture of a nation failing its people. The government's actions are undermining the fundamental rights and well-being of its citizens, jeopardizing the country's future. I urge our neighbouring countries to take immediate action to address these critical issues. The people of Zimbabwe deserve a government that respects their rights, promotes their welfare, and upholds the rule of law. It is much more crucial now to restoring hope and ensuring a better future for the nation. Enough is Enough. Collen Chikore Zimbabwe Human Rights Activist. 69 Montalt Road Cheylesmore Coventry CV3 5LS

IN THE HIGH COURT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA HELD AT LOBATSE CASE NO. CVHGB-003722-18

FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF BOTSWANA LIMITED Plaintiff

And

MOTSE LODGE (PTY) LTD 1st Defendant
HANSEN AND HANSEN INVESTMENTS (PTY) LTD 2nd Defendant
MATSHEDISO HANSEN 3rd Defendant

NOTICE OF SALE IN EXECUTION

BE PLEASED TO TAKE NOTICE THAT pursuant to the Judgment granted by the Honourable Court the following immovable property hereunder of the 2nd Defendant will be sold by public auction by Deputy Sheriff to the highest bidder as follows:-

DATE OF SALE: 01st March 2025
TIME OF SALE: 10:00hours
PLACE OF SALE: Tribal Lot 359, Kanye

PROPERTY TO BE SOLD: Defendant's right, title and interest on a certain piece of land being Tribal Lot 359, Kanye, measuring 4989m2, situated in the Bangwaketse which property is held under Notarial Deed of Cession No MA262/2007 dated 31st May 2007 made in favour of the 2nd Defendant together with development thereof being Bachelor Pad, Three roomed house which includes Bar, Reception, storeroom, structure of a room, 6 tented Shelling (guest) each with toilet and shower, separate 2 showers, 2 toilets, dancing stage, Swimming pool, storeroom fenced at the back and with a screen wall in front.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Cash or Bank guaranteed cheque otherwise detailed and conditions of sale may be inspected at the Plaintiff's Attorneys Office.

DATED AT GABORONE THIS 28th DAY OF JANUARY, 2025.

D.P GABOBAKWE c/o RAMALEPA ATTORNEYS
 Plaintiff's Attorneys
 Plot 4853, Independence Avenue
 Extension 11, Gaborone
 P.O. Box 70567
 GABORONE(UB)
 (V/R/spm/2046) 73900288 /72901534

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Business

Eyes on Gaolathe

STAFF WRITER

editors@thepatriot.co.bw

VICE PRESIDENT AND MINISTER OF Finance Ndaba Gaolathe will on Monday deliver his maiden Budget Speech – the first by a leader of a new government in Botswana after the defeat of Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) in last year's General Elections. The BDP had ruled the country for 58 years since independence in 1966.

Gaolathe is expected to give life to his party's – Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) – promises by announcing dates in which the Old Age Pension's allowance will be increased to P1 800; when Government will start paying the minimum wage of P4 000 and when they will increase Student Allowances to P2 500.

The new government has been accused of hiding behind the bad economic climate excuse for failing to deliver timeously on the promises which most believe enticed the electorate to vote for them. The UDC government inherited depleted financial standing with the situation worsened by the ongoing decline in diamond sales – which have been the mainstay of Botswana's economy for decades.

Ndaba walks on the footsteps of his father Baledzi Gaolathe, who served as Minister of Finance and presented his last budget in 2009 before being succeeded by Kenneth Matambo – both under the previous BDP government.

The young Gaolathe and his party are facing a stiff test of proving that they deserve the mandate and his pronouncements in delivering the 2025/26 budget is expected to go a long way in allaying such fears.

He has held a number of budget discussions as a way of highlighting to key economic groups and leaders the state of the economy while also seeking their views on areas that require prioritisation.

The 2025/26 draft Budget Strategy Paper highlighted that the 2025/26 budget priorities are aligned to the national priorities identified in the National Transformation Strategy (NTS), including the priorities of the New Administration.

The priority sectors include mining, tourism, agriculture, manufacturing, trade, sport and creative industries, transport and logistics, finance, real estate and business services.

They intend to build an Inclusive Economy; Improve Quality of Life; Modernise and Transform Infrastructure; and pursue Digital Transformation. The ministry also said in the 2025/2026 financial year, total Revenues and Grants are projected at P85.4 billion.

"Specifically, mineral revenues are expected to reach P17.2 billion. SACU receipts are anticipated to decline to P23.3 billion from the P26.7 billion projected in the 2024/2025 financial year," it said.

Meanwhile, the revenue income from Bank of Botswana is projected at P700 million over the coming year in line with expected pre-set dividend income from Government savings invested in global financial markets.

On the other hand, total expenditure and net lending is estimated at P96.7 billion. Out of this, Recurrent expenditure is expected to reach P71.8 billion while development expenditure is estimated at P25.1 billion, in line with the start of the new planning period for NDP 12.

"Overall, the budget deficit is anticipated to narrow to P11.3 billion (3.6 percent of GDP) in the 2025/2026 financial year. This deficit is expected to be financed by different sources including domestic and external borrowing, with little drawdown on the GIA," the ministry buttressed.

Gaolathe has promised to rebuild the economy and fight corruption.

"We are focused on ensuring that there is robust fiscal consolidation. There is a need to ensure that the entire government system is functioning in our effort to build a resilient economy and rise again," he said.

Gaolathe emphasized that prudent policy decisions will have to be made to stabilise the budget to achieve efficient economic recovery. He said the ministry will focus on developing sustainable financial assets to restore Government Investment Account (GIA).



LIKE FATHER LIKE SON: The late Baledzi Gaolathe, Ndaba's father, presented his last budget in 2009 having served as Finance Minister for a number of years. Some 16 years later his son will stand on the same podium to deliver his maiden budget speech on Monday



Kenewendo's charm offensive

■ Uses Mining Indaba occasion to announce diamonds sales deal with De Beers



Minister Kenewendo with De Beers CEO Al Cook

[PIC:PRESSPHOTO]

STAFF WRITER

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IN A JOINT EFFORT TO PROFILE AND SELL a compelling Botswana story, Botswana public and private sectors joined hands to showcase at the Investing In African Mining Indaba conference in Cape Town, South Africa this past week. The Indaba ran from 3rd – 6th February 2025.

Botswana's Pavillion was a base for 20 institutions.

Led by the Ministry of Minerals and Energy, participating entities included BITC, MDCB, De Beers, Okavango Diamond Company, Debswana, DTCB, BGI, MMG Khoemacau, Jindal Africa, Lucara Botswana, Botswana Oil, Morupule Coal Mine, BOTASH, Abaricom, The

Projects Magazine, and from the financial services sector - Stanbic Bank, Standard Chartered Bank, RMB and First Capital.

The Botswana delegation was led by Minister of Minerals and Energy, Bogolo J. Kenewendo, who charmed the audience at every platform she had. The highlight of Botswana's participation at the Indaba was when the Minister was joined by De Beers CEO Al Cook to announce that the Government and De Beers have clinched a diamond sales agreement following protracted negotiations that were started by the previous government but could not be concluded before the General Elections.

The new Government led by Advocate Duma Boko had placed priority on completing negotiations, which had stalled over unexplained developments. Observers had been alarmed at the arrogant nature

in which the previous Mokgweetsi Masisi government conducted the negotiations.

The minister said the full agreement will be signed before the end of this month but could not disclose the full details of what is included in the deal.

In a statement the partners announced the successful conclusion of negotiations focused on establishing a new sales agreement for Debswana's rough diamond production, as well as extending Debswana's mining licences beyond 2029. This development is in alignment with the Heads of Terms agreed on September 30, 2023.

Debswana, a 50:50 joint venture between the GRB and De Beers, operates several leading diamond mines in Botswana: Jwaneng, Orapa, Letlhakane, and Damtshaa. Following the issuance of new mining licences by the appropriate regulatory authorities in Botswana and final governance approvals, both parties look forward to signing and executing the relevant agreements. Until the execution of these new agreements, the terms of the existing agreements will continue to remain in effect.

The GRB and De Beers reaffirm their commitment to their enduring partnership, which has lasted over 50 years. This collaboration is aimed at the responsible recovery, marketing, and sale of diamonds, ensuring the sustainability of the global diamond industry while enhancing the significant fiscal and societal contributions that diamonds provide to Botswana.

The GRB and De Beers remain steadfast in their dedication to fostering a robust and sustainable diamond sector that positively impacts the nation's economy and supports the welfare of its citizens.

Ndadi is new Group CEO of Old Mutual Botswana

OLD MUTUAL BOTSWANA has appointed Priscillah Ndadi as its new Chief Executive Officer, effective 1 February 2025.

As a born and bred Motswana, and the First Female CEO of the Group in the country, the appointment reflects Old Mutual's commitment to diversity, empowerment, and transformation.

Priscillah brings with her over 20 years of experience in the financial services sector, having held several key and executive management roles across the non-bank financial services sector in leading institutions covering life insurance, pension fund administration, asset management and funeral services. Most recently, in her position as Chief Operating Officer at Metropolitan, she played an instrumental role in leading strategy development and implementation for the business, driving retail business growth, and improving operational efficiencies and overall



Ndadi

customer experience. Throughout her illustrious career, Priscillah has prioritised the development of strong leadership and business competence, empowering teams to deliver consistently in line with strategic objectives. Priscillah holds an MSc in Strategic Management from the University of Derby, and a Bachelor of Accountancy from the University of Botswana, as well as having completed a Leadership Development Programme through the University of Stellenbosch. She is also a Licentiate of the Insurance Institute of South Africa since 2011. "On behalf of the Board and Management team of Old Mutual Botswana, we welcome Priscillah to the team and extend our unwavering support in ensuring her tenure is a success. We are extremely excited at the opportunity to chart a new course for the business, led by exceptional local talent." - Old Mutual Botswana Board Chairperson, Wayne Fuller.

Tema takes over as Access Bank board chairman



Tema

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF ACCESS Bank Botswana Limited, a member of the Access Bank Plc Group is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr Boiki Matema Wabo Tema as Board Chairman, effective February 1, 2025. Mr Tema was first appointed as a member of the Board on September 26, 2018, and has served as an Independent Non-Executive Director. He has also served as committee member of the Board Audit Committee, Board Risk Management and Compliance Committee and for the period leading to his appointment as Board Chairman, he held the position of Chairman of the Board Credit and Finance Committee. Mr. Tema's academic background includes a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from the University of Botswana and a Master of Science in Strategic Management from the University of Derby, UK. His leadership extends beyond banking,

with board experience in various subsidiary and associate entities, including FNBB Insurance Agency, FNBB Pension Fund, and Botswana Post. With an extensive career spanning over 25 years in financial services, banking, corporate governance, farming, haulage and logistics, Mr. Tema brings a wealth of experience, having held several key leadership roles in leading financial institutions and, most recently, serving as Coverage Director at Rand Merchant Bank Botswana. As he steps into this new role, Mr. Tema is committed to advancing Access Bank Botswana's philosophy of People, Profit, and Planet. His focus areas for the year will center on the wellbeing of individuals, driving sustainable profitability, and ensuring the health of our planet through responsible banking practices. We look forward to his leadership and vision in steering the Bank towards continued growth and impact. [bse.co.bw]

Chobe enjoys strong demand

Listed tourism outfit Chobe Holdings has released this statement on the Botswana Stock Exchange (BSE) news portal to update their shareholders.

CHOBÉ CONTINUED TO PERFORM IN line with the previous financial year during the first half of Financial Year 2025, ending 31 August 2024, as reported in November 2024. A reduction of available beds due to the complete rebuild of Savute Safari Lodge and refurbishment of Nxamaseri Island Lodge and Okuti camp was tempered by a better achieved rate and a depreciation of the Botswana Pula against the United States Dollar. Within their market segments, both Desert & Delta Safaris and Ker & Downey Botswana continue to perform well with strong marketing teams and a focus on developing products and exploring new markets whilst continuing to nurture our existing markets. Despite economic headwinds in Europe, we continue to see strong demand for our product in Financial Year 2026 and beyond. Our lease over Xugana Island Lodge was renewed with the Tawana Land Board for a period of fifteen years and we are in correspondence with the Tawana Land Board to finalise the second period of our lease over Okuti camp. The half year saw a significant increase in operating expenses driven in the main by increased salaries and wages, repairs and maintenance. Our approach of providing appropriate remuneration will continue to drive increases in our payroll burden, however with a backlog of COVID-19 pandemic maintenance undertaken we forecast a containment of repairs and maintenance costs. Global supply chain constraints have placed significant upward



MC Odumetse Managing Director of Chobe Holdings Limited

pressure on our aviation expenses; however, these have largely been mitigated in the coming financial year. As occupancies increase, headroom in occupancy driven revenue growth diminishes, moderating the Group revenue growth to that driven by rate increases. The Group is cognisant of this and is actively pursuing further opportunities for bednight growth. During the Financial Year Chobe has begun work to add 14 beds at Maxa camp, 5 beds at Xugana Island Lodge and an additional 14 beds at King Lewanika Lodge. These will become operational in Financial Year 2026.

The Group is working on further increasing the available bednights through both our traditional owed camps and lodges as well as strategic partnerships with third parties. The dividend policy remains that, as a guide, to pay a dividend that is at least twice covered by attributable fully taxed earnings subject to the prudent ongoing requirements of the Group. Advanced Travel Receipts should be segmented and not paid as dividends. This allows for significant organic growth. Whilst Advanced Travel Receipts are segmented, Chobe's rights to the funds are protected during normal times by our cancellation terms and conditions. The Group earns a majority of its revenue in United States Dollars with this revenue translated to the reporting currency, Botswana Pula, using monthly exchange rates published by the Group's banker. The majority of the Group's costs are denominated in Botswana Pula; however, fuel prices are driven by both global market forces and the United States Dollar/Botswana Pula exchange rate and aviation expenses are predominantly denominated in United States Dollars. We expect the Botswana Pula to depreciate in line with Government policy. It is too early to evaluate performance of our new properties with King Lewanika Lodge in Zambia and Maxa yet to open and Grays Eden not having completed a season. Being the first full year of operations, these properties are not expected to have a material impact on Group revenue in Financial Year 2026. [bse.co.bw]

AfDB, Botswana sign US\$265,600.00 grant to PPRA

THE VICE PRESIDENT AND MINISTER of Finance Ndaba Gaolathe and African Development Bank (AfDB) Deputy Director General Southern Africa Regional Development and Business Delivery Office Ms. Moono Mupotola signed a US\$265,600.00 Public Procurement Technical Assistance Grant in Gaborone on 30 January 2025.

The technical assistance is directed towards Public Procurement Regulatory Authority's (PPRA) development of Standardised Bidding Packages (SBPs) for works, goods and services that are aligned with the new Public Procurement Act (PPA), 2021 and the Public Procurement Regulations (PPR), 2023, and training of stakeholders on the SBPs.

Section 56 of the Public Procurement Act (PPA), 2021 mandates the Authority to adopt, develop and issue, as well as amend, where necessary, an SBP and contract to be used by Procuring Entities (PEs) on a mandatory basis. The technical assistance will go a long way in coming up with fit-for-purpose SBPs, and the realization of the PPA intended outcomes.

Further, the SBPs enhance compliance and standardization in procurement and will prevent wastage, lead to value for money procurement, and increase transparency and sustainability of the procurement process.

The Authority has noted that PEs and contractors are experiencing challenges in carrying out procurement activities with the current SBPs. In particular, PEs and Contractors face challenges in using SBPs



Charles Keikotlhae CPRP Relations and Education Manager

[PIC:PINO KILANO]

for complex procurements as they do not incorporate changes brought about by the PPA, and do not reflect current international best practice; do not encompass the contract forms indicated in the PPR, 2023; and the "new" procurement methods introduced by the PPA.

Further, with the current SBPs, PEs continue to struggle with using the right procurement package, and in some instances use packages not aligned to the type of procurement at hand. PEs also struggle with completing SBPs and understanding terms and conditions.

As a result of the noted challenges, an urgent need to develop appropriate and suitable SBPs arose.

The project's broad development objective

is to enhance efficiency, transparency and accountability of the public procurement process in Botswana through effective implementation of the PPA thus supporting the government's fiscal sustainability objectives.

The project will be implemented in two phases with Phase I focused on the review and development of the SBPs and related capacity building initiatives while phase II will focus on the development of a Procurement Professionalization Strategy as well as its operationalisation.

PPRA Management is grateful for the AFDB grant and is hopeful that the bank will continue to offer necessary support for the effective and efficient implementation of the PPA, 2021.

Post4Health initiative launched

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS and Innovation launched Post4Health, an initiative by BotswanaPost in partnership with Universal Postal Union (UPU) on Thursday morning at the Botswana Post Mail Exchange Center in Gaborone.

In his welcome remarks, the Board Chairperson of BotswanaPost, Nathan Kgabi, expressed gratitude, noting that he is elated to witness the continued evolution of BotswanaPost and its commitment to national progress. He stated that BotswanaPost has utilised its extensive delivery network to assist the Ministry of Health in ensuring equitable access to healthcare. Kgabi cited that through their partnership with UPU's Post4Health Fund, they have successfully secured four specialised temperature-controlled vehicles worth P2.35 million.

During his address, the Minister of Communications and Innovation, David Tshere commended Botswana Post, stating that the initiative is a testament to how strategic partnerships and innovation can be leveraged to enhance healthcare access



Minister of Communications and Innovation, David Tshere

[PIC:PINO KILANO]

and strengthen social protection systems. Tshere highlighted that the Post4Health initiative is vital as it supports Pillar 2 of Vision 2036, which focuses on human and social development. Furthermore, Tshere acknowledged the importance of the initiative as he believes that it prioritizes health systems through innovation, efficiency and sustainable logistics solutions.

The Chief Executive Officer of BotswanaPost, Cornelius Ramatlhakwane noted that the Post4Health aims to cement posts positions as key players in the distribution of public health campaigns and programs. Ramatlhakwane highlighted that Botswana becomes the third country to benefit from this fund after Argentina and Namibia.

Know Your Corporate Leader

Full Name: Odirile 'ODK' Kaetwa

Position: Head of Finance Treasury

Institution: FNB Botswana

Date Started: 01 November 2024

Nature of business: Banking



South African giant showing signs of life



De Beers CEO Al Cook

BLOOMBERG

DE BEERS SAID THERE WERE SIGNS OF a pickup in US diamond demand before Christmas, while India overtook China to become the second-biggest market.

The industry has been hammered by a collapse in the demand for diamonds from

China and the increasing penetration of lab-grown stones.

At its final sale of last year, De Beers cut diamond prices by more than 10% across the board as the world's biggest producer abandoned attempts to put a floor under the slumping market.

In November and December, demand in the US for diamond jewellery rose about 8%

year on year, De Beers CEO Al Cook said in an interview with Bloomberg television at the Mining Indaba conference in Cape Town. "There are encouraging signals," he said.

Anglo American CEO Duncan Wanblad said on Monday that the mining giant won't let its struggling De Beers diamond business be a drag on its restructuring.

Wanblad said the company intended to exit De Beers by the end of this year, but given the state of the market that could spill over into 2026. The diamond industry has been struck by one of its deepest and most prolonged slumps in decades.

What started as a post-pandemic slowdown had spiralled as inflation hit customer purchases before a collapse in China's luxury market further eroded demand. Man-made diamonds have also continued to undermine prices.

The Chinese diamond market has stabilized, but any recovery will take time, Cook said. However, the Indian market is growing at double-digit rates, he added.

"But we see growth, the regrowth of Chinese demand being a longer-term story," the CEO said. "The good news is that India has taken over where China was." [dailyinvestor.com]

Capital Consortium visits infrastructure ministry

THE ACTING MINISTER OF Transport and Infrastructure, Keoagile Atamelang, last week Thursday received a delegation from the Nation's Capital Consortium who are looking for partnership with government to develop rail corridor in Botswana through Public Private Partnership (PPP) model.

Atamelang applauded the company for their proposed solution and assured them of further discussions. The new government is looking for private sector participation as one of cost cutting measures in-line with the 2024 State of Nation Address.

Government is currently looking at alternative rail routes for export and import of commodities in order to facilitate trade. The following railway lines are at different stages of procurement: Mosesete - Kazungula-Livingstone, Mmamabula - Lephalale rail line, Trans Kalahari railway line, Ponta Techobanine Project and the Limpopo Railway Line among others.



Assistant Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Keoagile Atamelang [PIC:PINO KILANO]

Mosetlhanyane, Galeforolwe retire from Access Bank board

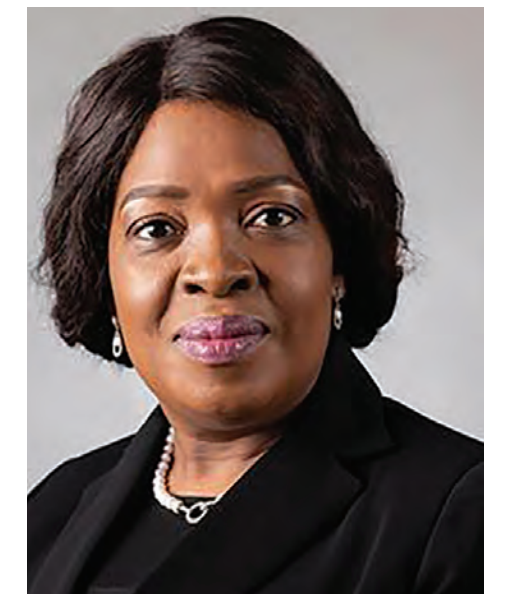
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF ACCESS Bank Botswana Limited wishes to inform its shareholders and stakeholders about the retirements of two Independent Non-Executive Directors from the Board.

Ms Lorato Nthando Mosetlhanyane was appointed on the Board of Directors of the Bank on July 1, 2014. She served as an Independent Non-Executive Director throughout her tenure of 10 years. On March 19, 2019, she was appointed to the position of Board Chairperson, a position that she held until her retirement on January 31, 2025.

Mr Joshua Benjamin Galeforolwe was appointed on the Board of Directors of the Bank on February 22, 2018. He served as an Independent Non-Executive Director throughout his tenure of 7 years. In March 2021, he was appointed to the position of Chairperson of the Board Governance Nomination and Remuneration Committee, a position that he held until his retirement



Joshua Benjamin Galeforolwe



Lorato Nthando Mosetlhanyane

on January 31, 2025.

The Board of Directors of Access Bank Botswana Limited would like to thank Ms Mosetlhanyane and Mr Galeforolwe for

their sterling and invaluable contribution to the Board and we wish them well in their future endeavours. [bse.co.bw]

Engen appoints Maharaj to its board

WITH EFFECT FROM 01 FEBRUARY 2025, Engen appointed Mr Sharveen Maharaj to the Board of Directors. Mr Sharveen Maharaj is presently the Executive Head (GM): Engen Lubricants & Commercial at Engen Petroleum, South Africa. Being a Chemical Engineer by background, with sound leadership exposure has equipped him with the technical knowledge to understand the industry and the highly complex and competitive nature of Oil & Gas Industry in General. Sharveen has held several senior management roles at Engen Petroleum, Lubricants Sales Head, previously managed Engen's National Logistics and Distribution as well as the Refinery's Maintenance Turnaround and Tankage Department, within the Engen Refinery in Durban,



Maharaj

SA. Prior to that he was the Operations Manager at the Engen Island View Site responsible for Oil Movements and Storage. He was also an Engen representative on the Oil Company and TNPA Forums at Island View. Sharveen is a Director: Engen Petroleum Ltd (SA), and a Board Member for Engen Namibia. Further, he represented Engen as a Director on the Cutler Management Board and spent 12 months as Chairman of the Board. He worked closely with SAPIA & National Government on the roll out and implementation of key frameworks and regulations for the sector. Sharveen is a seasoned Oil & Gas executive, with a strong engineering and commercial background. In addition to his Engineering qualification, he has completed several global executive programmes and recently graduated from Harvard Business School. [bse.co.bw]

Quick wins for Botswana's digital future



DR DIMAKATSO POLOKELO*

AT THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED World Economic Forum in Davos, President of the Republic of Botswana, Advocate Duma Gideon Boko, emphasized Botswana's key strengths to lure foreign investment for economic transformation. He lauded the country's highly educated workforce, democratic stability and a reformative government agenda as providing Botswana an enabling environment for transformation. The President positioned digital infrastructure as the linchpin of Botswana's economic transformation, calling for bold and strategic actions to attract investment and drive development.

This article suggests Quick Wins, that can be adopted to accelerate Botswana's economic shift toward a digital future.

Establishing Universal Internet Access
Botswana's connectivity landscape has improved, but gaps remain which need to be closed, particularly in rural areas.

Expanding nationwide internet access and making it affordable is critical for enabling digital transformation. The government should leverage public-private partnerships (PPPs) with telecom companies to extend broadband infrastructure. While fibre optics should be prioritized in urban areas, satellite-based solutions are necessary for remote regions. It is also imperative that the Mobile Network Operators also review their rather exorbitant tariffs downwards to help government in efforts to make internet affordable.

Subsidized internet for educational institutions, SMEs and underserved communities would also create an inclusive digital economy. Investments in telecommunications infrastructure, skilled technicians, lower tariffs and refined regulatory frameworks will be key enablers. Increased connectivity will fuel the e-commerce, remote work and online education while attracting foreign tech firms seeking new markets.

The Gig Economy as a Catalyst for Economic Growth

Unlocking the full potential of the gig economy also presents a quick win for Botswana's economic diversification and growth initiative. By enabling flexible, digital-first employment opportunities, the gig economy will serve as a key driver of economic expansion, reducing reliance on traditional industries. Expanding high-speed internet access and reducing data costs will ensure that more people, especially in rural areas, can participate in the gig economy.

Investments in broadband expansion, public Wi-Fi hubs, and tech incubation centres will further create an enabling digital ecosystem. Increased digital access will accelerate e-commerce, remote work, and online education, empowering local talent to compete globally while attracting foreign tech firms seeking new markets.

In addition, freelancers and small digital entrepreneurs need seamless access to banking, digital payment platforms, and microfinance options. Expanding financial inclusion through mobile banking, fintech solutions, and digital wallets will facilitate smooth transactions and cross-border payments.

Developing E-Government Platforms

A centralized digital governance system will enhance efficiency, transparency and service delivery. Botswana should introduce a unified digital portal for public services such as passport and ID applications, vehicle licensing and business registration. Integrating government databases and employing blockchain technology can further streamline operations while ensuring data security. The current system where every time a citizen applies for an Omang (National ID) or Passport, they have to fill the same information they did when they applied the previous time. It would even make the process of renewal more efficient as the renewal can be initiated online (go na le go a go fola line e itswaketsang ko BBS), then one goes to the office only to collect.

Successful models from Kenya and Estonia on how they have done this provide

valuable insights for Botswana to adopt. For this to be successful, investment in software development, cybersecurity and IT training will be crucial. A robust e-government system will reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies, curb corruption and improve public trust.

Enabling a Thriving Startup Ecosystem

Innovation is the backbone of a modern economy. Botswana's Digital and Innovation Hub should spearhead the development of a thriving startup ecosystem by transforming into a user-friendly co-working space and expanding incubators nationwide. Offering seed funding and grants for digital startups, alongside a fast-track system for intellectual property registration, will incentivize entrepreneurship. Taking a leaf from other countries, Dubai (Dubai Silicon Oasis) and Singapore (Singapore Science Park) have built ecosystems that are conducive to entrepreneurship. These hubs provide infrastructure, funding and mentorship to startups with large budgets (I know we might say BDIH is doing that, is it enough? Is it effective? Is it optimal?). Botswana could replicate the Dubai and Singapore models by providing free office spaces, access to seed funding and a network of mentors to support local entrepreneurs, especially in technology, green energy and agri-tech sectors.

Innovation hubs across the world focus heavily on R&D, with initiatives such as the Singapore-MIT Alliance for Research and Technology (SMART) bringing cutting-edge innovations to the market. BDIH must do the same and partner with

international universities and research institutions to enhance local R&D. This would help develop locally applicable solutions in sectors such as agriculture, mining, health tech and renewable energy, ultimately improving productivity across industries. Therefore, BDIH needs to move from conventional way of doing things to being more agile. In fact, the Botswana Digital and Innovation Hub must lead this transformation for the government to realize its transformation agenda.

Promoting Digital Education and Skills Development

To sustain long-term digital growth, Botswana must integrate coding, AI, and data science into school curriculums while offering vocational training in collaboration with tech firms. Online learning platforms can be leveraged to upskill the workforce and keep professionals relevant in an evolving digital economy. Universities and vocational centres should integrate gig-focused curriculums to prepare students for global freelance opportunities. The Form 3 results just came out, and it's not looking good at all. We need to go back to the drawing table and refocus our education – from Primary school to tertiary. In the coming columns, I will write in detail about the need to uproot the Education Curriculum and from primary to tertiary level and refocus the new curriculum to ensure that it is aligned to the ever-changing world and emerging trends.

Unlocking Botswana's Digital Potential

President Boko's vision for digital transformation is both timely and strategic

and I call on all Batswana to support this agenda, including both government and private sector, as only collaboration with each one doing their part will deliver this and drive rapid economic growth.

These quick wins provide a blueprint for immediate action, yielding economic benefits while laying the foundation for long-term transformation. With decisive leadership, strategic investments and collaboration between government, private sector, and global partners, Botswana can become a competitive player in the digital economy and an attractive destination for international investment.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Dimakatso Michelle Polokele is the Head of Centre for Technology and Innovation for Africa at Woxsen University in Hyderabad, India. She also serves the university as an Associate Professor in the School of Business. She has studied across multiple universities around the world, and holds a Doctor of Business Administration from Selinus University in Ragusa, Italy. Dr. Polokele is a digital transformation expert with specialization in Artificial Intelligence for Business, Blockchain for Business and Future of Work and Automation.

She is also a Micro Finance expert with over 15 years of executive leadership experience in various African countries. Dr. Polokele is also an accomplished author, having recently published books titled "Mindset Revolution", "Breaking Glass Ceilings – The Myth of Women Empowerment" and "AI in Microfinance for Growth and Returns".

EMPOWERING BOTSWANA'S YOUTH

Pathways to unlocking national economic potential



BAKANG PHUTHEGO
BUSINESS WITH BK

BOTSWANA'S YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT crisis is a paradox. On one hand, the country boasts a young, energetic population eager to contribute to the economy. On the other, hundreds of thousands of young people remain jobless. According to the World Bank, Botswana's youth unemployment rate was 27.6% in Q1 2024, a staggering figure that exacerbates poverty and inequality. The root cause? A glaring mismatch between the skills young people possess and the needs of the economy. Is Botswana's young population a ticking time bomb or an untapped resource capable of driving economic transformation?

The Scale of the Problem

Botswana's youth population is both its greatest asset and its most pressing challenge: 60% of Botswana's 2.4 million people are under the age of 30.

The youth population (ages 15–34) is estimated at 800,000 to 900,000, with approximately 212,500 young people unemployed.

The most affected are those with secondary education (68.7%) followed by university graduates (13.8%), and technical/vocational certificate holders (5%).

The data highlights a troubling reality: secondary school leavers face the highest rates of unemployment in Botswana. This raises a critical question—where do they go from here? For many, the path forward lies in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVETs)/ Brigades, which are primarily designed to equip youth with practical, job-ready skills. However, relegating secondary school leavers—who do not progress to college or university—to Botswana's underperforming TVET system is a glaring policy failure. What serves as a key economic driver in countries like Switzerland, fostering job ready professionals and entrepreneurs, is tragically reduced to a less esteemed, underfunded, and undervalued pathway in Botswana. The perception of the TVET system in Botswana is often associated with "go palelwa" (failure). This connotation needs a complete overhaul to reflect the true potential and value of TVET programs in empowering youth and driving economic development.

This systemic neglect not only undermines the potential of thousands of young people but also stifles the very economic growth and innovation that vocational training and self-employment could ignite. Such shortsightedness is not just an error—it is a disservice to the nation's future.

Similarly, Botswana's employment data reveals a significant imbalance in the labor market, with a disproportionate number of individuals employed in public administration. This sector alone constitutes a substantial portion of the workforce, raising several critical concerns about the country's economic development and sustainability.

Limited Economic Diversification: The heavy focus on public administration stifles the growth of other critical sectors such as manufacturing,

| Aspect | Botswana TVET System | Swiss TVET System |
|------------------------|--|---|
| Funding | Underfunded, reliant on government budgets- limited private sector funding model available | Well-funded, with contributions from government, industry, and private sector |
| Curriculum | Outdated, theoretical, and not aligned with industry needs | Dynamic, practical, and regularly updated to match industry demands |
| Industry Collaboration | Limited engagement with private sector | Strong public-private partnerships, with active industry involvement |
| Apprenticeships | Rare and poorly structured | Mandatory, well-structured, and integrated into the training program |
| Perception | Often viewed as a second-tier option | Highly respected, seen as a viable and prestigious career path |
| Graduate Employability | Low, due to lack of practical skills | High, with most graduates securing jobs immediately after training |

agriculture, and technology. These sectors are essential for economic diversification and resilience. Without a balanced distribution of employment across various industries, Botswana risks economic stagnation.

Sustainability Concerns: Government jobs, while stable, do not generate the same level of economic activity as private sector jobs. Over-reliance on public sector employment can strain government resources and is not sustainable in the long term. As evident with the bloated civil service

Underutilization of Skills: Many graduates with diverse skills and qualifications may end up in public administration roles that do not fully utilize their expertise. This mismatch can lead to job dissatisfaction and underperformance, ultimately affecting overall productivity and economic output.

Innovation and Entrepreneurship: A thriving private sector is essential for fostering innovation and entrepreneurship. By channeling too many resources into public administration, Botswana may be missing out on opportunities to support startups and small businesses that can drive economic growth and job creation.

Youth Unemployment: With a high unemployment rate, particularly among the youth, it is essential to create more opportunities in sectors that can absorb a larger number of job seekers. Public administration alone cannot address this issue effectively. The youth need access to diverse employment opportunities that match their skills and aspirations.

A Case Study of Switzerland: Best education system in the world-The success of the Swiss VET model

Switzerland, though small in size, boasts the world's most innovative economy, ranking first in the 2023 Global Innovation Index. A cornerstone of its success is its world-class Vocational Education and Training (VET) system, deeply embedded in Swiss culture and economic strategy. Unlike Botswana, where vocational training is often undervalued, Switzerland's VET system is a prestigious pathway chosen by two-thirds of students after compulsory education. Offering 250 occupations, it combines classroom instruction with paid apprenticeships, preparing youth for lifelong careers and contributing to the country's remarkably low youth unemployment.

This dual-track model, blending theory and practice, is a global "gold standard," producing skilled professionals across all sectors and fostering leaders who began as apprentices— from CEOs to government officials.

In stark contrast to Botswana's underfunded and underappreciated VET system, Switzerland's VET programs are tailored to industry needs, ensuring graduates are job-ready and businesses have access to a highly skilled workforce. This alignment between education and economic demand has not only reduced youth unemployment but also fueled innovation and competitiveness across industries. The impact is clear: Switzerland's VET system is a proven driver of economic growth, social mobility, and national prosperity.

TVETs as a Catalyst for Self-Employment

in Botswana: Synergizing with the Youth Development Fund (YDF)

Since its launch in 2009, the YDF has disbursed over 2.8 billion BWP to fund youth-led businesses. While commendable, the results have been mixed. The return on investment (ROI) for the government has been dismally low, with little to show beyond the goodwill garnered from the initiative. The fund has struggled to deliver tangible economic outcomes, as evidenced by high failure rates, significant loan defaults, and limited long-term impact on youth unemployment or economic diversification. While the program has succeeded in creating a perception of government support for youth empowerment, its financial and socio-economic returns remain far below expectations, raising urgent questions about its sustainability and effectiveness.

Botswana's escalating youth unemployment crisis demands innovative, actionable strategies to empower the next generation to forge their own economic pathways. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVETs) emerge as a transformative mechanism in this context, particularly when strategically aligned with the Youth Development Fund (YDF).

Reimagining the YDF Model: Integrating TVET Courses for Enhanced Impact

To maximize the effectiveness of the Youth Development Fund (YDF), Botswana must reimagine its framework by strategically integrating high-demand Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) courses. By aligning YDF funding with specific TVET programs, the government can create a more targeted, sustainable, and impactful model for youth empowerment. Below is a reimagined YDF model that incorporates key TVET courses such as Architectural Drafting , Auto Mechanics, Borehole Mechanics, Bricklaying and Plastering, Carpentry and Joinery, Dress Making , Electrical Installation , Machine Fitting, Painting and Decoration, Panel Beating and Spray Painting, Plumbing and Pipe Fitting, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning, Welding and Fabrication , ensuring that youth are equipped with both the skills and financial resources to succeed.

Pre-Qualification Training
Require YDF applicants to complete relevant TVET courses before accessing funding. This ensures they have the skills needed to run successful businesses.

For example, a youth applying for funding to start a construction company should first complete a TVET course in construction management or carpentry.

Tailored Funding for TVET Graduates
Create a dedicated YDF stream for TVET graduates, offering grants or low-interest loans to start businesses in their field of training.

Provide additional support, such as mentorship and business development services, to increase the likelihood of success.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Track the performance of YDF-funded businesses started by TVET graduates to identify best practices and areas for improvement.

Use this data to refine both TVET programs

and YDF funding mechanisms.

To catalyze economic transformation, Botswana must prioritize aligning TVET programs with market demands, ignite a culture of self-employment, and champion entrepreneurship as indispensable pathways to growth. While the government cannot single-handedly resolve unemployment in a volatile global economy, its role must pivot

toward cultivating an ecosystem where private sector innovation thrives—Investing in cutting-edge, market-responsive TVET systems is the foundation. But Botswana's ambition should extend beyond its borders: by perfecting this model domestically, the nation could pioneer scalable solutions to Sub-Saharan Africa's escalating youth unemployment crisis. What begins as a local challenge could evolve into a

regional opportunity—transforming a systemic threat into a blueprint for sustainable prosperity.

By empowering citizens with skills, fostering entrepreneurial ecosystems, and enabling private sector dynamism, Botswana can unlock a future where its people are not merely job seekers but architects of economic progress. The time for bold, visionary action is now—because when skills meet opportunity, progress becomes an unstoppable force.

Bakang Phuthego is an entrepreneurial specialist with research interests in global entrepreneurship, International business development and Impact Investing.

Savings, Investments, Lending and Foreign Currency Rates

effective from 1st February 2025

Savings and Investments Rates

| Description | Normal Interest Rate* | Effective Interest Rate* | Minimum Opening Balance (Pula) |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Current | 0.00% - 3.00% | 0.00% - 3.00% | 100 |
| Call | 0.00% - 3.00% | 0.00% - 3.00% | 10,000 |
| Ipelele | 0.00% - 1.55% | 0.00% - 1.56% | 1,000 |
| SureSave 12 Months | 3.00% | 3.05% | 100 |
| SureSave 24 Months | 4.50% | 4.60% | 100 |
| SureSave 36 Months | 4.35% | 4.45% | 100 |
| Lebanala | 1.85% - 2.35% | 1.87% - 2.38% | 1,000 |
| EasySave | 1.75% - 3.75% | 1.76% - 3.82% | 100 |
| Fixed Deposit 91 Days | 1.50% - 7.00% | 1.51% - 7.24% | 1,000 |
| Fixed Deposit 6 Months | 2.55% - 7.00% | 2.58% - 7.24% | 1,000 |
| Fixed Deposit 12 Months | 4.00% - 6.75% | 4.00% - 6.98% | 1,000 |
| Fixed Deposit 24 Months | 4.50% - 5.50% | 4.50% - 5.65% | 1,000 |

Lending Rates

| Description | Normal Interest Rate* | Average Effective Interest Rate (%) |
|--|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Monetary Policy Rate (MoPR) | | 1.90% |
| Bank Gaborone Prime Lending Rate | | 6.01% |
| Mortgage Rate | Prime - Prime +8% | 6.45% |
| Overdraft Rate (revolving credit lines) | Prime - Prime +13.50% | 11.03% |
| Credit Card Rate | Prime +10% - Prime +15% | 17.94% |
| Lease loans | N/A | N/A |
| Personal loans (excluding overdrafts mortgage, and credit cards) | Prime +3% - Prime +25.49% | 11.67% |
| Other long term loan rates (Commercial loans) | Prime +4% - Prime +13.5% | 10.94% |

Foreign Currency Rates

| USD rates | | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Months | Range Nominal Interest Rate (Min) | Range Nominal Interest Rate (Max) | Range Effective Interest Rate (Min) | Range Effective Interest Rate (Max) | Minimum Opening Balance (Individuals) | Minimum Opening Balance (Business) |
| 1 Month | 0.00% | 1.50% | 0.00% | 1.51% | 1000 | 1000 |
| 3 Months | 0.60% | 2.10% | 0.60% | 2.12% | 1000 | 1000 |
| 6 Months | 0.80% | 2.30% | 0.80% | 2.31% | 1000 | 1000 |
| 9 Months | 1.00% | 2.50% | 1.00% | 2.51% | 1000 | 1000 |
| 12 Months | 1.25% | 2.75% | 1.25% | 2.75% | 1000 | 1000 |
| Call | 0.00% | 1.00% | 0.00% | 1.00% | 100 | 100 |

*Rates apply to amounts from USD10K to USD1M. All rates for USDIM and above are negotiable

For more information contact our branches:

Airport Junction - 318 5903 | CBD - 371 5470 | Francistown - 244 2323 | Game City - 318 1077
Ghanzi - 659 7353 | Kang - 651 7190 | Kasane - 6250123 | Mall - 367 1601 | Mahalapye - 471 2952
Molepolole - 592 1444 | Maun - 680 0810 | Palapye - 492 4477

Contact Centre - 315 8681 | www.bankgaborone.co.bw

Member of the Deposit Insurance Scheme of Botswana



ZAR rates

| Months | Range Nominal Interest Rate (Min) | Range Nominal Interest Rate (Max) | Range Effective Interest Rate (Min) | Range Effective Interest Rate (Max) | Minimum Opening Balance (Individuals) | Minimum Opening Balance (Business) |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 Month | 0.75% | 3.75% | 0.75% | 3.82% | 10000 | 10000 |
| 3 Months | 1.00% | 5.00% | 1.00% | 5.09% | 10000 | 10000 |
| 6 Months | 1.50% | 6.00% | 1.51% | 6.09% | 10000 | 10000 |
| 9 Months | 2.00% | 6.25% | 2.00% | 6.30% | 10000 | 10000 |
| 12 Months | 2.25% | 6.50% | 2.25% | 6.50% | 10000 | 10000 |
| Call | 0.00% | 1.75% | 0.00% | 3.25% | 500 | 500 |

*Rates apply to amounts from ZAR50K to ZAR1M. All rates for ZARIM and above are negotiable

GBP rates

| Months | Range Nominal Interest Rate (Min) | Range Nominal Interest Rate (Max) | Range Effective Interest Rate (Min) | Range Effective Interest Rate (Max) | Minimum Opening Balance (Individuals) | Minimum Opening Balance (Business) |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 Month | 0.20% | 0.75% | 0.20% | 0.75% | 1000 | 1000 |
| 3 Months | 0.50% | 1.10% | 0.50% | 1.10% | 1000 | 1000 |
| 6 Months | 0.75% | 1.90% | 0.75% | 1.91% | 1000 | 1000 |
| 9 Months | 1.15% | 2.15% | 1.15% | 2.16% | 1000 | 1000 |
| 12 Months | 1.20% | 2.20% | 1.20% | 2.20% | 1000 | 1000 |
| Call | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 100 | 100 |

*Rates apply to amounts from GBP10K to GBP1M. All rates for GBPIM and above are negotiable

EUR rates

| Months | Range Nominal Interest Rate (Min) | Range Nominal Interest Rate (Max) | Range Effective Interest Rate (Min) | Range Effective Interest Rate (Max) | Minimum Opening Balance (Individuals) | Minimum Opening Balance (Business) |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 Month | 0.20% | 0.75% | 0.20% | 0.75% | 1000 | 1000 |
| 3 Months | 0.25% | 1.25% | 0.25% | 1.26% | 1000 | 1000 |
| 6 Months | 0.50% | 1.75% | 0.50% | 1.76% | 1000 | 1000 |
| 9 Months | 0.75% | 2.00% | 0.75% | 2.00% | 1000 | 1000 |
| 12 Months | 1.00% | 2.25% | 1.00% | 2.25% | 1000 | 1000 |
| Call | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 100 | 100 |

*Rates apply to amounts from EUR10K to EUR1M. All rates for EURIM and above are negotiable





REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

MINISTRY OF MINERALS AND ENERGY

EXTERNAL ADVERTISEMENT

VACANCY CIRCULAR NO 2 OF 2025

VACANCY: Deputy Director (Mineral Affairs Division)

Applications are invited from suitably qualified, experienced and highly motivated citizens of Botswana for the above position in the Ministry of Minerals and Energy (MME) under Mineral Affairs Division.

Salary: E2 (P449, 256 – P467, 436 per annum)
Leave: 30 working days per annum.
Benefits: Optional Contributory Medical Aid Scheme (Government contributes 50% and employee 50%)
Duration: 2 – 3 years' contract
Qualifications: Bachelor's Degree in Economics/ Finance/ Statistics or Mining Engineering/Geology or related fields from a recognized and accredited institution.
Experience: A minimum of fourteen (14) years' work experience in the field of mining and minerals industry or related field.

Main Purpose of the Job:

To provide strategic direction in the development and promotion of mining and minerals statutes, and offer advice on key areas for policy development.

Key Performance Areas:

- Coordinates the review of mineral policies and legislation.
- Provides technical advice in developing negotiation strategies for mining development agreements.
- Provides technical advice on forums for discussing mining and minerals issues.
- Liaises with stakeholders in the development, review and harmonization of mineral policies, programmes and procedures.
- Monitors and evaluates minerals projects.
- Addresses the public/stakeholder forums on Minerals programmes.
- Prepares financial budget estimates for the Division.
- Facilitates training and development programmes for subordinate staff.
- Guides subordinate staff on matters relating to Mining and Minerals programs.
- Undertakes any other related duties as may be assigned by Management.

Key Competencies

- Deciding and Initiating Action
- Adhering to Principles and Values
- Analyzing
- Leading and Supervising
- Formulating Strategies and Concepts
- Planning and Organising
- Delivering Results and Meeting Customer Expectations
- Adapting and Responding to change
- Entrepreneurial and Commercial Thinking

APPLICANTS:

- a) Applicants should quote the Vacancy Circular No. for this advertisement and provide the following details:
- Full names, address and place of birth.
 - Certified copy of National Identity Card.
 - Brief summary of career with duties (Curriculum Vitae)
 - Certified copies of certificates together with their transcripts (both academic and professional).
 - At least two (2) traceable references confirming the required experience (not more than six (6) months) old.
 - Names and contact details of two (2) current referees.
- b) Applicants should indicate:
- Date of first appointment
 - Present post and date of appointment thereto.
 - Candidates from Parastatals and Private Sector Organisations should provide a certified statement of salary or pay.

IMPORTANT

All Applications from serving Public Officers should be routed through their respective Heads of Departments and Permanent Secretaries. Applications **NOT** so routed will not be considered.

Note: All applicants who do not meet the minimum requirements stipulated above will not be responded to. **Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.**

Applications should be addressed to:

Permanent Secretary
 Ministry of Minerals and Energy
 Private Bag 0018
 Gaborone

OR hand delivered to:

Ministry of Minerals and Energy
 Fairgrounds Office Park
 First Floor
 Records Management Unit

VACANCY CIRCULAR NO 3 OF 2025

VACANCY: ASSISTANT MANAGER (Facilities Management)

Applications are invited from suitably qualified, experienced and highly motivated citizens of Botswana for the above position in the Ministry of Minerals and Energy (MME) under the Department of Corporate Services.

Salary Scale: D2 (P337,008 – 371,628) per annum
Leave: 30 working days per annum.
Benefits: 1. Optional Contributory Medical Aid Scheme (Government pays 50% and employee pays 50%).
 2. Contributory pension scheme for permanent and pensionable appointments. (Government pays 15% and employee pays 5%)
Qualifications: Degree in Estate/ Property Management/ Facilities Management / Construction / Management/Engineering/ Building Services or any related field. Must be registered with the relevant regulatory body.

Experience: A minimum of eight (8) years post qualification experience in Estate/ Property/Facility Management, two (2) years should have been served at D3 salary scale or equivalent equivalent in Parastatal or Private Sector. Knowledge of Government Procurement processes will be an added advantage.

Main Purpose of the Job:

To facilitate maintenance of all projects in the Ministry buildings.

Key Performance Areas:

- Implements facility management regulations, procedures and requirements.
- Secure office accommodation for the entire Ministry and develop design of the available office space and implement, in order to achieve optimal utilisation.
- Develop and implement maintenance schedule for buildings within the Ministry
- Carryout risk assessment of the Ministry buildings and other health and safety checks as directed by the Health and Safety standards and regulations.
- Works in collaboration with contract management office to ensure work is properly performed, and processes claims for payment.
- Supervises work of contractors in connection with maintenance and improvement of buildings and building facilities.
- Carries out periodic inspections of buildings and recommends any needed repairs.
- Prepares report on the operational effectiveness of the facilities.
- Undertakes any other related duties as required to meet exigencies of the service.

Key Competencies:

- Deciding and Initiating action
- Adhering to principles and values
- Working with People
- Analyzing
- Writing and Reporting
- Planning and Organizing
- Delivering results and meeting customer expectation
- Adapting and Responding to Change

APPLICATIONS:

- a) Applicants should quote the Vacancy Circular and the reference number of this advertisement and provide the following details:
- Full names, address and place of birth.
 - A certified copy of a valid National Identity Card.
 - Brief summary of career with duties (Curriculum Vitae).
 - Certified copies of academic qualification certificates together with their transcripts (both academic and professional)
 - At least two (2) traceable references confirming the required experience (not more than six (6) months) old.
- b) Applicants should indicate:
- Date of first appointment.
 - Present post, date of appointment thereto and salary scale.
 - Contact number (s).
 - Candidates from Parastatals and Private Sector Organizations **SHOULD** provide a statement of salary or pay.

IMPORTANT

All applications from serving Public Officers should be routed through their respective Heads of Departments and Permanent Secretaries. Applications **NOT** so routed will not be considered.

Note: All applicants who do not meet the minimum requirements stipulated above will not be responded to. **Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.**

Applications should be addressed to:

The Permanent Secretary
 Ministry of Minerals & Energy
 Private Bag 0018
 Gaborone

OR hand delivered to:

Ministry of Minerals & Energy
 Fairgrounds Office Park – Block C
 Records Management Unit
 First Floor, Office No. F04

VACANCY CIRCULAR NO. 4 OF 2025

VACANCY: PRINCIPAL PROJECT OFFICER II (ANTI – CORRUPTION)

Applications are invited from suitably qualified, experienced and highly motivated citizens for the above position in the Ministry of Minerals and Energy tenable in the Department of Corporate Services under the Anti-Corruption Unit.

Salary Scale: D3 (P293,652 - 323,748) per annum
Leave: 30 working days per annum
Benefits: 1. Optional contributory medical aid scheme (Government pays 50% and employee pays 50%)
 2. Contributory Pension (Government pays 15% and employee pays 5%)

Qualifications: Bachelor's Degree in Social Sciences or Business Administration. Post Graduate qualification in Strategic Management, Enterprise Risk Management will be an added advantage

Experience: A minimum of eight (8) years' relevant experience in the Anti-Corruption field with at least two (2) years served at D4 salary scale or equivalent in Parastatal or Private Sector.

Main Purpose of the Job:

To provide guidance and take part in conducting internal investigations and Transactions Monitoring Exercises.

Key Performance Areas:

- Coordinates the development of Corruption Risk Assessment and implementation of the recommendations made.
- Coordinates case conferences aimed at measuring the progress of investigations.
- Assists in the development of the investigation plans and guides the operations of the investigation teams.
- Conducts preliminary enquiries on suspected fraud/ corruption incidences and refer those that needs further enquiries to the DCEC/Police.
- Prepares the case reports and analyses evidence.
- Gives feedback to informers and reporters regarding investigation process.
- Monitors initiatives aimed at improving the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of the investigations.
- Prepares monthly and quarterly reports for planning purposes.
- Drafts performance Annual Plans for the Unit.
- Facilitate training and development programme for subordinate staff.
- Prepares Budget estimates and resource planning for the Unit.
- Undertakes any other related duties as maybe assigned by Management.

Key Competencies

- Deciding and Initiating Action
- Working with people
- Relating and Networking
- Analyzing
- Creating and Innovating
- Adhering to Principles and Values
- Coping with Pressures and Setbacks

APPLICANTS:

- a) Applicants should quote the Vacancy Circular No. for this advertisement and provide the following details:
- Full names, address and place of birth.
 - Certified copy of National Identity Card.
 - Brief summary of career with duties (Curriculum Vitae)
 - Certified copies of certificates together with their transcripts (both academic and professional).
 - At least two (2) traceable references confirming the required experience (not more than six (6) months) old.
 - Names and contact details of two (2) current referees.
- b) Applicants should indicate:
- Date of first appointment
 - Present post and date of appointment thereto.
 - Candidates from Parastatals and Private Sector Organisations should provide a certified statement of salary or pay.

IMPORTANT

All Applications from serving Public Officers should be routed through their respective Heads of Departments and Permanent Secretaries. Applications **NOT** so routed will not be considered.

Note: All applicants who do not meet the minimum requirements stipulated above will not be responded to. **Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.**

Applications should be addressed to:

Permanent Secretary
 Ministry of Minerals and Energy
 Private Bag 0018
 Gaborone

OR hand delivered to:

Ministry of Minerals and Energy
 Fairgrounds Office Park
 First Floor
 Records Management Unit

CLOSING DATE: 21st February 2025

For further information required contact Human Resource Management Unit at 3656693/6695/6686.

Choppies 21st Big Birthday Bonanza Grand Prize Handover

The spirit of celebration filled the air at BA ISAGO University grounds on February 5th, 2025, as Choppies Supermarkets marked its 21st anniversary with the grand prize handover ceremony for its highly anticipated Big Birthday Bonanza. The event culminated in the presentation of four Toyota single cab bakkies and the coveted grand prize, a brand-new Toyota Landcruiser LC 300, to their thrilled winners.

The culmination of weeks of anticipation following the live draw on January 15th, the handover ceremony was a testament to Choppies' enduring commitment to its customers and the wider community. The draw, which determined the winners of P10,000 cash prizes, the four Toyota single cab bakkies, and the grand prize Land cruiser, had generated considerable excitement across the nation. The lucky recipient of the grand prize, Mr. Nelton Sankoloba, was visibly overwhelmed with joy as he received the keys to his new vehicle. The four winners of the Toyota single cab bakkies also expressed their profound gratitude and excitement, each sharing stories of how the win would positively impact their lives.

The celebratory atmosphere was further amplified by vibrant performances from local entertainers LERA and Lioness Ratang. Their energetic sets had the crowd on their feet, demonstrating Choppies' continued support for local artists, particularly young women, and their contribution to Botswana's vibrant cultural scene. This commitment to nurturing local talent underscores Choppies'

belief in investing in the community's future.

The official handover of the prizes – symbolic envelopes containing registration books and car keys – was conducted by Choppies CEO, Ramachandran Ottappathu, and Gaborone City Mayor, Oarabile Motlaleng. Mr. Ottappathu emphasized that the Big Birthday Bonanza is more than just a competition; it's a core component of Choppies' Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. "For 21 years, Choppies has been committed to giving back to the community that has supported us. This competition is our way of expressing our gratitude and making a real difference in the lives of ordinary Batswana," he stated.

Mayor Motlaleng echoed these sentiments, praising Choppies for their sustained investment in the community and their positive impact on the lives of its residents. He stated, "Over the years, the winnings from this noble competition have seen many lives of ordinary Batswana change for the positive. I have seen many personal testimonies on BTV where some indicate that with the cash prize monies received they bought livestock and ventured into commercial farming whilst some have used their winnings to advance their already existing small businesses." He highlighted the significance of such initiatives in empowering individuals and contributing to the overall economic development of Gaborone.

Since its inception in 2003, the Choppies Big Birthday Bonanza

has become a highly anticipated annual event. Over the past 21 years, Choppies has given away over 250 vehicles and millions of Pula in cash prizes, impacting countless lives across Botswana. The competition has become synonymous with hope and opportunity, transforming the dreams of ordinary citizens into reality. The scale of the prizes and the transparent process of the draw have cemented the competition's reputation as a genuine and life-changing initiative.

The 2025 handover ceremony was not just about the winners; it was a celebration of Choppies' 21 years of service and a reaffirmation of their commitment to the people of Botswana. The event served as a platform to acknowledge the company's growth and success while emphasizing its core values of community engagement and social responsibility.

The joyous faces of the winners, the lively entertainment, and the inspiring words from Choppies' leadership all contributed to a memorable occasion that underscored the company's dedication to its customers and the nation. The Big Birthday Bonanza is a testament to Choppies' belief that business success should go hand in hand with a commitment to uplifting the community, and the handover event was a resounding affirmation of this philosophy. The ceremony concluded with a renewed sense of anticipation for the next Big Birthday Bonanza, leaving attendees excited for the opportunities it would bring.



CHOPPIES
Great value for your money!

lifestyle

Faith, Family & Film

DONALD MOLOSI*

AS WE MARK THE UN's World Interfaith Harmony Week in February's first week, it is essential to reflect on the significance of this day within the context of Botswana. This observance encourages dialogue and understanding among different faiths and beliefs, fostering a culture of respect and coexistence. This tone of respect, in my opinion, is best nurtured from our households and then the classroom can build upon it as a child grows.

In a nation where over 70% of the population identifies as Christian, with significant Muslim, Hindu, and indigenous spiritual communities, the relevance of interfaith harmony cannot be overstated. That harmony needs us all to respect each other's beliefs and we must teach that to each other in our homes.

Article 15 of Botswana's Constitution underscores the importance of freedom of conscience, stating that "no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his or her freedom of conscience." This legal framework not only protects individual beliefs but also sets a precedent for mutual respect among diverse religious groups. In a country that prides itself on its democratic values and human rights, it is imperative that we uphold these



Kaone Kario

principles by actively engaging in interfaith dialogue. Bagaetsho, there are already many faiths in a typical Botswana family and so the family is a good place to begin dialogue across religious belief or religious non-belief.

Hon. Unity Dow once said, "The strength of our nation lies in our

diversity." This sentiment resonates deeply as we navigate our collective identity in today's Botswana. Our superpower as a nation has always been to find unity in diversity as evidenced by our history and our flag.

In recent years, Botswana has witnessed a burgeoning film industry

that reflects its rich cultural tapestry. The innovation seen in films produced locally serves as a powerful medium for storytelling that transcends religious boundaries. By showcasing narratives from various faith perspectives, filmmakers can promote understanding and empathy among audiences. As Vice President

Ndaba Gaolathe aptly noted, "Art has the power to bridge divides."

The Oscar-qualifying film "Partly Cloudy & Hot," which I had the honor to write and executive-produce, exemplifies this potential. Starring Kaone Kario in an award-winning role, this film not only entertains but also invites viewers

to engage with complex themes surrounding how belief systems impact the modern marriage in Botswana. It is through such artistic expressions that we can foster an environment where respect for differing beliefs flourishes.

The interplay between traditional African religions and Christianity, among others, creates a unique landscape that influences family dynamics in Botswana. It is up to us to ensure that no family member is looked down upon because they worship differently from another family member or they don't worship at all. We Batswana have all witnessed or experienced such unfortunate stories from our own families.

As we commemorate World Interfaith Harmony Week 2024, let us re-commit ourselves to respecting one another's beliefs and religions. In doing so, we contribute to a more harmonious Botswana—one that embodies unity amidst diversity. Let us remember that our strength lies not just in our shared values but also in our willingness to embrace what makes us unique.

Donald Molosi is an award-winning Broadway actor and writer. He wrote and executive-produced "Partly Cloudy & Hot," Botswana's 2023 Oscar-qualifying film starring Kaone Kario, Zenzo Ngqobe and Gofaone Molosiwa.

Light Sunday Lunch

With Chef Jay R

Chicken Roulade

BONED STUFFED CHICKEN quarter Leg with Spinach and Cream Cheese.

Wrapped in Bacon and cling film season with salt and pepper to taste.

After wrapping it with cling film, place it in the freezer to be from for 20 minutes, then unwrap it and roast it for 45 minutes in a 180-degree Celsius pre-heated oven.

When cooked let it rest and slice it, then place it over a Roasted Butternut Disc's...layered with balanced Spinach...serve with a creamy brown sauce.

Dessert Panacotta Simmer 500ml Cream and add 200 g sour cream and 150 g sugar.. stirring constantly;then let it cool .

Dissolve gelatine powder about 2 x teaspoon and add in the mixture then put in the fridge to set...blend 1 x packet of Strawberry and add 100g sugar and cook it on a low heat until it becomes thicker .place it over the chilled Panacota and set it back to the fridge to set .

Serve to cool yourselves in this Heat.

Kgotla Films climb global stage



BATSWANA IN THE DIASPORA continue to prove that with the right skills set and mindset we can indeed achieve the unachievable. In a world full of possibilities, Kgotla Films has unearthed talent, cultivating the necessary value chain that we desire as a country.

This statement rings true to Kgotla Films, a company wholly owned by a Motswana. Kgotla Films produced a short film dubbed Morwaake, a powerful drama exploring themes of family, resilience and male mental health. Morwaake has won the Best African Film at the prestigious Ekurhuleni International Film Festival (EIFF) in South Africa. This is a remarkable feat and Botswana needs to celebrate the Arts as it is a way that the government can appreciate the alleviation of youth unemployment.

In as much as Kgotla Films have cemented their name on the international stage it imperative to note that they have also put an

indelible mark to the Film industry of Botswana.

"This award is not just a win for Morwaake; it's a win for Botswana. It demonstrates that local stories when told with passion and authenticity, can resonate on a global scale. We are incredibly proud to represent Botswana's creativity and culture on such a prestigious platform" said Co-Producer and Writer Calum Chisholm.

This win is a testament of what can be achieved when we come together to tell our stories. It is the same breath it is important to highlight that over 40 Batswana participated in the talent search, however as fate would have it, only one winner emerged victorious. A testament that Botswana is a key industry player when it comes to Arts. Pictured is the Minister of the Ministry of Sport And Arts Botswana Hon Jacob Kelebeg and the award winners, the much celebrated Lesedi Mpabanga. Like Maya Angelou would say 'And Still I Rise'.

Fix chaotic local transport system

■ End the rot that is damaging tourism prospects



BAKANG KEIMETSWE*

TRANSPORTATION IS THE backbone of any thriving tourism sector, and Botswana's is no exception. Yet, our country's tourism potential is being stifled by mismanagement, regulatory loopholes, and outright negligence. The current state of transportation—specifically the misuse of route variation permits and lax enforcement of regulations—is a glaring indictment of systemic failure. It's time to stop dancing around the issue and address the rot head-on.

Route Variations

Chapter 69.03 of the Road Transport Act, Section 9.3, was never meant to be a free pass for public transport operators to encroach on tourism routes. Yet, this is exactly what is happening. Short-term permits, meant to address urgent needs, are being handed out like candy. Public transport vehicles, which are supposed to serve commuters, are now masquerading as travel and tour operators with impunity. This is not just a regulatory oversight; it's a blatant abuse of power that undermines the tourism industry.

Allowing public transport operators to switch license plates from blue (commuter services) to white (tourism vehicles) is a mockery of the law. It creates an unfair playing field for licensed travel and tour operators, erodes professionalism, and compromises the quality of service. This practice is not just unethical; it's a direct attack on Botswana's tourism reputation. Tourists are left dealing with subpar services, theft, and unprofessional conduct, all because of a system that prioritizes expedience over quality.



Cost to Tourism

The damage to Botswana's tourism brand cannot be overstated. Tour operators have raised these issues repeatedly in forums like the Department of Tourism's Pitso events and HATAB meetings, yet their cries fall on deaf ears. The lack of action is not just negligence; it's complicity. How can we expect to grow and diversify our tourism sector when the very systems meant to support it are riddled with loopholes and corruption?

Transportation inefficiencies and regulatory failures have turned what

should be a seamless experience into a nightmare. Tourists expect reliability, professionalism, and safety. What they get instead are haphazard services and a tarnished image of Botswana as a travel destination. If we want to compete on the global stage, we need to stop this charade immediately.

Without Teeth

Section 17(c) of the Road Transport Act requires public transport vehicles to carry and display time-tables and fare-tables. Yet, enforcement of this regulation is laughable. Public transport

operators flout these rules with no consequences, leaving commuters and tourists alike frustrated. It's time for the government to stop paying lip service to regulations and start enforcing them rigorously.

Enough is Enough

The path to reform is clear, but it requires political will and decisive action. Here's what needs to happen:

End the Abuse of Route Variations: Short-term permits should be granted only after exhausting all options with licensed travel and tour operators. No exceptions.

Crack Down on License Plate

Fraud: Switching plates from blue to white must be treated as the serious offense it is. Regulatory bodies need to step up and enforce penalties that deter such behavior.

Overhaul Public Transport Regulations: Time-tables and fare-tables must be reviewed and enforced without exception. Public transport should serve commuters, not tourists.

Support Professional Tour Operators: The government must create an enabling environment for licensed operators to thrive. This includes incentives, infrastructure, and protection from unfair competition.

Demand Accountability: Stakeholders, including the government, tourism associations, and transport operators, must be held accountable for their roles in perpetuating this mess. Transparency and collaboration are non-negotiable.

Call to Action

Botswana's tourism industry deserves better. Transportation inefficiencies and regulatory failures are not just inconveniences; they are barriers to growth and diversification. The current situation is unsustainable, and the cost of inaction is too high. Let's stop making excuses and start taking bold, decisive steps to fix this mess. Our tourism sector—and our national reputation—depend on it.

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LUX to open in Mababe

THE LUX COLLECTIVE HAS announced its expansion plans for 2025, which include debuting the LUX brand in Botswana. The collaboration between LUX and Diamond Power Pty Ltd will be the first hotel management agreement in Southern Africa for LUX. LUX Xinii Mababe will be located in Mababe in the Okavango Delta. The resort will be designed in a minimalistic style with



each of the 26 'lodges' featuring a centrepiece emulating an African tree. The roofs will be designed in a funnel shape, distinctive of the Okavango Delta's Hambukushu tribes, and is an age-old method of harvesting rainwater. LUX will also make its debut in the Middle East and Vietnam this year, and the Lux Collective's brand, SALT, will expand outside Mauritius for the first time, with two resorts planned for China.

Source: <https://www.travelnews.co.za/article/lux-open-botswana-safari-lodge>

Authentic African safaris

FOUNDED IN 2006 BY Zimbabwean guide Beks Ndlovu, African Bush Camps (ABC) is home to the authentic African safari experience. With 18 distinct experiences across Botswana, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, we promote and influence African safari travel on a global scale.

African Bush Camps Foundation (ABCF) is our non-profit organization that has been working alongside us since 2006. ABCF works within the communities and wildlife areas surrounding our Experiences. Through proactively partnering with local communities, ABCF strives to improve quality of life and foster long-term preservation through its programs focused on Community, Conservation, and Sustainability.

In Botswana, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, ABCF tackles critical challenges related to unemployment, food scarcity, limited access to education and healthcare, financial empowerment, wildlife poaching, and the preservation of natural resources.

Positive impact

ABC and ABCF operate under three interconnected pillars: Community: Empowering local communities through programs addressing essential needs, creating job opportunities, and driving local economic growth. Conservation: Conserving Africa's natural environments through initiatives that protect wildlife, minimize human-wildlife conflict, and



promote responsible resource use. Sustainability: Being responsible for reducing our environmental impact across the company and Experiences while also investing in staff and local economic development.

Botswana focus

In Botswana, ABCF's initiatives have made remarkable strides in education and community development. Its key achievements include:

Khwai Pre-School: ABCF has

constructed a second classroom, built ablutions, repaired the school fence, upgraded the jungle gym, and installed a solar system. It continues to support the school by employing a chef and a cleaner, providing nutritional meals twice daily, and supplying additional monthly meals to Khwai Primary School.

Female Guides Program: In 2021, ABCF helped launch the Female Guides Program, with the aim of spearheading change in the safari industry by empowering women

and championing gender equality. Currently, 15 women in Botswana and Zambia are advancing through the program. This initiative earned the 2023 Regenerative Travel Impact Award in the Education category.

Annual Stationery Donation Event: Since 2022, ABCF has partnered with Mosha Wellness

Spa to donate stationery to Khwai Pre-School and Khwai Primary School. On January 15, 2025, the event grew into a fun-filled day of sports and games for 150 children



from both schools. Each child received a school bag with books, pencils, pens, and notebooks. The celebration brought the community together for a memorable day.

Vuche Vuche Basket Weaving Project: ABCF empowers women by supporting this initiative that transforms traditional basket weaving into meaningful employment opportunities. Our guests can purchase these beautiful creations from the women directly, or from our in-camp Trading

Posts. They can also participate in basket-weaving workshops that teach them about Botswana's rich cultural heritage.

Across Africa

In Zambia and Zimbabwe, ABCF continues to make a difference with initiatives such as: Education: Supporting schools with infrastructure upgrades, nutrition programs, and learning materials. Conservation: Protecting livestock and wildlife through the Lion Boma

Project and antipoaching initiatives. Healthcare: Building clinics, providing clean drinking water, and reducing human-wildlife conflict with fenced wash points along the Zambezi River.

"At African Bush Camps, we believe in travel with purpose. Our safaris offer more than wildlife encounters - they create a ripple effect of positive change for the people and ecosystems of Africa," - Beks Ndlovu, Founder and CEO of African Bush Camps.

World Cancer Day 2025: Cancer Prevention Tips

CANCER REMAINS A LEADING cause of mortality in Africa. As per World Health Organization reports approximately 1.1 million new cancer cases occur each year in the continent, with about 700,000 deaths. The World Cancer Day theme by UICC for 2025-2027, "United by Unique," emphasizes a people-centered approach to care and explores new ways to create meaningful impact. Hematologist/Oncologist Dr. Jeff Vacirca, who graduated from St. George's University (SGU), School of Medicine in Grenada, West Indies shares the importance of recognizing cancer risks and tips for detection and prevention.

Know your cancer risks.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), cancer is a leading cause of death worldwide, accounting for approximately 9.7 million deaths. Major risk factors include tobacco use, alcohol consumption, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, and air pollution, according to WHO. Non-modifiable risk factors such as age, carcinogens, genetics, and weakened immune systems also play a role.

Stay ahead with regular screenings.

Consistent screenings facilitate quick treatment, thereby lowering cancer-related deaths. Regular screening tests such as mammograms, pap smears, and colonoscopies are essential for catching irregularities early, enabling prompt treatment and boosting survival chances. For instance, catching breast cancer in its earliest stages can result in a 99% five-year survival rate with timely and appropriate treatment, compared to only 27% for late detection.

Spot the symptoms early Symptoms may vary depending on the type of cancer, but there are some key signs you should be on the lookout for to ensure prompt action and proactive prevention such as:

Physical symptoms: unexplained lumps, swelling, coughing, breathlessness, changes in bowel habits, unexpected bleeding, unintentional weight loss, fatigue, unexplained pain, and new moles.

Urinary system issues: complications, including urgency to urinate more frequently, inability to urinate, and pain.

Other symptoms: unusual breast changes, appetite loss, persistent soreness, heartburn, and heavy night sweats.

Proactive prevention

Healthier lifestyles, staying up to



Dr Vacirca

date on essential vaccinations, and addressing environmental risks can reduce cancer risks.

Maintain a healthy lifestyle: Avoid using tobacco, maintain a healthy weight, follow a healthy diet, and refrain from alcohol consumption.

Get necessary vaccinations: Vaccinate yourself against HPV, hepatitis B, and other viruses that put you at risk.

Address risks from your surroundings: Avoid ultraviolet radiation exposure, use sun protection measures, and minimize exposure to outdoor and indoor air pollution.

Dr. Vacirca, who is CEO and Chairman of the Board at New York Cancer & Blood Specialists and cofounder of OneOncology, stated: "On World Cancer Day, we are reminded of the profound impact cancer has on Africa and other nations worldwide. By embracing healthier lifestyles, getting necessary vaccinations, and encouraging early detection, we can collectively reduce the burden of this disease and pave the way for a healthier future for all Africans."

Public awareness and education about the importance of early screening can encourage more people to participate in life-saving tests. SGU calls on individuals and organizations in Africa to spread awareness of cancer risks, promote early screenings, and support those affected for a healthier future.

Botswana blew my mind

- 'Smooth transition of power without any violence blew my mind! -Byagaba
- 'I earned the nickname Rapula because when I landed here it started raining'
- 'Bald men should experiment with creative hairstyles. Otherwise we all look like clean-shaven clones'

UGANDA'S ROLAND BYAGABA recently visited Botswana as part of his tour to meet other African storytellers. Below he chats with actor-writer Donald Molosi about differences and similarities between Uganda and Botswana; and about balding hairstyles for African men. As Founder of Muwado - an online platform - Byagaba has edited and published thousands of African short stories and opinion pieces from around Africa on the platform.

Donald Molosi (DM) : Muwado is a profitable digital storytelling platform. How can Batswana make their own platforms profitable?

Roland Byagaba (RB) : It is through our relationships with the public and our stakeholders that Muwado is profitable. Even though Muwado started as a blog and has since grown into a multimedia content platform, we set out as a business from the onset seeking to make income from African stories sustainable.

We are on the path to achieving that with a backing of partners like UNDP and African Cultural Fund that see the vision. It's been 11 years of learning and it feels good to see it come to life and come close to the goal of transforming the lives of African storytellers.

DM: Your ongoing tour of East and southern Africa as a team in search of African stories has been an inspiring one. Please say more about it.

RB: The #MuwadoSADCtour was an ambitious expansion undertaking to visit 10 countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) block to research their creative economies and introduce them to Muwado. Out of the 10, I managed to visit 5 before visa issues prevented me from going further. Botswana is my last stop.

DM: As a digital platform that has managed to partner with entities like the UN to work across Africa, what have you learned about the African digital space?

RB: We learned a lot and collected a lot of stories for the platform. I plan to visit more African countries with groups of storytellers as the platform grows to generate collaborative content and build the synergies needed to make Muwado truly Africa's Storytelling Platform.

DM: How do you think this trans-Africa trip is changing you as a person, if at all?

RB: I am now a strong advocate for intra-Africa travel to build unity



Roland Byagaba

among ourselves and make Africa's development a collective effort.

DM: Just to backtrack, you and I first met in Uganda in 2015 when I was performing at the National theatre in Kampala.

RB: Yes. Wow, where did the time go? Uganda is always happy to welcome you back.

DM: Thanks. Welcome to Botswana. Back to your storytelling, you are now one of the familiar faces on Ugandan TV.

RB: Yes, after university, I saw a notice looking for actors for The Hostel TV show, a popular Ugandan series at the time, and decided to give it a shot. I got the part and appeared as a guest in a few episodes.

DM: And you have since gone on to appear in many Ugandan films and series. Congratulations, ssebo. What were your impressions of Botswana on this tour? Met any storytellers here yet?

RB: Botswana is a lovely country to conclude my tour from. I met the founders of Gaborone Book Festival, Kenanao and Keikantse Phelo. I met with a young leader Emmanuel Njang from Upright African Movement. I wish I had more time and resources to see more of the

country because, apart from the road journey from the border with Namibia, I am spending all my time in the capital Gaborone.

DM: You are welcome to return and see the countryside next time. From Kampala's tropical weather to our dry weather here, how has that been for you?

RB: The weather has been very hot, as it has been in the other SADC countries. I am very pleased to now see rain during my stay here. I earned the nickname Rrapula for the coincidence!

5. Lately, you have been posting content stigmatizing balding among men. Why is this important to you?

RB: I started balding as a teenager so I have had plenty of time to reflect on this phenomenon. Like most, I was initially not happy with my hair loss. I had grand creative plans for my hair...dreads and everything in between. I reached acceptance quickly and got over it but society made sure I didn't forget.

DM: Ugandan society made you feel insecure because you were balding. How was that?

RB: Almost everyone had an opinion on how I should cut my hair

to conceal the balding.

DM: The same thing happens to balding men in Botswana society. When your balding head was made an issue, how did that make you feel?

RB: I suppose it made those people around me insist that balding was making me less attractive. This didn't sit well with me. I still had intentions of being creative with my remaining hair but there didn't seem to be any material online to pick inspiration from.

DM: I myself am balding and I love growing my own hair out. What's the point of never seeing your own hair because as soon as it sprouts you rush for the shaver out of fear of judgment? Do you ever grow out your balding afro?

RB: When covid happened and barbers were unavailable due to social distancing, I grew my hair out and was pleased with the styling experiments I was able to try out with reluctant barbers.

Some barbers eventually appreciated the end results. My hope is to see more creativity with hairstyles for balding heads so that not all bald men look like clones with the clean shaven look.

DM: Clones are no fun indeed.

You are in Botswana for the first time and you witnessed Botswana change governments for the first time in six decades.

RB: To see an opposition party win a presidential election was a thing of wonder and amazement. To see them win without election violence straight blew my mind. Uganda's history with elections is not a pretty one and hopefully we can learn something from Botswana.

We have an election in Uganda coming up soon that's already tensing up to be violent from early signs but my hope remains I can see us witness something like what Botswana pulled off in my lifetime.

DM: Thank you for this conversation. Here is to more peace and stability everywhere, to African digital stories and to more imaginative hairstyles for balding men. Thank you.

RB: You are welcome.

* Donald Molosi is a retired Broadway actor. He works as a film consultant and producer at CattlePost Films. This conversation is reproduced with gratitude to the Upright African Movement. **

Sport

Sport takes centre stage

▪ School sport crucial for nurturing young talent, promoting healthy lifestyles and discipline

AS THE COUNTRY GRAPPLES WITH an ailing economy, teetering on the brink of collapse due to a depressed mining sector - the biggest contributor to Botswana's gross domestic product, sport has emerged as a strategic investment opportunity to diversify sources of income.

Addressing the 2025 Sport Pitso which was held in Gaborone on Monday, Minister of Sport and Arts, Jacob Kelebeng called for a fundamental shift in how sport is approached locally. He said sport should no longer be considered a mere pastime, but a massive industry and a sustainable product capable of driving economic growth and social development.

Kelebeng stressed the importance of forging strong partnerships with the private sector and exploring innovative avenues, such as leveraging the revenue generated by the betting industry, to support sports development. He advised that time has come for sport development to diversify funding sources beyond government grants, as a critical priority due to economic challenges that have befallen the country.

Echoing the crucial role of grassroots development, Kelebeng emphasized the importance of revitalizing school sport programs, reiterating that such structures are crucial for nurturing young talent, promoting healthy lifestyles, and fostering a strong sporting culture within the nation.

Senior Vice President of the Botswana National Olympic Committee (BNOC), Tshepo Sitale emphasized the critical role of school sport programs in building a strong sporting foundation. He called for a robust legal framework to provide a solid foundation for the growth and sustainability of the sports sector.

The 2025 Sport Pitso brought together different stakeholders among them sports administrators, government officials and the private sector to address challenges and opportunities in the sport fraternity.



Minister of Sport and Arts, Jacob Kelebeng

The 2025 Sport Pitso marks a significant milestone in the government's efforts to transform the sports sector in Botswana. The outcomes of this dialogue will serve

as the foundation for a comprehensive national sports strategy, guiding the sector's development and ensuring its contribution to the overall economic and social progress

of the nation. Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Sport and Arts (MoSA), Nancy Chengeta reiterated the need for an integrated

approach, fostering collaboration across all levels of government, the private sector, and sporting organizations.

Kelebeng engages Ambassadors

▪ US, Turkish envoys pay courtesy call on minister

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA Ambassador to Botswana, Howard Van Vranken paid a courtesy call on the Minister of Sport and Arts, Jacob Kelebeng at the beginning of the week. In his welcome remarks, Kelebeng spelt out the government ambitious plan of recognising the potential of sport and arts. He said Botswana is eager to learn from the United States on developing sport value chains to diversify the economy away from mining, due to the declining contribution of diamonds to the economy.

In response, Ambassador Van Vranken said the United States will look into government's plan with a view to assist in Sport and Arts. He added that there are already benefits to the athletes and artists derived from cooperation between the two governments.

Turkey

Meanwhile, Kelebeng met with the Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey A. Idem Akay. The two discussed the issues pertaining to sports and possible ways of sports cooperation. He expressed delight that Botswana and Turkey are in discussions and process of signing a memorandum of understanding. The Permanent Secretary in MoSA, Neo Chengeta revealed to the Ambassador that sports in Botswana is facing challenges such as sporting facilities and funding among others. Ambassador Akay then presented a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that both delegations agreed to look at before it was signed to incorporate issues relating to sport and arts.

Kudos to FNBB

▪ Government falls short, looks to private sector for support

THE PRIVATE SECTOR HAS BEEN urged to support government initiatives in the development of sport in Botswana. The call was made by Minister of Sport and Art, Jacob Kelebeng during a meeting with First National Bank of Botswana (FNBB) Executives who paid a courtesy call to his office last week.

For sport to grow and deliver returns, there is an urgent need for grassroots development where the reinstatement of school sport alone requires an injection of over P91 million. Kelebeng said government cannot do it alone, hence the need for public private partnerships.

He applauded FNBB for their commitment, determination and unwavering support to local sport and encouraged them to do more to improve the arts industry. He, however, acknowledged FNBB for supporting Thapong Visual Arts Centre and the rehabilitation of Maun Sporting Complex. Other areas where FNBB has



invested in sport include the upcoming Kazungula Marathon, the Premier League, the BOTESSA league and the Golden Grand Prix scheduled for April 2025. Kelebeng advised that in future a

Memorandum of Understanding should be signed by the parties to bolster their relationship and establish common areas of interest for collaborations.

Raguin in ITF World Tour J60 finals

LOCAL TENNIS STAR, NTUNGAMILI RAGUIN has qualified for the finals of the ITF World Tennis Tour Juniors J60 in Nairobi (Kenya) following a tough semifinal on Friday as he faced Amar Huseinovic, 17 years old, of Macedonia. Huseinovic was coming out of an impressive 8 consecutive wins, having taken last week's title at the J30 held in Nairobi.

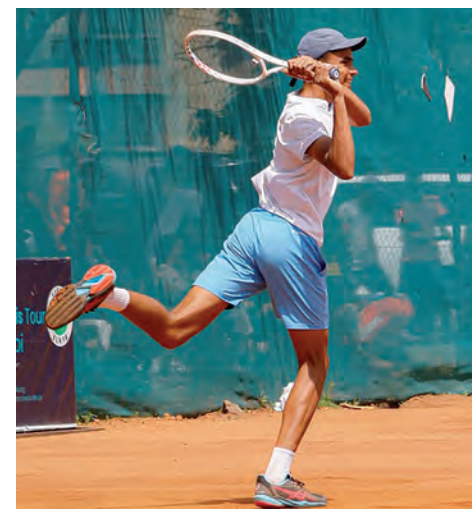
The final was scheduled to be played on Saturday morning, where Ntungamili will face Abdelaziz Guennouni of Morocco.

For his first week in Kenya, Ntungamili made Botswana proud as he fought neck to neck in the first set until the game stood at 3-3 against the best server in the tournament. When Ntungamili managed to break him to lead 5-3, he did not let his chance pass and played a stunning service game (2 winning 1st serves followed by an ace) to close the 1st set 6-3.

Ntungamili kept pushing his opponent in the 2nd set, gradually getting the upper end to eventually win 6-3; 6-2 and qualify for the J60 Final.

Earlier, Ntungamili had successively defeated Alberto Ciarapica 4-6; 6-2; 6-1; Jeff Okuku Hesbon 6-0; 6-1; Thomas Piot 6-2; 6-0 to reach the semifinals where he met Amar Huseinovic. Ntungamili also won his doubles Quarter final with his Kenyan partner Zayyan Virani 6-3; 6-4, thus qualifying for the doubles semi-Finals.

"I'm in Nairobi right now playing 2 ITF tournaments (one this week and another one



Raguin

next week). Today I just won my quarter finals matches both in singles and doubles (with a Kenyan partner) so I'm really happy and looking forward to my semifinals. The main challenge for me this week has been to adjust to the playing conditions here; because with the altitude (Nairobi is at 1800m altitude), the balls are literally flying and also bouncing very high. I struggled with it at first but I'm getting better and better each day. Ntungamili told Patriot Sport on Thursday evening.

BNOC demand direct funding

BOTSWANA NATIONAL OLYMPIC Committee (BNOC) Board has pleaded with the Minister of Sport and Arts, Jacob Kelebeng to consider funding them directly, to review and improve the government grant to them, and to release the funds timeously to facilitate preparations for upcoming games.

The BNOC also encouraged the minister to make time to visit and appreciate the operations of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF). BNOC President, Colonel Botsang Tshenyego said the absence of school sport has crippled growth of sport as there are no sources of new talent. Consequently, BNOC may be compelled to send the Paris 2024 Olympic team to the next Los Angeles 2028 Olympics. According to Col Tshenyego, BNOC is currently grappling with inadequate funding for sport activities, the absence of school sports - a need to reintroduce sport at schools, the lack of development pipeline, the absence of a Sports Act, Inadequate International recognition and representation and the need of Sport for Development (SDG). In turn, Kelebeng pledged support on reintroduction of school sport, and encouraged BNOC to support and promote all sporting codes, rather than selecting a few over the others. He encouraged them to develop and make less engaged sporting codes more appealing to the nation.



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