

The Patriot

on Sunday

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Power blackouts return!

- Electricity generation down 4.5% 2025 Q3
- Load shedding deteriorates as Morupule A, B face operational challenges



Minister of Minerals and Energy, Bogolo Kenewendo

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BOTSWANA'S AMBITION TO achieve self-sufficiency and becoming a net exporter of electricity has been compromised by persistent operational challenges at Botswana Power Corporation (BPC) Morupule A and B power stations in Palapye.

National Statistics Custodian, Statistics Botswana (SB) revealed in its latest Electricity Generation report for 2025 quarter three that the physical volume of generated electricity has decreased by 38.6 percent (381,793 MWH), from 988,303 MWH during the third quarter of 2024 to 606,511 MWH during the quarter under review. Statistics Botswana said the quarter-on-quarter, local electricity generation decreased by 4.5 percent (28,684 MWH), from 635,194

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MPs summon Boko

See some ministers as lazy, call for reshuffle!

- MPs fed up, demand to meet Boko alone, no ministers
 - UDC MPs blame Boko for laziness in Cabinet
 - Backbenchers protest intimidation by Ministers

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PRESIDENT DUMA BOKO WILL soon meet disgruntled backbenchers from the coalition Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) ahead of the February session of parliament, The Patriot on Sunday has learnt.

The Members of Parliament are demanding answers from Boko over a number of issues within the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) coalition government. The tete-a-tete will see cabinet ministers excluded as the backbenchers want to engage only with Boko and the Vice President Ndaba Gaolathe to air their grievances and chart a new path.

Information reaching this publication is that the UDC MPs are not happy with the affairs of government, especially in the appointments of some people into government who are not considered to be UDC cadres. Also, the MPs are calling on Boko to consider a cabinet reshuffle to drop the ministers who are not performing to expectation in their portfolios.



President Duma Boko

Moreover, it is expected that the MPs will relay to Boko their concerns over instability in the government and some of the decisions that have been taken that are putting their political careers on a tight rope as the 2029 election beckons.

One of the burning issues that MPs say they are facing is the newly introduced Lemang Diyo programme, under which the government is funding the farmers for only one hectare of ploughing.

Farmers have lamented that

one hectare is not sufficient and demanded that the government review it. According to the government, Lemang Diyo is an innovative scheme designed to address the limitations of previous subsidy programmes like the Arable Land Development Programme (ALDEP), Integrated Support Programme for Arable Agriculture Development (ISPAAD), and Temo Letlotlo, respectively.

Contacted for a comment on Friday, the government Chief Whip in Parliament, Sam Digwa, said he is not aware of any formal proposal by UDC MPs to engage with Boko, but said that wouldn't be a problem.

Digwa, who is also the MP for Boteti West constituency, said to his understanding there is a cordial relationship between MPs and ministers, indicating that the cabinet would embark on consultative meetings regarding the constitutional court, and both the UDC and opposition MPs will be part of that process.

"We are looking forward to the budget speech, and we expect our MPs to actively part-take in the debate of the budget presentation

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Botswana on FMD high alert

GORATAONE KGOSIMORE AND BAKANG TIRO
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THE MINISTRY OF LANDS AND Agriculture has issued a stern alert over the heightened risk of foot-and-mouth disease entering Botswana following reports of escalation in neighboring South African provinces close to the country's borders.

Explaining the severity of the outbreak and its presumed impact if it spread into the country, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Lands

and Agriculture, Kabelo Ebineng, said the disease has been recorded in eight of South Africa's nine provinces, describing the situation as worsening and posing a serious threat to Botswana as a neighboring country. He added that the South African government has alerted Botswana to cases of foot-and-mouth disease entering provinces along the shared border.

Security measures intensified
Government imposed a movement restriction for all cloven-hoofed animals (cattle, goats, sheep pigs and wildlife animals) within a

10-kilometre radius of the Botswana-South Africa border, affecting areas in Tlokweng, Kgatlang, Mahalapye and Palapye districts.

Movement controls prohibit the movement of livestock out of the area except for direct slaughter at licensed facilities for local consumption. Animals and their derived products from the restricted zone are barred from export, while any movement within the area requires an official permit. Animal-derived products are allowed to move freely within, into and out of the restricted area without the need for a permit.

Ebineng noted the ministry has strengthened efforts to reduce the risk of FMD spreading into Botswana, including hosting kgotla meetings in border communities to educate farmers on preventative measures, particularly the need to prevent local livestock from mixing with animals from South Africa. In addition, the ministry is working closely with the State President, Defence and Security Ministry, and other stakeholders to strengthen border control measures.

He clarified that livestock which stray or cross into South Africa will not be returned to their owners,

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Gaolathe in Tbilisi, Georgia



VP and Finance Minister, Ndaba Gaolathe

THE VICE PRESIDENT AND MINISTER of Finance, Mr. Ndaba Nkosinathi Gaolathe, has travelled to Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, where he is attending the inaugural Strategic Dialogues of the African Development Bank (AfDB) Group, taking place today, 7 January 2026.

The Vice President and Minister of Finance will also hold bilateral engagements with the President of the African Development Bank Group, Dr. Sidi Ould Tah. The discussions will focus on extending the Bank's technical support and capacity-building assistance to accelerate

the Botswana Economic Transformation Programme (BETP), as well as exploring innovative financing solutions that can be deployed at scale to support Botswana's development priorities.

The meeting will also explore collaboration with the AfDB on the possible establishment of a Southern African Customs Union (SACU) Industrialisation Fund, following an assignment by SACU for Botswana and South Africa Ministers of Finance to engage the Bank on this initiative.

Following the engagements in Abidjan, the Vice President and Minister of Finance

will proceed to Tbilisi, Georgia, for a working visit from 12 to 15 January 2026. Georgia has been identified as a country with effective funding architecture, particularly in supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, innovation, and productive sectors. During the visit, the Vice President and Minister of Finance will engage with Ministers and senior government officials on the design and implementation of Georgia's funding systems, to inform Botswana's ongoing efforts to restructure and strengthen its financing architecture in support of private sector growth and job creation.

Explaining ODC diamond sales

STAFF WRITER

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1 IS IT TRUE THAT ODC USE PRICES SET/ determined by De Beers when selling to their clients, even after obtaining/ purchasing their share of rough diamonds from DTCB?

Answer: This absolutely not true, ODC has its own independent price book which is managed internally and is guided by its most recent auction prices as well as other market dynamics.

2) Is the share (%) of rough diamonds

purchased by ODC determined by the De Beers Sales Agreement?

Answer: ODC's share is as per the 2025 Sales agreement yes.

3) Is it not that De Beers will have a say in prices for rough diamonds from Debswana-DTCB (to ODC and DBGSS) and later in their Sight holder sales at DBGSS only?

Answer: Debswana Prices are negotiated and agreed at every sale between DBGSS and Government Valuators to determine the price at which both ODC and De Beers pay.

4) If ODC obtains their share of roughs using a

price set by De Beers, and later sell to their clients using prices set by De Beers again, how are they any different from being an extension of De Beers and part of the Sales Agreement signed between the parties?

Answer: ODC don't sell their purchase from Debswana in the same format they get it from DTCB, there is a different assortment that is meant to unlock further value from the product before it is sold, and as mentioned before the price is not set by De Beers alone but it's a negotiation between De Beers and Botswana Government Valuators

US, Botswana sign \$487 million MoU



Christopher Gunning, U.S. Embassy Chargé d'Affaires and Health Minister, Stephen Modise signing the MoU

ON DECEMBER 23, 2025 IN GABORONE, Christopher Gunning, U.S. Embassy Chargé d'Affaires, and Botswana Minister of Health, the Honorable Minister Stephen Modise signed the bilateral health cooperation Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the United States and Botswana. This three-year, \$487 million MOU outlines a comprehensive vision to save lives, strengthen Botswana's health systems, and advance shared health goals through co-investment. In addition to the MOU, a five-year Data Sharing Agreement will facilitate modernizing data systems with

secure, interoperable digital tools that enhance disease surveillance and outbreak preparedness.

The United States plans to provide \$106 million to Botswana through this three-year MOU, while the Government of Botswana is increasing its spending on its own health system by \$381 million. Through this three-year MOU, the United States will strengthen Botswana's health system self-reliance, reform health care workforces, and work to sustain progress beyond Botswana's HIV targets, building upon Botswana's significant progress made with help from the United States over the past 22 years.

As a key part of the America First Global Health Strategy (AFGHS) this three-year MOU between the United States and Botswana emphasizes direct bilateral cooperation, ensuring that funding flows directly to service delivery, reduces overhead costs, while ensuring every dollar/pula is used for maximum impact. This multi-year co-investment marks a significant chapter in the long-standing partnership between the United States and Botswana.

The AFGHS enables the United States to work directly with recipient countries and provide foreign assistance tailored to country-specific needs, ensuring assistance is more effective, efficient, and aligned with U.S. foreign policy goals. With its emphasis on strategic term-limited bilateral agreements and co-investment the AFGHS strengthens local health capacities and promotes long-term sustainability for recipient countries.

The United States has been Botswana's largest global health partner, providing Botswana with more than \$1.3 billion in foreign health assistance since 2004. The generous foreign assistance provided by the United States has helped save millions of lives, strengthen systems, and enhance global preparedness against infectious diseases.

U.S. Embassy, Gaborone, Botswana, Public Diplomacy Section

The Last Great Bulls

Inside Botswana's Silent Struggle Over Its Elephants



ADAM CRUISE

WHEN DR MIKE CHASE BANKS THE small survey plane over northern Botswana's mopane woodlands, he can see the country's wildlife story written in the dust below. Carcasses — some months old, others more recent — lie scattered along ancient elephant paths, mute evidence of drought, hunting and poaching. Farther ahead, the shadows of living elephants stretch across the floodplains of the Chobe.

But the aerial view tells a different story — one that challenges years of political messaging and sparks a contentious debate over how one of Africa's largest elephant populations should be managed. Chase, who leads Elephants Without Borders (EWB), has spent two decades studying Botswana's elephants from the air. His latest report, with co-author, Scott Schlossberg, shows irrefutably that the country's hunting programme — reinstated in 2019 and expanded since — is based on flawed assumptions, outdated models and an incomplete picture of the pressures elephants now face.

"Botswana's crisis is not one of too many elephants — it is one of too little understanding," he says. "We don't have an elephant problem. We have an information problem. Everyone has an opinion, yet too few rely on evidence. Too many opinions. Too little truth, and the science capable of guiding us is too often left unused."

A Population That Isn't Growing — But Is Changing

For more than a decade, Botswana's government has stubbornly maintained that the country is home to too many elephants and that their growing numbers are putting pressure on people and landscapes. Yet aerial surveys conducted in 2010, 2014, 2018 and 2022 show a remarkably consistent figure: about 130,000 elephants in the north, which holds 94% of the country's population, contradicting the claims of population growth.

The new EWB report confirms what scientists have been observing quietly for years — that this number has not risen significantly in over a decade. Instead, another trend has emerged: carcass ratios, a key indicator of mortality, have been steadily increasing. Higher carcass ratios signal a rise in deaths from poaching, drought, disease or hunting.

Between late 2023 and mid-2025 alone, EWB documented at least 120 poached elephants, almost all of them adult males. The pattern reflects an earlier surge in 2017–2018, when up to 400 elephants were believed to have been killed. The scale of these deaths matters not just for the

numbers themselves, but for the type of elephants being lost.

The Selective Pressure on the Last Great Bulls

Botswana reopened trophy hunting in 2019, issuing quotas that have increased annually. This year's quota of 431 elephants represents about 0.3% of the population — a figure defenders of hunting often describe as insignificant.

Chase argues that this statistic obscures the real ecological impact.

"The quota of 410 elephants is often shrugged off as 'only 0.3% of the population.' But this statistic is dangerously misleading," he says. "The real threat is not how many elephants are killed; it is which elephants are being removed. This is not random offtake. Trophy hunters and ivory poachers selectively target the rarest animals in Botswana: the last great bulls, the oldest males, that carry the largest tusks. These elephants represent only a tiny fraction of the population."

Older bulls, 40 to 60 years old, carry tusks large enough to attract high-end hunting clients. They represent a tiny percentage of the population — perhaps 1–3% — and play an outsized role in elephant society. They father most calves due to female mate choice, teach younger bulls' social behaviour and seasonal movements, and act as cultural memory keepers for drought-hard landscapes. Modelling in the EWB report shows that hunting at current levels could halve the number of bulls aged 50 and above and reduce bulls aged 30 and older by nearly a quarter compared with a scenario without hunting. These declines are amplified when drought or poaching is added into the equation. Critically, the government's justifications of hunting quotas do not take drought or poaching into account.

Climate and Conflict: A Changing Landscape

Northern Botswana is scorched ever more frequently by drought. Climate projections for southern Africa indicate that severe dry seasons could occur in up to 40% of years by 2080. During drought, elephants crowd around diminishing water sources, increasing the likelihood of conflict with communities and disease transmission.

Drought also affects the long-term structure of elephant populations. Calves and reproductive females suffer higher mortality during dry years, reducing the number of future males that will eventually reach trophy size. When hunting and poaching selectively remove older males at the same time, the demographic pyramid begins to narrow from both ends.

Hunting Blocks as "Sink" Landscapes

One of the report's more striking findings is that many hunting concessions function as "sink" areas — landscapes where elephants die faster than they can be naturally replaced. The only reason these areas still produce huntable bulls, the researchers argue, is that males disperse from

protected areas like Chobe National Park and Moremi Game Reserve.

These dispersal patterns, however, may be changing. Survey teams noted shifts in elephant distribution between 2018 and 2022, suggesting that some elephants are beginning to avoid hunting areas altogether. If that trend continues, the supply of older bulls will diminish regardless of how large the overall population is.

Old Models and Missing Data

The EWB report scrutinizes the scientific basis for Botswana's hunting quotas. It finds that the primary model used by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks was developed in 2011, relying on survival rates that were not based on field data and assuming steady population growth without accounting for density dependence — a key factor in any large mammal population. Density dependence means that as an elephant population gets larger and more crowded, natural pressures like food scarcity, drought, and competition automatically slow its growth.

The model also assumed annual elephant emigration to neighbouring countries at levels not supported by survey data. These assumptions, the report argues, make the model unsuitable for guiding present-day hunting policy, especially under current pressures.

Repeated requests by researchers for basic quota data — including tusk measurements, ages and sex of hunted elephants — have gone unanswered.

A Nation Weighing Its Choices

Botswana's government maintains that hunting is a tool for reducing human-elephant conflict and generating revenue for rural communities. Some community leaders support hunting for the income and employment it provides. Others argue that photographic tourism, which depends on reliably viewing large, impressive elephants, is far more lucrative and sustainable.

Chase warns that increasing extraction — whether through bigger quotas, longer seasons or opening new concessions — risks undermining both sectors.

"Increasing quotas, prolonging hunting seasons, or opening new concessions will not fix our economic or ecological problems. On the contrary, these actions accelerate the depletion of the very resources on which communities and the hunting industry depend."

Botswana's tourism sector contributes about 12% of GDP and supports more than 100,000 jobs. Large bulls are a particular draw for photographic tourists, some of whom travel specifically to see the last intact populations of big-tusked elephants.

It remains to be seen how the Botswana government will respond to the latest EWB analysis. The country remains a global stronghold for elephants, holding roughly a third of Africa's remaining savannah population.

But Chase believes that the future of Botswana's elephants now depends on whether policy can be re-aligned with the realities unfolding in the field.

"After 25 years of fieldwork and months of analysis—and after enduring no small amount of pressure simply for speaking the truth—I feallafrica.com this may be my last chance to speak openly in a space dominated by politics, vested interests, and pseudoscience. 'Sustainability' has become a buzzword—too often used to justify the very practices that undermine it." [allafrica.com]

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Botswana courts Russia

▪ Sputnik Africa speaks to Dr. Phenyio Butale - Minister of International Relations

Sputnik Africa: Thank you for your time for being with Sputnik Africa today in Cairo. So, you have met already (Russia's Foreign) Minister Sergio Lavrov. So, could you please share some reflections on your meeting and assess some outcome?

Dr. Phenyio Butale: Thank you very much. Yes, indeed, we had a very fruitful meeting, a meeting that looked back at the excellent relations that have subsisted between our two nations for a long time. We looked at how we can reimagine these relations in line with the priorities of our two nations. As you know, we are a new government in Botswana that took over last year in November, and we are a government that is right now focused on transforming the economy. Our economy has been overly reliant on a single sector, a single commodity, which is diamonds. We are looking at now diversifying our economy, engaging in beneficiation, something that we're looking to engage and leverage on the Russian expertise in that space. You know, there was a Russian company, Norilsk [Nickel] that was engaged in mining, copper mining in Botswana, even though they've already sold their assets. So, we looked at the sectors of possible collaboration in downstream industries, in the diamond sector, looking at sectors such as agriculture where Russia has built considerable expertise and capability over the years. We're looking to ensure that we mechanize our agriculture, modernize it and leverage on technological advancement. We looked at possibilities of working together in the area of renewable energy, working together in other key sectors around which we look to have a transformed agile economy.

Sputnik Africa: Thank you so much, and security is also one of the main topics of this ministerial conference. So how do you estimate the relation between Russia and your country

in this sector, in this area, and how do you think that further cooperation in this area could help the stability of the region?

Dr. Phenyio Butale: Well, indeed we as Botswana value peace. We believe in peaceful resolution of conflict, and we have indeed collaborated and worked with Russia on the international space, one of which is when Russia supported us in our bid to host the Kimberley Process' headquarters in Botswana, and this is one of the things that we're looking forward to having this mutually beneficial collaboration even on issues of security. We are concerned about the lack of peace in a number of countries on the African continent because we believe that if there is peace then we can begin to talk about prosperity on the African continent. We can even begin to work towards attainment of the African Union Agenda-2063, which is an agenda about the Africa we want, and we believe that using the experience, the capacities that countries like Russia have built over the years, we'll be able to build a better world.

Sputnik Africa: And with the active support of Russia, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution establishing the International Day Against Colonialism. What form does neocolonialism take today and what should be done to address it?

Dr. Phenyio Butale: Well, that's a very important subject and a subject that as Africa or as Africans we need to really ponder over and think very deeply about. Because, for example, what you see on the continent where we are still not able to participate, for example, in downstream industries of minerals that we produce. This is a stance that the government of Botswana, led by Advocate Duma Gideon Boko, has taken that we do not want to export any raw material. We want industries. We want investors who come to Botswana not to extract and export.



Dr. Phenyio Butale, Minister of International Relations

We want them to do value addition, to make sure that even downstream industries, until the final product, are done in Botswana so that we create jobs. We are in a hurry to create jobs, we are in the hurry to industrialize, and the only way Africa can industrialize is when these raw materials are explored, exploited, and production happens on the continent. So that's a theme that

is closely linked to economic diversification, economic advancement and also ensuring that we build prosperity on the continent. And for me it also overlaps to the issue around migration where we have a lot of our Africans embarking on treacherous journeys to the western world, to other parts of the world in pursuit or looking for greener pastures. As Botswana, we believe that

we need to create prosperity on the continent, prosperity in Botswana and other countries to ensure that migration becomes an option, not an escape.

Sputnik Africa: How do you assess the role of the International Criminal Court in Africa in light of accusations of bias and double standards voiced by many African countries against this institution?

Dr. Phenyio Butale: Botswana believes a lot in what we think is necessary right now, which is reform. We need to reform the UN in a number of spaces. We've spoken about the reform of the UN Security Council to ensure that Africa's voice is heard. But most of these multilateral institutions must be reformed in a manner that would ensure that everyone, every member state, every citizen of the world feels that they serve the best interest of humanity.

Sputnik Africa: An increasing number of Russian companies are reorienting themselves today toward African countries and launching projects there. So what changes are currently being observed and relations between Russia and Botswana? Probably there are some projects that you could talk about that are in course, that are just in discussion. Could you talk about some concrete projects?

Dr. Phenyio Butale: Well as I've said we are engaging on possible collaborations and we have identified key sectors of possible collaboration which are priority sectors for our transformational agenda. One of the areas that we also believe that Russian companies and international companies must look into is our quest for massive infrastructure upgrades in Botswana because we believe the kind of agile economy that we want to build requires that massive upgrade, and we have massive potential in the mineral sector as I've said that would

require investment in terms of exploration and production. So we are open, we believe strongly that -- even evidence says so -- Botswana is the best place to invest in because we are the best in terms of political stability. We are the best in terms of economic stability, so investment in Botswana is a good investment because it will be done in an environment that is excellent for investment.

Sputnik Africa: Just one last question. Our news agency Sputnik is gaining popularity across Africa and, in your view, how would you explain the African audience's growing interest in Sputnik?

Dr. Phenyio Butale: Well, I think the world is becoming a very interconnected global village and in Botswana in particular, you know, the government has invested hugely in education, so most of our population is educated and therefore has interest in knowing what is happening in other parts of the world.

Also, you know, we have had the good fortune of Russia also extending to us scholarships, which scholarships we're hoping to make use of and increase the number of citizens of Botswana studying in Russia and that is the best way of promoting people-to-people diplomacy and making sure that there are interactions between our people. I think the idea that the world has become so interconnected and also the fact that there is indeed interest in Botswana because of the level of education and awareness in the citizenry, I think explains why many people would want to know what's happening in Russia, what's happened in other countries. And we're looking forward to having you take in some of our very agile, educated journalists to work with you, to report on Africa for you, and to also ensure that you understand Russia from the point of view of Botswana or a citizen of Botswana.

Botswana hosts WONCA Africa Conference

Prof Billy Tsuma works in the department of Family Medicine and Public Health at the University of Botswana and a key figure in the preparations for the WONCA Africa 2026 Conference. In this interview, he shares insights into his journey into family medicine, the work of the Botswana Association of Family Physicians, and the significance of Botswana hosting the regional conference.

What led you to a career in family medicine?

MY JOURNEY INTO FAMILY medicine began during my medical training in Australia, where I was first exposed to the discipline's unique philosophy and practice. I found myself deeply inspired by the comprehensive and integrative approach to care—what many describe as “whole-person medicine.” Unlike specialties that focus on a single organ system or narrow set of conditions, family medicine embraces the full complexity of people's lives, considering biological, psychological, and social dimensions simultaneously.

What drew me in most was the opportunity to meet patients at any point in their health journey, often with undifferentiated problems, and to “walk the path” with them as we uncovered the causes of their concerns, explored solutions together, and navigated the healthcare system in a way that felt supportive and empowering. Over time, a core principle of family medicine became a guiding light for me: the shift from asking “what is the matter with the patient?” to “what matters to the patient?” This subtle but profound reframing captures the heart of patient-centered care.

I believed then—and continue to believe today—that practicing medicine grounded in this principle brings the greatest impact. It creates space for trust, continuity, and meaningful relationships, which are the foundations of effective and compassionate healthcare. That belief solidified my commitment to choosing family medicine as my career.

Can you tell us a bit about the role



Prof Billy Tsuma

of the Botswana Association of Family Physicians?

The Botswana Association of Family Physicians (BOAFP), formally registered in 2019, serves as the professional voice for Family Physicians in the country. Although the Master's programme in Family Medicine began in 2011, graduates soon recognized the need for a structured, unified platform through which specialists could advocate for their discipline, collaborate on clinical and academic initiatives, and continue to advance professional development beyond training.

BOAFP was established precisely to meet this need. Its mandate includes promoting evidence-based primary care, supporting research that strengthens Botswana's health

systems, and championing the essential role of Family Medicine in addressing the country's population health challenges.

Through workshops, conferences, policy dialogues, and mentorship programmes, BOAFP continues to cultivate a community of skilled, confident, and engaged Family Physicians who are prepared to lead and innovate within the primary care space.

What does it mean for Botswana to host the upcoming WONCA Africa Conference?

Hosting the WONCA Africa Conference represents a milestone moment for Botswana. It places the country at the center of global and continental conversations about the future of Family Medicine and primary healthcare. For BOAFP, it is an opportunity to showcase the progress made

in developing the specialty, highlight local innovations, and strengthen partnerships with regional and international stakeholders.

Importantly, hosting the conference will allow policymakers, academics, clinicians, and trainees within Botswana to engage directly in high-level discussions that shape the evolution of primary care in Africa. This comes at a pivotal time, as the country is actively re-examining how best to revitalize and strengthen its primary healthcare system. The insights gained from the conference will not only elevate awareness of the value of Family Medicine but also influence long-term policy directions and health reforms.

What are your hobbies or interests outside of medicine?

Outside medicine, I enjoy spending time as a small-scale farmer, which keeps me grounded and connected to the rhythms of nature. I am also a classic car enthusiast—a passion that allows me to appreciate craftsmanship, history, and restoration. Whenever time allows, I love to draw, a hobby that provides creative expression and balance.

Is there anything you'd like to share with the global WONCA community?

Yes—WONCA Africa is delighted to host two major events: the regional conference in Botswana in 2026 and the World Conference in South Africa in 2027. These gatherings will be transformative for Family Medicine on the continent, offering platforms for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and advocacy. Most importantly, they promise to accelerate progress toward stronger primary healthcare systems and better health outcomes for communities across Africa. [globalfamilydoctor.com]

Khama blasts Trump

▪ labels Nicolas Maduro an illegitimate President but blasts United States for violating international law by invading Venezuela.



Former President of Botswana, Ian Khama

FORMER PRESIDENT IAN KHAMA HAS labelled abducted Nicolas Maduro as an illegitimate President while criticizing the United States (US) for violating the principles of territorial integrity and international law by invading Venezuela.

Speaking to this Swaziland News during an exclusive interview on Thursday, the former Head of State said, “Maduro was like Tanzanian President who rigged elections to cling on to power,” and therefore, his Presidency was illegitimate and/or against the will of the people of Venezuela.

“First of all Maduro was an illegitimate President. Just like the Tanzania President and all those leaders who rig elections to stay in power. However that does not justify the illegal action by the Americans to kidnap him and his wife or any citizen of Venezuela in the manner they did which violated the territorial integrity of that

country and international law,” said the former President.

The former Head of State said, the United States bombed and killed innocent people in the process, just to kidnap Nicolas Maduro and his wife, he then labelled the US military operation as a crime against humanity.

Former President Lieutenant General Khama urged Americans to hold the Donald Trump administration accountable and demand to know the costs of kidnapping only two (2) people.

“Americans too should ask their racist administration about the cost to kidnap only two people. Trump boasted that they had used 152 aircraft. Just imagine how much went into the preparation and execution and cost just to get two people. Typical on how they do things by always massively throwing everything at the smallest thing because they are unable to master doing things with minimum application,” he said.

On another note, the former Botswana President who doubles as an ex-military officer, dismissed President Donald Trump's sentiments suggesting that, “no country in the world could have done or achieved what the US achieved” when capturing Nicolas Maduro.

“I can tell you as a former military officer that their claim that no other military in the world could have carried out such an operation is false. Yes it's true no other military would have unnecessarily used so many assets, but the same result could have been achieved by several countries special forces using far less resources and who would not go on to boast about it at press conferences in such an unprofessional manner,” said the former Botswana President.

Source: <http://www.swazilandnews.co.za/fundza.php?nguyiphi=11058>

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YEARS RE XAVANA

Modernizing Botswana's energy laws for sustainability

STAFF WRITERS

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BOTSWANA IS ENTERING A DEFINING phase in its national energy transition, with rising electricity costs, expanding industrial demand, and abundant solar resources creating strong motivation for cleaner, more efficient power systems. The country has set ambitious national targets, including achieving a 15% reduction in Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by 2030 and ensuring a reliable, affordable, and adequate energy supply for sustainable development.

Across the country, companies are increasingly eager to invest in renewable energy generation as a long-term solution to rising tariffs and as a commitment to sustainability, following government's active push for renewable energy through initiatives like the Rooftop Solar Programme (RTS). Yet this transition sits at a moment shaped not by conflict between policy and innovation, but by untapped opportunity, where the absence of specific provisions for renewable energy transmission is slowing what could be an important step forward for national

energy resilience and economic growth.

A number of major industrial players are exploring establishing central solar generation hubs designed to support several of their operations across the country. The concept aligns strongly with the country's broader goals of improving energy security, reducing reliance on imports, and enabling industries to manage their own consumption. Pursuing this model revealed a familiar challenge: while Botswana encourages renewable energy adoption, the legal framework governing how privately generated electricity may be transmitted between different facilities under the same company is still developing. The lack of detailed provisions is not an outright barrier but an area where regulation simply has not yet evolved to match the pace of technological advancement.

In Botswana, the question of transmitting renewable energy across multiple sites exists in a space that is still being defined. The country does not yet have a specific, fully articulated legal framework or tariff system that allows an industrial producer to generate electricity at one facility and transmit it for use at another. This uncertainty reflects what many experts describe as a regulatory gray area rather than a prohibition. It stands in contrast to Botswana's Rooftop Solar Programme, where the rules for

single-site self-generation and export are already well defined. Under that programme, excess electricity produced on-site can only be exported to the Botswana Power Corporation, where it is credited in kilowatt-hours and later reconciled at an avoided-cost rate. This system works well for households and small businesses but does not address the broader question of whether renewable energy generated on one premises may legally support another. It is this distinction, between a clear, functioning credit system for single-site solar and an undefined structure for multi-site energy movement, that has become central for industries planning large-scale clean energy investments. It is also the space in which BERA is actively developing new guidelines.

For investors and project developers, this ambiguity carries practical implications. Preliminary insights from renewable energy companies suggest that a significant pipeline of solar projects may be slowed by uncertainty around future tariff structures and transmission rules. Without a defined formula for determining transmission fees, developers struggle to model the long-term economic viability of large solar installations. In many global markets, the cost of transporting privately generated electricity is calculated using a standard fee per megawatt hour multiplied by the amount of power

transmitted. Botswana has not yet established its own version of this fee. As a result, the financial assumptions that typically underpin such projects remain fluid, making it difficult for companies to commit capital with confidence.

In Botswana's Solar Initiative Demands Wheeling Framework report, officials at Botswana Power Corporation acknowledge that increased private renewable energy generation would support the grid by reducing demand during peak hours and enhancing national energy security. There is a significant opportunity here for both the utility and the country.

Industry expert and Chairman of Botswana Climate Change Network, Dr. Douglas Rasbash believes the moment is pivotal, describing it as an opportunity for Botswana to finally modernise its electricity laws and unlock a new wave of private-sector energy investment.

"The country needs one decisive legal clarification: that moving self-generated electricity across multiple company sites qualifies as self-use, not resale. With that single ruling, developers would only require a generation licence and a wheeling agreement. It removes the core regulatory uncertainty and immediately unlocks investment, financing, and large-scale private solar deployment," he says.

He argues that establishing a wheeling



framework would not only stimulate renewable energy development but also catalyse broader reforms that position the country as a regional leader in energy transition. Regional examples show the feasibility of such an approach.

International examples demonstrate that frameworks enabling renewable energy transmission do not weaken national utilities; they often strengthen them. In South Africa, for example, private solar generators pay connection and transmission charges that provide stable revenue streams for the grid owner while enabling investment in clean energy infrastructure. This has unlocked billions of rand in private capital while helping to maintain and upgrade utility networks. Namibia's system similarly allows commercial solar producers to operate at scale while ensuring that Namibia's national utility retains control and earns revenues from grid usage.

"Rooftop solar has really taken off in Australia...the reason being that the government makes it worthwhile," said Dr. Rasbash.

Botswana's own regulatory environment shows encouraging signs of progress. BERA's limit of 1MW or 110 percent of consumption for commercial rooftop solar installations reflects a cautious but sensible approach during the early stages of regulatory evolution. Some countries allow higher embedded generation thresholds, but Botswana's model aligns with global practice for markets establishing foundational rules before expanding capacity caps. As the market matures, these thresholds can be revisited to unlock further investment.

This transitional moment presents an opportunity to design a clear, forward-looking framework that supports both system security and industrial demand. Countries around the world use different approaches, ranging from sophisticated nodal pricing systems that adjust charges based on grid congestion to the simpler postage stamp model used in Mexico and parts of the United States, where a uniform transmission

fee applies regardless of distance or location. A transparent structure of this nature would provide developers with predictability, reduce reliance on expensive grid electricity, and allow the national utility to recover costs associated with network usage and power losses.

The benefits of modernising Botswana's electricity laws extend far beyond individual companies. Allowing renewable energy generated at one facility to be used by another could reduce strain on the national grid, improve energy security, and lower the long-term cost of doing business. Companies able to rely on stable, clean, self-generated power would be better positioned to expand operations, create jobs, and reinvest savings into innovation and growth. Perhaps most importantly, a modern framework for renewable energy transmission would open space for independent power producers to supply additional capacity into the national system, supporting Botswana's ambition to strengthen its energy resilience.

The broader conversation reflects a country standing at a promising crossroads. Botswana has the sunlight, the industrial demand, the technological readiness, and the investor appetite to build a modern renewable energy ecosystem that complements the national grid. What is needed now is a legislative structure that explicitly recognises and guides the movement of privately generated solar power across multiple operations. By viewing this as an opportunity rather than a barrier, Botswana can position itself as a regional leader in clean energy adoption.

The path forward is clear and achievable. With new guidelines under development and growing interest across the private sector, Botswana now has the opportunity to attract investment, stabilise energy costs, and strengthen long-term energy security. The window for reform is open, and with decisive modernization, the country can transform untapped potential into a resilient, sustainable, and economically competitive energy future powered by the sun.



VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

VICE CHANCELLOR RE-ADVERTISEMENT

The University is seeking to recruit a highly qualified, accomplished and transformative **Vice Chancellor**, to provide strategic leadership and direction. This is a key executive role responsible for guiding the University towards its vision and goals, ensuring excellence in academic, research, and administrative functions.

The position is offered on a five (5) year Fixed Term Contract

ABOUT BIUST

The Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST) is a research-intensive institution established by the Government of Botswana, with a commitment to research. BIUST plays a pivotal role in diversifying Botswana's economy through the provision of appropriate skills, knowledge and contribution to digital technology to enhance the country's regional and global competitiveness. The University is poised to make significant strides in shaping the future of science and technology in Botswana and beyond for the sustainable socio-economic transformation of the country.

VISION

Entrepreneurial research-based university of science, engineering & technology, internationally recognized for its quality and excellence.

MISSION

Drive cutting edge research and innovation in science, engineering and technology, propelling industry growth, development and advancement of a diversified knowledge-based economy and society.

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

The Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST) is located on an expansive and ecologically diverse 2,500-hectare site of gently sloping land in the Tswapong Hills, in the Central District of Botswana. BIUST is centrally located between the Capital City Gaborone and the City of Francistown. It is in close proximity of the famous Goo Moremi Gorge.

MAIN PURPOSE OF THE JOB

Dynamic and visionary, the **Vice Chancellor** serves as the chief academic and administrative leader of the institution. The Vice Chancellor will provide strategic leadership to drive BIUST forward, positioning it as a globally recognized centre of excellence in teaching, research, and innovation. Reporting directly to the University Council, the Vice Chancellor will be responsible for executing the University's strategic goals and fostering high-level relationships with government institutions, policymakers, industry, leaders to advance both the University's and the higher education sector's interests.

The ideal candidate will demonstrate a proven track record of exceptional leadership in academic and research environments, strategic management of research activities, the development of policies and appropriate research and development initiatives to transform higher education for the benefit of the country and its economy. Strong capabilities in inspiring, leading, and motivating multidisciplinary teams, as well as collaborating with academics, senior management, and colleges, are essential for success in this role.

QUALIFICATIONS

- A minimum of a Doctorate degree and a full Professor in Science, Technology or Engineering related field.

EXPERIENCE

- Outstanding academic or professional employment record with a minimum of ten (10) years' experience in teaching and research.
- Significant traceable experience in research administration and fund raising.
- Must have a minimum of (five) year's tertiary environment experience in an executive leadership role.
- Must have substantive and successful experience in creating collaborative opportunities.
- Must have exceptional problem-solving skills combined with proven track record for the execution of plans and strategies; strong interpersonal, communication and organisational skills; and impeccable integrity.
- Must have extensive experience within an academic institution or a relevant

business or research activity at a leadership level and traceable strong academic and outstanding leadership at executive management level.

KEY COMPETENCIES

- Strong commitment to academic values and standards.
- High level of financial astuteness and commercial competence demonstrated through successful management of substantial budgeted responsibilities
- Strong understanding of public policy processes experience in working with a governing body.
- Successful management of complex organization including strategic planning, people, finances and other resources representing an organization externally and articulating its goals and objectives to key stakeholders.
- Ability to develop and communicate a clear, inspiring and relevant vision and direction for the university, commitment to seek and accept challenges and opportunities.
- Commitment to inspire and motivate students and staff to realize their potential and embrace the university goals and objectives and ability to demonstrate a consultative and inclusive management style in situations involving complex group dynamics.
- High level of conceptual and analytical ability Commitment to values and apply intellectual processes within a well-defined coherent framework.
- Demonstrable understanding of implications of decisions (social, economic, financial, political) and think creatively and innovatively.
- Demonstrate how an intensive Research and Development institution can contribute to economic and technological transformation.
- Demonstrable personal commitment excellence.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Ensures that the University standards in teaching, learning and research are established to meet the requirements of students, staff and the Botswana society as a whole
2. Fosters the values of academic freedom, excellence, equity and accountability
3. Refines the University's vision for developing, communicating and implementing a strategic plan (in collaboration with the Council and in consultation with other appropriate parties) which will position the University internationally.
4. Promotes and maintains a collegial culture within the University.
5. Supports and motivates staff and contributes in their development.
6. Provides strategic leadership to ensure prudent and effective management of the University's resources and legal and regulatory compliance.
7. Ensures proper financial management through best practice budgeting, monitoring, control and reporting systems.
8. Ensures existence of "good employer" practices and equal employment opportunities thereby attracting, developing and retaining high caliber staff.
9. Ensures that the University is at the forefront of the development and application of new and appropriate technologies.
10. Initiates and supports fund raising efforts to increase the University's financial resources for projects that enhance the University's achievement of its objectives.

SUBMISSION METHOD

- Candidates shall be required to submit, together with their applications, a statement detailing their achievements and their vision for the University.

Interested candidates should send a cover letter, certified copies of educational certificates together with detailed Curriculum Vitae and names and contacts of five (5) professional referees to:

Director, Human Capital at the email address below.

vcrecruitment@biust.ac.bw

Closing date for the advertisement is **13th February 2026**

For any further enquiries, you may contact Mr. P. Makwati/ Ms. K Taolo 4931061/4931305

Botswana on FMD high alert

FROM PAGE 1



Acting Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr. Edwin Dikoloti

urging farmers to keep their cattle secured and to strictly comply with all measures put in place to curb the spread of the disease. At a time when the country is facing economic challenges, Ebineng stressed that it is imperative for farmers to play their part in protecting the livestock industry as securing vaccines would come at a higher cost.

Meanwhile, to beef up control measures, the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) on Thursday announced that they would also avail resources to monitor the FMD situation working hand in hand with other government departments. The BDF Commander, Deputy Commander, Commander Ground Forces and other senior officers have been engaging with key stakeholders. The task team meetings follow the recent control measures announced by the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture which were aimed at preventing possible spread of the disease into Botswana.

Losing international markets
Ebineng warned that failure to prevent FMD from spreading into Botswana could result in the loss of the European market, a key destination for Botswana's beef exports. He also added that vaccinated cattle would not be eligible for export to various international markets. He further explained that if the disease reaches within a 10-kilometre radius of the Botswana Meat Commission (BMC), the country's main livestock industry entity, abattoirs would be forced to close.

Addressing a kgotla meeting at Bethle this week, Agriculture Minister and also Member of Parliament for Goodhope-Mmathethe constituency, Dr Edwin Dikoloti reiterated that government remains alert on the situation, imploring his constituency to report if they observe any signs of the disease and to always comply with precaution measures. He noted if not prevented, the spread could undermine efforts to revive the industry.

Farmers on alert
Farming communities along the South African borders are currently on high alert

due to the FMD outbreak in South Africa causing distress and prompting Botswana to reinforce preventative measures.

In an interview on Friday, the Executive Secretary (ES) of the beef umbrella body, Botswana National Beef Producers Union (BNBPU) Alfred Ramono Pilane said the union has received notifications and reliable information from the ministry of Lands and Agriculture over the FMD outbreak in South Africa. He said there is a positive case in Limpopo which has been detected and is spreading towards Botswana, adding that this is a cause for concern for the farmers and the beef community at large.

He said the Limpopo case is 40 kilometers away from Botswana hence urging farmers along the Limpopo border post to be vigilant. "We are concerned by the situation in South Africa. We are consulting with our associations and also the government is engaging with us and appraise us on efforts made and challenges encountered such as lack of finances. However, collaboration between farmers and government is very important," he said.

Pilane said in the villages close to North West province of South Africa, the FMD remains far from moving towards Botswana buttressing that however it is important for farmers to herd their animals because FMD is a very mobile disease. He said BNBPU's main objective by working hand in hand with department of veterinary services is to prevent any room of FMD to enter Botswana.

"There is no room for error at all. If FMD can invade us, this would be a big blow because international standards of our beef will drop. This will in turn mean that the local price of our cattle would drop and ordinary farmers would benefit less from their cattle," said Pilane.

During a consultative meeting with concerned farmers, Tlokweg Member of Parliament (MP) Pheny Segokgo said the FMD situation in South Africa is spiraling and Tlokweg is facing lot of uncertainty. He said farmers should continuously monitor movement of their animals in line with precautionary measures outlined by the government. He suggested that the ministry of agriculture's department of veterinary services would embark on tours to address the farmers, adding that farmers should remain calm and optimistic as government is closely monitoring the situation in South Africa.

The farmers expressed concern that FMD is a serious threat to them owing to Tlokweg's proximity to South Africa and cattle cross to South Africa taking advantage of destroyed fences along the border. The farmers pleaded with government to maintain the fence and tighten security across the border as cattle rustling is a major concern for them.

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China to Botswana: 'Adopt a people-centered development philosophy'

Amid rising uncertainty in global geopolitics and the US withdrawing support and turning her back on many African countries, Botswana finds herself in tenterhooks. Natural diamonds have lost their sparkle, leaving the economy on its knees. President Duma Boko and his politburo are globetrotting in search of partners to help resuscitate and diversify the economy through establishment of new tech-driven industries to create jobs to alleviate escalating poverty.

STAFF WRITER DITIRO MOTLHABANE had a chat with Chinese Ambassador to Botswana, Ambassador Fang Yong to ponder issues like trade relations, skills & technology transfer, poverty eradication and wider bilateral relations between the two nations.

PATRIOT Q1: Considering the colonial history of Africa including Botswana and the rise in sentiments for Africa to have a stronger voice in its matters and global matters. What role is large economies like China assisting to realise this?

AMBASSADOR Fang Yong (AMB FY): Given the history of colonial rule suffered by African countries, China, as the largest developing country and a permanent member of the UN Security Council, is firmly supporting African nations in gaining equal status and a stronger voice in international affairs by proposing the Global Governance Initiative (GGI).

China explicitly advocates that sovereign equality is the foremost premise of global governance. Addressing the historical inequality where a few countries monopolized global governance, China emphasizes through the GGI that all countries, regardless of size, strength, or wealth, have the equal right to participate in international affairs. This directly responds to the aspirations of Botswana and African countries to shed the residual effects of colonialism and achieve true independence. China and Botswana hold similar views on principles such as "all countries are equal regardless of size" and "non-interference in domestic affairs," jointly opposing hegemonism and power politics.

Specifically, through the GGI, China advocates true multilateralism, supports the central role of the United Nations in international affairs, and explicitly supports the "Global South" in building strength through unity. China supports the African Union (AU) in playing a leading role in regional peace and security affairs and actively supports Africa's capacity building for peacekeeping, stability maintenance, and counter-terrorism, rather than imposing external will. On international stages like the UN, China always stands with African countries—just as

Botswana voted to support restoring China's lawful seat in the UN in 1971 despite pressure, China consistently defends international fairness and justice and safeguards the common interests of developing countries, including Botswana.

Furthermore, the GGI emphasizes being action-oriented. China supports not only with words but also by sharing governance experience and providing international public goods (such as the Belt and Road Initiative) to enhance the economic autonomy and competitiveness of African countries, thereby providing solid material support for their political voice. China is willing to strengthen policy communication with Botswana under the GGI framework to jointly promote the reform of the global governance system in a more just and equitable direction.

Q2: Trade between Botswana and China continues to grow, but concerns around trade imbalances and protection of local industries persist. How is China working with Botswana to ensure that this trade relationship becomes more balanced, inclusive and supportive of local production?

AMB FY: China attaches great importance to the balance and inclusivity of its trade relationship with Botswana and is implementing specific tariff policies and industrial investment strategies to support local production and economic diversification in Botswana.

To address trade imbalances, the most direct and powerful measure is tariff reduction. China has committed to implementing 100% zero-tariff treatment for products from all African countries having diplomatic relations with China. This policy will significantly lower the threshold for Botswana's products to enter the Chinese market, directly promoting exports to China and thereby improving the trade balance. China is willing to work with Botswana to use the implementation of this zero-tariff measure as a key instrument to



Chinese Ambassador to Botswana, Ambassador Fang Yong.

deliver early results. To support local production and address concerns regarding industry protection, China views Botswana not merely as a source of raw materials but actively supports its industrialization and modernization process. The economies of China and Botswana are highly complementary, and Chinese investment in fields such as trade, industry, agriculture, minerals, and clean energy is growing rapidly. From January to September 2024, China's direct investment in Botswana increased eight times year-on-year, reaching 29.98 million US dollars. These investments are flowing into sectors that enhance local production capacity. For instance, China's technologies in new energy and new materials can help Botswana build emerging pillar industries, which aligns strongly with Botswana's economic transformation plans (such as NDP12). Furthermore, China actively responds to the new Botswana government's declaration to "promote

diversified and sustainable economic development based on its own resources". By sharing the experience of Chinese modernization, China supports Botswana in independently exploring a modernization path suited to its national conditions. Through technology transfer and infrastructure construction (such as railways and highways), China helps reduce logistics costs for local industries and enhance their international competitiveness. China is committed to expanding high-standard opening-up and deepening collaboration with Botswana across trade, investment, healthcare, and tourism to explore new growth areas, thereby establishing a more balanced and mutually beneficial trade relationship.

Q3: China is respected for lifting millions of Chinese nationals from poverty. What lessons can Botswana derive from China for the purpose of also lifting many Botswana from poverty?

AMB FY: China's achievements in poverty alleviation and modernization offer valuable references for Botswana. The core lessons lie in adhering to a "people-centered" development philosophy and formulating scientific, continuous national development plans.

Firstly, the scientific formulation and continuous implementation of Five-Year Plans is a crucial governance experience from China. Through the successive implementation of 14 Five-Year Plans, China has concentrated resources on major undertakings, ensuring sustained economic growth and social stability, which form the material basis for poverty eradication. Botswana is currently formulating its 12th National Development Plan (NDP12), which coincides with China's 15th Five-Year Plan period, allowing for deep alignment in development strategies. China's experience shows that optimizing regional economic layout and advancing rural revitalization and agricultural modernization through long-term planning are key means to solve poverty issues.

Secondly, prioritizing infrastructure construction and livelihood guarantees.

China has financed the renovation of railroads, highways, housing, and primary schools in Botswana, which not only improved living conditions but also opened arteries for economic development. China's massive investment in education, healthcare, and social security systems—such as building the world's largest education and healthcare systems—proves that improving population quality and health is the fundamental way to block the intergenerational transmission of poverty. Botswana can draw on this by continuing to strengthen investment in education and health, utilizing resources like Chinese medical teams and aided schools to enhance domestic basic services.

Most importantly, independently exploring a modernization path suited to national conditions. The success of Chinese modernization proves that all countries are capable of developing modernization paths in line with their own conditions. China supports Botswana in promoting diversified and sustainable economic development based on its own resources, rather than simply copying other models. China is committed to helping Botswana accelerate the realization of its dreams of development, revitalization, and modernization through frameworks like the "Global Development Initiative," fundamentally eradicating poverty by creating jobs and promoting industrialization.

Q4: As Botswana invests in data centres, smart infrastructure and digital platforms, how is China supporting technology transfer, skills development and digital capacity-building to ensure Botswana fully participate in this digital economy?

AMB FY: China is supporting Botswana's digital economy development through a multi-dimensional approach involving strategic alignment, infrastructure construction, and talent cultivation, ensuring that Botswana can fully benefit from this transformation.

Firstly, at the strategic level, China is willing to actively explore cooperation in the digital economy and e-commerce,

and strengthen joint capacity building in artificial intelligence to "empower" bilateral cooperation with intelligence. This involves not just hardware investment but also strengthening technology sharing through exchanges and training to tangibly assist Botswana's industrialization and modernization. China is deeply advancing the construction of a "Digital China" and has made breakthrough progress in emerging industries such as AI and new energy, providing a solid technical foundation and source of experience for cooperation in these frontier fields.

Secondly, regarding infrastructure and platforms, through the Belt and Road Initiative, China cooperates with global partners in key fields such as the digital economy, providing strong impetus for the development of "Global South" countries, including Botswana. China's achievements in cutting-edge technologies and new productive forces will provide greater support for Botswana's development in digitalization, green energy, and infrastructure construction. This support is reflected not only in physical facilities but also in helping Botswana build connectivity networks and create highlights of cooperation.

Finally, regarding the crucial aspect of skills development and talent cultivation, China focuses on capacity building. From 1999 to the present, more than 1,700 Botswana government officials, experts, and technicians have been invited to China to participate in various seminars and short-term training programs. Additionally, China has established two Confucius Institutes in Botswana, which serve not only for language teaching but also as bridges for cultural and skills exchange. During the FOCAC Beijing Summit, China announced the "Ten Partnership Actions" to jointly advance modernization with Africa over the next three years, which will further deepen specific cooperation in skills training and digital capacity building, ensuring Botswana possess the necessary knowledge and skills to participate in the digital economy.

Power blackouts return!

FROM PAGE 1

MWH during the second quarter of 2025 to 606,511 MWH during the period under review. This decline, it said, was primarily attributed to operational challenges at Morupule A and B.

According to Statistics Botswana report, in the third quarter of 2025, the Morupule A and B power stations accounted for 93.7 percent (568,171 MWH) of total electricity generation, underscoring their pivotal role in Botswana's national energy supply.

It said Orapa and Matshelagabedi emergency power plants contributed 0.9 percent (5,279 MWH), while solar power stations supplied 5.4 percent (33,061 MWH), reflecting the country's growing commitment to renewable energy. "The integration of solar plants in Bobonong, Phakalane, Shakawe, and Mmadinare further illustrates ongoing efforts to diversify energy sources and enhance sustainability within the electricity generation mix," said SB in the report.

Answering a question in Parliament last year, Minister of Minerals and Energy, Bogolo Kenewendo said government was content that Morupule B would operate at maximum scale. She said government continues to assess the situation of the plant and it is its desire to see the plant operating optimally and meet the demand of national electricity supply.

"We are not in the process to determine if the plant is defunct state asset or not. BPC is responsible for taking care of plant maintenance and operating the plant. Remedial works from time to time are the responsibility of engineering contractor. Government don't bear costs of remedial works," she said at the time.

In the past, the Auditor General (AG) report noted that in 2026, government took a decision in

principle to sell Morupule B power plant after the liability period.

The AG report said 24 months liability period which was scheduled to end in June 2016 was extended for the contractor to make good on the outstanding defects, some of which were impacting on the reliability or availability of the power plant.

It was noted at the time that government's intention was to give priority to Chinese state-owned entity, China National Electric Equipment Corporation ("CNEEC") in the divestment process.

CNEEC, identified as the original build contractor and thus was seen as best placed to mitigate the risk which may arise as a result of the complexity and other issues attached to the project.

Power Imports
Meanwhile, SB said during the third quarter of 2025, the physical volume of imported electricity increased by 120.7 percent (284,927 MWH), from 236,075 MWH during the third quarter of 2024 to 521,003 MWH. According to SB, imported electricity increased by 15.3 percent (69,248 MWH) during the third quarter of 2025 compared to the previous quarter, from 451,754 MWH to 521,003 MWH. It said the rise in imported electricity was necessitated by a decline in domestic electricity generation underscoring Botswana's continued reliance on external sources to fulfill its energy needs.

"Eskom was the principal source of imported electricity, accounting for 68.2 percent (355,474 MWH) of total imports. The Zambia Electricity Supply Corporation contributed 13.6 percent (70,860 MWH), while Nampower and Cross-border electricity markets supplied 9.2 percent (47,837 MWH) and 5.5 percent (28,637 MWH) respectively," said SB.

MPs summon Boko

FROM PAGE 1

by Finance Minister and VP Ndaba Gaolathe. There is a consultative workshop on human-wildlife conflict arranged by Parliament, and I have been invited to be part of it and I believe that other MPs of UDC who are invited will attend the workshop," Digwa said briefly.

Cabinet

Some MPs told this publication that their relationship with the Cabinet has deteriorated because of how the ministers muzzle their freedom of expression and deter them from presenting the needs of their voters freely.

"Some of us are targeted by ministers, and the President should bring this to an end. Ministers must stop infringing on our freedom of expression, calculated at silencing us from disagreeing with them when things don't go well. We are also part of this government, and we must feel that," said one vocal UDC MP.

Last year, two UDC MPs Kamal Jacobs of Lobatse and Galenawabo Lekau of Mogoditshane West, publicly aired their grievances over the intimidation of ministers, with Kamal even alleging that he received death threats from one of Boko's bodyguards. The duo took Parliament by storm, a development that exposed signs of cracks within the ruling coalition.

Raising his complaint at the time, Lekau said it takes vocal MPs to be expelled from the UDC for advocating for the interests of people, let it be so because it is unfair for MPs to be threatened using state security

forces. "We did not come here to be threatened, silenced or victimised. We are talking about the rights and the interests of the people who constitutionally elected us. So, I will defend the Constitution of this country without fear or favour," said unapologetic Lekau at the time.


Unity

Political analyst, Kitso Morekisi, said there have been clear signs of disunity between the backbenchers and executive, as more often some UDC MPs clash with their cabinet colleagues on the Parliament floor. He said some UDC backbenchers have developed teeth to bite and demand accountability from their own government, a situation that puts most ministers under pressure.

Drawing comparison to the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) era, Morekisi said the UDC MPs would be expected not to be hard on the government but rather display loyalty and patriotism at the expense of voters' needs sometimes.

"Sometimes, the imminent public clashes between MPs and ministers could be resolved at the party caucus, an internal structure for conducting Parliament business. Also, MPs have the right to have a platform to talk to Boko, as he often consults with the Cabinet during its meetings.

UDC is entering a critical phase as a governing party; unity is important for stability and not just in the UDC but in the government to a large extent," he said.



Bank of Baroda (Botswana) Ltd.

Month - January 2026

Effective from 1st January 2026

Type of Deposit Account	Nominal Interest Rates (%)	Actual Interest Rates (%)	Minimum Opening Balance
BWP	(Lowest-Highest)	(Lowest-Highest)	(P' 000)
Current	0.00-0.00%	0.00-0.00%	3000
Call	0.00-1.00%	0.00-1.01%	1000
Savings	0.00-2.00%	0.00-2.02%	100
91-Days Fixed Deposit	1.25-1.25%	1.25-1.26%	500
6 months	1.50-1.50%	1.50-1.51%	500
12 months	3.25-4.00%	3.25-4.31%	500
24 months	4.00-4.75%	4.00-4.82%	500
Over 24 months	4.25-5.00%	4.25-5.08%	500
USD	(Lowest-Highest)	(Lowest-Highest)	(USD)
3 months Fixed Deposit	0.00-0.25%	0.00-0.26%	No Minimum Balance
6 months	0.00-0.50%	0.00-0.52%	5000
Over 12 months	0.00-0.75%	0.00-0.76%	5000
ZAR	(Lowest-Highest)	(Lowest-Highest)	(ZAR)
6 months	1.75-1.75%	1.75-1.76%	1 million
Over 12 month	2.75-2.75%	2.75-2.78%	1 million

Baroda Prime Lending Rate (BPLR) 7.51% p.a. w.e.f 23.06.2025

Lending Rates	Nominal Interest Rates (%)	Average Effective Interest Rates (%)
MoPR	3.50	3.50%
Baroda Prime Lending Rate	7.51%	7.51%
Mortgage Facility	7.51-15.51%	11.38%
Overdraft Facility (Revolving Credit Lines)	7.51-15.01%	10.52%
Credit Card	NA	NA
Lease Loans	NA	NA
Unsecured Personal Loans (excluding overdrafts, mortgages, and credit cards)	9.51-17.26%	14.73%
Other Long-Term Loans	7.51-13.01%	11.57%

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 <p>10kg 87⁹⁹</p> <p>SUPER A1 Maize Meal</p>	 <p>10kg 109⁹⁹</p> <p>EXCELLA Rice</p>	<p>BUY 5 OR MORE</p>  <p>10kg 127⁹⁹ EACH</p> <p>TASTIC Rice</p>	 <p>12.5kg 176⁹⁹</p> <p>CHOPPIES White Sugar</p>	 <p>3kg 47⁹⁹</p> <p>SUNBLEST Macaroni</p>
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 <p>19⁹⁹</p> <p>NS MATHS SET 8 PIECE</p>	 <p>7⁹⁹</p> <p>NS BROWN KRAFT PAPER OR CLEAR PLASTIC WRAP 450x1</p>	 <p>9⁹⁹</p>	 <p>29⁹⁹</p> <p>NS GIFT WRAP</p>	 <p>29⁹⁹</p> <p>NS SELF ADHESIVE WRAP</p>		



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Opinions, Reviews & Analysis



ADAM PHETLHE
ON SUNDAY!

Mzwinila, Moagi may have lied when declaring assets

“ IN ESSENCE, ASSET DECLARATION FOR Ministers isn't a choice but foundational legal obligation for ethical governance, ensuring they lead by example in upholding the law.” Ministers who served in the 12th Parliament would have been well aware of their ‘foundational legal obligation’ with respect to the mandatory full disclosures of their assets and liabilities because the Declaration of Assets and Liabilities Act was passed by that parliament, assented to in August 2019 and officially came into operation in October 2019. It was amended in 2021.

Former Ministers Kefentse Mzwinila and Lefoko Moagi are in the crosshairs of the Directorate of Public Prosecutions (DPP) allegedly for possessing assets disproportionate to their known official incomes and in the process and as a consequence, reasonable to conclude they may be living beyond their means. The Ethics and Integrity Act requires individuals holding senior public offices listed in the schedule (Ministers inclusive) to declare their assets and liabilities within 60 days of their appointment; 24 months thereafter; within 30 days of any significant change which is over P 200,000 in assets income or liabilities and 5 years after leaving office. Needless to say, the purpose of making declarations in the main is to significantly reduce acquiring assets corruptly; reduce the possibility of the declarants living



Former Minister of Lands and Water Affairs, Dr Kefentse Mzwinila

beyond their means and reducing the possibility of money laundering and other forms of unethical conduct of individuals holding senior public offices; avoid conflict of interest (real or perceived) in so far as public duty and private financial interests are concerned; accountability and transparency and to strengthen public



Former Minister of Minerals and Energy, Lefoko Moagi

confidence in government and its actors. Expectedly, DPP would have approached the former Ministers for them to fully explain the circumstances under which they acquired properties listed in affidavits deposed in court by its officers. Further to this, the former Ministers would have been expected to state the sources of income for

such acquisitions. If they had adequately and fully accounted for the assets in dispute whether acquired before or during their ministerial tenures and the sources of income thereof, DPP would have been satisfied with no need to take their matters further. To be fair to the former Ministers, I am yet to have sight of their defence to the allegations by the DPP.

Assuming without conceding the two former Ministers did not make full disclosures because I am yet to know their side of the story save to say they reject the DPP allegations as mere political witch hunt, it would suggest failure to disclose would be intended to hide undisclosed assets because they may have been acquired corruptly or fraudulently and therefore susceptible to intense scrutiny by relevant State organs. This could have been occasioned by many factors: firstly, they may have feared that disclosing their assets could possibly expose them together with their families as targets of crime where criminals could attempt to extort money from them; secondly that they may have taken advantage of possible loopholes in the Ethics and Integrity law in terms of the incapacity of the Directorate to make follow-ups on declared assets in order to ascertain their true value and sources of income; thirdly the ambiguous nature of the law in terms of what should or should not be declared and fourthly, the incapacity of the Directorate to perform a comprehensive lifestyle audit of the declarants to determine whether or

not they live beyond their means. To be fair to the former Ministers once more, they may not be the only ones who may not have made full disclosures. It should be a fair point to make that a big chunk of the expected declarants, past and present, are at the deep end of failure to make full asset and liability disclosures.

Have Members of Parliament of the 13th Parliament together with the executive branch fully disclosed their assets and liabilities as per the requirements of the Ethics and Integrity Act? There is all likelihood that a good number of them may have not done so given the porous nature of the law relevant and the incapacity of the Directorate of Ethics and Integrity. While the Directorate has two main divisions whose purpose is to ensure declaration compliance—Monitoring and Legal Enforcement and Asset Declaration and Management, it is doubtful whether the two divisions are sufficiently capacitated both in financial and human capital terms to ensure compliance with the Act. That is one part of the equation. The other is that public institutions like the Directorate have been believed to be overly under the tight grip of the executive authority—the political leadership at the highest level. Has this grip been loosened let alone been let go by the current political leadership that bitterly complained about it while in opposition? I am doubtful because the current political leadership committed to publicly declaring their assets and liabilities.

It appears there is a great deal of ducking and diving. Even if the law does not provide for public declarations, what harm will it cause if such are made public? The opaque nature of making declarations will further render the process purely a public stunt meant to deceive Batswana that their public representatives are clothed with ethical integrity. The reality though is that the situation under which Mzwinila and Moagi find themselves will be perpetuated to eternity. On the basis of the DPP cases against the former Ministers, it is fair to suggest in all probability that they failed to make full disclosures about their assets and liabilities as argued herein. If they did, they would have been cleared by the Ethics and Integrity Directorate. This is a classic case study of how people holding high-end public offices can get away with murder. I still maintain the Ethics and Integrity law is hopelessly porous to be taken advantage of by those who are required to declare. In the process, living beyond one's means will be a new normal occasioned by the ineffectiveness of the tools meant disrupt and minimise it together with the absence of meaningfully dealing with lifestyle audits. “In essence, asset declaration for Ministers isn't a choice but foundational legal obligation for ethical governance, ensuring they lead by example in upholding the law.” I am prepared to be persuaded otherwise as always. Judge for Yourself!

*Compliments of the New Year.
adamphetlhe08@gmail.com

The unprecedented kidnapping of Maduro

THE UNPRECEDENTED KIDNAPPING IN the world annals, in the manner in which it took place, of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro constitutes not only a military intervention in a sovereign and independent country in violation of the principles of international law, but also constitutes a clear warning to the entire planet. A warning to every insubordinate leader of any country.

Already on January 3, 2026, during a press conference he gave regarding the military operation and arrest of Maduro, US President Donald Trump issued threats against Colombian President Gustavo Petro, stating the following: “He would do well to be careful.”

At the same time, the US president hinted that Cuba could be a topic of discussion within the context of broader US policy in the region, highlighting Washington's ability



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro captured by the USA military

to expand its focus beyond Venezuela.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio even said that the Cuban government should be worried after Maduro's arrest. Specifically, he said: “If I lived in Havana and was member of the government, at least I would be worried,” adding that “Cuba is a disaster” and that the country is “run by incompetent and depraved men.”

The history of the United States, moreover, is characterized by extensive imperialist interventions, both territorial and interventionist in other countries. Specifically, there have been approximately 400 interventions since 1776, when the Second Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence on July 4, declaring the independence of the 13 American Colonies from the British Empire, an event that marked the official founding of the United States of America.

Who can forget that from April 15 to 19, 1961, 1,400 anti-Fidel Castro fighters, trained and financed by the CIA, attempted to land at the Bay of Pigs, 250 kilometers from Havana, but failed to overthrow the Cuban communist regime. These battles resulted in the deaths of about a hundred people on each side.

“With Salvador Allende winning the elections of September 4, 1970 in Chile and already Fidel Castro in Cuba, we will have a Red sandwich in Latin America that will inevitably become all Red,” Richard Nixon feared, and his fear was soon confirmed by the election results.

So, in the face of this unpleasant reality for the United States, a solution had to be found. And the solution was found on that morning of September 11, 1973, when a military coup took place under the head

of the army, General Augusto Pinochet, with the support of the United States, but also of Brazil, whose military regime was completely friendly and cooperative with the United States. The coup plotters, after first surrounding and bombing the Presidential Palace, then stormed it. Salvador Allende and his close associates were killed, after fierce resistance.

The United States also invaded Panama in mid-December 1989 during the presidency of George W. Bush. The purpose of the military invasion was to oust Panama's de facto leader, General Manuel Noriega, who was accused by American authorities of extortion and drug trafficking.

So, if one is looking for a historical parallel where the US arrested a de facto leader of a country and transferred him to the US for trial, the Noriega case is the most characteristic. And this happened after a regular military invasion, that is, in the context of a coordinated armed intervention, and certainly not a “normal” peace.

Noriega managed to escape and took refuge in the Vatican embassy in Panama City, the country's capital, where he remained for 11 days. There, he was subjected to relentless psychological warfare in order to surrender. The US military set up a horrible, deafening wall of sound outside the embassy. A fleet of Humvees with loudspeakers constantly played hard rock and occasionally heavy metal music. For example, “Panama” by the heavy metal singers Van Halen was played.

The Holy See rightly complained to President Bush, and the musical war ended after three days. By January 3, 1990, the general had agreed to surrender.

But what are the deeper reasons for the US military invasion of Venezuela and the pursuit of overthrowing the insubordinate existing regime?

Venezuela, therefore, has the largest proven oil reserves in the world, amounting to approximately 303.8 billion barrels as of 2021. For comparison, leading oil producing countries have smaller reserves. Specifically, Saudi Arabia has approximately 267 billion barrels and Kuwait has 101.5 billion barrels.

At the same time, the country's proven natural gas reserves exceeded 5.6 trillion cubic meters in 2021. It should be noted, at the same time, that in the Western Hemisphere, only the United States had more reserves.

Also, Venezuela's total iron ore reserves are estimated at 4.5 billion tons. And here it should be emphasized regarding iron reserves that the country is second in the region after Brazil. Venezuela finally has some of the largest reserves of bauxite in the world, a mineral used to produce aluminum. The country's total bauxite reserves amount to 950 million tons.

It is, therefore, clear to any objective observer that the US covets Venezuela's wealth-producing resources. Resources that they cannot get their hands on with the existing regime, which is a political and military partner and ally of Moscow, Beijing and Tehran, but also the main supplier of oil to China, whose control is drying up the flow.

The solution therefore for them, for the US, in order to secure primacy in the relentless international competition is the overthrow of the existing Venezuelan regime and the emergence of a president and a government that is absolutely friendly and serviceable. The rest, that is, whether such a thing is legal and democratic, does not concern them at all.

In closing, I would like to emphasize that the leaders of any country are overthrown only by their people, that is, by popular uprisings and revolutions, as has happened in various countries in the past. They are not overthrown by the military intervention of another country, a foreign power. Therefore, the US military invasion of Venezuela and the kidnapping of its president, Nicolas Maduro, are absolutely condemnable for any democratic and free-thinking citizen of the world.

Isidoros Karderinis, journalist, foreign press correspondent accredited by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, regular member of the Greek Foreign Press Correspondents' Association, novelist, poet and lyricist. Facebook: Karderinis Isidoros

BNF denies Chinese mafia gifts



BNF Information and Publicity Secretary, Carter Joseph

THE BOTSWANA NATIONAL FRONT (BNF) unequivocally condemns the reckless, misleading, and irresponsible placement of the Treasurer's photograph on the front page of Tuesday Grill's online publication under the defamatory headline: “BNF, Masihi Benefited from Moagi-Mzwinila Chinese Mafia Cash.”

The BNF categorically and unreservedly denies ever receiving, benefiting from, or being associated with any cash, resources, or proceeds linked to any alleged “Chinese mafia cash.” Any suggestion to the contrary is false, malicious, and defamatory.

The BNF's financial operations are governed by strict internal controls. All donations and contributions are processed exclusively through the Party's official bank account and never in cash. This policy is non-negotiable and exists to ensure full transparency, accountability, and lawful financial management.

The allegations published by Tuesday Grill are baseless, reckless, and unsupported by a

shred of credible evidence. The publication of such serious accusations without proof constitutes a deliberate attempt to damage the integrity, credibility, and public standing of the BNF and its leadership.

Any individuals purporting to collect cash donations on behalf of the BNF from any source are fraudsters and impostors. They act without the knowledge, authority, or consent of the BNF, and the Party rejects any association whatsoever with their actions.

The BNF demands responsible journalism grounded in facts, evidence, and ethical reporting. Tuesday Grill is hereby put on notice to retract these false claims and to cease the publication of defamatory material against the BNF and its officials.

The Botswana National Front reserves all its legal rights, including the right to pursue appropriate action to protect its reputation and that of its members.

CARTER JOSEPH
BOTSWANA NATIONAL FRONT
INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY
SECRETARY

Reset, make bold decisions

TAKE IT THAT MOST OF US ARE BACK TO base to continue where we left off. Let's reset and make bold decisions. Some decisions may be painful like cutting out some people from your lives, quitting alcohol but we'll get over them and adjust. Let's be positive in our thinking and make things happen. Let's be productive. Let's change for the better in everything we do. Let's go to church and pray.

Personally, I intend finishing my first book titled Dining with the Devil. Thanks to a friend in one of the universities in South Africa for assisting me with this project.

I wish Batswana and our political leaders, church leaders, corporate leaders and everyone else in every sector of the economy to remain focused. To the unemployed I become emotional because the reality is that life is tough and it is not easy even to us waking up every morning. Please hang in there and don't give up!

One day, just one day, God will open doors and your dreams will become a reality. To those who've lost their loved ones, be comforted. Most of us know the pain of losing your loved one. God is still God!

Edmond Mdluli
Jackals No1



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

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Business

Bomaid optimistic about 2026

Leading local medical aid provider, Botswana Medical Aid Society (Bomaid), says despite the current macroeconomic hardships, it is resilient and has stepped up service delivery to members to ensure that 2026 turns up successful. Bomaid CEO, Moraki Mokgosana, says with 2026 being the final year of their Isago Strategy, they are strengthening benefits and access points; expanding network for improved cost-effective access, growing Telehealth and other digital care pathways. He talks to **BAKANG TIRO**

Who is Moraki Mokgosana?

MORAKI: I SERVE AS THE Chief Executive Officer of Bomaid, where I lead the organisation's work in strengthening healthcare access, improving member experience, and creating long-term sustainability for the

Fund. My career has been shaped by a commitment to service excellence, organisational transformation and expanding the impact of healthcare financing across Botswana. I believe in purposeful leadership, collaboration across sectors, and building systems that enable people to live healthier and more fulfilled

lives. I joined Bomaid as CEO in December 2013. Over this period, we have focused on transforming the Fund into a more agile, customer-centred, and technology-driven organisation that meets the evolving needs of our members and the broader health system.

Kindly reflect on your journey in
TO PAGE 10



Bomaid CEO, Moraki Mokgosana

Lucara to generate \$1.3 billion from Karowe mine

▪ The underground expansion will also extend the life of the mine to 2038

KITSO RAMONO

editors@thepatriot.co.bw

LUCARA DIAMOND Corporation has confirmed that Botswana's Karowe Diamond Mine is set for a new and lucrative chapter, with an underground expansion expected to generate more than US\$1.3 billion in net income and extend the life of the mine until at least 2038.

The announcement follows the release of an updated feasibility study this past Monday that assesses the technical and financial strength of the underground mining project at Karowe. The study shows that while open pit mining is approaching its natural end, some diamond resources remain deep below the surface, making underground mining both practical and profitable.

Karowe, located in north-central Botswana, has been one of the country's standout mining success stories since it began operations in 2012. The mine has gained international attention for producing some of the world's largest and most valuable diamonds, including several stones weighing more than 1,000 carats. These rare finds have consistently boosted revenues and reinforced Karowe's reputation as a world-class asset.

According to the updated study, the underground mine will operate for approximately 10 years and is expected to produce about 4.5 million carats of diamonds. Over the life of the underground operation, total diamond sales are projected to exceed US\$3 billion, translating into net income of



LUCARA Botswana Chief Executive Officer, William Lamb

more than US\$1.3 billion. Lucara has already invested heavily in preparing Karowe for underground mining. More than US\$436 million has been spent to date on major infrastructure, including the sinking of deep production and ventilation shafts, underground tunnels and surface facilities required to support long-term operations. Total pre-production capital costs are expected to reach close to US\$780 million before the mine reaches full underground production in 2028.

Once fully operational, the underground mine is expected to process nearly three million tonnes of ore each year. The mining plan combines drilling and blasting in

the deeper sections with controlled caving of the rock at higher levels. This approach is designed to reduce costs over time while allowing access to higher-value diamond zones first, improving cash flow during the early years of production.

The feasibility study indicates that the project remains financially resilient under a range of scenarios. It shows that the underground operation is most sensitive to diamond prices, while changes in capital and operating costs have a smaller effect on overall profitability. This reflects Karowe's unique ability to recover large, high-value diamonds that can dramatically lift revenue in any given year.

For Botswana, the underground expansion at Karowe carries significant economic importance. It ensures continued employment for hundreds of workers, ongoing opportunities for local suppliers and contractors, and a steady stream of royalties and taxes for government. The project also supports surrounding communities that rely on the mine for livelihoods and social development initiatives.

The transition to underground mining comes as open pit operations at Karowe are expected to wind down in the first half of 2026. During the transition period, Lucara plans to continue processing stockpiled material while underground development progresses. Full underground production is scheduled to begin in the first half of 2028.

Lucara's mining licence for Karowe runs until 2046, providing long-term regulatory certainty. The company has also secured the necessary environmental approvals to proceed with underground mining, including plans to manage groundwater and other environmental risks associated with deep-level operations.

Lucara President and Chief Executive Officer William Lamb said the updated study confirms the company's long-term commitment to Botswana.

"Karowe is a world-class mine, and the underground project allows us to extend its life in a responsible and economically sound manner. We are confident that this next phase will continue to deliver lasting benefits for Botswana and all our stakeholders," he said.

Race for De Beers intensifies

▪ Africa's diamond-producing nations, private companies stake their claim



CEO of De Beers Group, Al Cook

DE BEERS HAS ATTRACTED interest from several business groups and African governments as parent Anglo American looks to offload its stake in the firm, the diamond giant's CEO told Reuters.

Botswana, Angola and Namibia - all major diamond producers - have

expressed interest in acquiring equity in De Beers, alongside "a number of business-led groups," CEO Al Cook said, stopping short of commenting on the status of talks or the names of some of the interested parties. Reuters reported in June, citing sources, that billionaire Anil Agarwal, Indian diamond groups and Qatari investment funds were

among those that had shown interest in De Beers.

Anglo American, which owns 85% of De Beers, has valued the diamond producer at about \$4.9-billion.

When asked about who it would prefer as the company's new owner, Cook said the focus was not on identity but on alignment with its long-term strategy, including its emphasis on natural diamonds, partnerships with producer nations and growth in key markets.

De Beers is sharpening its focus on India, which Cook called "a tremendously important market." He expects demand for natural diamonds in the country to double, with the market for the precious stone hitting 1.5-trillion rupees (\$16.7-billion) by 2030.

The group opened its fifth Forevermark store, its largest store globally, in Mumbai this week and plans to expand the network to 25 outlets by the year-end, with a long-term goal of crossing 100 stores.

De Beers, whose revenue slid 13% to \$1.95-billion in the first half of 2025 due in part to low prices, is banking on rising self-purchases in India as demand globally has shifted away from a gifting-led model.

The group is also doubling down on its Element Six business, which brought in about \$300-million in revenue last year by supplying synthetic diamond wafers to data centres for their use as heat conductors. It discontinued its lab-grown diamond jewellery brand Lightbox last year. [Reuters, miningweekly.com]



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Bomaid optimistic...

FROM PAGE 9



the medical aid sector

MORAKI: My journey in the medical aid sector began in 2007 when I was involved with a start-up business that was part of a multinational group that administers medical aid funds. At the time, the group were introducing a medical aid fund into Botswana. Broadly speaking, my career spans leadership roles across financial services, security services, investment promotion, beverage manufacturing, and telecommunications.

Over and above the strategic roles, I have held roles that included project management, financial reporting and business development. I have worked closely with regional medical schemes, regulators, and policy makers, which has strengthened my understanding of the unique pressures and opportunities within the health financing space. These experiences have equipped me to guide Bomaid through a changing landscape where affordability, accessibility and innovation are central to long-term sustainability.

What is your vision for the organisation

in the face of tough competition from established and emerging medical aid providers?

MORAKI: My vision is to position Bomaid as the most trusted health partner in Botswana, anchored on quality service, financial sustainability, partnerships, and innovation.

Competition in the sector has encouraged us to sharpen our value proposition. We are moving beyond the traditional definition of medical aid and transitioning into a health and wellness partner. This means combining strong core benefits with added-value services, digital tools, preventive wellness, and a broader provider network that extends beyond Botswana's borders.

The Fund's direction rests on three pillars: Customer experience and excellence; Health and wellness outcomes; Fund sustainability through innovation, partnerships, and operational efficiency. We are also navigating a landscape in which the regulatory framework of medical aids is evolving and where national health insurance has necessitated the Fund to reevaluate its business model, and that will

be a key focus area going forward.

How has Bomaid navigated the difficult economic storm of the year 2025, and what should your clients expect this year?

MORAKI: Despite the broader economic pressures, Bomaid has remained stable and resilient. Our response has been guided by continued value creation for our customers, careful cost management, stronger stakeholder engagement, minimisation of leakages, and digital tools that improve efficiency and reduce administrative bottlenecks. In 2026, we enter the final year of our Isago Strategy.

For 2026, customers can expect: continued strengthening of benefits and access points; expansion of network for improved cost-effective access, growth of Telehealth and other digital care pathways; improved turnaround times through automation; and a continued strengthening of our focus on preventive wellness and improved health outcomes.

What are the successes of the new transformation strategy adopted in 2023?

MORAKI: The strategy has reoriented

Bomaid towards customer-centricity, innovation, and collaborative sector leadership. Commitment to ethical and safe medical practices and support ethical patient care. Key changes include strengthened digital service channels, integration of customer insights into product development, streamlined internal processes, sustainability-focused fraud systems, and institutionalised stakeholder engagements such as the country-wide member and provider stakeholder engagements, first-ever Provider Pitso and, in addition to periodic provider engagements, there have been greater Executive-level engagements with stakeholders across the board.

Can you share details of how Bomaid performed in the past financial year?

MORAKI: The year was marked by significant achievements, including sector collaboration with healthcare associations, participation in national Universal Health Coverage discourse, hosting the inaugural Provider Pitso, expansion of added-value services, strengthened provider engagement through Hospital CEO meet-and-greet, regional provider network growth, and enhanced risk management structures,

Self-service platforms e.g. WhatsApp, extended consultations. Extended call centre operating times for efficiencies, launched telehealth platforms, amplified brand via social media platforms, and these have grown. Increased participation at corporate and community level and collaboration in fund raising and social impact activities which e.g., Police Commissioners' walk in Francistown, Kazungula Marathon, BTC Marathon, Diacore Marathon, Morupule Coal Manager's Fundraising Cycle Challenge, Debswana Orapa General Manager's Walk, MMG Khoemacau Lake Ngami Cycle Challenge and the BPC CEO's fundraising event. These are opportunities to contribute societal impact while espousing our value of passion for wellness.

What's new, exciting, and innovative products/services can we look forward to from Bomaid going forward?

MORAKI: Upcoming developments include an expanded Telehealth ecosystem, stronger self-service digital platforms, and enhanced wellness packages. We will also be introducing a revamped AI-driven wellness product. To promote access to health care products, we recently introduced health plans that cater for healthier individuals and are more affordable. Our Access Core is the most affordable medical aid product with a price of less than P300 per beneficiary.

What are you doing to make Bomaid services accessible everywhere across the country?

MORAKI: Accessibility has expanded through innovative solutions that have seen additions to our platforms that afford customers and members self-service. We also intend to utilise other channels such as the Telehealth platform, partnerships with local health facilities, community outreach wellness days, and growth of our provider network across Botswana to facilitate better reach and cost-effective interventions.

What are the new CSR projects that the community can look forward to?

MORAKI: Our CSR efforts support health, education and community resilience through academic awards, school refurbishment projects, mental health programs, book donation drives, wellness days, and support to national health associations. Following from our monumental collaboration with Botswana Harvard Partnership last year in healthcare research, we are working on two projects to provide support for oncology patients at public facilities and to facilitate access for uninsured patients in remote parts of the country.

What more can you tell us?

MORAKI: Bomaid is entering a new era defined by partnership, innovation, and a deepened commitment to member wellbeing. Our direction is guided by a belief that healthcare is not only about treatment but about supporting people to live healthier, balanced, and meaningful lives.

IMF urges urgent reforms

...as Botswana's growth model comes under strain



VP and Minister of Finance, Ndaba Gaolathe

BOTSWANA FACES AN URGENT NEED for wide-ranging structural reforms to revive growth, tackle

unemployment and reduce heavy reliance on diamonds. According to a new International Monetary Fund (IMF) analysis published earlier this week.

The IMF Selected Issues Paper, prepared as part of Botswana's latest Article IV consultation, warns that the country's long-successful development model is losing momentum after two decades of slowing growth, rising joblessness and shrinking fiscal buffers. A sharper-than-expected downturn in global diamond demand in 2024 has intensified pressure on an economy where diamonds still account for about 80% of exports.

While Botswana remains one of Africa's strongest performers on governance and macroeconomic management, the IMF notes that economic complexity has declined steadily. The country has failed to diversify into higher-value industries, leaving it vulnerable to external shocks and limiting opportunities for inclusive growth, particularly for young people.

Using firm-level data from the 2023 World Bank Enterprise Survey alongside cross-country analysis, the IMF identifies several binding constraints holding back private sector development. Limited access to finance emerged as the most frequently cited obstacle, with 25% of firms reporting it as their biggest challenge. Only about 8% of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises currently have access to bank loans, despite a stable banking sector.

Governance concerns, land access difficulties and unreliable electricity supply were also highlighted. Although Botswana is widely regarded as one of Africa's least corrupt countries, business perceptions of corruption have worsened over the past decade, potentially undermining investor confidence.

The IMF's macro-level analysis suggests that reforms to labour markets, governance and the external sector could deliver significant growth gains. Closing just half of Botswana's gap with peer economies in key reform areas could raise medium-term gross domestic product growth by up to 2.0 percentage points, while labour market reforms alone could lift employment growth by nearly 4%.

The paper recommends prioritising measures to improve access to credit for smaller firms, modernise land administration, strengthen anti-corruption institutions and accelerate energy sector reforms, including greater investment in renewables. It also calls for labour market adjustments to make hiring and firing more flexible while protecting workers' rights.

According to the IMF, Botswana stands at a critical turning point. Without decisive action, long-standing structural weaknesses risk deepening inequality and unemployment. With the right reforms, however, the country could unlock private sector-led growth and build a more resilient and diversified economy for the decade ahead.

[IMF/ChannelAfrica]

PUBLIC NOTICE



PUBLIC TENDER NOTICE

TENDER NO: BOCRA/PT/006/2025.2026

PROVISION OF INSURANCE BROKERAGE SERVICES TO THE BOTSWANA COMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY (BOCRA) GROUP

Botswana Communications Regulatory Authority (BOCRA or the Authority) invites 100% citizen-owned companies with substantial experience to provide Insurance Brokerage Services to the BOCRA Group (Botswana Communications Regulatory Authority (BOCRA), Universal Access and Service Fund (UASF) and Communications Regulators Association of Southern Africa (CRASA) for a period of three (3) years.

Procurement Method is Open Domestic Bidding method.

The tender is reserved for 100% citizen owned companies who are domiciled in Botswana and are registered with the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) under the following code and sub-code:

Code 127: Insurance & Pension
Sub-code 06: Brokerage and risk-related services

Economic Diversification Drive (EDD) shall apply to this tender. Bidders are requested to submit relevant documentation or certificates in order to benefit from the Policy.

Youth companies shall purchase the Invitation to Tender (ITT) at 50% of the fee as per Presidential Directive CAB 14(B)/2015.

Interested entities may purchase the ITT document at a non-refundable fee of P570.00 (VAT Inclusive). Payment must be made in the form of bank transfer or deposit at the following banking details:

Bank Name: First National Bank Botswana Ltd
Branch Name: Mall
Branch Code: 28-28-67
Account Name: Botswana Communications Regulatory Authority
Bank Account No: 62011115088
Swift Code: FIRNBWGX
Reference: BTA0006
Payment Reference: Company Name

Tender documents shall be issued upon provision of **Proof of Payment (POP)** at tenders@bocra.org.bw. All bank charges relating to funds transfer shall be borne by the bidder.

Queries or Clarifications relating to this tender may be addressed in writing no later than **15 January 2026** to tenders@bocra.org.bw and will be respond to no later than **19 January 2026**.

Companies that participated on the previous tendering process referenced **BOCRA/PT/006/2024.25** are exempted from purchasing the tender document. Affected companies are requested to share Proof of Payment (POP) at tenders@bocra.org.bw. Tender documents for the current tender shall only be shared with affected bidders upon presentation of the POP of the previous process.

Bids and all supporting documents should be submitted not later than **10:00 Hours on 30 January 2026**, or such other later date as the Authority may advise in writing, at the **Tender Box** located at the following physical address:

Botswana Communications Regulatory Authority
Plot 50671
Independence Avenue
Gaborone

Bids will be opened at **10:05 Hours on the 30 January 2026** at the BOCRA Offices. Bidders and the public are invited to attend the Tender Opening session.

Late tender submissions will not be accepted.

Two Envelope Submission Method shall be followed in submitting bids.

The PP Act and Regulations shall apply to this tender.

Notwithstanding anything in the foregoing, BOCRA is not bound to accept the lowest or any tender offer.

For further information regarding the tender, please contact the Procurement Office at: tenders@bocra.org.bw

BOTSWANA COMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY
PLOT 50671 INDEPENDENCE AVENUE
PRIVATE BAG 00495, GABORONE, BOTSWANA
TEL: +267 3957755 FAX: +267 3957976
info@bocra.org.bw | www.bocra.org.bw



Bank of Baroda (Botswana) Ltd.

Quarterly Disclosure on Actual Interest Rates for October 2025 to December 2025

Type of Deposit Account	October 2025 Interest Rates (%)	November 2025 Interest Rates (%)	December 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	3.25-4.31%	3.25-4.31%	3.25-4.31%	3.25-4.31%
24 months	4.00-4.82%	4.00-4.82%	4.00-4.82%	4.00-4.82%
Over 24 months	4.25-5.08%	4.25-5.08%	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	October 2025 Interest Rates (%)	November 2025 Interest Rates (%)	December 2025 Interest Rates (%)	Range Interest Rates (%) during the quarter
MoPR	1.90%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%
Baroda Prime Lending Rate	7.51%	7.51%	7.51%	7.51%
Mortgage Facility	7.51-13.00%	7.51-15.51%	7.51-15.51%	7.51-15.51%
Overdraft Facility (Revolving Credit Lines)	7.51-12.75%	7.51-15.01%	7.51-15.01%	7.51-15.01%
Credit Card	NA	NA	NA	NA
Lease Loans	NA	NA	NA	NA
Unsecured Personal Loans (excluding overdrafts, mortgages, and credit cards)	9.50-15.75%	9.51-17.26%	9.51-17.26%	9.51-17.26%
Other Long-Term Loans	7.51-12.75%	7.51-13.01%	7.51-13.01%	7.51-13.01%

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

CONTACTS:

Head office: Old Nokia, G-west, Gaborone, Ph: 3992700, Email: ho.botswana@bankofbaroda.com.
Gaborone Branch: Main Mall, Gaborone, Ph: 3188878, email: gaborone@bankofbaroda.com.
G-West Branch: Kamosungu Road, Gaborone, Ph: 3992705, Email: gwesbo@bankofbaroda.com.
Francistown Branch: Haskins Building, Francistown, Ph: 2413440, Email: francistown@bankofbaroda.com.
Palapye Branch: Madiba Complex, Palapye, Ph: 4920041, Email: palapye@bankofbaroda.com.

Why natural diamonds endure while lab-grown trends come and go

As lab diamond value wavers, natural diamonds prove that real brilliance lies in authenticity, not just appearance

JORDYN ROSS

IN THE WORLD OF FASHION, EVERY TREND has its moment. And that's certainly true for lab-grown diamonds (LGDs). These gems are quick to make, easy to market and offer a fast track to own and wear diamonds. It's no surprise that shoppers have been quick to snap them up.

Natural diamonds, by contrast, aren't vulnerable to changing tastes. They have an enduring appeal that effortlessly outlives the latest fads. Rather than being produced in labs or factories, they evolved over billions of years, deep within the Earth. Their supply is not endless, but finite. Their beauty and rarity are why they have played such a pivotal role in love stories, personal milestones, and historic moments for centuries.

While debates around the value of LGDs often hinge on affordability, this misses the point of what makes a gem special. LGDs can give you a burst of brilliance, but what makes owning a natural diamond so meaningful is that it is rare, real and has timeless appeal. When fashion moves on, natural diamonds stay constant as symbols of permanence, beauty, and a deeper emotional connection.

The cultural legacy of natural diamonds
Diamonds have always been more than just beautiful accessories. Whether slipped onto a finger during a proposal, gifted to mark a precious moment or bought to celebrate our own achievements, each gem represents a chapter in your story. It is this emotional connection that gives diamonds their real value, the kind that deepens with time.

A symbol of power
Throughout history, societies have treated diamonds as symbols of power. In the 13th century, Saint Louis IX of France reserved them for royalty, declaring that only the king could wear them thanks to their rarity and value. From that point, diamonds became the ultimate status symbol, gleaming from the crowns and gowns of Europe's monarchs.

England's royal collection alone reads like a gemstone history book, from the Koh-i-Noor to the record-breaking Cullinan Diamond, both now part of the Crown Jewels collection in London that draw millions of visitors each year. Over time diamonds became coveted by those outside royal circles. By the 17th century, diamonds had moved into the salons of Europe's aristocracy, then on to the vaults of the wealthy merchant class.

A reminder of diamonds' historic role as symbols of power, adorning the crowns and regalia of royalty long before they became treasures for the wider world.

Red-carpet brilliance
Today, what was once the preserve of royalty has become a global symbol of success and effortless style. Celebrities choose natural diamonds for red carpets, album covers, and Instagram grids, translating old-world prestige into contemporary chic. When Beyoncé or Kim Kardashian step out wearing priceless diamonds, it's more than a fashion statement; it's a continuation of a legacy that reaches back into history. Because a natural diamond's magic lies not only in its beauty, but in its origin.

How rarity and permanence make natural diamonds timeless

In an age when almost anything can be replicated, true rarity is elusive. That's what imbues natural diamonds with their inimitable appeal. They can't simply be made in a factory; each one is the result of a billion-year-long geological process. These gems aren't just beautiful; they're miracles of nature.

Natural diamonds are one-of-a-kind
And their rarity is only increasing. Global recovery of natural diamonds peaked in 2005, and by 2023, production had fallen by nearly 40%. To put that into perspective, the total number of one-carat-and-above diamonds unearthed each year could fill a single exercise ball. That's how rare they've become.

Every naturally formed diamond carries a distinct fingerprint, tiny inclusions, irregularities, and growth patterns that make it entirely one-of-a-kind. These aren't flaws, but the unique imprint of its billion-year journey. It is this natural individuality that adds emotional gravitas to owning a diamond; a connection to something powerful and elemental.

LGDs are in infinite supply
LGDs, by contrast, are created in controlled chambers designed to mimic nature's conditions. The results may be visually similar, but their homogeneity means they lack the complexity of a gem formed by natural forces. Made in months, not millennia, they can be replicated endlessly, removing the very ingredient that underpins diamond value: rarity. When supply is infinite, uniqueness fades.

Why emotional symbolism endures beyond trends

Natural diamonds gain emotional resonance over the years, becoming intertwined with the emotions of both the giver and receiver. They are the solitaire on the band that marks a lifetime commitment; the priceless pendant passed down from mother to daughter; the glittering cufflinks

saved for a son's wedding day. Each one carries a story that links its ancient past to bright hopes for the future.

By contrast, LGDs' charm often lies in affordability, not ancestry. They offer accessible, contemporary glitter, and they are not the first diamond alternatives to do so. In the 1970s, cubic zirconia promised diamond sparkle for less, and for a moment, it seemed unstoppable. Everyone wanted it until they didn't. Once the novelty wore off, people realized that while it could mimic the look of a diamond, it could never hold the same meaning or value. A natural diamond's power, meanwhile, grows with every story it becomes a part of. You only have to think of history's most famous diamonds to understand that their allure lies not in their monetary worth, but in the priceless value of the events they've witnessed over the years. The Hope Diamond is one such icon; surviving the French Revolution, passing through the hands of British monarchs, American socialites and the famous jeweler, Pierre Cartier, and now drawing crowds of visitors at the Smithsonian Institute.

Market value vs trends in diamond choices
For decades, natural diamonds have been seen as a sound financial investment; a symbol of permanence in a market that's anything but. Their rarity and deep cultural associations have helped them hold value. While crazes burn bright and then fizzle out, an authentic piece has longevity.

That stability shows up in the numbers, too: Over the past 50 years, natural diamond prices have grown by around 3% annually; By contrast, the market for LGDs tells a different story. Since 2015, the price of a 1.5 carat LGD has dropped by more than 83%, a reflection of just how fast production has increased and how quickly novelty wears off.

The same factors that make these lab-made alternatives affordable also make them unstable; mass production has flooded the market, driving prices down.

The numbers don't lie
As lab-grown supply grows, resale value has also been affected. If you want to sell, you will usually only receive a fraction of the original price, with consumers paying up to 60% less than the original price. With no natural limits on production, supply keeps growing, which means the market stays crowded and prices stay low.

Natural diamonds, by contrast, hold their ground. Their rarity gives them built-in scarcity, and that translates into financial stability. Many jewelers don't buy back lab-grown stones, but they do trade in natural diamonds, reflecting where real trust still lies.

For consumers, that volatility matters. Natural diamonds are seen not only as beautiful but as something that carries trust, authenticity, and longevity. Trends may shift, but the narrative of lab-grown value always circles back to one truth: in an overcrowded world, rarity still reigns.

How natural diamonds translate long-term value into something that lasts

A natural diamond fast becomes more than its initial sparkle. It's woven into a family's story, becoming an irreplaceable heirloom. Provenance adds depth; knowing where a diamond came from and whose hands it passed through gives it a soul that no laboratory can engineer.

You only need to look at Meghan Markle's engagement ring from Prince Harry to see that symbolism in action. Prince Harry designed the three-stone ring himself, choosing a center cushion-cut diamond from Botswana, a place deeply connected to their relationship, and flanking it with two smaller diamonds from Princess Diana's personal collection. That kind of emotional heft is impossible to recreate with mass produced gems.

Meghan Markle's three-stone ring embodies personal meaning, uniting a diamond from Botswana with gems from Princess Diana's collection.

Taylor Swift's engagement ring designed by fiancé Travis Kelce reflects the same desire for something genuine and meaningful. Kelce worked with designer Kindred Lubeck, to create a one-of-a-kind ring set with a brilliant-cut old mine, to reflect the singer's passion for storytelling and vintage style. It was only possible to create something so personal and unique by selecting a natural diamond, which brings its own personality to the piece.

A one-of-a-kind old mine-cut diamond, designed for Taylor Swift by Travis Kelce, shows how a natural diamond's character can turn a love story into something entirely personal. Image courtesy of Taylor Swift/Travis Kelce on Instagram

Both natural diamonds and LGDs shimmer and sparkle, but only natural diamonds come with a history and story that has been etched into the Earth. It is their unique mix of characteristics honed over billions of years that transforms them from jewelry into treasured pieces that become powerful heirlooms carefully handed down from one generation to the next.

Sustainability isn't a simple question
There's another layer of tension: sustainability. LGDs are often pitched as the

greener choice, but the reality is far more complicated. Their production is highly energy-intensive, relying on extreme heat and pressure to mimic the Earth's natural conditions. More than 60% of lab-grown diamonds are produced in regions where the main energy source is coal, and that leaves a heavy carbon footprint. A 2019 analysis by Trucost revealed the truth that creating an LGD can generate more than three times the carbon emissions of a natural one. It's a sobering reminder that when it comes to eco-credibility, marketing spin hides a much more complex situation.

The shifting narrative of lab-grown desirability

Just a few years ago, LGDs were hailed as the disruptors of the jewelry world. They were touted as a more accessible and eco-friendly way to own a diamond. They certainly caused a buzz in the industry, but as initial excitement settles, the conversation begins to shift. Consumers are asking tougher questions, not just about price,



but about permanence. The early narrative of sustainability and simplicity is being re-examined as people look for proof, not

promises. Where lab-grown once symbolized modern rebellion, it's increasingly seen as a category defined by affordability rather than

aspiration. Their place in everyday, fashion-forward jewelry remains strong, but for milestones that mark a lifetime, buyers are returning to the enduring appeal of natural diamonds.

Why some brilliance lasts forever
Choosing a natural diamond is a statement. It is selecting something precious with beauty, history, and its own individual quirks to perfectly complement the wearer. It is investing in something that will grow in value, both sentimental and financial. Unlike lab-grown value, which is susceptible to shifting trends and tastes, the increasing rarity of a natural diamond means it will always be in demand. A natural diamond isn't a fleeting purchase; it's something with true value that will long outlast that first dopamine hit. Investing in one is inviting that special gem to become a part of your story, creating a treasured heirloom to be passed from mother to daughter, father to son, best friend to best friend. In a world that moves fast and forgets easily, a natural diamond endures, a symbol of love, meaning, and genuine lasting worth. [\[adiamondisforever.com\]](http://adiamondisforever.com)

Deposit and Lending interest rates as at January 2026

Deposit rates

BWP - Botswana Pula

Types of deposit account	Nominal interest rate	Actual interest rates	Minimum opening balance (BWP)
Current	0.00% - 1.00%	0.00% - 1.00%	50
Call	0.00% - 0.55%	0.00% - 0.55%	10,000
Savings	0.00% - 3.60%	0.00% - 3.66%	100
91 days fixed deposit	1.46%	1.47%	1,000
6 months fixed deposit	1.73% - 1.90%	1.74% - 1.91%	1,000
12 months fixed deposit	2.57% - 3.07%	2.57% - 3.07%	1,000
24 months fixed deposit	2.92% - 3.62%	2.92% - 3.62%	1,000
36 months fixed deposit	3.02% - 3.82%	3.02% - 3.82%	1,000

ZAR - South African Rand

Types of deposit account	Nominal interest rate	Actual interest rates	Minimum opening balance (ZAR)
Current	0.00% - 0.00%	0.00% - 0.00%	3,450
Call	0.00% - 2.50%	0.00% - 2.50%	3,450
Savings	Negotiable	Negotiable	3,450
91 days fixed deposit	Negotiable	Negotiable	3,450
6 months fixed deposit	Negotiable	Negotiable	3,450
12 months fixed deposit	Negotiable	Negotiable	3,450
24 months fixed deposit	Negotiable	Negotiable	3,450
36 months fixed deposit	Negotiable	Negotiable	3,450

GBP - British Pounds

Types of deposit account	Nominal interest rate	Actual interest rates	Minimum opening balance (GBP)
Current	0.00% - 0.00%	0.00% - 0.00%	300
Call	0.00% - 2.50%	0.00% - 2.50%	300
Savings	Negotiable	Negotiable	300
91 days fixed deposit	Negotiable	Negotiable	300
6 months fixed deposit	Negotiable	Negotiable	300
12 months fixed deposit	Negotiable	Negotiable	300
24 months fixed deposit	Negotiable	Negotiable	300
36 months fixed deposit	Negotiable	Negotiable	300

USD - U.S Dollar

Types of deposit account	Nominal interest rate	Actual interest rates	Minimum opening balance (GBP)
Current	0.00% - 0.00%	0.00% - 0.00%	500
Call	0.00% - 2.50%	0.00% - 2.50%	500
Savings	Negotiable	Negotiable	500
91 days fixed deposit	Negotiable	Negotiable	500
6 months fixed deposit	Negotiable	Negotiable	500
12 months fixed deposit	Negotiable	Negotiable	500
24 months fixed deposit	Negotiable	Negotiable	500
36 months fixed deposit	Negotiable	Negotiable	500

Lending rates

Lending rates	Nominal interest rate (%)	Average Effective Interest Rates (%)
Monetary policy rate (MoPR)		3.50%
Mortgage Facility	Absa PLR + 10.50% - Absa PLR + 14%	20.76%
Overdraft facility (revolving credit lines)	Absa PLR + 10% - Absa PLR + 20%	24.07%
Credit card	24% - 36%	34.49%
Lease loans (VAF)	Absa PLR + 11.75% - Absa PLR + 14%	21.50%
Unsecured personal loans (excluding overdrafts, mortgage and credit cards)	Absa PLR + 14.5% - Absa PLR + 24%	29.35%
Other long-term loans		Negotiable
Absa Prime Lending Rate (Absa PLR)		6.76%

For special rates, contact your Relationship Manager or any Absa branch.

Absa Bank Botswana Limited (registered number BW00001237900) is regulated by the Bank of Botswana. Member of the Deposit Insurance Scheme of Botswana.

Your story matters



Letshego Africa receives bidding offers



Letshego Africa CEO, Reinette van der Merwe

SHAREHOLDERS ARE REFERRED TO THE cautionary announcements published by Letshego Africa on XNews, with

the most recent being on 10 December 2025, stating that the Company has received binding offers from potential counterparties.

Shareholders are advised that the Company continues to work towards a potential corporate transaction materialising and, to

this end, shareholders are further advised that the Company is reviewing the binding offers received and is in discussions with potential counterparties regarding their binding offers.

At this point, no preferred counterparty has been selected, and no agreements have been executed. While the Company continues to explore the potential transaction, shareholders are reminded that no decision(s) have been made, and there is no guarantee that any agreement or transaction will materialise from these engagements with potential counterparties.

A corporate transaction(s), if concluded, may have a material effect on the price of the Company's securities and therefore shareholders are advised to continue to exercise caution when dealing in the Company's securities.

The Board wishes to remind shareholders that all Group and subsidiary businesses remain uninterrupted and continue to operate as usual.

[bse.co.bw]

Continental Re Holdings relocates to Botswana



Continental Reinsurance CEO, Lawrence Mutsunge Nazare

CONTINENTAL REINSURANCE Holdings is pleased to confirm the successful relocation of the Group Holding Company from Mauritius to the Republic of Botswana, following the completion of all logistical, statutory, and regulatory requirements. This milestone marks a pivotal step in the Group's evolution and underscores its strong confidence in Botswana as one of Africa's most stable and forward-looking financial services hubs.

Founded in Nigeria four decades ago, Continental Reinsurance has built one of the continent's most trusted reinsurance networks, serving clients across more than 50 countries in Africa. The Group later moved its holding structure to Mauritius to accelerate access to global capital and strategic expansion. Now, as Continental Reinsurance positions itself for its next growth horizon, Botswana has emerged as the preferred home for its future: a jurisdiction that combines stability, sound governance, financial sector reforms, and a commitment to long-term economic transformation.

The newly relocated holding company, manned by a team of professionals, will operate separately from the company's well-established Botswana subsidiary, which has maintained a strong presence in Gaborone for the past 11 years. The Botswana subsidiary currently serves a growing client base, contributing meaningfully to the Group's Africa-wide network of more than 1,000 cedants and brokers.

Mr. Lawrence Mutsunge Nazare,

Group Managing Director of Continental Reinsurance Holdings, described the relocation as both a strategic and symbolic milestone for the group. "This move reflects our deep commitment to Africa, and our conviction that Botswana offers a uniquely enabling environment for long-term investment. The country's stability, institutional maturity and progressive reforms provide the foundation we require as a Pan-African reinsurer with global ambitions. The culture and 'botho' infused into how Botswana – and Batswana – do business is something we are inspired by. Indeed, Botswana mirrors the values we embody: integrity in conduct, passion for our mission, collaboration rooted in mutual respect, responsiveness to evolving needs, and a relentless pursuit of excellence."

Continental Reinsurance provides comprehensive risk solutions to insurers across Africa, offering both treaty and facultative reinsurance across life and non-life classes. Guided by its philosophy of delivering Pan-African commitment, made local, the company blends deep continental expertise with strong local insight to support the resilience, competitiveness and maturity of Africa's insurance sectors.

This relocation positions Botswana as an increasingly preferred destination for multinational financial services headquarters and reinforces the country's growing reputation as a secure, well-governed and investment-ready economy. For Continental Reinsurance, it marks the beginning of a new chapter; one rooted in confidence, partnership and a long-term commitment to shared prosperity.

Anglo American-Teck merger heading for EU antitrust approval



Anglo American CEO, Duncan Wanblad

REUTERS

THE PROPOSED MERGER OF LONDON-listed miner Anglo American and Canada's Teck Resources is heading for antitrust clearance in Europe after EU regulators signalled the absence of competition concerns, according to a European Commission filing.

The EU competition enforcer is reviewing the deal, the second-largest ever in the mining sector, under a simplified procedure after the companies sought approval on Tuesday. Such a step means the EU watchdog does not see a merger giving rise to significant competition problems, leading it to conduct only a routine check.

The Commission will issue its decision on the deal to form the world's fifth-largest copper company by February 10. Canada has already cleared the deal.

The Commission is also assessing the deal under its Foreign Subsidies Regulation which takes aim at unfair foreign aid for companies, with the goal of reining in competition from non-EU companies subsidised by their governments. Its decision is due by February 3.

Anglo American and Teck announced their proposed merger in September of last year.

(By Foo Yun Chee; Editing by Matthew Lewis)



Stanbic Bank

Stanbic Bank Botswana DEPOSIT, LENDING AND FOREIGN CURRENCY DEPOSIT RATES January 2026

Stanbic Bank Botswana Prime Lending Rate (SBBPLR) - 7.01%



BWP Deposit Interest Rates

Type of Deposit Account	Nominal Interest Rates % (Lowest - Highest)	Actual Interest Rates % (Lowest - Highest)	Minimum Opening Balance
Current	NIL	NIL	P50
Youth Account	2.00%	2.02%	P50
Call	0.05% - 1.00%	0.05% - 1.00%	P10,000
Premium Call	0.80% - 1.30%	0.80% - 1.31%	P50,000
32 Day Notice	0.25% - 1.00%	0.25% - 1.00%	P1,000
Savings (Pure Save)	0.25% - 0.75%	0.25% - 0.75%	P50
Koketso Savings	2.40%	2.43%	P100
Matshelo Savings	0.50% - 1.50%	0.50% - 1.51%	P500
Maitlamo Savings (12 - 36 months)	2.30% - 2.80%	2.32% - 2.84%	P100
91 day fixed deposit **	1.90%	1.92%	P1,000
6 month fixed deposit *	2.10% - 2.30%	2.12% - 2.32%	P1,000
12 month fixed deposit *	2.20% - 2.35%	2.22% - 2.38%	P1,000
24 month fixed deposit *	2.55% - 2.80%	2.58% - 2.84%	P1,000
Over 24 month fixed deposit *	2.80% - 3.30%	2.84% - 3.35%	P1,000
Stanbic Bank Prime Lending Rate	7.01%		

* Reference rate All interest rates quoted are on annual basis
 ** Rate applies to Flexi - Access Account

Lending Interest Rates

Lending Rates	Nominal Interest Rates % (Lowest - Highest)	Actual Interest Rates % (Lowest - Highest)
MoPR	3.5%	
SBBPLR Lending Rate	7.01%	
Mortgage Facility	SBBPLR - SBBPLR + 15%	SBBPLR - SBBPLR + 16.08%
Overdraft Facility (Revolving credit lines)	SBBPLR + 5% - SBBPLR + 18%	SBBPLR + 5.12% - SBBPLR + 19.56%
Credit Card	28% - 32%	31.89% - 37.14%
Lease Loans	SBBPLR - SBBPLR + 15%	SBBPLR - SBBPLR + 16.08%
Unsecured Personal Loans (excluding overdrafts, mortgage and credit cards)	SBBPLR + 8% - SBBPLR + 22%	SBBPLR + 8.30% - SBBPLR + 24.36%
Other Long-Term Loans	SBBPLR - SBBPLR + 18%	SBBPLR - SBBPLR + 19.56%

*Scheme related lending is per the scheme contract and is negotiable.
 All interest rates quoted are on annual basis

Foreign Currency Deposit Interest Rates

Type of Deposit Account	Nominal Interest Rates (%)	Actual Interest Rates (%)	Minimum Opening Balance	Type of Deposit Account	Nominal Interest Rates (%)	Actual Interest Rates (%)	Minimum Opening Balance
SA RAND	SA RAND	SA RAND	SA RAND	U.S. DOLLAR	U.S. DOLLAR	U.S. DOLLAR	U.S. DOLLAR
Current	0.0%	0.0%	100.00	Current	0.0%	0.0%	50.00
Call	0.00%-1.75%	0%-1.76%	500.00	Call	0.05%-1.00%	0.05%-1.00%	100.00
1 Month	1.50%-2.50%	1.51%-2.53%	1,000.00	1 Month	0.25%-0.35%	0.25%-0.35%	100.00
2 Months	1.60%-2.60%	1.61%-2.63%	1,000.00	2 Months	0.35%-0.42%	0.35%-0.42%	100.00
3 Months	1.70%-2.70%	1.71%-2.73%	1,000.00	3 Months	0.37%-0.45%	0.37%-0.45%	100.00
6 Months	1.80%-2.80%	1.81%-2.84%	1,000.00	6 Months	0.40%-0.60%	0.40%-0.60%	100.00
12 Months	2.20%-3.20%	2.22%-3.25%	1,000.00	12 Months	0.45%-0.75%	0.45%-0.75%	100.00
Over 24 Months	2.40%-3.50%	2.43%-3.56%	1,000.00	Over 24 Months	0.75%-1.25%	0.75%-1.26%	100.00
BRITISH POUND	BRITISH POUND	BRITISH POUND	BRITISH POUND	EURO	EURO	EURO	EURO
Current	0.0%	0.0%	50.00	Current	0.0%	0.0%	50.00
Call	0.05%	0.05%	100.00	Call	0.00%	0.00%	100.00
1 Month	0.05%-0.07%	0.05%-0.07%	100.00	1 Month	0.00%	0.00%	100.00
2 Months	0.07%-0.09%	0.07%-0.09%	100.00	2 Months	0.00%	0.00%	100.00
3 Months	0.09%-0.10%	0.09%-0.10%	100.00	3 Months	0.00%	0.00%	100.00
6 Months	0.10%-0.15%	0.10%-0.15%	100.00	6 Months	0.00%	0.00%	100.00
12 Months	0.20%-0.30%	0.20%-0.30%	100.00	12 Months	0.00%	0.00%	100.00
Over 24 Months	0.25%-0.40%	0.25%-0.40%	100.00	Over 24 Months	0.00%	0.00%	100.00

All interest rates quoted are on annual basis
 Interest is calculated based on the daily closing balance and is credited to the account monthly. Interest begins to accrue from the day a deposit is made, if the minimum balance requirement is met. This applies to all interest-bearing products, except fixed deposits.
 Fixed Deposit interest is calculated based on the principal amount, agreed term and applicable interest rate. The accrued interest is paid at maturity or termination.

Member of Deposit Insurance Scheme of Botswana

10 African mining projects set to reach key milestones in 2026

A number of African mining projects are approaching important production, expansion, and infrastructure milestones.



Qala Shallows Gold Mine, South Africa

AFTER SEVERAL YEARS OF PROJECT delays and cautious investment, 2026 is shaping up as a year of delivery for African mining. A number of high-profile projects are approaching important production, expansion, and infrastructure milestones.

From copper and lithium to gold and iron ore, the following ten projects stand out as key developments to watch in 2026.

1. Kamoa-Kakula Copper Complex – Democratic Republic of Congo

One of the world's highest-grade copper operations is transitioning from recovery to production stability and expansion in 2026. Ivanhoe Mines has issued guidance that copper output at Kamoa-Kakula is expected to reach between 380,000 and 420,000 tonnes in 2026, with plans to complete an updated life-of-mine plan in early 2026. After addressing dewatering challenges and restarting underground operations, the complex also intends to clear concentrate stock and increase smelter feed.

2. Manono Lithium Project – Democratic Republic of Congo

The Manono Lithium Project, one of the world's largest undeveloped hard-rock lithium deposits, is on track for initial commercial production in early 2026. The project is designed with a total mining and processing capacity of 5 million tonnes per year and will include a smelter capable of processing 500,000 tonnes of spodumene concentrate annually, producing approximately 95,170 tonnes of crude lithium sulphate each year.

Mine construction is well underway, with the accommodation camp and Phase I solar farm already commissioned. Key components, including mining operations, processing facilities, the smelter, logistics infrastructure, and river diversion works, are all progressing on schedule, with commissioning targeted for June 30, 2026.

3. Qala Shallows Gold Mine – South Africa

The Qala Shallows Gold Mine, developed by West Wits Mining in South Africa's Witwatersrand Basin, represents one of the rare new underground gold developments in the country's mature gold sector. It is the first shallow underground gold mine to be developed in South Africa in 15 years.

Mining began in late 2025, with the first gold pour targeted for March 2026, marking the start of meaningful production and ramp-up expected throughout 2026. The mine aims to produce 70,000 ounces annually and forms the first phase of the larger Witwatersrand Basin Project, laying the groundwork for future expansion.

4. Goulamina Lithium Project – Mali

The Goulamina Lithium Project in Mali, operated by Ganfeng Lithium in partnership with the Malian government (which holds a 35% stake), has moved beyond development and entered commercial production, establishing itself as one of Africa's most advanced lithium operations. Commissioning of the first production phase was completed in late 2024, and the mine is now producing around 506,000 tonnes of spodumene concentrate annually, with plans to expand toward 1 million tonnes per year in subsequent phases.

Goulamina continues to generate battery-grade lithium concentrate into 2025 and 2026, supporting Mali's emerging role in global lithium supply chains, and is expected to maintain strong output while underpinning the country's ambitions as a key supplier of critical minerals.

5. Bougouni Lithium Project – Mali

Following its formal inauguration in November 2025 by Mali's President General Assimi Goïta, the Bougouni Lithium Project is poised for continued progress through 2026 as it transitions from commissioning into sustained production and export operations.

The Stage 1 dense media separation (DMS) processing plant has already begun producing highgrade spodumene concentrate, with the first export shipments

expected to generate initial revenues and cement Bougouni's role as a key supplier in the global lithium supply chain.

With a targeted annual output of roughly 125 000 tonnes of 5.5 % Li₂O spodumene concentrate and plans underway to nearly double capacity with a Stage 2 flotation plant, the project is expected to make significant contributions to Mali's expanding critical minerals sector and to broader African lithium production in 2026.

6. Fekola Regional Expansion – Mali

As B2Gold's Fekola Mine in Mali transitions into 2026, the company is progressing key components of its growth strategy with significant contributions expected from both underground operations and the Fekola Regional expansion.

Following approval in mid-2025 to commence underground mining at Fekola, stope ore production has begun and is being processed through the mill, with underground output expected to ramp up significantly in 2026.

Meanwhile, the Fekola Regional project, which received its exploitation permit and will see ore trucked to the existing Fekola mill, is anticipated to contribute approximately 180,000 ounces of additional gold annually over its first five full years of production from 2026 through 2030, enhancing the overall production profile and extending the life of the Fekola Complex well into the 2030s. Additionally, milestones such as the construction of haul roads and supporting infrastructure have already been completed, enabling mining prestripping activities to transition into initial gold output early in 2026.

7. Otjikoto Antelope Underground Project – Namibia

As the Otjikoto Mine in Namibia enters 2026, B2Gold is progressing plans to supplement its production profile through development of the Antelope underground deposit, following a positive Preliminary Economic Assessment (PEA) completed in early 2025 that confirmed strong project economics and production potential.

The Antelope deposit, comprising zones with highgrade gold mineralisation, could be developed as a smallscale, lowcost underground operation that supports Otjikoto's output into the next decade alongside stockpile processing. With ongoing optimisation work, early technical planning and permitting are expected to continue through 2026, advancing the project toward potential future production.

8. Simandou Iron Ore Project – Guinea

In 2026, the Simandou iron ore project in Guinea is set to transition from construction to initial production, following first shipments expected in late 2025 and ongoing infrastructure development.

The highgrade iron ore deposit, one of the world's largest, is expected to deliver millions of tonnes of premium ore into the seaborne market, with production from both the northern and southern blocks ramping up before full-scale operations later in the decade. This phase will be critical for testing rail and port logistics, establishing export flows, and laying the groundwork for long-term contributions to global iron ore supply.

9. Lobito Corridor Rail and Export Infrastructure – Angola / Zambia / DRC

The Lobito Corridor, connecting the Central African Copperbelt to the Atlantic, continues construction and integration among Angola, Zambia, and the DRC. In 2026, key segments are expected to reach operational readiness, dramatically lowering transport costs and transit times for minerals like copper and cobalt. (Based on infrastructure project planning and regional transport agendas.)

10. Tulu Kapi Gold Project – Ethiopia

Tulu Kapi has faced delays and complex financing challenges, but renewed developer focus and financing arrangements in 2025 have positioned the project to advance early construction and development milestones in 2026. When delivered, it will be one of Ethiopia's first large-scale gold mines, unlocking new investment potential in the country's mining sector. [miningreview.com]

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The University is looking for a qualified and experienced individual for the below stated position. The successful candidate will be appointed on a fixed term contract of up to five years.

CHIEF OF OPERATIONS

Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST) is a research-intensive University established by the Government of Botswana. BIUST is committed to fundamental and applied research with particular emphasis on the economy of Botswana. A key strategy of the University is to build strong partnerships with a number of world-class Universities together with regional, national and international public and private sector enterprises. The University is seeking to identify a leader to carry out the duties and responsibilities of Chief of Operations.

Main purpose of the job

The incumbent will strategically and effectively lead and oversee provision of corporate support functions to the University, which includes ,accounting ,financial management services, information technology services, campus facilities management services, project management of campus infrastructure. The incumbent is expected to lead the internal organisation and operation of the departments in this cluster; create a proper work environment and steer its resources in the right direction for achieving its goals

Qualifications and Experience

At least ten (10) years work Experience at managerial level, six (6) of which should have been at Senior Management or similar role in a large institution. University experience will be an added advantage preferably in a Higher Education institution such as a recognized large University or similar organisation with management control experience in all or most of the functional areas of responsibility indicated above.

The successful applicant will have at least a Master's in Business, Management or a related field from a recognized institution. Professional graduate accreditations and memberships preferred.

Key Performance Areas:

- IT support to users, and the design and adoption of efficient and up to date IT platforms, applications, systems, services to enhance operational efficiency
- Effective budgeting, financial planning and control, financial management and reporting
- Fair, transparent and value for money procurement
- Safe, secure, well-maintained, and optimally utilised campus facilities
- Efficient management of campus infrastructure development project
- Delivery of quality audit, assurance and management services
- Seek to continuously improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Operations wing,

- Optimal resource planning, allocation, utilisation and management at all times
- Maintenance of good relations with key partners and other external stakeholders
- Build, lead and motivate a unified team to operate around a unique organisation culture and to advance into a high performing team
- Establish overall goals, strategies, plans and objectives for BIUST

The position requires the following competencies:

- Ambition to achieve the highest standards in the delivery of own work
- Apply interpersonal styles/methods to develop, motivate and empower individuals to achieve goals
- Conceptual and practical thinking
- Customer focused
- Decisive and assertive
- Maintain confidentiality and aware of sensitive situation
- Personal value system (personal integrity, conscientiousness and strong moral character)
- Professionalism and adherence to good work ethics
- Team player with strong dedication to BIUST's purpose and mission
- Visionary and strategic thinking
- Work well in a multi-cultural environment

Remuneration

The University offers an attractive package, commensurate with qualifications and experience.

If you meet the requirements of the above stated position, please send your application letter and a detailed Curriculum Vitae and certified copies of academic qualifications including at least three (3) recent professional references to;

Director, Human Capital at the email address below:

executiverecruitment@biust.ac.bw

For any further enquiries, you may call Ms Taolo @ +267 4931305 Mr Mothibakgomo 4931312

CLOSING DATE: January 25th, 2026



lifestyle

Artists petition Parliament

Allege widespread mismanagement at National Arts Council

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ARTISTS FROM ACROSS Botswana have petitioned the National Assembly, calling for parliamentary intervention into what they allege is maladministration, financial mismanagement and abuse of public funds at the National Arts Council of Botswana (NACB).

The petition was submitted on November 26 through Chobe Member of Parliament Simasiku Oscar Mapulanga in terms of Standing Order 35.2, on behalf of theatre groups and independent artists who participated in the 2025 National Arts Festival. It was

addressed to Speaker of the National Assembly Oithapeleng Keorapetse and all Members of Parliament.

At the centre of the petition are allegations surrounding an estimated P24 million allocated by the Ministry of Sports and Arts for the 2025 National Arts Festival. According to the artists, NACB announced in July that the festival would run through a structured process beginning at ward level, progressing to constituency and regional stages before culminating in a national carnival. The petitioners say the Council later abandoned ward-level competitions without consultation, a move that should have reduced costs and allowed the remaining stages to proceed.

However, on October 3, NACB

announced the suspension of all outstanding festival activities, citing exhausted funds. Artists argue that the explanation raises serious questions about how the allocation was used, with the petition alleging possible mismanagement or misallocation of public resources.

The petition further accuses NACB of engaging unregistered arts associations to co-administer the festival, despite legal requirements under the Societies Act and the National Arts Council of Botswana Act.

The artists claim that the Ministry of Sports and Arts had previously declined to fund or work with unregistered bodies, yet NACB allegedly proceeded to do so. They

say these concerns were formally raised with NACB chief executive officer Otswetse Koboyankwe in August but were not addressed.

Payment disparities between artists and event coordinators also feature prominently in the petition. According to the artists, performance groups comprising between 15 and 30 members received a once-off payment of P7,000 per event, translating to minimal individual earnings after costs. In contrast, coordinators allegedly received between P7,000 and P8,000 per event, with some reportedly earning significantly more across multiple engagements.

Artists also complain of delayed payments, with some participants



Former National Arts Council of Botswana CEO, Otswetse Kobonyane

from the July constituency stage still unpaid months later despite submitting all required documentation. They argue that such delays would not be tolerated if they affected government employees or service providers.

The cancellation of the remaining festival stages is said to have caused financial losses for many artists who invested in rehearsals, costumes and logistics after being promised

progression to later rounds, where prize money was expected to increase. The petition describes the suspension as a breach of professional engagement that left creatives bearing unrecovered costs.

The artists further accuse the NACB leadership of failing to engage meaningfully with their complaints, alleging that formal requests for written responses were ignored and concerns dismissed as internal

disputes within arts associations.

Through the petition, the artists are asking Parliament to intervene, investigate the conduct of the Council and ensure accountability, compensation and structural reforms within the arts funding system. At the time of publication, neither the National Arts Council of Botswana nor the Ministry of Sports and Arts had publicly responded to the allegations contained in the petition.

iShowSpeed graces Botswana

ISHOWSPEED, WHOSE REAL NAME is Darren Watkins Jr., has an estimated net worth generally reported to be between \$10 million and \$30 million as of late 2025. Some reports suggest figures as high as \$100 million when including a purported deal with Rumble. His wealth is generated through YouTube revenue, Streaming Deals, music, merchandise etc.

19-year-old the world knows as iShowSpeed has 76 million followers across all his social accounts. He's the most subscribed-to English-speaking streamer on YouTube. And while he's still finding his feet in a career he started just a few years ago, Speed's presence in popular culture is omnipresent



Popular USA Youtuber and Streamer, iShowSpeed during touring Zola

[PIC: GORATAONE Kgosimore]

Tonota Music Festival debuts

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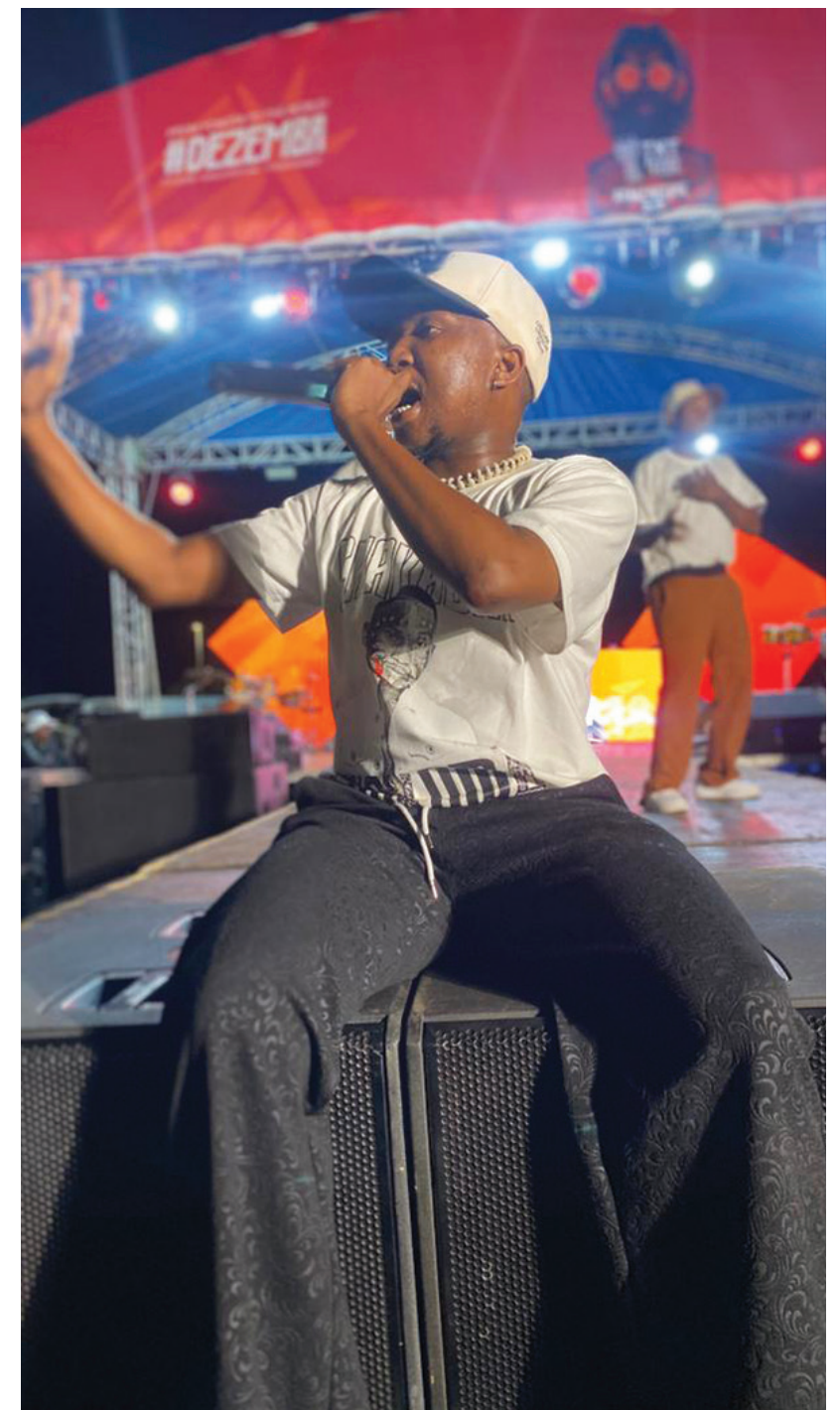
THE INAUGURAL TONOTA Music Festival, held on December 24 at the Tonota FC Grounds, lived up to expectations, delivering a vibrant and well-curated musical experience that ushered revellers into the Christmas celebrations in style. The festive event, which marked its first edition, was a resounding success, setting a strong foundation for what promises to become a key fixture on Botswana's entertainment calendar.

The Patriot on Sunday partnered digitally with the event, amplifying its reach and visibility, as music lovers from Tonota and surrounding areas converged in large numbers to witness a star-studded lineup. From start to finish, the festival ran smoothly, with all booked artists honouring their appearances and delivering energetic performances that kept the crowd engaged throughout the night.

One of the standout moments of the evening came from Chokoma, who lit up the stage with a unique and refreshing set. The artist performed exclusively unreleased material from his upcoming album, which was released later this year. His signature rumba and kwasakwasa-infused sound reverberated across the venue, drawing positive reactions from the audience. The warm reception to the new material suggested that the album is poised to be a hit, with fans praising both the rhythm and lyrical depth of the songs.

Franco and Afro Musica further elevated the night with a high-energy performance that sent the crowd into a dance frenzy. The group's commanding stage presence and infectious beats saw both ladies and gentlemen take to the dance floor, their waist movements echoing the timeless influence of rumba legends such as Koffi Olomidé. Franco added a nostalgic touch to the performance by breaking into an acappella session, sending the audience into raptures with classic hits including Robala Nnana, Madame Dumela and Sephiri Se Dule.

The excitement continued with an electrifying performance by international lekomo sensation



Chokoma performing at the Tonota Fest

Janesh. The South African artist, whose music has been dominating dance floors across the Southern African region, had the crowd singing and dancing along to her popular tracks. Her energetic backup dancers added flair to the performance, further igniting the festive atmosphere.

As the night transitioned into the early hours of Christmas morning, gospel icon Winnie Mashaba took to the stage, delivering a spiritually uplifting performance. Her melodious hymns and nostalgic gospel classics prompted revellers to pause, kneel and praise, a powerful

reminder that faith and festivity can coexist. For many in the crowd, Mashaba's songs evoked fond memories of childhood Sundays spent doing household chores with her music playing in the background.

Despite challenging weather conditions, the organisers proved well-prepared, ensuring seamless security, catering and hospitality services. All promises were delivered, making the first annual Tonota Music Festival a clear success and a promising beginning for future editions.

Lemmenyane is NACB CEO



Newly appointed NACB CEO, Gaokgakala Daniel Lemmenyane

THE NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL of Botswana (NACB) is delighted to announce the appointment of Mr. Gaokgakala Daniel Lemmenyane as the Chief Executive Officer. A seasoned arts administrator, cultural policy specialist, and resource mobilisation strategist with over 15 years of leadership across the creative sector, academia, government, and international institutions.

His academic accolades include a Bachelor of Arts and Post Graduate Certificate of Education from University of Cape Town. He further garnered a Master of Arts from University of Witwatersrand where he continues to pursue his Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) candidature.

With a career rooted in building sustainable arts ecosystems, Lemmenyane brings a rare

combination of sector-wide artistic literacy, institutional management, and high-level policy and partnership experience. Lemmenyane's career in the creative and cultural industries is beautifully decorated by years of leadership in both creative practice and educational development. He served for six years as the Director of Maitisong Theatre, Maru-a-Pula School, leading operations while driving sponsorship-based programming. In this role, he conceptualised, produced and fundraised for Maitisong Festival, the Mascom President's Concert, and Barclays' Madi Majwana (radio drama, stage production and social media campaign). His tenure demonstrated strong and sustained long-term partnerships within the corporate sector.

His academic leadership includes

five years at Wits University (Johannesburg, South Africa) as Head of Arts Department and lecturer where he contributed to teaching, research and strategic institutional performance. He is a founding member of Drama for Life, an international programme based at Wits University that champions skills development, recognition of prior learning, and the integration of creative methodologies into education, health and social justice.

Lemmenyane also brings direct industry insight, having served for four years as a UNICEF Botswana Consultant, leading productions including the adaptation of MTV's internationally acclaimed television and radio series Shuga Down South. This experience sharpened his understanding of the lived realities of creative entrepreneurs,

including procurement barriers, late payments, and intellectual property vulnerabilities. At national policy level, he served as Policy Specialist for Arts & Culture in the former Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport & Culture Development, overseeing departments spanning National Celebrations, Visual Arts, Arts & Culture, and Youth Broadcasting Channel (NOW!).

He helped shape post-COVID recovery interventions for creatives and played a key role, alongside PEEPA in establishing the inaugural NACB Board, from recruitment to launch. His most recent appointment was at the African Union Commission (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia) where he served as Advisor to the Chairperson of the AU Commission on Education, Science, Technology & Innovation (ESTI), a senior role supporting strategy, stakeholder engagement, and partnerships with AU organs, Member States, Regional Economic Communities and global partners. This work has expanded his diplomatic reach and networks, assets he intends to leverage for Botswana's creative economy, including opportunities such as digitisation of art collections, content monetisation and strengthened international collaborations.

With Mr. Lemmenyane at the helm, NACB is well positioned for continued growth and success. The Council is excited about the experience, energy, and leadership he brings to grow the creative and cultural sector.

In-Stores



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📘 The Patriot Woman

The Patriot *inspirational*
woman

Sport

Kebaitse joins BAA admin



BAA Manager-Sports Administration, Legojane Kebaitse

THE BOTSWANA ATHLETICS Association (BAA) has appointed Legojane Kebaitse as Manager – Sport Administration, effective 05 January 2026. Kebaitse brings extensive experience in sport administration, athletics governance and ICT. He previously served two terms as BAA Secretary-General and is a World Athletics Certified Referee and Photo Finish Judge. He has officiated at World Championships, including Daegu 2011. Kebaitse also played a key role in governance reforms and chaired the BAA Constitutional Review Task Team. He holds a Master of Business Administration and a BSc (Hons) in Applied Business Computing.

Ntungga for Junior Australian Open



According to the latest ITF World Rankings, Botswana tennis star Ntungami Raguin is in the World Top 100. Consequently, he has qualified to play in the qualifiers of the Australian Open Junior. Before winning back-to-back home tournaments in November 2025, Ntungga was ranked number 200.

Ramoreboli on AFCON flop

Explains Zebras's early exit from Morocco



Zebras bowed out of Afcon 2025 after losing all three of their group stage matches

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BOTSWANA'S AFRICA CUP OF Nations (AFCON) campaign in Morocco came to an early end at the group stages, with head coach Morena Ramoreboli pointing to the gap in quality, experience and match exposure as the primary reasons behind the Zebras' disappointing showing. The Zebras lost all three of their group matches, going down 3-0 to Senegal, 1-0 to Benin and 3-0 to DR Congo. They finished the group without a point or a goal scored, marking their poorest AFCON performance to date and mirroring their inaugural appearance in 2012, albeit without the consolation of a goal this time around. The tournament is still ongoing and will conclude on January 23.

According to Ramoreboli, the technical team approached the tournament with realism rather than ambition unchecked by context. He admitted that Botswana was drawn against opponents whose players are accustomed to elite-level football and constant pressure, a reality that shaped both preparation and tactics. "We had to be honest with ourselves about the level we were going to face. We were playing against teams with players who are exposed to pressure week in and week out. To match that quality, you have to bring a lot more than just desire," Ramoreboli said.

Defensive Priorities

Ramoreboli revealed that Botswana's cautious approach was not accidental but a calculated response to the aggressive nature of their opponents. He dismissed suggestions that the Zebras should have played a more open, attacking game, arguing that such an approach could have led to heavier defeats.

He explained that opposing teams consistently committed numbers forward, leaving Botswana with difficult choices every time possession was won.

"Every time we got the ball, they had

three players ready to attack. You have to ask yourself how many you leave behind and how many you commit forward. If you get that wrong, you get punished," he said.

Despite prioritising defensive organisation, Botswana still conceded goals in all three matches, a frustration Ramoreboli acknowledged. He conceded that while the team set out to limit damage, they struggled to sustain concentration and structure against relentless pressure.

Limited Exposure

A recurring theme in Ramoreboli's assessment was exposure. He noted that many of his players do not regularly compete at the intensity required at AFCON level, making it difficult to maintain consistency over 90 minutes against seasoned opposition.

The lack of regular high-level competition, he said, showed in moments of decision-making, recovery runs and transitional play, areas where AFCON matches are often decided.

Attacking Sacrifice

The defensive focus also came at a price. Botswana struggled to create meaningful attacking opportunities and finished the tournament without scoring. However, Ramoreboli maintained that the approach was necessary under the circumstances.

"If we had tried to open up, we would have been exposed even more," he said, adding that the team's limited attacking output was a consequence of prioritising competitiveness over entertainment.

Lessons for future

Despite the poor results, Ramoreboli insisted that the AFCON experience would not be wasted. He described the tournament as a learning curve for both players and technical staff, offering a clear picture of what is required to compete consistently at continental level.

"We knew it was going to be a very competitive tournament. We did not get the results we wanted, but we have learned a lot," he said.

Chiefs hire European coach

KITSO RAMONO
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MOCUDI CENTRE CHIEFS HAVE turned to Europe in their bid to arrest a worrying slide, appointing Spanish coach Miguel Corral Torreira as head coach following the departure of Pontsho Moloi last week.

The 34-year-old Torreira, a UEFA Pro Licence holder, arrives at a club that has struggled for direction, goals and consistency, despite heavy investment in playing personnel over the past two seasons. Chiefs' decision comes after

sustained pressure from supporters, who had grown increasingly frustrated with a run of poor results that yielded just 13 wins, 13 defeats and two draws under the previous technical leadership.

The expectation had been clear, challenge for the league title. Instead, performances dipped, goals dried up and patience ran out. Club president Stanford Fredericks said the appointment was the result of an extensive recruitment process focused not only on qualifications, but on football philosophy and cultural fit. "We did not appoint him on credentials alone. We wanted a coach whose ideas

align with where this club wants to go," Fredericks said.

Clear football identity

Torreira wasted little time in outlining how he wants Chiefs to play. The Spaniard favours an offensive, possession-based approach, built on high pressing, quick ball recovery and vertical attacking play. His teams are expected to press aggressively when possession is lost, defend compactly, and attack with speed and purpose once the ball is regained. "I like good possession of the ball, but it is very important to press high when we lose it. We want to recover the ball very

fast and attack again," Torreira said.

He also stressed the importance of balance, insisting that attacking football must be supported by defensive discipline. "You can have possession, but without a good defence it is very difficult to win matches," he said.

No overhaul planned

Despite arriving midway through the season and inheriting a squad assembled by his predecessor, Torreira indicated he is not planning a major overhaul during the current transfer window. He confirmed that the club has already added a striker and said he is satisfied with the squad at his disposal, at least for now. "I need time to know my players better, not only from video but in training. But

it is a good squad. There is quality in all positions," he said.

His immediate focus will be on improving team structure, raising intensity levels and developing younger players within the squad.

Short-term goals, long-term vision. Chiefs are currently aiming to stabilise their campaign and push for a top-three finish, with cup success viewed as an added bonus rather than a demand. Fredericks emphasised that the club is not interested in short-term fixes or frequent coaching changes, saying Torreira will be given time to implement his ideas.

Football, however, remains a results business.

I ♥ C

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