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APRIL 13, 2025 | ISSUE 621

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Unions test UDC mettle

- Reject the P227m fan shaped salary structure
- Public sector trade unions warn UDC of workers' backlash

BAKANG TIRO
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THE SIX COOPERATING Trade Unions plus one union (6CTU+1) have warned the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) to tread carefully with the Fan-Shape Salary structure in the public service, which could attract heavy backlash from civil servants.

The civil service employer, Directorate of Public Service Management (DPSM) resolved to introduce the Fan Shape during the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) administration to replace the Peterson structure.

Addressing the media on Wednesday, the Coordinator of cooperating trade unions, Agang

TO PAGE 3

Masisi loses glory!



- Criticised for incorrigible rant, imaginary foes
- MEK's days as BDP president come to an end

FULL STORY ON PAGE 3

BURS fights smuggling

- Cracks down on smuggling of cigarettes, vegetables

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THE BOTSWANA UNIFIED Revenue Service (BURS) has ramped up efforts to curb the smuggling of goods into the country, such as prohibited vegetables and illegal tobacco products, by intensifying physical searches at all ports of entry and deploying its K-9 unit to bolster border security.

Reports have been rife that some of big retailers are smuggling and undeclaring vegetables produce sourced from South Africa into the



TO PAGE 3 Makgolo

BR rubbishes union claims

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BOTSWANA RAILWAYS (BR) management has expressed serious concern about allegations against the leadership of the rail transport monopoly made by Botswana Transport and Allied Workers Union (BTAWU) questioning the organization's integrity, financial stability, and performance. Through Sereo

- Union alleges obstruction of forensic audit, financial mismanagement, compromise of national assets
- Allegations are baseless and unsupported by facts – BR

Thabeng, Head- Corporate Communications and Public Affairs, Botswana Railways dismissed the contents of the petition by BTAWU as "baseless and unsupported by facts". Responding to The Patriot on Sunday inquiry about the contents of the petition, Thabeng said as a state-owned entity, Botswana Railways

recognises its union in their efforts to advocate for workers' rights. She said BR is committed to upholding these rights and values to foster a culture of mutual respect and collaboration. "BR further wishes to reiterate its unwavering commitment to addressing all employee concerns through established internal

processes, as outlined in our Collective Labour Agreement. The Collective Labour Agreement clearly stipulates that disputes and grievances should be addressed through internal dialogue and negotiation between BR and the union. Only in the event of a deadlock, after exhausting all

internal avenues, should a third party be engaged. To Management's knowledge, these internal processes have not been followed in this instance. BR is committed to maintaining a fair, transparent, and productive working relationship between BR and its employees. BR remains dedicated to open

communication and constructive dialogue with all stakeholders, including the Unions, to address any concerns or grievances that may arise," reads part of the written response from BR.

Thabeng, however, said as management they are constrained to respond to specific details of the petition as it was addressed to the President, and not Botswana Railways.

The Petition

In the petition, BTAWU claimed that they have been trying to engage the Ministry of Transport and

TO PAGE 6

WIN BOTTOMLESS BUCKETS

FROM 149⁹⁰ EACH



KFC

BOFINET supports flood victims

IN THE WAKE OF THE recent devastating floods that have impacted many lives across Botswana, Botswana Fibre Networks (BOFINET), the leading telecommunications provider, has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the nation through meaningful action and community engagement. As part of the initial response, BOFINET made a significant donation of P100,000.00 to the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO). This contribution is aimed at assisting with emergency relief efforts including the provision of food, shelter, medical assistance, and other critical services for families affected by the floods.

Building on its commitment to community support, BoFiNet partnered with the Tlokweng Council to tackle another urgent issue caused by the floods: blocked stormwater drainage systems. On Friday, April 4th, 2025, staff volunteers from BoFiNet and



Mpho Koolese, CEO of BoFiNet

the Tlokweng City Council launched a community clean-up initiative aimed at unclogging stormwater drains and implementing preventive

measures to reduce future flood risks. The Tlokweng District Council reported that approximately 290 households were affected by the floods. On

this day, employees exchanged their laptops for shovels, ensuring that the culverts on Rasepati Road were cleared of grass and sand. "We are proud of our employees who have dedicated their time and energy to this cause. Today's clean-up effort is not only about addressing a current issue but also about enhancing the resilience of our communities against future environmental challenges," said Mr. Mpho Koolese, CEO of BoFiNet.

BOFINET extends its gratitude to the Tlokweng Council and the Office of the District Commissioner for their steadfast support and collaboration. Their provision of resources and manpower has been instrumental in driving this initiative forward. Speaking at the event, Kgosi Michael Gaborone stressed the importance of collaboration between community leadership and private entities to mitigate environmental challenges to building stronger, safer, and more resilient communities across Botswana.

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- Demonstrates commitment to employee welfare

EMERGENCY ASSIST 991 IS proud to announce that, as of April 2025, the company is fully compliant with the minimum wage of P4000. Over the past six years, we have maintained an impressive compliance rate of 95% for our 150 staff members reflecting our unwavering commitment to our employees and their welfare.

At Emergency Assist 991, we believe that fostering a caring work environment is



fundamental to our success. This commitment not only aligns with government standards but also reinforces our mission to exemplify corporate responsibility and prioritize the well-being of our employees.

We are proud to have achieved full compliance, which underscores our dedication to our staff and our values as a company.

Our ongoing efforts to ensure fair compensation and a supportive work culture reflect our mission to lead by example in the industry.

MoH extends private practice licence renewal

THE MINISTRY OF Health wishes to remind all Private Practitioners of their annual obligation to renew their practice licences. The renewal period for this year will commence on 1st April 2025 and end on 30th June 2025. As per the Botswana Health Professions Council (BHPC) regulations, this exercise is essential to ensure that no health professional practices illegally in Botswana, without the requisite practicing certificate. Pursuant to this, the following documents are

required when submitting the applications for renewal: Completed Renewal Form. Copy of 2025/26 BHPC Registration C and Blue Card. Professional Indemnity Insurance Cover. BoMRA license (for pharmacists). Effective 1st April 2025, all Pharmacists should have a BoMRA licence reflecting the holder as the Responsible Pharmacist. Residence and work permit for non-citizens. List of health professionals employed by the organization; both permanent

and locums. Include copies of permission to employ provided by the Ministry of Health, copies of 2025/26 BHPC Registration Certificate, Blue Card, Residence and Work permit (for non-citizens). Practitioners who have not employed any professional, are to submit an affidavit stipulating that position. Registration of facility on Master Health Facility List (MFL) platform. <https://healthfacilities.gov.bw/> (For enquiries on this, please contact Ms. Goitseone Makgekene on 3632730 or

gmakgekene@gmail.com or Tshogofatso Kgame on 3632730 or tshogokgame@gmail.com). Practitioners outside Gaborone are advised to courier their documents for verification purposes. However, renewed licenses must be collected in person by the license holder, with a valid identification document. For more information, please contact the Ministry of Health Private Practice and Licencing Office at 3632505/3632466 or by email at dhsoffice2@gov.bw. Dr Christopher Nyanga

EU supports floods victims

FOLLOWING INTENSE rainfall and flooding in Botswana, the European Union is providing €150,000 in humanitarian aid to help address the most urgent needs of affected communities in Gaborone, South-East, Kgatleng and Ghanzi districts.

The EU funding will bolster the efforts of the Botswana Red Cross Society (BRCS) in delivering much-needed relief, including multi-purpose cash assistance, food, shelter, water, health, and sanitation support, as well as mental health and psycho-social services to over 9,000 flood victims. Additionally, the BRCS is developing an Early Action Protocol (EAP) for floods to strengthen preparedness and response efforts for future emergencies. The emergency response project will run for five months, until the end of August 2025. The funding is part of the EU's overall contribution to the Disaster

Response Emergency Fund (DREF) of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

Botswana is reeling from the devastating effects of heavy rains and flash flooding that struck four districts between 19-21 February 2025. The floods submerged farms, disrupted transport networks, contaminated water supplies, and caused extensive damage to homes and infrastructure. At least nine people died, thousands were displaced, and major roads and bridges were destroyed. The flooding also forced the temporary closure of a South African border post and schools. The crisis, worsened by La Niña conditions, prompted the Government of Botswana to issue a warning of continued rainfall and flooding, forecasting additional downpours that could further worsen the already dire situation. In response, a national disaster task force,

including the BRCS, was formed to coordinate relief efforts. The European Union and its Member States are the world's leading donors of humanitarian aid. Relief assistance is an expression of European solidarity with people in need worldwide. It aims to save lives, prevent and alleviate human suffering, and safeguard the integrity and human dignity of populations affected by natural disasters and man-made crises. Through its Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations department, the European Union helps millions of victims of conflict and disasters every year. With headquarters in Brussels and a global network of field offices, the European Union provides assistance to the most vulnerable people based on humanitarian needs. The European Union is signatory to a €14.5 million humanitarian delegation agreement with the

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to support the Federation's Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF). Funds from the DREF are mainly allocated to "small-scale" disasters – that do not give rise to a formal international appeal. The Disaster Response Emergency Fund was established in 1979 and is supported by contributions from donors. Each time a National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society needs immediate financial support to respond to a disaster, it can request funds from the DREF. For small-scale disasters, the IFRC allocates grants from the Fund, which can then be replenished by the donors. The delegation agreement between the IFRC and ECHO enables the latter to replenish the DREF for agreed operations (that fit within its humanitarian mandate) up to a total of €14.5 million.

Savings, Investments, Lending and Foreign Currency Rates

effective from 1st April 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
Ipele	0.00% - 1.55%	0.00% - 1.56%	1,000
SureSave 12 Months	4.25%	4.34%	100
SureSave 24 Months	4.50%	4.60%	100
SureSave 36 Months	4.25%	4.34%	100
Lebandla	1.85% - 2.35%	1.87% - 2.38%	1,000
EasySave	1.75% - 3.75%	1.76% - 3.82%	100
Fixed Deposit 91 Days	3.50% - 8.00%	3.56% - 8.32%	1,000
Fixed Deposit 6 Months	3.75% - 8.00%	3.82% - 8.32%	1,000
Fixed Deposit 12 Months	4.50% - 7.25%	4.60% - 7.51%	1,000
Fixed Deposit 24 Months	4.50% - 5.75%	4.60% - 5.91%	1,000

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	2.00%	5.00%	2.02%	5.12%	1000	1000
3 Months	2.25%	5.25%	2.27%	5.38%	1000	1000
6 Months	3.35%	6.25%	3.30%	6.43%	1000	1000
9 Months	3.50%	6.50%	3.56%	6.70%	1000	1000
12 Months	3.75%	6.75%	3.82%	6.96%	1000	1000
Call	0.00%	2.75%	0.00%	2.78%	500	500

*Rates apply to amounts from ZARIK to ZARIM. 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	0.25%	1.25%	0.25%	1.26%	1000	1000
3 Months	0.50%	1.50%	0.50%	1.51%	1000	1000
6 Months	1.00%	2.00%	1.00%	2.02%	1000	1000
9 Months	1.50%	2.50%	1.51%	2.53%	1000	1000
12 Months	1.50%	2.50%	1.51%	2.53%	1000	1000
Call	0.00%	0.25%	0.00%	0.25%	100	100

*Rates apply to amounts from GBPIK to GBPIM. 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	1.00%	1.50%	1.00%	1.51%	1000	1000
3 Months	1.50%	2.00%	1.51%	2.02%	1000	1000
6 Months	1.75%	2.25%	1.76%	2.27%	1000	1000
9 Months	2.00%	2.50%	2.02%	2.53%	1000	1000
12 Months	2.00%	2.50%	2.02%	2.53%	1000	1000
Call	0.00%	0.15%	0.00%	0.15%	100	100

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

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%	8.49%
Overdraft Rate (revolving credit lines)	Prime - Prime +13.50%	11.36%
Credit Card Rate	Prime +10% - Prime +15%	17.85%
Lease loans	N/A	N/A
Personal loans (excluding overdrafts mortgage, and credit cards)	Prime +3% - Prime +25.49%	11.45%
Other long term loan rates (Commercial loans)	Prime +4% - Prime +13.5%	10.96%

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	0.75%	2.25%	0.75%	2.27%	1000	1000
3 Months	1.25%	2.75%	1.26%	2.78%	1000	1000
6 Months	2.00%	3.50%	2.02%	3.56%	1000	1000
9 Months	2.25%	3.75%	2.27%	3.82%	1000	1000
12 Months	2.50%	4.00%	2.53%	4.07%	1000	1000
Call	0.00%	1.50%	0.00%	1.51%	100	100

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

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St Joseph's crowned NSQC World Champs

IT IS WITH GREAT HONOUR and privilege to inaugurate the (National School Quiz Championships) NSQC World Series edition for all schools in Botswana and those attending from other countries. This is an academic sport that encourages and celebrates academic excellence across the world. We welcome IAN P UNIVERSAL, the founders, producers and global partners of the NSQC initiative, to Botswana. As the Ministry of Child Welfare and Basic Education, we support NSQC in its pursuit to empower young students with STEAM and encourage them to participate in international activities that equip them to become global thinkers and innovative citizens of the world. NSQC is the biggest televised academic tournament that reopened its doors in 2023 after the COVID pandemic. It started with NSQC Botswana

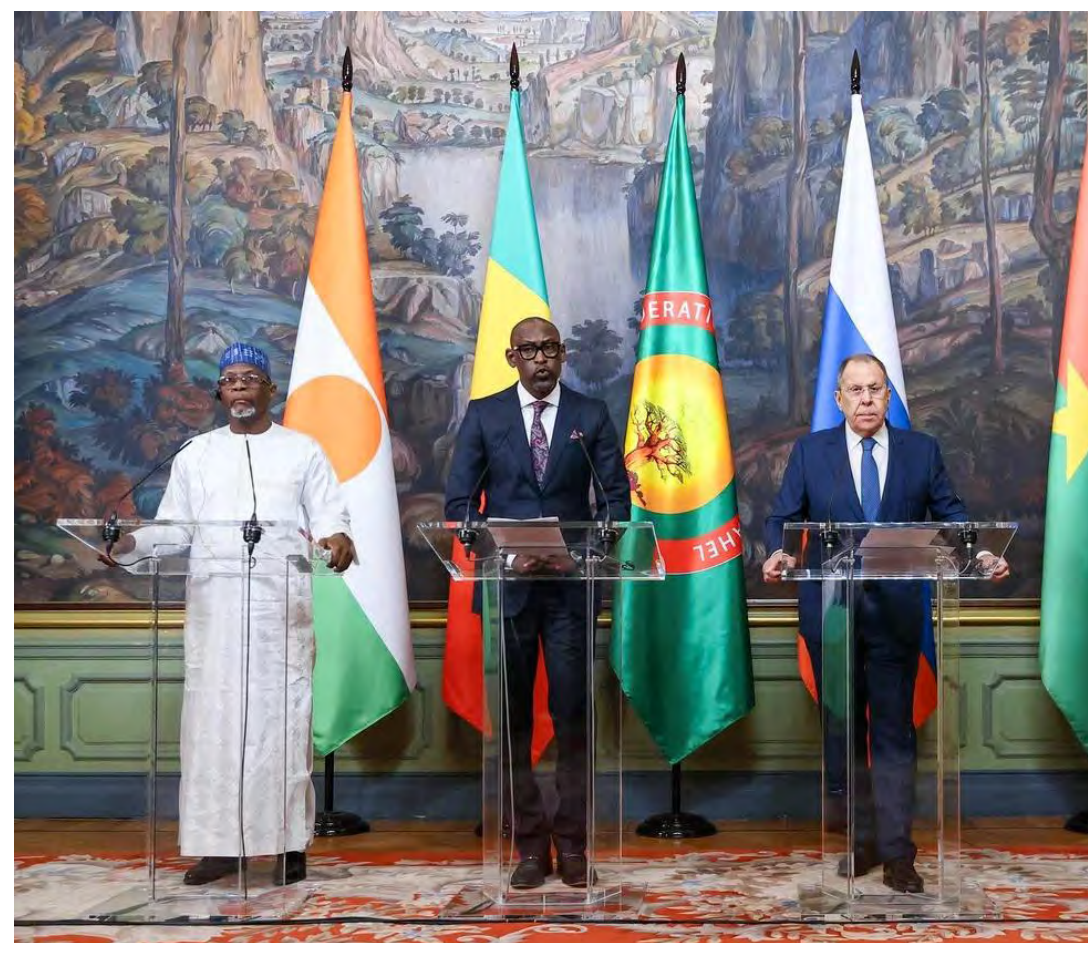
at the prestigious Gaborone International School. The tournament ran from 5 to 8 December boasting 26 teams with Zimbabwe and Kingdom of Eswatini schools gracing the occasion. It was nothing short of a spectacle and brilliant performance of academic gladiators from primary and secondary schools. This tournament is also televised by MIndset learn on DStv along with all the participating national broadcasters including our own BTv to start its broadcast in this season. It is such social cohesion and collaboration that will take NSQC Botswana editions to the other broadcasters across the region and the world at large. As Ministry we encourage participation of schools, students, teachers and parents alike to showcase the academic brilliance and prowess. Such

a showcase will educate and share our culture and heritage to schools in other countries. All registered teams will contest fairly and study hard for the competition. The preparation for NSQC also helps students prepare for the exams. The competition gives great rewards such as international scholarships and mentorship programs to students with keen interests in Media and the Arts. NSQC since its inception in 2012 it has awarded more than 6 Million Rand in scholarships and has broadcasted in over 80 countries. This has marked its 10 year anniversary of being televised academic sports. NSQC secured 100 tertiary scholarships as prizes to study in India courtesy of EDOOFA (Education for All). This was a great milestone and opportunity for all students who are academically gifted.

The academic tournament is a great spectacle and an inspiring production that brings students from all walks of life to make new friends. I urge all schools to start SPELLING BEE clubs, Quiz and Debate clubs, to be prepared to participate, to learn and have fun. Like any sport, it will be competitive; those who win will be rewarded and represent their countries at the NSQC World Series. It will be a great privilege for us as Botswana to bid and host again the 2026 NSQC World Series at a larger scale. This will bring schools from all over the world and shine the light on Botswana as a safe and beautiful destination for future international students. We would like to congratulate all the schools for participating, particularly to the winning schools that will carry the flag higher in their global endeavours.

On Russia-Confederation of Sahel States (CSS) ministerial meeting

ON APRIL 3, MOSCOW hosted the first Russia-Confederation of Sahel States (CSS) ministerial meeting with the participation of Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali Abdoulaye Diop (the President of Mali currently holds the CSS presidency), Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Cooperation and Burkinabe Abroad of the Republic of Burkina Faso Karamoko Jean-Marie Traore, and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, and African Integration of the Republic of Niger Yaou Sangare Bakary. The ministers engaged in a detailed discussion on issues related to strengthening friendly relations between Russia and the CSS with a focus on intensifying political dialogue and enhancing sector-specific cooperation. They stated that the parties had similar views on the majority of topics under discussion. Sergey Lavrov confirmed that Russia was



ready to help the CSS evolve an independent political course and shape a new regional security architecture based on self-reliance. The ministers agreed

on further enhancing coordination at the UN and other international venues. Significant attention was given to promoting interaction within the framework of the

Russia-Africa Partnership Forum. The participants in the meeting approved a joint statement. The next meeting in the same format will be held in one of the CSS countries.

Masisi loses glory!

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BOTSWANA DEMOCRATIC Party (BDP) president Mokgweetsi Masisi is slowly losing the grip on the party after he received backlash from some democrats and organisations that he lambasted during a media briefing on Monday, a development that observers say shows that he has lost glory.

Masisi used a large part of the BDP media briefing to take a jab at the ruling Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) and De Beers Group, which he accused of ousting BDP by sponsoring UDC.

Political science lecturer at University of Botswana (UB) Dr Adam Mfundisi said Masisi seemingly lacks both character and leadership qualities. He said in times of existential threat and challenges to the BDP, the former President should be showing exemplary leadership nuanced with emotional intelligence.

“Trust in leadership is critical for transformative, collective action and communication with transparency in times of uncertainties. He should have prepared and planned for the press conference as well as adaptive to the changing political dynamics,” said Dr



Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) president Mokgweetsi Masisi [PIC:PINO KILANO]

Mfundisi.

Another political analyst Kitso Morekisi said Masisi is feeling the pressure from BDP members and has to justify why the party performed poorly during the 2024 general election. He said Masisi would have done himself justice by resigning immediately after BDP lost state power to the UDC, adding that nobody is protecting as it used to be the case when BDP was in power.

“He was glorified by everyone in the party and now he has lost the glory even from his

then cabinet ministers. He is serving his last days at the helm of BDP presidency and soon he will be forgotten. I doubt even if the new central committee would put him close to the party’s powerful structure,” said Morekisi.

Attacks

Meanwhile, Morekisi said by attacking both the UDC and De Beers, Masisi was motivated by dreams of glory and the conference provided an avenue to gain spotlight after times of heavy criticisms of his administration and his persona.

Dr Mfundisi said, Masisi has an unlimited lust for power, prestige, status, and authority. “Former President has no moral authority to have clinched to BDP leadership after devastating loss of his party. He should have resigned forthwith after the political tsunami that befallen his party,” said Dr Mfundisi.

He added that Lack of ethics and accountability led to his continued to hold to power of the party destined to the political grave, adding that his boundless appetite for power

helps explain why he does not want to relinquish power in the BDP.

“President Masisi has lost glory after the BDP disastrous performance in the elections. My assessment is that the BDP needs transformative leadership devoid of any connection to the previous BDP regimes. Or a change of name for the party whose glory has diminished in the eyes and minds of the voters. It has presided over rampant corruption, maladministration, unemployment, inequality, and poor public services,” he buttressed.

Calls had been loud from some BDP members calling for the immediate resignation of Masisi or the entire central committee but Masisi this week insisted that he will remain BDP leader until congress.

BDP will be holding a crucial elective congress in Maun next month, and those who are seeking for positions for the central committee have since launched campaigns traversing the deep and breath of the country to canvass votes from the democrats.

Masisi encouraged the contestants to embark in a clean campaign, refuting claims that as the party president he is favouring some candidates over others.

BR rubbishes union claims

FROM PAGE 1

Infrastructure, without success, to raise alarm over governance issues at Botswana Railways, including the suspension of the General Manager, Paul Masena and the subsequent appointment of Chelesile Malele to act in that capacity.

“Masena’s suspension followed a forensic audit aimed at uncovering significant corruption within the organization, particularly implicating the Board Chairperson and the Chief Operating Officer, Ms. Malele, during her 3-year tenure as acting CEO from January 2021 to December 2023. We believe this suspension and the obstruction of the audit are deliberate attempts to shield corrupt practices.

The union finally met the Minister, Noah Salake in March 2025 and he assured them he was addressing the matter. Unhappy with delays, BTAWU then decided to escalate the petition to President Duma

Boko.

According to the petition signed by Thapelo Motube Molefe, the General Secretary of BTAWU livelihoods of BR workers (both active and retired), the organization’s sustainability, and Botswana’s economic stability and international reputation are at stake. The key issues raised, include obstruction of the Initial Forensic Audit; Financial Mismanagement: The union alleges that the acting General Manager and her management team have engaged in extravagant spending, including unnecessary international trips, reversing the financial discipline Masena had enforced, which threatens BR’s viability, given its fragile financial status.

Compromise of National Assets: the union complains that current engagements with questionable companies risk state capture and could lead to Botswana being grey-listed for money laundering concerns.

Unauthorized Hiring Practices: The union accuses



Sereo Thabeng, Head-Corporate Communications and Public Affairs, Botswana Railways

the acting General Manager of continuing to employ new staff, including for senior positions such as an internal auditor—a role that should be mandated to a substantive General Manager—further undermining governance and accountability.

Union demands

BTAWU is demanding the immediate reinstatement of Masena as General Manager of Botswana Railways to stabilize leadership ahead of your forensic audit, and to grant him the authority to appoint

his preferred Directors to restore effective management. Further, BTAWU said the newly appointed eight-member Board must be sworn in promptly and act swiftly to safeguard the organisation.

“It is imperative that they address the current challenges with urgency to ensure the stability and success of the organisation moving forward. Ensure the continuation and completion of the initial forensic audit already underway, alongside broader investigation,

to respect the efforts employees have already invested and maintain their trust, with findings made public. Safeguard the funds from the sale of the last 17% shares of the Rail Park Mall, protecting national assets from mismanagement. Impose immediate restrictions on the spending authority of the acting General Manager and her management team to halt further financial damage and ensure resources are available to comply with the pension fund court order. Compel Botswana Railways to comply with the court order by updating the Botswana Railways Staff Pension Fund premiums by July 31, 2025, to ensure retired employees receive their pensions, addressing the plight of those who have waited over twelve months. Prohibit the acting General Manager from making senior appointments, such as the internal auditor, reserving such decisions for a substantive General Manager to restore proper governance,” reads part of the petition.

BURS fights smuggling

FROM PAGE 1

country, with that jeopardizing BURS tax collection capacity. Briefing the media on Thursday in Gaborone, BURS Commissioner General Jeanette Makgolo said BURS would continue to be vigilant and crack smuggling of goods such as illegal cigarettes popularly known as Mangwanda in the streets.

“We are very strict against the smuggling of goods into the country. We are winning the battle against smuggling of goods and especially the vegetable produce. We have seen lot of locally produce consumed in our market.

This signals that we are doing very well in terms of curbing smuggling,” said Makgolo.

Collection

Meanwhile Makgolo said, as of 31st March 2025, preliminary accounts show net tax collections stood at P61.097 billion.

She said this figure surpassed the target of P58.704 billion by P2.393 billion or 4.08%.

According to Makgolo, this is a record-breaking collection in the history of



BURS Commissioner General Jeanette Makgolo [PIC:PINO KILANO]

the organisation. She credited the impressive performance to the implementation of the 2024–2029 Strategic Plan, which focuses heavily on reducing leakages at border entry points.

“Monitoring of high-risk and high-value customs consignments, particularly those in transit, to prevent diversion into the local market without paying applicable taxes and duties is one area we had to improve,” Makgolo said. She emphasized the need

to enforce tighter controls on all bonded warehouses, which hold goods yet to be taxed, in order to close off another major source of revenue leakage.

“Intensifying physical searches at all commercial border posts and international airports to detect any form of smuggling and non-compliance was also important.

We introduced the strategic deployment of tactical intervention teams, including Canine and Flexible Anti-Smuggling Teams (FAST), to

deal with customs offences,” she added. Makgolo further noted that the strong revenue performance was also boosted by Value Added Tax (VAT) and Southern African Customs Union (SACU) receipts, which helped offset a shortfall in income tax collections. On the other hand, income tax underperformed during the period, with actual collections reaching P18.968 billion against a target of P20.714 billion.

This shortfall of P1.746 billion reflects a 91.58% performance rate and underscores the need for stronger compliance and enforcement,” she explained.

Meanwhile, VAT collections exceeded the target by recording P14.455 billion against the projected P11.280 billion.

SACU receipts also beat expectations by P855 million, with actual collections reaching P27.566 billion compared to the P26.711 billion target, representing a performance rate of 103.20%.

Oozing with confidence, Makgolo said this good performance is due to favourable exchange rates.

RETRACTION/ APOLOGY

In our last edition, dated April 06, 2025 we published a story titled “Controversial Judge re-appointed” following the recent appointment of Judge Onkemetse Tshosa to the bench. We have since established that Judge Tshosa successfully appealed the cited matter before the Court of Appeal and was cleared of the charges. We retract the article in its entirety and apologise to Judge Tshosa unreservedly for the oversight.

EDITOR

MUSIC -N- LIFESTYLE FESTIVAL

FOOD ART FASHION

Saturday 26th April 2025

1200hrs - 0100hrs

Royal Aria Grounds, Tlokweng

Stanbic Bank Botswana is a member of The Standard Bank Group, an authorised financial services and registered credit provider. Member of the Deposit Insurance Scheme of Botswana.

Collaborative Innovations: Transforming Classroom Behavior Management in Botswana



LAGAGO TAMOCHA*
EDUCATING THE 21ST CENTURY LEARNER

effective behavior management is strongly linked to the degree of support teachers receive—not only from educational authorities but from a broad array of community stakeholders. This model calls for partnerships that bridge the gap between schooling, child welfare, and community support systems.

Lessons from Successful International Collaborations

1. The United States and Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS):

Across many U.S. school districts, the PBIS model has demonstrated remarkable success by actively involving teachers, parents, community mental health experts, and administrators. In these collaborative environments, teams develop school-wide initiatives, tailor behavior expectations, and design supportive interventions that help prevent misbehavior before it escalates. This research-backed framework not only eases the daily burden on teachers but

also cultivates a school culture of proactive support and mutual accountability. Such models highlight that with clearly defined roles and shared responsibilities, sustainable behavior management is achievable without overloading individual educators.

2. Finland's Integrated Approach to Educational Well-being:

Finland has long been admired for its holistic educational policies, where schools work in tandem with social services, health professionals, and community organizations. Finnish educators report that regular collaboration meetings and professional development sessions—which include behavior management strategies—are integral in creating a supportive network. Teachers benefit from shared experiences and access to expert insights, which in turn, enhance student behavior in the classroom. This approach underscores the critical role of continued professional development coupled with community involvement, reinforcing that when

responsibility is distributed, better outcomes ensue.

3. Singapore's Multi-Stakeholder Model:

Singapore's education system offers another compelling example. Here, the government has instituted programs that pair teachers with behavioral specialists, school counselors, and even local law enforcement when necessary. Through structured partnerships and shared training opportunities, schools have successfully reduced disruptive incidents. This system teaches that when schools and community agencies forge strategic alliances, there is less reliance on punitive measures and more emphasis on understanding and redirecting student behavior. The integration of multiple perspectives contributes to a more comprehensive support system for educators who are already managing demanding workloads.

Policy Implications and Recommendations for Botswana Based on these international

examples, the Ministry of Child Welfare and Basic Education in Botswana could consider several strategic actions to alleviate the burden on teachers while enhancing behavior management:

Establish Multi-disciplinary Behavior Support Teams: Create school-based teams that include behavioral specialists, social workers, and psychologists. These teams can work in tandem with teachers to design and implement behavior interventions tailored to individual school environments. This delegation helps ensure that teachers are not solely responsible for managing complex behavioral issues.

Professional Development and Collaborative Training Programs: Invest in continuous teacher training that covers evidence-based behavior management techniques. Use a collaborative model where teachers learn from successful practices both locally and internationally, thereby empowering them to apply these strategies effectively. Workshops co-hosted by external experts and

local stakeholders can foster a sense of shared responsibility.

Public-Private and Community Partnerships:

Engage non-governmental organizations, private sector partners, and parent groups in the development of after-school programs and mentoring initiatives. These partnerships can help create community-based support networks, reducing the reliance on teachers to resolve behavioral issues singlehandedly.

Data-Driven and Participatory Policy Making: Leverage data from pilot collaborative initiatives to refine intervention strategies. Involving all stakeholders in the evaluation process ensures policies reflect real needs and practical insights from teachers, administrators, and community members.

Resource Sharing and Networking: Create an inter-school network where best practices, success stories, and challenges are shared regularly. Such networks can help

disseminate effective collaborative strategies rapidly across the country, ensuring that innovative ideas are not confined to a few schools but are adopted nationwide.

The path forward for Botswana lies in building systems where collaboration becomes the cornerstone of behavior management. By partnering with experts and community stakeholders, the Ministry can relieve the pressure on teachers and foster environments where students thrive academically and socially. As evidenced by initiatives in the United States, Finland, and Singapore, when responsibility is shared and expertise is pooled, schools can implement sustainable behavior management strategies that cultivate respect, empathy, and learning. These international success stories offer a promising blueprint—one that, if tailored to Botswana's unique context, can transform classrooms from sites of discipline struggles to thriving centers of collaborative success

HOW STRATEGIC partnerships and shared responsibilities are paving the way for more effective and sustainable discipline solutions

Educators, across the country, face mounting challenges—not only are they responsible for delivering rigorous coursework, but they must also address complex behavioral issues without resorting to corporal punishment. With limited training in alternative behavior management strategies and ever-increasing workloads, teachers are calling for support that reaches beyond traditional classroom boundaries. This article explores how ministries, educators, and community stakeholders from various countries have built collaborative frameworks that empower teachers, safeguard student welfare, and promote a positive learning environment.

The Challenge: Balancing Academic Demands with Behavior Management

Teachers around the world share a common struggle: how to create an environment where discipline supports learning without overwhelming the teacher. In Botswana, where corporal punishment is banned, the pressure to manage disruptive behaviors falls solely on educators often without sufficient training in alternative strategies. Research indicates that

Unions test UDC mettle

FROM PAGE 1

Gabana said the workers are against the Fan Shape salary structure, adding that they rather prefer PEMANDU report. He said the new proposed structure doesn't have any capacity to improve on the welfare of employees.

He said the Botswana public service has issues of pay equity for years, arguing that the fan shape salary structure would worsen the situation. In addition, Gabana said the trade unions' position is that government is aware of the importance of remuneration in attracting talent to the public service because it experiences both inabilities to attract talent as well as

loss of talent to the private sector.

"We have heard the minister for State President announcing a budget of P227 million for implementing the fan shape structure.

This money is not even to pay the civil servants. We demand a fair and better salary structure. All what we need is better remuneration for civil servants across board," said Gabana. DPSM noted that the fan shape salary structure aimed at addressing productivity and progression of public sector employees.

The new structure according to DPSM would have broad salary scales of around 25 notches compared to the current narrow scales of 10 notches or less.

On average PEMANDU report established that the public service remuneration scales substantially lag behind the national citizen market by 28%, 40% and 55% for Grade A and B, Grade C and D and Grade E and above respectively.

PEMANDU consultancy further noted that there is no policy governing remuneration, and therefore, recommends that a remuneration policy be developed to inform decision making in the Public Service.

Swift response

UDC interim spokesperson Dr Patrick Molutsi said government is aware of the concerns raised by

Trade Unions and would attend to them swiftly. He said all issues raised by the trade unions have been noted by government through relevant ministries.

Dr Molutsi noted that UDC had been advocating for fair and transparent employment practices whilst it was still in the opposition, just like what unions advocate for. "We are willing to engage with trade unions from all aspects of employment whether in the public service or private sector. We have a common ground and understanding with them, so they must rest assured of our support and hearing as government," said Dr Molutsi late Friday.



Gabana

Leakages

Meanwhile, Secretary General of Botswana Federation of Public, Private and Parastatal Sector Unions (BOFEPUSU) Robert Rabasimane said lot of money is lost in the public service because of leakages.

Rabasimane said there are many duplications in terms of positions in the public service especially at the senior level, adding that the creation of new council districts is gobbling lot of money from government. He said from the 36 district councils, there are five deputy council secretaries and this is a big wastage. "Things must be done in a proper way and we expected the new UDC government to close the leakages more so that the government purse is suppressed as we are always told. Government must be up to the task," said Rabasimane.

DEPOSIT & LENDING INTEREST RATES

As at April 2025
Interest earned is Tax-free

DEPOSIT RATES

Type of Deposit Account	Nominal Interest Rate (Lowest - Highest)	Actual Interest Rate (Lowest - Highest)	Minimum Opening Balance (Pula)
Current	NIL	NIL	
Savings			
Sesigo	1.75% - 2.75%	1.76% - 2.78%	200.00
Ordinary	1.75% - 1.75%	1.76% - 1.76%	50.00
SAYE	1.25% - 2.00%	1.26% - 2.02%	200.00

Fixed Deposits

Term	Nominal Interest Rate	Actual Interest Rate	Minimum Opening Balance
3 months	0.80% - 1.00%	0.80% - 1.00%	1,000.00
6 months	1.40% - 1.75%	1.41% - 1.76%	1,000.00
12 months	1.85% - 2.20%	1.87% - 2.22%	1,000.00
24 months	2.25% - 2.55%	2.27% - 2.58%	1,000.00
Over 24 months	3.35% - 3.80%	3.40% - 3.87%	1,000.00

PRIME LENDING RATE

6.01% 6.01% 6.01% 6.01%

LENDING RATES

Lending Rates	Nominal Interest Rate	Average Effective Interest Rate
MoPR	1.90%	1.90%
Prime Lending Rate	6.01%	6.01%
Mortgage Facility	Prime to Prime + 4.50%	Prime to Prime + 4.59%
Overdraft Facility (Revolving credit lines)	N/A	N/A
Credit card	N/A	N/A
Eezi Auto	Prime +3.50% to Prime +5.50%	Prime +3.56% to Prime +5.64%
Lease Loans	N/A	N/A
Unsecured Personal Loans (excluding overdraft, mortgage and credits cards)	Prime +12% to Prime +22%	Prime +12.68% to Prime +24.36%
Other Long - Term Loans	N/A	N/A



BANK OF BOTSWANA

1 April 2025

PUBLIC NOTICE AND INVITATION TO TENDER

The Bank invites 100% Citizen-Owned Companies to tender for preventative maintenance of Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems at the Bank of Botswana Airport Road facility, and other properties in Gaborone for a period of three (3) years, Tender Reference No: BOB/2025/03/11

- The Procurement Method is, Open Domestic Bidding. The tender is reserved for 100% citizen owned companies.
- The Evaluation method is, Least cost selection for works.
- Tenderers must, in order to be considered for award of this contract, be registered with Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) under Code: 08 Mechanical Engineering Works and Maintenance, Sub code 01: Air conditioning/ Refrigeration, Subcode 07: low pressure water systems, Sub code 11: pumps and munchers. Grade E.
- A compulsory site visit with representatives of the Procuring Entity will take place at Bank of Botswana Airport Road Facility in Gaborone on 8 April 2025 at 1000hrs. Prospective bidders are to assembly by the gate of the main entrance at BOB Airport Road Facility (Block 8). Registration starting time: 1000hrs. The costs of visiting the Site shall be at the Tenderer's own expense.
- Interested companies may purchase the tender documents for a non-refundable fee of P350.00 (Three Hundred and Fifty Pula, VAT inclusive). The payment can be done by Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) or cash at the Bank's Banking Hall in Gaborone, or at Francistown Branch Banking Hall, from 31 March 2025 to 16 April 2025, Monday to Friday at 0900 to 1400 hours in Gaborone and from 0900 to 1245 hours in Francistown Branch during weekdays. The 50% price discount for purchase of the tender document will be applied to companies owned by youth, women and people living with disability who should provide proof of the same to qualify.
- Companies are advised to email proof of payment to keekeek@bob.bw who shall send the complete tender documents by electronically.

Bank Details for EFT payments

Bank : Bank of Botswana
Account Name : Accpac Sundry Receipts
Account Number : 0000110900001
Branch Code : 910167
Branch Name : Gaborone
SWIFT Code : BBOTBWGX
Please include reference (Company Name)

- Enquiries and clarifications relating to this tender may be addressed to enquiries20250311@bob.bw.
- The tender will be closed on 17 April 2025, at 1000 hours and Submissions will be opened at 1200 hours, the same day, or later as the Bank of Botswana may advise.

Contact Us Now on: 367 0100 or Visit a BSB branch near you for more information.

Member of the Deposit Insurance Scheme of Botswana



www.bsb.bw





Wena

Rona

Re a turna, and re celebrat'a
ka go chench game with
untshwarable surprises.

#NoLimit



PART 2

***Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's interview with Channel One, Moscow**

CHANNEL ONE: Relations between Russia and the United States have been gradually deteriorating over the years, even during Donald Trump's first term in office. We can even say that these relations have reached their all-time low. Why has the President of the United States chosen this precise moment in time to change the whole paradigm of Russia-US ties?

Sergey Lavrov: I think that the experience he acquired during his first term was invaluable for him, primarily in terms of realising that he needed to have a team of his own. The deterioration in our relations was largely attributable to the fact that there were all these random people forming Donald Trump's entourage during his first term. Pundits in the United States have been arguing that this resulted from a widely shared belief that he would not become President so he did not do much to prepare himself for this office. This is how people who would later betray him became part of the administration.

He has recently talked about his then Vice President, and his Secretary of State, and the National Security Advisor who keeps criticising Trump in a quite unpolite, or should I say in a quite boorish manner. Donald Trump is a man of action, so he decided to seek revenge for the 2020 election when Joe Biden was voted into office by millions of dead people or those who cast mail-in ballots. Donald Trump decided to settle his scores and claim what history owed him and to fulfil the will

of the American people. And he succeeded by completely changing the way he ran his campaign. The fact that Donald Trump has been able to get the Senate to approve his main picks so quickly demonstrates that he has been working on it for a long time.

This is a team of like-minded people, and these people do not shy away from saying things they agree upon and which they believe to reflect the national interests of the American people. During our trip to Riyadh with Yuri Ushakov, we met with Marco Rubio and Michael Waltz, as I have already said in one of my interviews. Marco Rubio said that Donald Trump's foreign policy is designed to serve US national interests with an understanding that other countries, especially major world powers have their own national interests. These interests may not necessarily coincide, and in fact they do not coincide, in most cases. But when they do, it would be a crime not to make use of this convergence for coming up with mutually beneficial tangible joint economic, energy, infrastructure and logistics projects.

He also made a second point by saying that when these interests do not coincide, as it happens in most cases, any power which has a sense of responsibility must do everything to prevent these differences from evolving into a confrontation, let alone allowing an actual confrontation to break out.

We were all in on this approach. I believe that US-China relations rely on these very principles too. These

two countries have so many disagreements and have often had tense exchanges on the Taiwan Strait and the South-China Sea with the Chinese condemning the United States and other Western countries for viewing Taiwan as an independent state. China argues that it wants to unite its land by peaceful means. At the same time, it is prepared to use other methods for achieving this goal for the great people of China. How has the United States responded to this posture? Do not even dare. Still, the dialogue between the two countries never stopped.

I believe that what we have experienced under Joe Biden was an anomaly, which did not do any credit to the politicians behind this policy, especially to Joe Biden considering his experience. He prided himself on being such a seasoned politician. But all of a sudden, we had this little-boy-in-a-kindergarten kind of attitude when a boy turns away from a girl or vice versa saying "I will not be friends with you, and will not hang out with you." What a silly attitude.

The fact that we have resumed dialogue despite all our differences signals a return to normalcy. We need this kind of dialogue, especially since it is not limited to Ukraine.

Joe Biden artificially positioned the Ukraine topic on top of the international agenda. Many friends have been telling us that this topic did not deserve to be treated this way and that the response to Russia's special military operation was blown out of proportion. In fact, we started signalling dangerous developments 10 years before

launching the operation. We shouted about it from all corners after the government coup and to protest NATO's involvement. Even during his 2007 Munich speech, Vladimir Putin said we were witnessing a new phenomenon of Western impunity, its feeling of excessive integrity and exceptionalism. And it all materialised.

There are differences today too, of course. However, will restoring normal energy supplies to Europe serve only the interests of the United States and Russia? I am referring to the Nord Stream pipelines. It would probably be interesting to see whether the United States uses the leverage it has on Europe to force it to stop buying Russian gas. This is when it all takes on a tint of surrealism. Today, Europe and its businesses are paying several times more for their energy compared to US companies. At the same time, people like Robert Habeck, Ursula von der Leyen and Boris Pistorius have been saying that they would never allow the Nord Stream pipelines to be restored. These people are either sick or suicidal.

There is nothing abnormal in having a conversation. As you know, and I would like to make this point once again, we discussed prospects for removing obstacles so that we can engage in mutually beneficial joint economic projects in energy, space, and the Arctic. Russia and the United States are Arctic nations, after all.

That said, we do not have any illusions. The so-called Biden partners have caused a very deep chasm in our



Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov

bilateral relations. However, Donald Trump's people have been seeking to shift to a mutually beneficial relationship whenever possible and to build mutually respectful ties on matters we can agree upon, while preventing the differences between two major nuclear powers from escalating into a confrontation. We have reached a consensus on this matter.

Channel One: Does "do not have any illusions" mean that we will act differently in these relations? Which mistakes that we possibly made before won't be repeated?

Sergey Lavrov: "Trust but verify." It is a signature phrase of Ronald Reagan, which President Trump has recalled. We won't forget it.

It is a combination of a civilisational view of the current development stage when national interests should become the priority, when it has become clear that globalisation has been destroyed, including through the actions of the previous US administration. They started using the dollar as a weapon. Donald Trump said after the elections but before he assumed office that it was a bad mistake, if not a crime, of Biden to use the dollar to punish certain countries. As a result, not only those he wanted to punish by preventing them from using the dollar but also others critically assessed the situation. They were punishing Russia, Iran, Venezuela and several other countries. But

what if they didn't like someone else? You may remember that Joe Biden offended Saudi Arabia and then had to go there to make peace with it.

All countries think more or less alike – anyone who is not on the black list now might fall out of favour with the US administration any day, considering that each new administration can cancel the agreements made by the previous administration.

To be on the safe side, they are thinking about replacing the dollar and the euro with national currencies in mutual settlements, even if not creating a new currency. Europeans are even less predictable. Discussions of payments mechanisms such as BRICS Pay are underway, and this process can't be reversed.

President Donald Trump is a man of action. He doesn't like to be engaged in philosophical speculation; he likes to settle problems. He has said that the United States needs Greenland for national security. We discussed this with the Americans, and my impression is that they understand our position. They accept a comparison according to which Ukraine is much more important for Russia's national security than Greenland is for US national security. They understand it.

I'd like to say a few words about Greenland. A shameful thing has happened. NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte

stated before meeting Trump in the White House that he didn't want the Americans to drag NATO into the Greenland debate. What does this mean? A man who is responsible for protecting the interests of the member states (Denmark, which currently owns Greenland, is a NATO member) and for preventing infringements on their territorial integrity has stated that he would not be dragged into the debate despite his responsibility. At the same time, Rutte has no scruples about declaring unwavering support for the territorial integrity of Ukraine, which is not and will never be a NATO member. He has refused to protect Denmark's territorial integrity but is ready to stand up for Ukraine. He is ridiculous and pathetic.

Channel One: The United States wants China to join the New START talks. Could this offer a workable solution, in your opinion?

Sergey Lavrov: It is up to the People's Republic of China to decide, as we have been saying all along. Beijing has commented on this matter many times whenever this topic surfaced in the public space. Its position consists of saying that China's nuclear arsenal pales in comparison with what the United States and Russia have. The time to review the way nuclear powers interact would come once their arsenals become comparable.

Just as before, we remain engaged with the nuclear five at the level of our representatives at the United Nations. There are also meetings at the level of deputy ministers. It was Russia's initiatives to convene an online summit in January 2022 for reaffirming the Gorbachev-Reagan formula whereby a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought, within this five-party framework. All five nuclear powers reaffirmed this formula.

We have nothing against continuing to work within this framework. By the way, this has been an ongoing, uninterrupted effort. This format mostly deals with confidence building measures and matters which are not related to any restrictions, limitations or even discussing the sizes of nuclear arsenals or avoiding incidents.

Just like Joe Biden before him, President of the United States Donald Trump has been saying that China had to join these talks. We adopted the following position. First, it is up to Beijing to decide, and the decision it makes – we will fully respect its choice. If we are adding more parties to these talks, what about France and the UK? Together with the United States, these two countries are all members of a single alliance. During the Biden years, and even earlier, this entity said a lot of nasty things about Russia and went on to designate us as the main adversary. If this is the case, while we are told to launch a conversation without touching upon these two aspects, this seems unfair.

There is a need to restore Russia-US strategic stability dialogue. We agree on this point. Of course, the only way we can do this is by reviving the very principles governing the New START and set forth in its preambular part, including when it mentions the way strategic offensive and defensive weapons are linked, as well as mutual respect and agreements to offer each other equal treatment. How can we talk about stability while doctrines designate us as an adversary?

We stand for talks on all fronts, be it hockey, or football, or what have you. By the way, this goes beyond sports. This is what people want. In the sports world, an overwhelming majority of prominent figures from both Russia and the United States, as well as from any other country, including Western nations, believe that the efforts to ban Russian and Belarusian athletes from competitions are totally abnormal. They also share the view that it is not okay when a man calls himself a woman and goes on to fight a boxing match against an actual woman. There is a sense within US President Donald Trump administration that you cannot mess with human nature or distort it, and that traditional religious, cultural and moral values must be preserved. This must have a salutary effect on the Western society in general. I hope that this materialises.



27 March 2025

PUBLIC NOTICE

INCREASE OF INCOME TAX RATE BY 1.5% NOT YET IN EFFECT

The public is notified that the proposed 1.5 per cent rate increase for corporate and personal income tax which was announced in the 2025 Budget Speech has not yet been effected.

The public is further advised to await the Amendment Act which will pronounce the commencement date.

Botswana Unified Revenue Service (BURS) will then accordingly issue revised Tax Tables to facilitate withholding of correct taxes by employers reporting Pay-As-You-Earn (PAYE).

For further clarification, please contact our Call Centre at **17649**.



Bank of Baroda (Botswana) Ltd.

Recruitment

Bank of Baroda (Botswana) Limited is a subsidiary of Bank of Baroda (India), a government of India undertaking public sector unit, having its registered office at Gaborone, wishes to invite applications from suitably qualified and experienced individuals for the following positions:

➤ Post No. 1- Risk Head (Re-Advert)

Nationality: Motswana.

Age: Candidates should have completed 25 years of age but should not have completed 35 years as on 31.12.2024

Qualification: The minimum qualification is Degree in Risk Management.

Working Experience: Minimum 3 years prior work experience is required in Banking.

Computer Knowledge: Candidate should have computer knowledge like Windows, MS Office, MS Excel, Internet, etc.

Key Competencies: Good in communication skill, Analytical and detail-oriented, resilient, Proactive, Result-oriented, expertise in risk management framework.

Process for Recruitment: Interview.

Remuneration: Negotiable as per qualification and experience of candidate.

Appointment: Selected candidate appointment will be subjected to regulatory clearance.

➤ Post No. 2- Forex Officer

The person should be fully conversant with Treasury operations of a bank, including IT, Credit and Trade Finance related guidelines viz, UCPDC etc. The person will be responsible for managing the treasury department viz, Treasury Operations, Money Market operations, Trade and Finance, SWIFT operations, Nostro & Nostro operations, etc including reconciliations of accounts.

Nationality: Motswana.

Qualification: Graduate/ Post Graduate from recognised University

Professional Qualification: MBA in International Business/Finance. Certified associate from institute of bankers (Preferably)

Minimum work experience: 2 years of banking experience in a reputed bank with international standard, with minimum of at least -1- years' experience in efficient management of treasury and forex function.

Age: Minimum 25 years and Maximum 35 years as on 31.12.2024
Candidates fulfilling the above eligibility criteria may apply with their CV to the following address within seven days from the date of publication of this advertisement.

**The Managing Director,
Bank of Baroda (Botswana) Ltd.
Postal Address- PO Box 216ADD Postnet, KagleView, Gaborone
Physical Address- Plot-14456, Kamoshungo Road, Nokia Circle, G-west Industrial, Gaborone.
Email- hrm.botswana@bankofbaroda.com**

NB: Only shortlisted candidates will be responded to.

Bank of Baroda (Botswana) Ltd. is a member of Deposit Insurance Scheme of Botswana

Opinions, Reviews & Analysis

COMMENT

Fasten your seatbelts, the rough ride unfolds!

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT U.S. PRESIDENT Donald Trump's relations with other countries have gripped the entire world. Firstly, China. Trump has also punished China by imposing an additional 20% tariff on imports from the country, plus a further 34% on April 2nd. China then immediately imposed a retaliatory tariff of 34% on imported U.S. goods. And on April 7th, Trump, in a show of defiance, imposed an additional 50% tariff on Chinese goods. The total tariff on imported Chinese goods is now a staggering 125%!

However, this might have serious negative consequences for both countries since China is America's third largest trading partner (China in 2024 accounted for 14% of America's total trade with the world). Since China imports large quantities of agricultural products from the U.S., then tariffs imposed by China on these products will adversely affect farmers in the U.S., many of whom live in Trump's heartlands – deep red Republican states like Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma. China and the U.S. are also the world's two largest economies, and between them produce 47% of the world's manufactured goods.

China will also remain defiant in the likelihood of further tariffs and 'it will fight to the end'. According to its Ministry of

Commerce: "China will resolutely take counter measures to safeguard its own rights and interests. Pressuring or threatening China is not the way to engage... These tariffs are a typical move of unilateralism, protectionism and economic bullying." An all-out trade war – an economic nuclear war – between the U.S. and China could have a seismic impact on the world economy.

The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also warned the U.S.: "There are no winners in trade wars and tariff wars." Only loss of jobs and rising prices. And the Chinese Ministry of Commerce again also issued a statement saying that tariffs undermine normal economic and trade cooperation. Canada, Mexico and China are America's top three trading partners and, together in 2024, accounted for a staggering 53% of America's trade with the whole world. And yet Trump wants to clobber these countries with tariffs. Trump should heed the words of Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau: "The better path is to partner with Canada, not to punish us." Wise words, indeed.

The U.S. has also imposed a 25% tariff on all imported aluminium and steel imports into the U.S. This will hit hard on steel producing countries such as China, Germany, South Korea and India, and aluminium producers including

as Trump madness degenerates to bullying, blackmailing and sheer bigotry

China, India and Canada. However, the U.S. may also be negatively affected since 58% of aluminium imported into the U.S. comes from Canada. Plus, a 25% tariff on all automobile imports from any country into the U.S. And that is bad news for the European Union (E.U.) since Germany is a major exporter of vehicles to the U.S. – think Volkswagen, BMW, Daimler, Opel... And on April 2nd, Trump imposed a further 20% tariff on imports from the E.U. Such moves could have serious repercussions for both the E.U. and the U.S. since the E.U. is one of America's leading trading partners.

Since Trump's declaration of new tariffs on April 2nd, stock markets have tumbled across the world, and on April 7th, the Hang Seng index in Hong Kong ended 13% down, its worst one-day loss since the 1997 financial crisis. So far, trillions of dollars have been wiped off stocks worldwide. His tariffs could spark a global trade war, and even a worldwide depression as what happened in the 1930s. But Trump still refuses to change course saying simply that the tariffs are 'medicine that the world economy has to swallow' after which everyone will be wealthy. Really?

Next country targeted by Trump – Panama. This is home to the Panama Canal, a 100-kilometre-long canal that connects the Caribbean

Sea with the Pacific Ocean. Opened in 1914, the area along the canal, known as the Canal Zone, was initially controlled by the U.S. But in 1999, the Republic of Panama assumed full control of the canal. Trump has now criticised the Panamanian government of two things. Firstly, he claims that the rates that Panama were charging American ships were 'exorbitant', and secondly, Panama is allowing the Chinese too much control over the operations of the canal. For these reasons, Trump is threatening to invade the country and seize the canal. Violating the sovereignty of another country? In reply, the Panamanian president, José Raúl Mulino, denied that the U.S. was being unfairly charged, or that anyone besides Panama was in full control of the canal. Next, Ukraine. In recent weeks, the U.S. has withheld military aid and intelligence information to the Ukraine government. Also, Trump is pressuring Ukraine to sell its rare earth minerals to the U.S. in exchange for U.S. assistance in ending the war against Russia. Obey me or else? In the 'punch up' in the Oval Office last month between Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky and Trump, Trump insulted Zelensky. Also, he has called him a dictator and for doing a 'terrible job', one reason being that he has not called elections since 2019. But nations

do not run elections in war time for security reasons; also, governments need to be focused on the war effort and not to be distracted by other events. After all, the U.K. never ran an election during World War 1 which lasted six years. But the U.K. is not a dictatorship!

So far, we have discussed Trump's relationships with nations that are allies of the U.S. And we have seen that Trump has nothing but disrespect and contempt for them. Now the U.S. has also many potential enemies on the planet. And whereas he has been saying that many of his allies are doing 'bad things', 'terrible, horrible things' and that they are harming the U.S., little criticism has been levelled at these enemies.

But 'rocket man' Kim Jong Un in North Korea is doing terrible things to his people since many of them are starving while he spends billions on producing new missiles. And he claims that some of them can even reach the U.S. and cause havoc there! And the same is true for Iran which is being accused of secretly developing the technology to produce nuclear weapons. Also, the Taliban government in Afghanistan is doing terrible things by denying women their rights.

And Trump is bowing down to Russian president Vladimir Putin and offering too many concessions to him in his attempt to end the

conflict in Ukraine. But it seems that he is not demanding any concessions from Putin! And the Russian leader has laid down many conditions for any ceasefire in the Ukraine. These include the disbanding of Ukraine's armed forces, no E.U. peacekeeping forces to be allowed in Ukraine despite Zelensky's demand for security guarantees, no NATO membership for Ukraine, retention of all Russian occupied areas in the Ukraine which make up some 20% of Ukraine territory...

Yet Trump remains largely silent and seems to support authoritarian totalitarian regimes, run by dictatorial tyrants, more than his allies most of which are democracies. In February this year, to mark the third anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, members of the United Nations voted on a motion that stated that Russia had invaded Ukraine, thus starting the war there. But the U.S. voted against the motion alongside dictatorships – China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, Belarus... And yet the Founding Fathers of the U.S. emphasised the importance of upholding democratic principles. And the U.S. did not impose any tariffs on Russia, North Korea and Belarus on April 2nd! Trump's foreign policy seems to be in tatters. Put on your seat belts; we are expecting some serious turbulence for the foreseeable future – we are in for a rough ride!

UDC govt: the good, the bad!



ADAM PHETLHE ON SUNDAY!

THE UMBRELLA FOR DEMOCRATIC Change (UDC) will feature prominently in the annals of history as the first political movement to break the dominance of the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP). The ascendancy of the UDC was eminent given the total disconnect between the BDP and the citizenry over a plethora of failures particularly on the socio-economic front where deep pain was felt. One is not oblivious to other developmental failures. Given the huge expectations created by the euphoria of electoral victory and the overpromises by the UDC, the focus is firmly on government for prompt delivery.

The Good

Most of the good will be in the statement of intent of the UDC government. That is to say that government has committed to undertake a people-centred Constitutional review process expectedly far different from the shambolic one by the BDP; that institutions like Parliament, Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime; Directorate of Intelligence and Security and others will be rendered free from Executive

overreach. A legal process by way of amending legislation to effect these changes will have to be undertaken. Inevitably, these processes will take time. I will personally take the UDC's word for it that it will honour the statement of intent yet not overly oblivious to how politicians make commitments they eventually abandon with little to no convincing explanations.

The President has on countless occasions, called upon Batswana to criticise him and his government. He has also made it clear that there should not be sacred cows in terms of the institutions like the judiciary immune from criticism and intense, relentless probity. This is reassuring from him and must be embraced. It is however not clear whether the President has a solid team around him in terms of the quality of some of his cabinet members to deliver his vision for the country. There are indications that some of his cabinet members lack the wherewithal to deliver. But accepting that most of them could be challenged here and there, I will give them the benefit of doubt to pull up their socks. They should however be aware that time is of the essence. Batswana require reliable and efficient services.

The second point is the decision of the President to bury the CKGR old man Rre Gaobereke Pitseng inside the game reserve after spending almost three years in the mortuary. I had said it before that the sky would not fall if the old man was buried in his ancestral land. Having told Batswana and the world that his government is human-rights centric, it came as no surprise when he abandoned the Court of Appeal judgement in favour of government that the old man not be buried inside CKGR.

The President has been criticised for not delivering the P 1,800 elections promise for the elderly. And I think the criticism is fair particularly that he was adamant that come end of November 2024, the elderly would receive the money. Be that as it may,



President Boko [R] with Vice President Ndaba Gaolathe

government has since 1 April 2025 paid the elderly P 1,400. Generally speaking, the money has been well-received by the beneficiaries. The beneficiaries seem content with the saying half loaf is better than no bread.

Thirdly, parliament has been reformed under the President's political party in more ways than one. A new Speaker who has brought sanity to the institution is in place; a new Clerk of the National Assembly is also in place. Importantly, opposition Members of Parliament have taken chairmanships of various parliamentary committees which the BDP had rendered almost exclusive to it. The Speaker and the Leader of the House have committed to ensuring the House is as far as possible, detached from the Executive.

The President has demonstrated his willingness and desire to unearth corruption and other forms of malfeasance that have negatively impacted in no small measure, to the developmental agenda of Botswana by

instituting a forensic audit. The President has eloquently explained the importance of the forensic audit and I need not belabour this point. At face value, the audit appears to be well-received by the general public including notable politicians who have said, bring it on. I may have omitted some of the good things the UDC government has fulfilled so far. It will however be remiss of me not to mention how disappointed I am that the President has missed on his 100 days report.

The Bad

During his time in opposition, the President criticised the manner in which Judges are appointed. My take is that he was saying should I be in a position to appoint Judges, I will do it differently. An opportunity presented itself recently when the immediate past Chief Justice resigned reportedly on medical grounds. While the law prescribes the President as the final appointing authority in so far as the Chief

Justice is concerned, it does not prevent him from causing a competitive and transparent process to identify the Chief Justice. It is my honest belief that the President missed a golden opportunity to harvest the low hanging fruit in the appointment of the Chief Justice. It inevitably brings the argument from others that he appointed his preferred appointee much the same in line with the process used by his predecessors. As if that was not enough, there are widely circulating reports that three High Court Judges have been 'promoted' to the Court of Appeal. If this is so, it stands to reason the three have been picked by the President to the disadvantage and detriment of other Judges and lawyers who may have been interviewed for the position. There have been complaints about the secretive appointments of the Court of Appeal and should these reports be credible, it would suggest the needle has not moved a bit in this regard. Don't get me wrong: I am not questioning the credibility of the newly appointed Chief Justice neither am I questioning the 'promotion' of the three Judges to the Court of Appeal but the manner they were appointed. I am the last one to do so.

I have noticed that the President has developed the propensity to disparage other arms of government when delivering public speeches. I have repeatedly criticised him for doing so. The case in point is during the burial of the CKGR old man. He has repeatedly criticised parliament for this and the other reason. While he could be making good observations about other arms of government, I feel the platforms he uses are inappropriate. There are better platforms for his complaints such that affected institutions can be afforded the opportunity to engage him.

Considering where the President and his Comrades in government come from, they should not be engulfed in the allowances

storm as is currently the case. When the BDP decided to pay its President the constituency allowance, the opposition at the time including the UDC were up in arms against this decision. As it stands, it is said by those in the know that the sitting President enjoys the same. I believe the President would have, if he wanted, stopped the payment by writing the Accountant General to cease from paying it. Ministers and others are also engulfed by the allowances issue particularly that to do with furniture. Against the argument that government is broke, these allowances are viewed with opulent undertones to say the President and his Ministers are leading lifestyles of their lifetimes.

The President's government seems to be on a collision course with doctors in public service who have embarked on actions short of a strike. The biggest complaint from doctors is about non-compensation for working long hours. With the health sector almost on its knees over several factors, it is not desirable that the situation is exacerbated further from where it is. At the end of the day, it is us ordinary citizens who cannot afford private health services who will bear the brunt. Concerning is the fact that doctors have received a favourable decision from the Court of Appeal regardless of how partial it could be. Government, human rights centric as it claims to be, is under obligation to comply with the court judgement in the interests of the delivery of health services.

Flowing from this conversation, it is fair to suggest Boko's government so far, is somewhat a mixed bag. Given the fact that it is still early days owing to the period it has been in power, it is difficult to say whether the bad will ultimately be subsumed into the good. Only time will tell. I am prepared to be persuaded otherwise as always. Judge for Yourself!

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Intelligence law fails to safeguard against state capture

PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA SIGNED the General Intelligence Laws Amendment Act ("the Act") into law on 28 March. The Campaign for Free Expression (CFE) is of the view that despite important amendments to earlier drafts of the law, it still fails to achieve its central aim: to rectify the structural shortcomings and prevent the endemic misconduct in the State Security Agency (SSA) that enabled state capture. As enacted, it holds out a threat to the media and public's right to freedom of expression and to corresponding rights to impart and receive information.

The Act came about in response to a scathing report by the Presidential High-Level Review Panel on the SSA and the Zondo Commission of Enquiry into State Capture. The review found the SSA was repurposed under former President Jacob Zuma to work as a "private resource to serve the political and personal interests of particular individuals" and political factions.

Among its many findings, the panel recommended "an overarching overhaul of the intelligence and security architecture of the country". Despite this indictment of the agency, the Ramaphosa administration

chose to have the SSA itself draft the new law. The Act was considerably improved in the parliamentary drafting process. This includes the omission of a provision that would have allowed state intelligence services sweeping vetting powers of persons and organisations with access to critical information, including of civil society.

The CFE remains concerned, however, that the Act still retains provisions that could allow for malicious interpretation and state-overreach:

1. Security vetting as a danger to press freedom in state-funded media

The omission of the draconian vetting provision is a victory for civil society, but the Act still allows for the vetting of persons with access to critical infrastructure. This means the agency could continue to target SABC journalists for security vetting. This is a threat to the independence of journalists and the SABC as well as source confidentiality. To rectify this, the law should exempt SABC journalists from vetting provisions.

2. Mass interception of communications The procedures by which mass interception of communications and data

will be undertaken will only be established through further regulations. This includes the necessary safeguards against abuse that should follow. It is essential that these regulations are gazetted in draft and final form and that ample opportunity for public comment is afforded. However, in an improvement from its original draft, the Act now requires intelligence services to seek approval from a judge to conduct mass interception. The judge must be appointed by the President in consultation with the Chief Justice. CFE has argued that, to ensure judicial independence, it must be required that the Chief Justice and the President concur on the appointment. The Act now also includes tighter controls around data collection by the National Consumer Commission (NCC); the NCC judge must also take international legislation into account. The Act now also clearly recognises the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA).

3. Transparency and theft regarding secret slush funds

The Act still fails to empower the Auditor General, the Inspector General of Intelligence (IGI) and Parliament's Joint

Standing Committee on Intelligence (JSCI) to oversee classified expenses from the security agency's so-called 'slush fund'. It is likely, if not inevitable, that the intelligence services will continue to receive qualified audits and unlikely that the large-scale theft from these funds will be stopped if auditors and the public do not have access to the full scope of the organisation's spending.

4. The Office of the Inspector General of Intelligence

While the IGI will now have the autonomy to appoint staff and determine the structure of its office, it still cannot make legally binding recommendations. This means the IGI's findings about the agency, however severe, could have no real consequences for corrupt or criminal members of the service. Much like the powers of the Public Protector, the IGI's findings should be binding unless overturned by a High Court Judge.

The CFE is also deeply concerned about the need for a Deputy IGI position to be clearly provided for in the law. As it stands, if the position is vacated for any reason - resignation, the end of a term - there will be a power and oversight

vacuum. This problem plagued the IGI's office during the Zuma administration when the organisation, which is tasked with investigation and oversight, was without an Inspector General for a significant span of time.

5. Broad definitions of essential concepts

The Act was the perfect opportunity for law-makers to clarify broad definitions - in particular the scope of "national security" and "national security interests." These core concepts remain vague and open to abuse. Despite its shortcomings, this Act marks the beginning of an improved regulatory framework for state security operations. Notably, the agency will once again be split into a foreign and domestic branch after being consolidated by then-President Zuma in 2009. The National Intelligence Coordination Committee (NICOC), which should play a critical part in holding the SSA accountable to prescripts on intelligence coordination, has greater but still insufficient independence. Ultimately, these gains only partly resolve the primary concerns of civil society: that the new law should have solid safeguards against abuse that align with the urgent findings of the High-Level Review Panel

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The agony of a haunted soul

IT MUST BE VERY HARD TO BE A former President Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi right now. He is sounding more and more unintelligible in speech. He is like a dead man yelling tales. He is seeing enemies everywhere.

Former President Masisi is blaming De Beers for his party's historic loss. According to him his erstwhile allies committed an act of betrayal. They slept with the enemy- the opposition. True to character all fingers point away from him. He is innocent. De Beers are to blame.

The Presidency is the highest office a citizen can aspire for. It is an honour for one to serve in the exalted office. It should be a humbling experience too. One virtually has their hands on the levers to change the lives of 2,5 million people for good. He achieved the opposite at best.

Former President Masisi was virtually picked out of a hat by his predecessor and planted into stately power and privilege. Typical of unmerited fortune it messed up his bearings. His head became a cesspool of arrogance and ignorance. He forgot the biblical admonition if he ever knew it; he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.

The bar was at its lowest when former President Masisi assumed the reins. To impress was easy; failure was near impossible. Botswana was generally speaking a success story albeit in gradual decline. Riding a crest wave of public sympathy his predecessor had given him a clear manual on how not to run a government. Except, his predecessor had not ruined the country. Masisi did not have to fix much. The toilet was working, the TV was functional and the aircon was working. He only had to clean the room. The country was emerging from one of the most

disagreeable periods in its history. Yet Botswana's most disagreeable period was above Africa's normal by far. A rogue Directorate on Intelligence and Security (DIS) had wrought fear upon the land but a resilient democracy had stemmed an effort at authoritarian rule.

Soon as he assumed the reigns from his deceived predecessor Masisi lit up the powder keg upon all enemies real and imagined. And yes, on the economy. Most of the victims of the unconscionable purge were innocent people who did him or the state no harm; Wilheminah Maswabi, Dr Thapelo Matsheka remain the most notable examples of vileful presidential rage. The list is endless. Perceived personal adversaries of the president and of his interests became an obsession for an entry five years while the weighty responsibilities of the state lay in abject neglect. With an intelligence chief hired not for national security but purely to fight personal wars every citizen was fair game. Peter Magosi read his boss well and played upon his obvious insecurities. Arrogance and ignorance conspired with poor judgment to reveal the clown prince in Khama's crown prince. Instead of working for votes he danced and insulted for votes. Magosi infused in his boss a siege mentality that virtually fried his brain and his presidency in fear. He artfully created imaginary enemies he used to spook his principal. He waged a war on the citizenry seeking among others to amend spy legislation to increase surveillance powers against the citizens. A fake constitutional review was vanquished on the floor of Parliament.

President Masisi wrecked careers of well meaning citizens he did not like. People who had worked all life for their country like the



Masisi

[PIC: PINO KILANO]

former Police Commissioner being a poignant example. "You must align," his spy chief is said to have told anyone who fancied higher public office."

Meanwhile roads filled up with potholes and graves filled up with road traffic victims. Clinics ran short of medicine while classrooms lay windowless and schools ran out of stationery. Masisi's government mercilessly put the focus on the sword. "It is our time to eat," they arrogantly declared to the swelling ranks of the destitute and the unemployed. And eat they did. His Presidency Minister declared a luxury five star resort for his private pleasure beyond the buffalo fence. He gleefully accepted company equity from predatory retail sector economic hitmen. His executive appropriated for him a government

farm one fifth the size of Gaza. Meanwhile public patience was wearing thin. The cup of discontent was beginning to overflow. Pride and arrogance, and perhaps sheer lack of wit, blinded a failing and falling President to the reality of impending doom. "You can fool some people some of the time. You can fool most people most of the time. You just can't fool all people all of the time," an American Statesman is said to have said.

Sycophants applauded as he insulted the citizenry and the nation's strategic economic partners with derision. The very ones he now blames for his crushing defeat by a technically insolvent opposition.

Someone needs to ask the former President Masisi to go on a retreat all alone. Somewhere where peace and tranquility will allow

contemplation of life's vicissitudes. He will remember when he made vulgarities the official language of a presidency struggling with seismic national crash in societal morals. He will remember that he presided over a period when his own sister showed up with a briefcase company and in five years had raked hundreds of millions in state tenders a la Isabel dos Santos. He will remember sycophants sang his praises and defended him and now curse him with contemptuous epithets.

He will hear echo from the vista if time the sound of his gravy train as it steamed by in cynical mockery of the pitiable plight of the people he swore to serve.

He will remember a time when a captured Botswana Unified Revenue Services (BURS) unleashed under his spy chief's command, medieval

Trump has a narrow view of the world

THIS WEEK, WE SHALL continue our discussion on U.S. President Donald Trump's relations with other countries. On October 7, 2023, Hamas militants crossed over from Gaza into Israel and killed some 1300 Israelis and took over 200 hostages. Since then, intense fighting

has occurred between Hamas and Israeli forces. However, both sides have recently agreed to a ceasefire. Trump is seeing this as a potential move towards a peace deal over Gaza. And after the signing of such a deal, Trump says that the U.S. will then march into Gaza and own it as if it is American property. He will

then forcibly remove the two million Palestinians living in Gaza and have them relocated elsewhere.

However, this is a breach of the Geneva Convention (which the U.S. has signed) since the convention clearly states that the 'unlawful deportation or transfer of people from their homeland' is a grave

breach of the convention. Also, such a move might also be considered a form of ethnic cleansing - and regarded as a crime against humanity by the International Criminal Court (ICC). Furthermore, according to the United Nations Charter, which the U.S. has ratified, "all members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state." So, America's intention to take Gaza by force violates this principle! Gaza is not American territory at present; it is one of the two Palestinian territories that make up the state of Palestine (the other is the West Bank).

Trump now says that the two million Palestinians should be resettled in Jordan and Egypt. However, this idea has been met with outrage across the Middle East. Even though neighbouring Arab nations support the Palestinian cause, the possible influx of additional refugees has been met with hostility and unfriendliness.

However, Trump remains adamant and threatens to punish Jordan by suspending the US\$1.5 billion worth of American aid that Jordan receives each year. You do what I tell you, or else! This is blackmail again! But Trump is clearly ignorant of the facts and the situation on the ground. As a result of the civil war between former Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad, and rebel forces which began in 2011, Jordan now hosts some 1.8 million Syrian refugees. Plus, some two million Palestinian refugees already live in refugee camps across Jordan. This means that both Syrian and Palestinian refugees make up a substantial portion of Jordan's population; Jordan is a small country and is home to only some eleven million people. And it is already suffering from financial and environmental issues, and so taking in refugees from Gaza will create even more strain on the country's resources, especially water. In fact, Jordan is one of the world's top ten driest countries. And this endangers the livelihoods of its citizens.

Such concerns are echoed by former Jordanian Foreign Minister, Marwan Muasher: "Economic sanctions is a small price to pay. The choice is clear. Jordan cannot take any number of Palestinian refugees

no matter what the stakes are." And one local interviewed on the street summed up the thought of most ordinary Jordanians: "Donald Trump's mentality is from the Middle Ages. Look at how they got rid of the native Americans. He deals with things like a real estate broker, and he is an arrogant narcissist (someone who has too much admiration for himself - a person who is too big for his boots). That's not how things are done, and there are no jobs here for our own people. If more refugees come in, we will die." Clearly, Jordanians want their government to follow a 'Jordan first' policy; after all, 'America first' is the centrepiece of Trump's governmental agenda.

And Trump also wants Egypt to take in Palestinians from Gaza. Or else... Once Palestinians have been expelled from their homeland, Trump says that he will rebuild Gaza and turn it into the 'Riviera of the Middle East'. Recently, he released an AI generated video showing what his new Gaza will look like - modern office buildings, high rise 5-star hotels, tourists soaking in the sun on sun-loungers, sandy beaches lined with waving palms, visits from cruise ships, golden statues of Trump in the streets, and a child flying a kite consisting of a long string with a golden mask of Trump's face attached at the end! And one image showed transvestites - bearded men with boobs and bras wearing multicoloured skirts - belly dancers? And yet Trump discriminates against the LGBTQ+ community!

The images of Trump statues remind me of the authoritarian state of Turkmenistan in central Asia. Here golden statues of former all-powerful dictator and President for Life, Saparmurat Niyazov, grace the streets of the capital, Ashgabat. Plus, statues of past and present leaders adorn the streets in Pyongyang in North Korea. An omen for the future? The video was met with disbelief from critics, and Hamas says that it goes against the culture and interests of Palestinians.

But it seems that Trump has little knowledge of the geography of the Middle East. The region's riviera is already in existence - Dubai, which attracts millions of visitors each year. And Egyptian resorts, like Sharm el Sheikh, along the Red Sea also attract

horror upon his political opponents and competitors. He will remember when the current President was not allowed to fly and how he treated Pelonomi Venson-Moitsoi whose only crime was to aspire for an office she was constitutionally entitled to aspire for. He will remember when internal party democracy was quashed and Dr Edwin Dikoloti was purged from the party for daring to win against a crony. The problem was never De Beers. The problem has always been Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi, simply the most incompetent president this nation has ever had.

Historians will write of a time when power unlocked the worst out of the man from Moshupa and how he lived up to his true self. Historians will write about how vulgar oratory and dance moves proved insufficient to save him. Historians will write about how a nation wanted their President home and he was always in America doing what only he and his office knew. It was not De Beers. Masisi failed his country, failed his people and failed his party. Period. It is a self-inflicted wound no conspiracy theory can fix. It is over. There is no economic or political legacy. Were it permissible to write a man a requiem in his lifetime the record would reflect that he leaves behind a legacy of corruption, chronic lying, and empty state coffers. That in his time the nation was shunted back decades and the Botswana Democratic Party scored only four seats in a Parliament they used to occupy almost every inch of.

As for the country its fair to say we deserved our President. The writing was on the wall early on. Former President Masisi had never been fit to lead the country. The verdict is simple; Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi is convicted as charged. De Beers are acquitted and discharged.

visitors. Here visitors can dive and see countless species of fish and also coral reefs which do not occur along the Mediterranean coast of Gaza. Plus, the rugged landscapes of the interior of the Sinai Peninsula where Moses received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. Such landscapes are in marked contrast to Gaza which is sandy and as flat as a pancake.

And who is actually going to foot the bill for rebuilding Gaza? Hundreds of billions of dollars will be needed, and even many of the buildings still standing will likely have to be demolished. Trump seems to think that the whole world will chip in but if he says that the U.S. does not have cash to fund the World Health Organisation (WHO), then how are they going to contribute to this massive project? To put 'America first', he should continue to contribute to the WHO budget since health is a basic human right, and continued membership of WHO will benefit Americans more than turning a foreign land into a playground for the super wealthy. And some experts reckon that redeveloping Gaza may take 15 years or more. In the meantime, all those exiled Palestinians will have to live in tents in a foreign land if Trump has his way.

Trump is clearly living in a fantasy world, a world of make-believe! A world that is simply a pipedream, a figment of the imagination. And yet after the release of the video, a White House spokesperson confidently insisted that the president's plan for Gaza was 'visionary'.

Really? Next on Trump's list is Greenland which is part of Denmark. And Trump also has plans to occupy it since he considers it to be of 'strategic importance' for the U.S. Although many Greenlanders, the majority of whom are Inuit (Eskimos), have criticised Danish rule, they feel no desire for their country to be occupied by the U.S. Reasons given include their desire to hold onto their culture. In reply to Trump's remarks, Greenland prime minister recently said: "Until recently, we could trust the Americans, who were our allies and friends, and with whom we enjoyed working closely... But that time is over."

Grahame McLeod

The Patriot on Sunday

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Business

BURS targets P120 BILLION

- Bullish collection target set for March 2029
- BURS bank on key transformative strategy
- Surpass 2024/25 collection target by P2.3 billion
- Makgolo upbeat more revenue can be collected

BAKANG TIRO

editors@thepatriot.co.bw

BOTSWANA UNIFIED REVENUE Service (BURS) Commissioner General Jeanette Makgolo says they are targeting to mobilise P120 billion revenue by 31st March 2029.

Makgolo told a media briefing in Gaborone on Thursday that they are banking on their transformative strategy themed the "Delta – exploring the untapped revenue streams" to advance on their target.

She said BURS would reach the P120 billion target by exploring the untapped revenue streams.

Makgolo said on the basis of this strategy, they developed a multifaceted Revenue Mobilisation Strategy aimed at bridging the collection gap created by poor performance of the traditional revenue streams.

"The devised strategy embedded interventions that are rooted in real world, actionable steps that directly impact day to day operations and accelerate revenue collection, minimise revenue leakages and close tax gaps.

In addition, she said the revenue mobilisation strategy was premised on the establishment of revenue performance monitoring structures.

"And these included: the Revenue management committee, Revenue mobilization committee and Revenue Collection War room to oversee and make timely decisions to facilitate revenue for daily strategizing on measures to ratchet the revenue collection," she said.

2024 COLLECTION

Meanwhile, Makgolo said preliminary accounts indicate that the net tax revenue collected as at 31st March amounts to P61.097 billion, surpassing the target of P58.704 billion by P2.93 billion by P2.393 billion (4.08%). Makgolo said the positive return was primarily driven by positive collections in Value Added Tax (VAT) and Southern African Customs Union SACU receipts, which offset a shortfall in Income Tax Collections. She said Income Tax underperformed during the period, with actual collection reaching P18.968 billion against the target of P20.714 billion.



BURS Board Chairperson Dr Lesedi Senatla [L] and Botswana Unified Revenue Service (BURS) Commissioner General Jeanette Makgolo at a press brief on Thursday in Gaborone

[PIC:PINO KILANO]

This, she said, resulted in a shortfall of P1.745 billion and a performance rate of 91.58%, underscoring the continued need to strengthen compliance and enforcement efforts in this tax type. "The underperformance in this category can be attributed to challenges in the mining sector, including low global demand for

diamonds, unfavourable diamond prices and stockpiling by the diamond dealers," explained Makgolo. Also, she said the poor performance of the Non-Mineral Income Tax can be attributed to subdued domestic economic activity, contraction in taxable profits, and emerging challenges in tax compliance. Conversely, Makgolo said

Value Added Tax (VAT) exceeded its target by recording P14.455 billion against target of P11.280 billion. She said this collection surpassed the target by P3.175 billion or 28.15% adding that this outstanding performance suggests resilience in domestic consumption. "Similarly, SACU receipts surpassed its target by P855 million, with

actual collections amounting to P27.566 billion against a target of P26.711 billion, representing 103.20% performance. This good performance is due to favourable exchange rate," she said. For his part, BURS Board Chairperson Dr Lesedi Senatla said solid 2024 collection target reflect the resilience of BURS collection

mechanisms, adding that the past financial year was characterised by tough economic conditions. Dr Senatla said BURS will continue to strengthen revenue collection by tapping into other new tax revenue streams such as the digital space amongst others and thrive to surpass the 2025/26 financial year target.

BOMAID assures customers

- Promise better, diverse and efficient service delivery
- Bomaïd drives inclusivity, targets informal sector
- Launches STEPS campaign to push customer centric growth



Bomaïd Principal Officer Moraki Mokgasana

[PIC:PINO KILANO]

BAKANG TIRO

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LEADING MEDICAL AID SERVICES provider, Botswana Medical Aid (Bomaïd) continues to explore avenues to diversify its products in an efficient manner.

The fund's Principal Officer Moraki Mokgasana told the media on Monday that they are working very hard with their

partners, who provide healthcare services to remove the out-of-pocket expenses that restrict access to private health for their customers.

Mokgasana said it is important to demystify the myth that the medical aid is for people who are employed in large corporate settings and earn a lot or those who are in formal employment.

According to Mokgasana, Bomaïd products are designed for everybody

including the cashier in a retail store, the person who runs a small business selling vegetables, airtime and sweets in the streets, or a taxi driver.

"We would like to encourage those people who are in the informal sector and those who are caring for other unemployed family members and loved ones to approach our sales team and explore the options that are available from us," said Mokgasana.

He said Bomaïd recently reopened its

Maun office after they relocated from a location that they shared with their sister company MRI, at the old Maun Mall.

Mokgosana said this brings Bomaïd closer to customers in the North West region, improving access and responsiveness in one of Botswana's key population centres.

He buttressed Bomaïd's commitment to have its services across the length and breadth of this country by expanding Bomaïd's national footprint.

"We will also be looking at other options to avail services where we do not have physical presence including through our call centre, which is being upscaled to provide other services as well as regularly visiting the various locations country wide to educate customers on our products and services," he said. Meanwhile, Bomaïd Chief Customer Experience Officer Segolame Macheng said guided by their Defend, Grow and Transform strategy, a bold and intentional approach that prioritises sustainability, customer centric growth and innovation, Bomaïd launched the STEPS campaign in direct response to customer feedback. Macheng said this is in addition to continued engagement over comprehensive product offering of 16 diverse health plans that cater for different life stages and budgets. "As we navigate through 2025, we remain steadfast in our mission to innovate and collaborate, ensuring that our members receive unparalleled value and support on their health journeys," said Macheng.

She added: "Bomaïd is evolving. We are investing in new capabilities, doubling down on what we do well, and showing up where it matters most. This journey cannot be done alone, which is why our partnership, as media stakeholders, is so essential."

StanChart Chief Economist buttresses need for diversification



Head of Research and Chief Economist at Standard Chartered for Africa and Middle East, Razia Khan

BAKANG TIRO

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HEAD OF RESEARCH AND CHIEF Economist at Standard Chartered for Africa and Middle East, Razia Khan has called on Botswana to take advantage of opportunities that remain untapped by accelerating the diversification of the economy.

Khan was speaking during the bank's a Research and Investment dialogue in Gaborone last week, noting that despite the growing global economic uncertainty emanating from the increased tariffs by the US on its imports, Botswana and the rest of African continent can still survive.

She said Botswana should strive to diversify her economy much more away from heavy dependence on the minerals (diamonds) which are currently not selling at the best level due to weak global demand.

Khan said more effort should be placed in transforming sectors such as vocational education, agriculture, vocational training, immigration and manufacturing.

"In the near term, Botswana will

experience challenges with the current geopolitical dynamic. Many African countries will experience these challenges, but this is an opportunity for the country to be creative and drive diversification efforts by boosting the country's industrial and manufacturing capacity," she added.

For her part, Senior Policy Advisor at the Ministry of Finance Naledi Madala said the government is coming up with strategies to respond to a volatile macroeconomic environment.

She said there is a need for robust economic transformation as the country enters new phase of transformation.

According to Madala, the economy has been exposed to shocks that include weak demand of natural diamonds with that plunging government revenues under immense pressure.

"Our economy needs several forceful structural reforms. We are confident that the shifting global macroeconomic dynamics are giving us an opportunity to rebuild and diversify our economy to the full potential," said Madala.

Choppies sells Zim operations for P3.75m



THE PURCHASE CONSIDERATION FOR the net assets of the Choppies Zimbabwe business is US\$260,000 (two hundred and sixty thousand US dollars) which approximates to BWP 3.75 million (Three million and seven hundred and fifty thousand Pula).
The sale is aligned to the strategic intent of Choppies group to focus on its profitable regions. While Choppies believe in Zimbabwe's long-term viability, for the Zimbabwean operations to be profitable, Choppies as a group will need to invest more capital to support its Zimbabwean operations for extended periods. Supporting the Zimbabwean operations further will not be economically viable for the Choppies group at this time. Due to the factors mentioned above Choppies has decided to exit Zimbabwe. [bse.co.bw]

De Beers to Shell Out Decade-High Funding on Natural-Diamond Marketing



DE BEERS HAS EARMARKED ITS highest category-marketing spend in 10 years to promote natural diamonds and drive demand.
The miner did not specify the amount, but it noted in a letter to shareholders last week that it planned to match any country's natural-diamond marketing contributions for this year, and invited proposals. The company is already working with several

industry organizations, including the Antwerp World Diamond Centre (AWDC), the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) and the Dubai Multi Commodities Centre (DMCC) on their category-marketing initiatives, it commented. De Beers asked companies to use their advertising to "fight the false myths on lab-grown diamonds" and to "differentiate natural and lab-grown."

"To date, we have announced strategic collaborations with key retailers and launched new category campaigns in the US, China and India," the mining giant told Rapaport News. "As part of our approach, we are also committed to working with stakeholders across the industry, including countries, to drive and amplify natural-diamond category-marketing efforts as we collectively seek to bring the magic of natural diamonds to a new generation of consumers." De Beers is currently testing a set of "key messages" on natural and lab-grown for use across the industry, which it intends to share with the trade once it has compiled results, it shared. The miner has launched its newest campaigns in the US and internationally, including its new "Love from Dad" ads in India, which follow its "Soulmate" collaboration with Indian jeweler Tanishq. "There is no better time than the present to take the actions that will accelerate improvements to our industry," De Beers said. "The difficulties we have faced have been testing, but they have also challenged us to be better, to work harder, and to tell our story more widely." [rapaport.com]

Africa must lead its own climate finance future – BSE chair

- Africa receives less than 2% of global climate capital
- Africa is home to vast resources and untapped green potential therefore she must do more to appear 'investable'

BOTSWANA STOCK EXCHANGE (BSE) chairperson Neo Mooki Watson took to the stage at the London School of Economics Africa Summit recently, and spoke candidly about Africa's position in the global climate finance dispensation. Her message was direct: Africa must move from the sidelines to a place of influence.

Under the theme "Building Africa's Future: Navigating a Resource-Based Economy in a Decarbonised World," Watson highlighted the mismatch between Africa's potential and the level of climate investment it receives. She pointed out that less than 2% of global climate capital reaches the continent, even as investors channel billions into emerging markets elsewhere.

She argued that Africa's issue isn't a shortage of opportunity, but a need to be seen as ready. To shift this perception, Watson stressed the importance of stronger governance, accurate and accessible data, and bold leadership. She also noted that ESG education and credible financial markets are essential if Africa is to attract the kind of capital needed for long-term progress.

Rather than being passive in the global green shift, Watson described Africa as the



Neo Mooki Watson [PIC:PINO KILANO]

next frontier. Her call was for the continent to move away from being defined solely by its natural resources and start focusing on measurable results.

Watson emphasised that Africa cannot afford to wait to be included in decisions that affect its future. It must shape those decisions—and do so with clarity and confidence.

Know Your Corporate Leader



Full Name: Boga Chilinde-Masebu
Position: Communications and Public Relations
Institution: FNB Botswana
Date Started: 2018
Nature of business: Banking

BIHL director resigns

IN LINE WITH THE BOTSWANA STOCK Exchange Listing Requirements, BIHL Group wishes to inform its shareholders and other stakeholders of the resignation of Mr. Andrew Cartwright from the Board of Directors of the Botswana Insurance Holdings Limited effective 8th April 2025. The Board wishes to thank Mr. Cartwright for his invaluable contribution to the BIHL Group and wishes him well in his future endeavours. [bse.co.bw]



PUBLIC NOTICE



Research on the Prevalence of Excessive and Problem Gambling in Botswana

The Gambling Authority has launched a study to measure the Prevalence of Problem and Excessive Gambling in Botswana. Therefore, the public is encouraged to work closely with a team of researchers who will visit various homestead to gather information related to this study.

The research will take place as follows.

DATE	LOCATION
10 April 2025	Molepolole, Mochudi & Ramotswa
11 April 2025	Kanye & Lobatse
12 April 2025	Gaborone
14 April 2025	Tsabong & Francistown
15 April 2025	Francistown
16 April 2025	Ghanzi, Tutume & Tonota
17 April 2025	Tutume & Tonota
18 April 2025	North West & Tutume
19 April 2025	North West & North East
20 April 2025	North East
21 April 2025	Okavango
22 April 2025	Chobe
23 April 2025	Boteti
24 April 2025	Serowe & Bobirwa
25 April 2025	Serowe & Bobirwa
26 April 2025	Serowe & Selibe Phikwe
27 April 2025	Serowe & Selibe Phikwe
28 April 2025	Palapye & Mahalapye
29 April 2025	Palapye & Mahalapye

Researchers will be identified by the Gambling Authority logo on their t-shirts, as well as their identity cards.

For more information on their verification or this project please contact Malebogo Lepere at 395 7672 or via email mlepere@gamblingauthority.co.bw

29th NORTHERN TRADE FAIR

Theme, "Driving Economic Diversification Innovation for Sustainable Growth."

INNOVATION FOR sustainable growth in Botswana's economic future with every trade!

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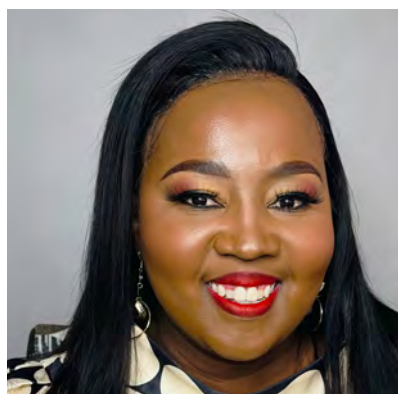
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DR DIMAKATSO POLOKELO

THE FACTORY FLOOR LOOKS nothing like it did a generation ago. Where rows of workers once assembled products by hand, robotic arms now pivot with silent precision. You would recall that my column last week spoke about dark factories where in warehouses, autonomous vehicles glide through aisles, retrieving goods without human direction. Offices have their own invisible workforce, algorithms that screen job applicants, manage schedules, even analyze legal contracts. This quiet revolution in workplace robotics presents one of the most consequential dilemmas of our era: how to harness the extraordinary potential of automation while preventing the unravelling of the social construct that work sustains.

The case for robotics in the workplace is fascinating. Operational efficiencies reach levels unimaginable with human labour alone. Machines don't tire, don't need breaks and perform repetitive tasks with flawless consistency. Quality control improves

The Ghost Workforce

dramatically when automated systems detect microscopic defects invisible to the human eye. Productivity surges when operations continue uninterrupted through nights and weekends. For businesses facing global competition, these advantages aren't luxuries, they're necessities for survival. Enterprises that fail to automate risk being outmaneuvered by those that do.

Yet the same features that make robotic systems so attractive to employers threaten to erode the traditional employment contract. The most vulnerable jobs share predictable characteristics: repetitive tasks, structured environments and clearly definable outcomes. These positions, often entry-level roles that have historically provided stepping stones into the workforce, are disappearing first. The consequences ripple outward. When a factory automates, it's not just assemblers who are affected. The cafeteria workers who fed them, the transportation providers who got them to work, the local businesses they patronized, all face diminished prospects. This economic hollowing out occurs gradually, then suddenly, leaving communities bewildered by the effects of loss of income.

The ethical dimensions of workplace automation grow more complex upon closer examination. At what point does efficiency become

exploitation when machines set an unsustainable pace for their human counterparts? How should we value human labour when algorithms outperform people on measurable criteria? These questions take on particular urgency when considering workforce demographics. Younger workers face the paradox of entering job markets where traditional pathways are evaporating even as new, more technically demanding roles emerge. Older employees confront the brutal reality that skills honed over decades may become obsolete almost overnight. The psychological toll of these transitions, the loss of identity, purpose and community that work provides, defies easy quantification in productivity metrics.

Responses to these challenges have been fragmented and inadequate. Some advocate for slowing technological adoption, an approach that ultimately sacrifices long-term competitiveness for short-term stability. Others propose radical solutions like universal basic income, which addresses symptoms while neglecting the human need for meaningful engagement. Between these extremes, I believe in the middle ground, if there ever is. This is the one that recognizes automation as inevitable but demands it be implemented thoughtfully. This middle way requires unprecedented

collaboration between policymakers, educators and industry leaders to reinvent rather than simply replace human labour.

Educational systems bear particular responsibility in preparing workers for this hybrid future. Curricula must evolve beyond teaching specific vocational skills to teaching adaptability, the capacity to learn, unlearn and relearn as technologies advance. Technical training programs should emphasize human skills that complement rather than compete with machine capabilities: creativity, emotional intelligence and complex problem-solving. Lifelong learning can't remain a luxury; it must become an accessible, ongoing expectation for workers at all levels.

Businesses implementing automation have both an opportunity and obligation to lead this transition. Forward-thinking companies are discovering that the most effective systems combine robotic efficiency with human ingenuity. In these hybrid workplaces, machines handle predictable tasks while employees focus on areas requiring judgment, innovation and interpersonal skills. This approach not only preserves jobs but often enhances their quality, freeing workers from monotonous labour to engage in more rewarding aspects of their professions. Such a model point toward a future where technology elevates rather than

eliminates human potential.

Policy frameworks must encourage these balanced approaches while protecting against the worst excesses of unchecked automation. Thoughtful regulation could require companies to demonstrate how technological adoption will create new opportunities even as it displaces certain roles. Tax structures might incentivize businesses that invest in workforce transitions rather than simply cutting jobs. Social safety nets need reimagining to support continuous retraining without imposing unrealistic burdens on displaced workers. These measures won't halt technological progress, but they can ensure its benefits diffuse more broadly through society.

The ultimate test of this approach to workplace robotics shouldn't be measured in productivity statistics or quarterly earnings reports. It should be in whether we emerge from this transition with societies that feel more empowered or more precarious. The machines themselves are neutral tools, their impact depends entirely on the wisdom with which we deploy them. In workplaces where automation serves to augment human dignity rather than diminish it, we find models worth emulating. Where it simply eliminates jobs without consideration for the lives affected, we see warnings worth heeding.

Robots may operate around the

clock without rest, but it falls to us, while we still can, to ensure they work toward ends we collectively choose rather than outcomes we passively accept. The future of work isn't something that happens to us, it's something we build, one thoughtful decision at a time. This transition presents extraordinary opportunities alongside significant risks. The same technologies that threaten certain jobs could make others more fulfilling. The systems that disrupt traditional industries might enable entirely new forms of meaningful work. Realizing this potential requires moving beyond simplistic narratives of technological determinism to engage in the complex, ongoing work of shaping automation to human purposes. The robots don't get to decide what kind of workplaces we inhabit; we do.

What emerges from this period of transformation could be workplaces that combine the best of human and machine capabilities, or systems that prioritize efficiency at the expense of everything else. The difference won't be determined by the technologies themselves, but by the values we choose to prioritize in deploying them. The most important design challenge isn't engineering better robots but building better workplaces for the humans who will work alongside them.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Dimakatso Michelle Polokelo 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. As part of her responsibilities, Dr. Polokelo is the Convener of the Women Leadership Affinity Group at Woxsen University. She has studied across multiple universities around the world and holds a Doctor of Business Administration from Selinus University in Ragusa, Italy. Dr. Polokelo 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. Beyond academia, she is a thought leader with a widely followed weekly column in The Patriot on Sunday, a leading Botswana newspaper. Her insights focus on emerging technologies and their transformative impact on Botswana and Africa's broader economic landscape. Dr. Polokelo 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".

The SADC opportunity: A \$720 Billion market awaits



BAKANG PHUTHEGO
BUSINESS WITH BK

AS THE WORLD GRAPPLES with economic uncertainties, such as trade tensions exemplified by Trump's tariffs, emerging markets like Botswana stand at a unique crossroads. Beneath this glimmering exterior lies a pressing challenge: a staggering 300,000 unemployed citizens. This issue, while daunting, also unveils immense opportunities for transformation. By leveraging the vast markets of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Botswana could turn its economic challenges into a powerhouse of job creation and sustainable growth.

The Current Economic Landscape Botswana's labor market paints a concerning picture. With approximately 1.5 million citizens in its labor force, the unemployment rate stands at an alarming 23.38%. As traditional sectors like mining and tourism struggle to absorb the growing number of job seekers—many of whom are young graduates equipped with skills and training—alternative pathways to

economic revitalization must be identified. The solution may well lie beyond Botswana's borders, within the extensive trade potential that exists within the SADC.

The SADC Market: An Untapped Resource

The Southern African Development Community consists of 16 member countries, encompassing a consumer base of 390 million people. This regional bloc represents a collective economy that surpasses even that of Saudi Arabia. Currently, Botswana taps into less than 15% of its potential trade with the SADC, according to recent UNCTAD reports. This underutilization reflects the need for strategic initiatives aimed at leveraging regional cooperation and enhancing trade relations. Botswana is ideally positioned to act as a gateway for trade within the SADC. By focusing on sectors such as agro-processing, renewable energy, and manufacturing, the nation can create a more diverse economy capable of absorbing the surplus labor force.

A Roadmap for Economic Transformation

To navigate this complex landscape and stimulate economic growth, Botswana must concentrate on several strategic pillars:

Trade Liberalization: Breaking Down Barriers

Trade liberalization is critical for Botswana's economic transformation. Currently, high non-tariff barriers contribute to 23% of cross-border trade costs, stifling trade activity. To address these challenges, Botswana

should aim to establish itself as SADC's "Trade Facilitation Hub" by 2028. This ambitious goal can be achieved through the expedited implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) protocols. These measures will streamline trade processes, reduce barriers, and enhance intra-regional trade volumes. The economic impact could be profound: increasing intra-SADC trade from BWP 15 billion to BWP 22.5 billion could generate roughly 75,000 new jobs in sectors such as logistics, manufacturing, and agro-processing.

Empowering SMMEs: Building Export Champions

Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) play a vital role in Botswana's economy, currently contributing approximately 30% to the nation's GDP. Recognizing the potential for these entities to drive growth and innovation, the government must implement a National Export Accelerator Program aimed at supporting 800 SMMEs by 2028. This initiative will provide businesses with critical resources to navigate international markets, along with establishing Botswana Trade Houses in key SADC nations for enhanced trade relations. Additionally, introducing an Export Voucher System that subsidizes 50% of certification costs for SMMEs will alleviate financial burdens and encourage compliance with export standards. Supporting data indicates that every BWP 1 million in exports generates about 8.3 jobs, underscoring the transformative

potential of a thriving SMME sector.

Infrastructure plays a pivotal role in enhancing economic productivity, and Botswana must prioritize modernization initiatives. Key projects, such as the digitalization of border posts by 2024 and the completion of the Trans-Kalahari Railway, are essential for improving logistics and trade flows. Efficient logistics are critical for economic success; studies indicate that reducing border delays by just one day could increase GDP by 2%. Currently, logistics costs consume approximately 30% of product value in Botswana, compared to just 8% in OECD countries. By investing in infrastructure modernization, Botswana could mitigate logistical challenges, optimize supply chains, and create approximately 10,000 temporary construction jobs.

Human Capital Development: Skills for the Future

A robust human capital development strategy is fundamental for Botswana's economic transformation. A recent national skills audit revealed that 58% of unemployed youth lack essential digital skills required in today's labor market. Moreover, with the burgeoning renewable energy sector projected to require 15,000 trained technicians by 2030, it is imperative that Botswana bridges this skills gap. To this end, implementing a National Apprenticeship Program with a target of 10,000 placements annually, alongside mandatory entrepreneurship education in all Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions,

could equip the workforce with the necessary skills for both current and future job markets. This approach will not only address immediate skill shortages but also foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship that is essential for long-term economic growth.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Botswana stands poised at a pivotal moment in its economic evolution, facing substantial challenges yet brimming with untapped potential. The staggering unemployment rate, particularly among the youth, presents an urgent call to action that can be turned into an opportunity for sweeping economic transformation. By strategically leveraging the vast markets offered by the Southern

African Development Community (SADC), Botswana has the chance to reposition itself as a vibrant economic hub within the region.

The roadmap outlined—encompassing trade liberalization, empowering Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs), modernizing infrastructure, and developing human capital—is a comprehensive strategy that addresses existing challenges while unlocking new avenues for growth. By investing in these key areas, Botswana can significantly enhance its economic landscape, creating thousands of jobs, stimulating innovation, and ultimately fostering sustainable development.

Furthermore, the commitment to becoming the SADC's "Trade

Facilitation Hub" can catalyze regional integration and cooperation, benefiting not only Botswana but the entire SADC region. With the right leadership and strategic initiatives in place, Botswana can successfully navigate its economic landscape and emerge as a dynamic player in the global market, paving the way for a prosperous future for its citizens. The time to act is now—Botswana's moment for transformation is at hand, and the rewards of strategic action will be far-reaching and lasting.

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

Kenewendo on US tariffs

STAFF WRITER

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WHILE THE USA MIGHT have suspended the implementation of a wide range tariffs against various trading partners for 90 days, Botswana is not having any comfort.

The minister responsible for mining – with diamonds being the main commodity that Botswana sells in the US market – Bogolo Kenewendo has declared that they are working on a strategy of dealing with this serious matter.

After shocking the world by imposing sweeping tariffs across the globe, US President Donald Trump suspended the move but escalated his trade battle with China by imposing tariffs well over 100 per cent.

Botswana has been imposed with 37 per cent tariffs charge.

The Minister of Minerals and Energy, Kenewendo said the tariff



Kenewendo

[PIC:PINO KILANO]

issue was important as diamonds were the country's leading export.

"Our silence does not mean we are not acting. I am here to give you assurance that government is taking the matter seriously," the Minister was quoted by The Daily News.

Kenewendo said the challenges emanating from the imposed tariffs were not only affecting direct export channels, but markets such as India, Israel, Dubai, Antwerp and many others.

She said the concerned markets were being assessed to establish how the tariff had affected them and how they may be affecting the country's efforts of beneficiation.

The US's move comes at the most difficult time since diamonds sales have fallen in recent months and the country had pitched marketing plans to help turn things around, with the minister having been to the US recently to lead in the promotion work.

Bank of Baroda (Botswana) Ltd.

Quarterly Disclosure on Actual Interest Rates for January 2025 to March 2025

Type of Deposit Account	January 2025 Interest Rates (%)	February 2025 Interest Rates (%)	March 2025 Interest Rates (%)	Range Interest Rates (%) during the quarter
BWP	(Lowest-Highest)	(Lowest-Highest)	(Lowest-Highest)	(Lowest-Highest)
Current	0.00-0.00 %	0.00-0.00 %	0.00-0.00 %	0.00-0.00 %
Call	0.00-1.01%	0.00-1.01%	0.00-1.01%	0.00-1.01%
Savings	0.00-2.02%	0.00-2.02%	0.00-2.02%	0.00-2.02%
91-Days Fixed Deposit	1.25-1.26%	1.25-1.26%	1.25-1.26%	1.25-1.26%
6 months	1.50-1.51%	1.50-1.51%	1.50-1.51%	1.50-1.51%
12 months	3.25-3.56%	3.25-3.56%	3.25-4.31%	3.25-4.31%
24 months	4.00-4.07%	4.00-4.07%	4.00-4.82%	4.00-4.82%
Over 24 months	4.25-4.33%	4.25-4.33%	4.25-5.08%	4.25-5.08%
USD	(Lowest-Highest)	(Lowest-Highest)	(Lowest-Highest)	(Lowest-Highest)
3 months Fixed Deposit	0.00-0.26%	0.00-0.26%	0.00-0.26%	0.00-0.26%
6 months	0.00-0.52%	0.00-0.52%	0.00-0.52%	0.00-0.52%
Over 12 months	0.00-0.76%	0.00-0.76%	0.00-0.76%	0.00-0.76%
ZAR	(Lowest-Highest)	(Lowest-Highest)	(Lowest-Highest)	(Lowest-Highest)
6 months	1.75-1.76%	1.75-1.76%	1.75-1.76%	1.75-1.76%
Over 12 months	2.75-2.78%	2.75-2.78%	2.75-2.78%	2.75-2.78%
Lending Rates	January 2025 Interest Rates (%)	February 2025 Interest Rates (%)	March 2025 Interest Rates (%)	Range Interest Rates (%) during the quarter
MoPR	1.90 %	1.90 %	1.90 %	1.90 %
Baroda Prime Lending Rate	6.01%	6.01%	6.01%	6.01%
Mortgage Facility	6.01-11.50%	6.01-11.50%	6.01-11.50%	6.01-11.50%
Overdraft Facility (Revolving Credit Lines)	6.01-11.25%	6.01-11.25%	6.01-11.25%	6.01-11.25%
Credit Card	NA	NA	NA	NA
Lease Loans	NA	NA	NA	NA
Unsecured Personal Loans (excluding overdrafts, mortgages, and credit cards)	8.00-14.25%	8.00-14.25%	8.00-14.25%	8.00-14.25%
Other Long-Term Loans	6.01-11.25%	6.01-11.25%	6.01-11.25%	6.01-11.25%

Bank of Baroda (Botswana) Ltd. is a member of Deposit Insurance Scheme of Botswana

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Trump may have backtracked, but this is far from over

There were some heroic efforts from Donald Trump and those around him on Wednesday night to suggest the past seven days were something other than absolute chaos.

BY THIS READING, TRUMP'S 4D GAME OF chess has left China in check. Certainly, the Chinese economy faces a massive hit from punitive tariffs in its biggest market. But even accounting for the President's roll back, the US has still erected a massive protectionist tariff wall, not seen since the 1930s.

The world is left with a universal 10% tariff, irrespective of whether that country (for example the UK or Australia) actually sells less to the US than the US sells to it.

There is now no difference between the EU, which clearly does have a massive trade deficit in goods and was preparing to retaliate, and the UK.

There is also an anxious wait to find out what comes next. One of the questions is whether President Trump pushes ahead with tariffs on medicines, the UK's second biggest goods export.

Plus there is potential logistical chaos on the cards from a little-noticed multi-million dollar port tax for every cargo vessel docking in the US that was "made in China". That is more than half of the global merchant fleet - and it is due next week.

Even with Trump's stated 90 day pause on implementing higher tariffs, there remains too much uncertainty for companies to go through the rigmarole of rerouting global trade.

The China fallout

The central issue now, however, is that the world's two great economic superpowers are facing off against each other like rutting stags.

Tariffs at these sky-high rates are massively hitting business between two nations which together account for around 3% of the entire world's trade. The main motorway of the global economy is effectively shut.

The visible tangible consequences of all this will become very real very quickly: Chinese factories will close, workers will stroll from plant to plant looking for work.

Beijing will need to organise a stimulus package to account for the loss of whole percentage points of GDP, the kind of thing that happens when a natural disaster flattens a major city. Painful, but manageable at a cost, though not forever.

Meanwhile the US will see consumer prices

surge. President Trump might try to order these US companies not to raise prices, but the effect will come through soon enough.

In theory this will be in sharp contrast to what is happening in other countries in the world. Across the border in Canada, or in Europe, not only will there not be such China-sourced price rises, there could be price cuts.

From trade wars to currency wars

Trade wars on this scale do not stay confined to the flow of goods. They tend to become currency wars.

What we saw this week was the trade turmoil spread to credit markets, especially the US bond market, having already hit share prices.

Indeed there was an invaluable reveal for the game theory of this conflict. The Trump administration revealed a key pressure point with its concern about the "yippee" - as Trump called it - bond market.

As trading in US government debt continued overnight in Asia, the effective interest rate on these bonds rose to 5%.

This sort of borrowing should not move in

such an erratic fashion.

The last time this happened was in the "Dash for Cash", the key moment of financial fragility at the very beginning of the pandemic. The world was focussed on life or death in March 2020, but this potential further crisis was alleviated only by emergency action.

Effectively, the President's row back was a form of emergency policy change.

Was the Chinese government behind this rash of US government bond sales in Asia? Probably not. However, what happened on Wednesday highlighted a vulnerability for Trump.

China is the second biggest holder of US government debt in the world and if it chose to, dumping all that debt would be catastrophic for America. But doing so would be a form of mutually assured economic destruction - the losses for China would be huge.

More importantly, what the bond markets were telling Trump is that they are deeply sceptical about his tariff policy.

The US does have the Federal Reserve, which does have some power to tranquillise bond



markets. But right now it does not look like its chairman Jerome Powell will ride to the rescue.

The bond market scepticism echoes the sentiment of the ascendant Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent. He is now pushing for Trump to reach trade deals with their allies because the US needs them to take on China.

Given the US was previously calling these same close allies cheaters, looters and pillagers, there is no way this was the strategy all along.

This does matter. The US needs the EU, UK, the rest of the G7 on side in terms of China. China probably needs those countries just to stay neutral, and carry on soaking up its exports. The rest of the world has seen Trump's team

struggle to explain tariffing penguin islands or poor African economies and the President himself recirculating the suggestion he was crashing stock markets on purpose. And they've witnessed the fact that the tariff rates were changed after they came into effect and also the absurd nature of the equation used to calculate them.

It's in this context that Trump's handling of the situation has handed leverage back to the rest of the world, because neither friend nor foe will know quite what they are negotiating with this America.

There is a calm, welcomed by all, but it could be rather brief. [BBC]

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

The Bank of Botswana will be conducting the Balance of Payments (BOP) surveys for the year 2024 and the first quarter of 2025. The surveys aim to collect data on financial assets and liabilities of all local and foreign owned entities based in Botswana. Companies that will be contacted are urged to participate in this important exercise as statistics produced provide information used in the formulation of the country's national and international policies and strategies, including tracking of foreign direct investment (FDI). The data collected is strictly for statistical purposes and will be treated with utmost confidentiality and disseminated on an aggregated basis and, therefore, not divulging nor sharing the respondent details with third parties.

Private companies are, therefore, encouraged to participate in the surveys to be conducted by Bank of Botswana Staff.

The surveys commence on 14 April 2025 and responses due on 31 May 2025. For further information on the survey, please contact Ms Oratile Mmualefe (3606163, mmualefe@bob.bw) or Ms Baby Mogapi (3606595, mogapib@bob.bw)

Hb Botswana expands in-country diamond processing ... partners with Lucara

HB BOTSWANA IS ADVANCING ITS diamond processing operations in Gaborone, deepening its transformative partnership with Lucara Diamond Corp. This milestone reflects a shared commitment to turning Botswana's natural resources into lasting national value, driven by youth and engineers at its heart.

The latest phase of this collaboration sees a growing number of diamonds scanned, evaluated, and processed by skilled Botswana professionals at HB's cutting-edge facility in Gaborone. Leveraging proprietary technology and a focus on local talent, particularly youth and engineers, HB is reinforcing Botswana's capacity to lead in diamond processing while fostering economic resilience.

"This is more than a business expansion—it's a symbol of our ecosystem thriving," said Omogolo Mathumo, Communication Director at HB. "With Lucara, we're proving that technology and expertise can converge here in Botswana to create opportunity and impact where it matters most."

Aligned with Botswana's vision to maximize the value of its resources, this partnership drives job creation, skills development, and sustainable growth. By empowering local professionals and prioritizing in-country processing, HB and Lucara are shaping a tangible reality—not just an ambition.

As HB Botswana strengthens its role within this landmark agreement, it remains dedicated to building a future where national priorities and local expertise shine as brightly as the diamonds themselves.



Mathumo

About HB
HB is a pioneering force in diamond transformation, dedicated to unlocking the full potential of the world's most precious stones through cutting-edge technology and unparalleled expertise.

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Milk Afric changes to Milk Valley Farm



THE MILK AFRIC DAIRY PROJECT NEAR Lobatse has officially changed its name to Milk Valley Farm. General Manager, Onkemetshe Berek explained that the renaming marked a new chapter in their journey to advancing the local dairy industry and contributing to national food security.

The farm aligns to Botswana's economic diversification goals and plays a crucial role in supporting domestic dairy production and reducing reliance on imported dairy products, he said.

In line with commitment to enhancing dairy value chain, Milk Valley Farm aims to promote local dairy production capacity by fostering partnerships with key stakeholders and local farmers and aligning its efforts with Botswana's Dairy Strategy. "We believe that by investing in innovation,

technology, and capacity building, we can create a thriving ecosystem that generates employment opportunities, improved efficiencies and boosts regional market development," he said.

The farm can accommodate 2 000 milking cows, each with a daily production capacity of over 20 liters of milk per day, according to its production manager, Maxwell Boiditswe.

It is currently not functioning up to its full capacity as it carries 214 cows which include 91 milking cows, 2 bulls, and 121 dry cows and heifers, he said.

Currently, they milk 102 lactating cows twice at 6am and at 6pm everyday with each animal producing about 15-20 liters per day. The farm has 18 workers, including four women. At full capacity, the farm is expected to generate over 250 direct and indirect jobs



BANK OF BOTSWANA

10 April 2025

Re-advertisiement
PUBLIC NOTICE

DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FROM DAFRITECH (PTY) LIMITED

In 2023, the Bank of Botswana (**the Bank**) instituted legal proceedings against Dafritech (Pty) Ltd (Dafritech), on the basis that Dafritech was engaged in illegal deposit-taking, contrary to Section 5 of the Banking Act (Cap. 46:04). The High Court ruled in favour of the Bank and ordered that the funds collected by Dafritech be transferred to the Bank for distribution to the depositors.

In this regard, the Bank requests members of the public who deposited monies into the Dafritech bank account held with First National Bank of Botswana Limited (FNBB), at details stated below, to contact the Bank as soon as possible, with effect from the date of this notice, to claim their funds. Claimants must produce valid proof of identity in the form of Omang (for Botswana citizens), Passport (for foreign nationals), certificate of incorporation (for companies), and documentation of proof of deposit. In the case of heirs, assignees and executors/administrators of the owners' assets, valid documentary proof of representation shall be required.

The concerned depositors are requested to contact Ms Mmapula Motshegare at 3606003, email motshegarem@bob.bw or Mr Oageng Moreputla at 360 6291 email moreputlao@bob.bw

DAFRITECH ACCOUNT DETAILS	
Account Name	Dafritech (Pty) Ltd
Bank	First National Bank of Botswana Limited
Account Number	62881068889
Branch Name	First Place
Branch Code	281467

For further information, please contact, Dr. Seamogano Mosanako. Head of Communications and Information Services, Bank of Botswana, at mosanakos@bob.bw, +267 3606083, 3606382 and 3606315 or visit the Bank website at www.bankofbotswana.bw

10 Moranang 2025

KITSISO SECHABA

KGAOGANO YA MADI A DAFRITECH (PTY) LIMITED

Sechaba se itsisiwe gore ene yare ka ngwaga wa 2023, Banka ya Botswana (Bank of Botswana) ya sekisa kompone ya Dafritech (Pty) Ltd go ya ka tsetlana ya botlhano (Section 5) ya molao o o tsamaisang polokelo ya madi wa dibanka (Banking Act (Cap. 46:04). Tsetlana e, e iletsa ope go gweba ka go tsaya madi mo sechabeng ka tsholofetso ya go dira dipoelo (banking business) a sena tetla. Banka e ne ya atlega mo tshekong ya yone kgalhanong le kompone ya Dafritech, ka jalo Kgotla kgolo ya Ditsheko ya laola gore botlhe ba ba neng ba beeditse madi a bone mo komponeng ya Dafritech ba busediwe madi a bone.

Ka jalo, botlhe ba ba beeditse madi a bone mo polokelong ya Dafritech, ba ne ba dirisa letlole la banka ya First National Bank of Botswana Limited (FNBB), le le fa tlase motsebeng ye ba kopiwa go ikgolaganya le Banka ya Botswana go simolola ka letsatsi le kitsiso e dirilweng ka lone. Babeetsi ba kopiwa go tla ka bosupi jwa gore ba bolokile madi le kompone ya Dafritech, ga mmogo le sesupo se se ka fa molaong wa Botswana, e leng Omang (fa o le Motswana) Passport (fa o le motswakwa), kgotsa setlankana sa kwadiso ya kompone (fa e le kompone). Bajaboswa le batlhokomedi ba dithoto tsa babeetsi ba kopiwa go tla ka bosupi jo bo rurufatsang seo.

Ba ba amegang, ba kopiwa go ikgolaganya le Mme Mmapula Motshegare mo mogaleng wa 3606003, kgotsa email ya motshegarem@bob.bw, kgotsa Rre Oageng Moreputla mo mogaleng wa 3606291, kgotsa email ya moreputlao@bob.bw.

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Go itse go feta fa, o ka ikgolaganya le Banka ya Botswana, ka go lelets, Dr. Seamogano Mosanako. Head of Communications and Information Services, +267 360 6083, +267 360 6382 kgotsa +267 360 6315 kgotsa wa kwalela mosanakos@bob.bw, kgotsa wa dirisa maranyane wa etela www.bankofbotswana.bw

lifestyle

THE BOTSWANA PRETTY Herero and Mbanderu Ladies, a cultural advocacy group, have issued a passionate plea for the respect and dignity of their traditional attire. In a recent statement shared on social media, the group expressed frustration over the misrepresentation of their cultural dress while emphasizing their openness to sharing their heritage in a respectful manner.

The statement, which has garnered significant attention online, reads: "This is unacceptable and it's high time we stand up and fight hard for our cultural attire's dignity!"

We are not stopping anyone from wearing or putting on our cultural attire but we plead to everyone who's interested in putting on or wearing our cultural attire to present it in a good way which may reflect us and looks respectable!"

The group's message comes amid growing concerns over cultural appropriation, where traditional attire is often worn without understanding or honoring its significance.

The Botswana Pretty Herero and Mbanderu Ladies are advocating for a more mindful approach, encouraging those who wish to embrace their culture to do so in a way that reflects respect and



Herero, Mbanderu demand respect for their attire

appreciation. The traditional attire of the Herero and Mbanderu communities, often characterized by vibrant colors and distinctive headwraps, holds deep cultural significance. For the Herero people, the dress style, including the iconic horn-shaped headgear, is a symbol of resilience and pride, rooted in their history of overcoming colonial oppression. Similarly, the Mbanderu community's attire.

[PIC:PRESSPHOTO]

A holistic approach to tourism

Align ministries for Industry Growth



BAKANG KEIMETSWE*

TOURISM IS A MULTIFACETED industry that thrives on the seamless interplay of various sectors. It draws heavily on the infrastructure, services, and policies provided by multiple ministries and departments. In Botswana, the potential for tourism to drive economic growth, job creation, and cultural preservation is immense, but this can only be realized through an integrated, cross-ministerial approach. Unfortunately, the lack of alignment among ministries has created challenges that stifle the industry's growth and efficiency.

Tourism: A Multisectoral Industry
Tourism is not an isolated industry. Its success relies on contributions from:

- Ministry of Transport and Public Works: Ensuring road, air, and rail networks are accessible, safe, and efficient for travelers.
- Immigration and Citizenship: Streamlining visa processes to make entry into Botswana hassle-free.
- Botswana Unified Revenue Services (BURS): Facilitating smooth customs and tax regulations for tourists and tourism operators.
- Ministry of International Relations: Marketing Botswana as a global destination and fostering international partnerships.
- Ministry of Youth, Gender, Sports, and Culture: Promoting local talent, festivals, and cultural tourism experiences.
- Ministry of Entrepreneurship: Supporting tourism-related micro-businesses, such as community lodges and craft makers.
- Ministry of Health: Ensuring health and safety standards for



tourists and addressing medical emergencies effectively.

When these ministries work in silos without a shared vision, it undermines the potential of Botswana's tourism industry.

Current Challenges of Misaligned Goals

1. Immigration and Visa Delays
Tourists often encounter lengthy visa application processes or unexpected hurdles at entry points, which discourage international travelers. For example, Botswana's visa policy has been critiqued for being less tourist-friendly compared to neighboring countries that offer visas on arrival or electronic visas.

2. Transport Infrastructure Gaps
While Botswana has stunning natural attractions, limited transport options—such as poorly maintained roads to remote destinations and insufficient domestic flights—make these areas less accessible. The Ministry of Transport's infrastructure priorities often seem disconnected from tourism development needs.

3. Lack of Incentives for Youth and Entrepreneurs
The Ministry of Youth and the Ministry of Entrepreneurship have not fully tapped into tourism as a driver for job creation and small business opportunities. The failure to develop skills and provide financial

support limits the participation of young people and women in the tourism value chain.

4. Health and Safety Concerns
The Ministry of Health plays a critical role in ensuring the safety of travelers, especially during global health crises. Botswana faced challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic when unclear communication and delayed responses affected the confidence of international tourists.

5. Taxation and Customs Bottlenecks
BURS policies often create challenges for tourism operators, such as high import taxes on

essential equipment for campsites and safaris. These inefficiencies make the industry less competitive compared to regional players like South Africa and Namibia.

6. Missed International Opportunities
The Ministry of International Relations has not fully integrated tourism into its global outreach. A lack of coordinated marketing strategies with tourism associations and operators has resulted in missed opportunities to position Botswana prominently on the global tourism map.

The Need for a Holistic Approach
For Botswana's tourism sector to achieve its full potential, ministries and departments must align their goals with a shared vision. A holistic, phased strategy should include:

1. Cross-Ministerial Collaboration Framework
 - Establish a Tourism Growth Council chaired by the Ministry of Tourism and comprised of representatives from all relevant ministries.
 - This council would develop and oversee a unified tourism strategy, ensuring all stakeholders are working towards common objectives.
2. Streamlined Visa and Immigration Policies
 - Implement electronic visas and visas on arrival for key international markets.
 - Provide training to immigration

officers on customer service to improve the tourist experience.

3. Infrastructure Investment Plans
 - Collaborate between the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Tourism to prioritize roads and transport services to key tourism sites.
 - Partner with the private sector to introduce budget-friendly domestic flights.
4. Youth and Entrepreneurship Empowerment
 - Create funding programs under the Ministry of Youth and the Ministry of Entrepreneurship to support tourism startups, such as eco-lodges, cultural tours, and adventure activities.
 - Develop training programs to equip young people with the skills needed for tourism-related careers.
5. Health and Safety Readiness
 - Strengthen partnerships between the Ministry of Health and tourism operators to ensure medical facilities and emergency services are available at major tourist sites.
 - Develop health certification programs to build confidence in Botswana's safety standards.
6. Effective Tax Incentives
 - Work with BURS to introduce tax breaks or exemptions for tourism operators importing essential equipment.
 - Simplify customs processes for items like photographic gear or

7. Global Marketing Campaigns
 - Task the Ministry of International Relations with integrating tourism promotion into every international engagement, from trade expos to diplomatic missions.
 - Partner with influencers and global media to showcase Botswana as a versatile destination beyond just wildlife.

Conclusion

Tourism's success in Botswana hinges on the alignment of multiple ministries and departments toward a common goal. By addressing the existing challenges and fostering collaboration, Botswana can unlock the true potential of its tourism industry. A unified approach will not only boost the sector's economic impact but also create jobs, empower communities, and position Botswana as a premier destination for diverse experiences year-round.

The time for action is now—let's embrace a future of seamless collaboration and shared purpose for Botswana's tourism industry.

*Director of Business Development, Afrigetaway (Pty) Ltd
Website: <https://afrigetaway.com/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Afrigetaway>
Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/afrigetaway_official/

Parent Playbox uplifts teen mothers

ON THE CUSP OF International Women's Day, Learn To Play is excited to announce a transformative partnership with Choppies Botswana, dedicated to uplifting 120 teen mothers across three Districts in Botswana (Tsabong, Tutume, and Ghanzi Districts). With Choppies' generous sponsorship of P150,000, young mothers – often underserved in positive parenting support – will engage in the Parent Playbox programme over 52 weeks (one whole year!). This initiative provides essential skills and resources to foster early childhood

development and strengthen caregiver-child relationships, ensuring lasting benefits for families and communities.

The Parent Playbox, developed by Learn To Play in collaboration with Kids Collab, is a comprehensive, high-impact early childhood development (ECD) solution. It equips parents and caregivers of children aged 0-6 with the confidence, knowledge, and practical tools to support their children's cognitive, emotional, and social growth within their homes.

The initiative aligns with Botswana's National Vision 2036, which calls for the advancement

of women and the promotion of inclusive, sustainable development. By supporting teen mothers in vulnerable communities, the project addresses critical gaps in early childhood education, ensuring that children and caregivers alike have access to the necessary tools needed to thrive. This collaboration exemplifies Learn To Play's unwavering mission to transform childhoods and uplift communities through the power of play, while reflecting Choppies' commitment to community development, creating value for communities the proudly Botswana born brand calls home.

For Learn To Play, this partnership

represents a significant step toward scaling sustainable and impactful early childhood education initiatives in Botswana. "In many parts of Botswana, early childhood education remains out of reach, with young mothers left without the support they need to nurture their children's growth.

But when mothers are given the right tools – not as charity, but as recognition of their strength and potential – entire communities flourish. This partnership with Choppies is not just about providing resources; it's about valuing and investing in the women who are already shaping the next generation.

What better way to mark Women's Day than by acknowledging their power and ensuring they have what they need to give their children the best possible start in life?" said Priyanka Handa Ram, Co-Founder and Chief Energy Officer of Learn To Play.

Each of the 120 playboxes, carefully curated for community-identified teen mothers, contains a kit of resources for 104 play-based activities, training materials, and continuous support to enhance positive parenting practices through play and social emotional learning.

"We are thrilled to support the incredible work of Learn To Play and

are dedicated to empowering young mothers across the nation through this programme. As a company rooted in Botswana, we believe in giving back to the communities that have supported us for decades. By investing in young mothers and their children, we are helping to shape a brighter future for families and communities across the country," said Ramachandran Ottapathu, CEO of Choppies Botswana.

Launches within each of the three Districts will take place across March and April to kickstart implementation of the 52-week programme, working in partnership with community leaders.

Jeepers BW: A convergence of love, passion

MOTERING WITH ALPHA MOLATLWE

AS RECENT AS THE PAST TWO weeks, the country's events landscape witnessed a massive convergence of a total of about 130 guests from South Africa and Lesotho, all armed to the hilt with 70 4x4 Jeep vehicles. This regional celebration brought together these Jeep enthusiasts courtesy of Jeepers Botswana. After the event, which according to Jeepers Botswana representative, was not just a regional celebration and a resounding success, managed to showcase the beauty of combining adventure with compassion. It wasn't just about the terrain, it was about heart. Botswana shone as a host nation, and the Charity Drive Programme reminded us all that no road is too rough when traveled together.

We invite more Batswana to join this growing family of Jeepers and help write the next chapter of this incredible journey.

Below is the post event interview with Janet Motlogelwa, one of the event organizers.

What is Jeepers Botswana?

Janet Motlogelwa (JM): Jeepers Botswana is a vibrant off-road adventure community that brings together Jeep enthusiasts from across the country and the region. Beyond adventure, we are a family-oriented collective that promotes responsible off-roading, tourism, environmental stewardship, and giving back to our communities through charity-driven initiatives.

When was Jeepers formed?

JM: Jeepers Botswana was formed in 2022 by a passionate group of off-road lovers who saw the need



to formalize their shared passion and turn it into a movement that combines adventure with community upliftment.

What does it take to be a part of the community?

JM: Membership is open to individuals and families who own Jeep vehicles and have a heart for both adventure and service. We value respect, safety, camaraderie, and a commitment to contributing positively to society. Prospective members usually start by joining our events, after which they can be inducted more formally into the Jeepers family.

What were the primary objectives?

JM: Our main objectives are:

- * To promote off-road adventure and domestic tourism.
- * To foster community spirit and family bonding.
- * To engage in charitable activities and community service.
- * To provide a safe and structured platform for off-roading.
- * To establish Botswana as a key destination for regional 4x4 enthusiasts.

Does Jeepers Botswana have any international and/or regional affiliations?

JM: Jeepers Botswana is affiliated with Jeep Nation South Africa. These relationships have created a

strong regional network that allows for cross-border events, knowledge sharing, and deeper cultural exchange.

How many members does the community have thus far?

JM: We currently boast over 73 members with 35 active members in Botswana, with a growing regional network of more than 500 Jeepers across Southern Africa.

Tell us about the recent event and how Botswana came to be the hosts?

JM: The recent event was part of the Jeepers Botswana in conjunction with Jeep Nation South Africa, held from March 28th to March 30th,

2025. This event marked Botswana's first time hosting the regional Jeepers gathering, following successful previous editions in South Africa and Lesotho. Botswana was selected due to our well-organized local chapter, stunning off-road trails, and our strong commitment to community-driven experiences.

How was the event program structured, from arrival to departure?

JM: The event kicked off on Friday, March 28th with registration and campsite setup. * Friday evening featured a meet-and-greet cultural entertainment. * Saturday included a scenic 4x4

trail drive in Manyana, cultural site tour, and a hearty traditional lunch served to all guests.

* Saturday morning was dedicated to the charity drive and community engagement activities.

* Sunday morning saw a farewell breakfast at the famous Corner Couch Phakalane and safe departures.

Who were the beneficiaries?

JM: Our primary beneficiary was Mochudi Resource Centre School for the Blind, a special needs institution dedicated to educating and empowering visually impaired learners. Jeepers Botswana provided essential supplies, industrial Washing

machine, Fridge, brail machines, renovations, food donations, and spent quality time engaging with the students and staff, spreading love and encouragement.

Who were the main Sponsors and what can you on behalf of this marvelous community say?

JM: We were proudly supported by Molapo Motors (Main Sponsor), Jeep Nation South Africa, Crystal Empire, Leru Water, Selekamo, Everest Capital, Crystal Empire, Limpopo Jeepers Club, Pitori Jeepers, The Bush Cartel, Venda Jeep Khartel, Jozi Jeepers, Vaal Cartel, Black Jeepers ZA, muddies jeep club and platinum cartel.

Wilderness Safaris commit to tourism's future

OKAVANGO WILDERNESS Safaris (OWS) has reaffirmed its long-term commitment to Botswana's tourism industry, pledging to drive sustainable economic development, conservation, and community impact.

At an intimate stakeholder engagement event in Gaborone, OWS underscored the pivotal role of tourism in Botswana's economic and social progress and reiterated its dedication to the industry and its broader value chain.

Addressing guests, including the Minister for State President, Moeti Mohwasa, Members of Parliament including Dumelang Saleshando, government officials, and industry stakeholders, OWS emphasised the necessity of strengthening Botswana's tourism sector and cultivating a sustainable future.

"It is not just Wilderness that is here to stay - tourism in Botswana is here to stay," said Okavango Wilderness Safaris Board Chairman, Kabelo Binns. "We firmly believe that the Okavango Delta, like Botswana itself, is an absolute gem - sustainable, replicable, and scalable.

We all have a role to play in realising its full potential, and at Wilderness, we are fully committed to this mission, offering the unique Wilderness Way that embodies our values of botho and maitseo. Rather than looking at challenges with a "we can't" philosophy, we look at them as opportunities and ask "can't we?" It is possible."

As Botswana continues to navigate an increasingly competitive global tourism landscape, OWS remains steadfast in working alongside the government and private sector to create an enabling environment for investment and growth.

Recognising that tourism is a holistic value chain involving not just safari operators but also local service providers, transport sectors, and small businesses, OWS advocates for a national approach that ensures all Batswana benefit from the industry.

Speaking on the night, Caretaker Managing Director, Joe Matome, highlighted key areas that require urgent attention to maintain Botswana's competitive edge, including streamlined lease agreements, faster visa processing, and improved infrastructure. "These are areas we can all support to ensure a stronger and even

more attractive Botswana to global travellers and investors", Joe stated. "Tourism is a major economic driver, supporting an extensive value chain, employment, infrastructure development, and foreign direct investment.

Let us all work to advocate for an inclusive approach to tourism that ensures benefits extend beyond luxury safari operators to local businesses, service providers, and communities across the country", he added.

With over four decades of experience, OWS has been at the forefront of sustainable conservation tourism, continuously investing in conservation efforts and community upliftment. OWS's contributions to Botswana's socio-economic fabric include:

- For every P1 that goes to investors, P5.67 is paid to the government, and P8.67 to employees.
- Over P56 million paid to local communities, including P6.4 million in 2024 alone.
- P1.3 billion spent on local suppliers, boosting Botswana's economy.
- P1.8 billion in revenue generated for other operators



Okavango Wilderness Safaris Board Chairman, Kabelo Binns

through global marketing efforts.

• P1.2 million invested in boreholes for the Okavango

Community Trust's five villages. • 76 hectares of farmland

- cultivated, supporting 52 farmers across six villages.
- 1096 food parcels (40 tons) distributed during the 2024/5 drought at a cost of over P650,000.
- P2 million invested in classrooms at Eretsha Village.
- Children in the Wilderness (CITW) programme: Over 2700 children engaged in Eco Clubs, 2100 camp visits facilitated, and 78 learners hosted in December 2025.
- Solar energy implemented across 10 owned and 19 marketed camps.

With a bold vision for the future, OWS is confident that its work is only just beginning. The company has earmarked over a quarter of a billion Pula for tourism infrastructure development in the next 12 months, contingent upon securing long-term lease agreements. "This will attract and sustain foreign direct investment, which in turn drives job creation and economic growth", shared Kabelo.

Furthermore, OWS has set a new industry benchmark with the approval of a Minimum Basic Pay increase to BWP3,000-00 per month. With additional benefits, the

Minimum Wage for the lowest paid staff, will be at least BWP4,000-00 per month. "We have revised our remuneration internationally effective March 2025, and we urge other industry players to follow suit. In addition, we continue to champion local talent development, boasting a workforce that is 97% Batswana. Investing in people is a key pillar of our vision for a thriving tourism industry that benefits all. We are steadfast in our belief in Botswana's tourism potential and the country's ability to compete on the global stage", said Kabelo.

OWS remains committed to positioning Botswana as a world-class tourism destination that caters to a broad spectrum of visitors. This is while ensuring that conservation remains at the heart of the industry. "Through collaboration, innovation, and sustainable tourism practices, we will continue to shape a thriving future for Botswana's tourism sector.

We are privileged to work with so many others in the tourism value chain to make this possible. We are here to stay. We are committed. We are ready to keep working and collaborating for sustainable impact", said Joe.

The Global Tuberculosis Fight

■ Why Prevention Holds Key to Eradication

TUBERCULOSIS (TB) REMAINS one of the deadliest infectious diseases in the world, and Africa accounts for a large portion of the global tuberculosis burden with a significant number of new cases and deaths occurring in the region. According to the World Health Organization, nearly 2.5 million people fell ill with TB in the African region in 2022, with an estimated 424,000 people dying from the disease. Despite significant medical advancements, TB continues to thrive in communities with limited healthcare access, delayed diagnosis, and social stigma.

In this article, St. George's University (SGU) School of Medicine in Grenada, West Indies highlights the global burden of TB and the critical role of preventive measures in combating the disease. With early detection, preventive strategies, and sustained public health efforts, countries in Africa have the potential

to turn the tide against TB and move closer to its goal of eliminating the disease.

The Global Burden of TB The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that tuberculosis (TB) claimed approximately 1.25 million lives in 2023, with the burden falling disproportionately on low- and middle-income countries. Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are the hardest hit countries in Africa, and they are among eight countries that accounted for about two-thirds of the global number of people estimated to have developed TB in 2023. Nigeria has 4.6% of the global new cases and DRC has 3.1%. These growing numbers underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions and improved healthcare access in high-burden areas.

The persistence of TB is largely due to socio-economic factors, including poverty, malnutrition, and

inadequate healthcare infrastructure. In many high-burden countries, delayed diagnosis and treatment gaps allow TB to spread unchecked. Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis (XDR-TB) are both serious forms of tuberculosis (TB) that are caused by drug-resistant bacteria, further worsening the situation. Drug-resistant TB poses serious global health threats, making it even more critical to strengthen healthcare systems and ensure timely diagnosis and treatment.

Key Preventive Measures Early Screening and Regular Testing Routine TB screening, especially in high-risk populations, can significantly reduce transmission. Mass screening programs in densely populated areas and among vulnerable groups such as people with HIV, healthcare workers, and

those with a history of TB exposure can aid in early detection.

Strengthening Immunization The Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine has been instrumental in preventing severe TB forms in children. While it does not provide complete immunity, ensuring that all newborns receive the BCG vaccine is a crucial preventive measure. Research into more effective vaccines is ongoing and should be prioritized.

Improved Living Conditions and Nutrition Malnutrition weakens the immune system, increasing susceptibility to TB. Addressing malnutrition through government-led food security programs, improving sanitation, and ensuring better living conditions can reduce TB transmission rates.

Awareness Campaigns and Community Engagement Educating communities about

TB symptoms, transmission, and treatment options is essential to preventing its spread. Public health campaigns should focus on encouraging people to seek medical care early and complete their treatment regimens. Community-based interventions, where local leaders and healthcare workers work together to spread awareness, have proven to be effective.

Infection Control in Healthcare Settings Hospitals and clinics must adopt stringent infection control measures, including proper ventilation, use of protective masks, and patient isolation protocols. Ensuring that healthcare facilities are equipped to handle TB cases safely can prevent hospital-based transmission.

The Road Ahead To eliminate TB as a public health threat, a multi-pronged approach is required. Governments must prioritize TB control by investing in

healthcare infrastructure, ensuring access to affordable diagnostics and treatments, and addressing socio-economic determinants of the disease. Strengthening global partnerships, advancing research on new TB vaccines and drugs, and integrating TB programs with broader healthcare initiatives will be crucial in achieving long-term success. In line with this, St. George's University (SGU) as a medical school is committed to training future healthcare professionals to tackle global health challenges, including TB. By equipping students with the knowledge and expertise to work in high-burden regions, SGU plays a crucial role in the fight against TB through education and medical training.

The fight against TB is far from over, but with sustained efforts, innovative solutions, and global solidarity, the vision of a TB-free world is within reach.

Sport

Choppies powers Macheng

RETAIL GIANT CHOPPIES -AFRICA'S leading supermarket chain has offered a one-year sponsorship to one of the country's rising young tennis stars, Malak Macheng. The talented 13-year-old made headlines last weekend, taking home two prestigious awards at the 44th Botswana National Sports Awards.

On a memorable Saturday night, Macheng walked away with the titles: Junior Sports Woman of the Year and Public Athlete of the Year. They joy continued for the highly rated teenager, as the potentially life-changing sponsorship deal with Choppies was made public.

In fact, negotiations between the two parties started in December 2024, with the agreement finalized in March 2025. The partnership is a major milestone for both Choppies and Macheng and represents a shift from the company's past focus of supporting national teams in popular codes such as football and athletics. "For a long time, we have been focused on the national teams, either be it athletics or soccer. We want to establish a young athlete we can support in aiding their progress. We ended up with the young Malak, which made it more interesting as she is under a different sporting discipline than what we usually sponsor," revealed Choppies Marketing Executive, Kebonyemodisa Kebonyemodisa.

Although the total value of the sponsorship has not been disclosed, it includes unlimited access to tennis regalia and equipment, including racquets and balls, throughout the year. The young tennis star will also receive a monthly allowance, together with coverage of competition-related travel expenses. Set to run for a year, the sponsorship is subject to renewal depending on performance and progress.

Appreciating the gesture, Malak's mother, Bonnie Macheng, said the financial burden the family has been carrying to keep her daughter competitive in such an expensive sport has been lifted. "Tennis is a very expensive game; its shoes, racket and apparel are really expensive," said Macheng, adding that Choppies' support will make the world of difference to her daughter's burgeoning career.

"This sponsorship will help us in a huge way. Sometimes we are limited on which tournaments to attend, as Botswana Tennis Association only sponsors a few tournaments, maybe only two events in one season. With this sponsorship, I assure you that Malak will improve her 13th place in Africa's U/14 category to something better, as she will be having the support of Choppies in every tournament she will be attending," concluded the extremely grateful mum.



P1 Million for Phikwe Marathon



SELEBI-PHIKWE TOWNSHIP JUST GOT A major lifeline, following Orange Botswana's announcement of a P1 million sponsorship annually for the next three years to power the Phikwe National Marathon, to revive the town's economy and positioning it as a sports tourism hub.

"This is bigger than a race; it's about jobs, tourism, and putting Selebi-Phikwe back on the map," said Orange Botswana CEO Néné Maiga at the launch event. "We're investing P1 million a year because we believe in the power of sports to move economies and transform lives."

Since the closure of the BCL Mine, Selebi-Phikwe has been fighting to reinvent itself. The marathon first backed by Orange Botswana in 2016 has grown into a key economic driver, drawing thousands of runners and fans from across the country and beyond. With this fresh injection, the marathon is set to scale new heights, bigger prizes, better logistics, more volunteers, and next-level visibility through OBW's cutting-edge digital platforms. Expect

live race tracking, social media takeovers, and a serious push to position Selebi-Phikwe as a must-visit destination.

"Every runner brings business. Every spectator supports a vendor. Every cheer echoes growth," added Maiga. "We're proud to back this event not just with money, but with purpose. At Orange Botswana, we see sports as a powerful development tool that builds character, drives discipline, and opens doors for young talent. This marathon is a launchpad for the next generation of champions," Maiga emphasised.

The 2025 edition, slated for August, promises to be the most ambitious yet. Organizers are gearing up for record participation, enhanced infrastructure, and vibrant community engagement. The Selebi-Phikwe Town Council and Local Organising Committee hailed the deal as a "turning point" for the town. With this renewed backing, Orange Botswana is doubling down on its belief that sports tourism is the next frontier for economic development in Botswana and the Phikwe Marathon is leading the charge.

FSG sponsor 44TH Sport Awards

FSG LIMITED, A COMPANY DEEPLY rooted in Botswana's heritage since its inception in 1993, is proud to have sponsored the esteemed 44th Botswana Sport Awards, held on 5th April 2025. The company sponsored the Junior Male Sports person of the Year and Junior Female Sports person of the Year categories with P70,000 in total.

The awards ceremony celebrated the nation's outstanding sporting talents, honouring rising tennis stars Ntungamili Raguin and Malak Macheng as this year's Junior Male and Junior Female Sports persons of the Year, respectively. Each recipient, both youth tennis stars, was awarded a prize of P35,000 presented by FSG's Group Managing Director, Mr. Fergus Ferguson.

"FSG proudly reaffirms its unwavering dedication to nurturing youth and promoting

sporting excellence in Botswana. We believe that sports transcends mere talent; it serves as a vital foundation for societal advancement. It is with great enthusiasm that we support this remarkable event, which honours the achievements of young athletes. Their relentless pursuit of excellence and collaborative spirit not only motivate us, but also embody the principles of discipline, determination, and a vision for the future. We are excited to witness the passion and hard work these young individuals bring to the field, as they represent the hopes and aspirations of our nation," said Mr. Ferguson.

Established over three decades ago, FSG has been an integral part of the nation's fabric, dedicated to creating lasting legacies not only through its core services but also by nurturing potential in various spheres, including sports.

Molefhe, Tanyala shine in Australia



Lentle Tanyala



Gabriel Molefhe

BOTSWANA'S GABRIEL MOLEFHE was over the weekend crowned the Australia Karate Under-21 Kumite champion at the Australian Open Karate Championships in Sidney. Molefhe, who is studying at the University of Melbourne under the BNSC Elite Scholarship

Programme beat Reo Takeuchi of New Zealand to be crowned the U21 champion. Still at the championship, Lentle Tanyala, also studying under the Elite Programme scooped bronze in the under 21 female kata division. The BNSC congratulates the athletes for their efforts

Ovechkin Breaks Gretzky's NHL Record by Scoring 895th Goal

WASHINGTON CAPITALS' RUSSIAN forward Alexander Ovechkin on Sunday overtook Canada's Wayne Gretzky as the top sniper in the regular championships of the National Hockey League (NHL) by scoring his 895th goal.

The 39-year-old scored his record-breaking goal in a game against the New York Islanders.

"What a day. Like I always say all the time, it is a team sport and without my boys, the whole organization, the fans, the trainers,

coaches, I would never stand there and obviously I would never pass a great one. So, fellas, thank you very much. I love you so much ... Thank you, [New York Islanders goaltender Ilya Sorokin] Ilya Sorokin, to let me score 895. Love you, brother. And the last thing, all of you fans from all over the world, Russians, we did it, boys. We did it," Ovechkin said at a ceremony held during the match.

Ovechkin's record now includes 895 goals in 1,487 games against Gretzky's 894 goals in 1,487 games.

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