

# The Patriot

## on Sunday

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### BDP mulls coalition

**E**VEN AFTER SUFFERING A humiliating defeat in October 2024, the opposition Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) Executive Secretary, Ame Makoba is adamant that they can cause an upset during the 2029 general elections. He cites popular vote of 30 percent against the ruling Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC)'s 37 percent. With such statistic, he insists that no party can match them pound for pound. But numbers can be deceiving, especially in politics.

Interestingly, the BDP walked away with a paltry four (4) parliamentary seats in 2024, when the UDC brought an end to their continuous rule spanning close to 6 decades. Makoba tells **STAFF WRITER BAKANG TIRO** that going forward, BDP will consider forming a coalition with other opposition parties to launch a strong comeback to state power. **PATRIOT: Do you believe BDP can bounce back to power in 2029?**

**Ame Makoba (AM):** I have no doubt that the BDP can come back in 2029. We have a very determined generation of leaders, led by President Mpho Balopi and behind them another layer of leadership coming up. We are in it to win it. We don't expect it to be easy but we exist to contest elections and to win elections if possible. So yes, we can and we intend to win 2029.

**PATRIOT: Will the party approach 2029 solo or would you opt for a coalition?**

**AM:** It is a matter for the Central Committee and ultimately the Congress of the Party to decide upon. That discussion has not been had at present. But as you see, we are quite a force on our own and our numbers show that we have a good chance.

FULL STORY ON PAGE 3



President Duma Boko

**KITSO RAMONO & BAKWADI LEKOPANE**  
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**P**RESIDENT DUMA BOKO SPENT the whole Friday morning lecturing to members of Ntlo Ya Dikgosi over plans to establish a Constitutional Court through a Bill that was passed by Parliament at the end of 2025.

In the end Dikgosi took turns appreciating the detailed, knowledge enriching and simplified presentation. Now that they understand the rationale behind establishment of a Constitutional Court, they fully embrace it despite that they had earlier rejected the Bill

# Dikgosi embrace ConCourt

■ Approve Constitutional Court ahead of holistic Constitutional Review

when it was presented before Ntlo ya Dikgosi. It emerged that Dikgosi had rejected the proposed Constitutional Court because they had never been consulted and appraised about the implications of the Bill bringing it, to which Boko apologised profusely.

Boko outlined the distinction between a Constitutional Court and the broader Constitutional Review process, and why both are necessary for Botswana's democracy. He gave a detailed presentation justifying the need for the urgent establishment of a Constitutional Court, arguing that the country cannot wait for the completion of a full Constitutional Review while citizens' rights continue to be violated.

Using an analogy from the health sector, Boko said just as patients first consult general practitioners before being referred to specialists, the legal system also requires specialised expertise. He explained that while there are different branches of legal practice, such as criminal, commercial and human rights law, constitutional law is a specialised field that requires judges and practitioners who deeply understand the Constitution and draw lessons from international best practice.

"Our Constitution has a rich history, but it was crafted at a time when many voices were excluded," Boko said. He recalled that early constitutional discussions in Lobatse

in 1961 and later in 1963 did not adequately represent women and all tribes. The Independence Constitution, he added, largely mirrored British constitutional models used across former colonies.

Boko said Botswana's governance system evolved into a presidential system in which executive authority is concentrated in the Office of the President. He noted that although the Dibotelo Commission was tasked with reviewing the Constitution, its outcomes did not reflect the will of the people on key issues such as the direct election of the President and the establishment of a Constitutional Court.

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## Boko on Death Penalty, Queer claims

**KITSO RAMONO**  
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**P**RESIDENT DUMA BOKO HAS dismissed claims that he is aggressively pursuing the establishment of the Constitutional Court to use it to abolish the death penalty and legalize same-sex relationships as unfounded and misleading.

Addressing members of Ntlo ya Dikgosi during a consultative meeting about the introduction of the Constitutional Court in Gaborone on Friday morning, Boko said wild and false allegations circulating in public platforms have created unnecessary fear and panic. He explained that Botswana's

Constitution already provides clear guidance on the right to life and the circumstances under which the death penalty is applied.

### Death penalty

Referring to Section 4 of the Constitution, Boko said while life must be respected and protected, the Constitution allows deprivation of life through a lawful court order. He said where a person is convicted of murder and no extenuating circumstances are found, the prescribed punishment is death. "The Constitution allows that a person may be sentenced to death by a court of law. That is not a Presidential wish, it is the law," he said.

Boko further clarified that the

President's role in death penalty cases, as outlined in Section 53, is not discretionary in the manner suggested by critics. He said once all legal processes, including appeals, have been exhausted and the courts confirm the death sentence, the President's role is to execute the law, not to substitute it with personal beliefs.

"When all the legal boxes are ticked, it is no longer about my feelings or anyone else's feelings. It is a responsibility imposed by law," he said, adding that emotions must be separated from legal duties.

He cautioned against claims that the Constitutional Court would give the President powers to abolish the death penalty, stressing that the court

would operate strictly within the Constitution.

### Same sex relationships

Turning to the issue of same-sex relationships, Boko said this was also not a matter for the President to decide. He explained that the issue is governed by the Penal Code, specifically Sections 167 and 168, which deal with sexual conduct.

Drawing from his experience as a lawyer, Boko referenced the *Kanane v State* case, where the courts examined the constitutionality of certain provisions of the Penal Code. He said while some parts of Section 167 were struck out, Section 168 remained intact, and the courts

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## Clifton College: Shaping the Next Generation of Dynamic Leaders

STAFF WRITER



SITUATED JUST OUTSIDE THE bustle of Botswana's second city, Clifton College is redefining what a senior school can be. With its infrastructure steadily taking shape, the school is already asserting itself as a national leader in both academic excellence and sporting dominance — proving that high performance in the classroom and on the field can thrive side by side. Far from being a typical Form One to Upper Six institution, Clifton College has rapidly positioned itself among Botswana's top performers in the Cambridge curriculum, recording a 100% pass rate. At the same time, the school currently holds national championship titles in swimming, cricket, tennis, hockey, and girls' softball — a rare achievement that underscores its commitment to excellence across disciplines.

holistic," said Headmaster Elson Murisa. "Academic results matter, and we are proud to be among the very best nationally. But sport builds discipline, resilience, and leadership — qualities that shape strong, capable individuals." Murisa emphasised that the school's ongoing infrastructure

development is deliberately aligned to future-focused learning. "This is just the beginning," he noted. "The infrastructure we are putting together is a stepping board for the future. STEM, robotics, and technology represent the industries of tomorrow, and it all has to start here — by building possibilities and

daring to dream." Clifton College's curriculum integrates STEM education, robotics, sports, culture, leadership development, and the arts, ensuring that every learner finds a pathway to excel. Supported by leading regional coaches and a committed academic team, students are encouraged

to pursue excellence beyond examinations, embracing a multi-disciplinary approach to growth. "We will not apologise for excellent grades in Cambridge — we are among the best," Murisa added. "But not every child's gift is the same. Our role is to create a hub of value where academics, sport, science, culture, and creativity combine to produce leaders with dynamic capabilities." The school's diverse student body, drawn from different nationalities, cultures, and backgrounds, reflects a metropolitan learning environment that prepares students for an interconnected world. Collaboration, adaptability, and respect are embedded into daily school life. As new classrooms, laboratories, and sports facilities continue to take shape, Clifton College is building more than infrastructure. "Beyond grades and trophies," Murisa concluded, "we are building character, confidence, and the courage to lead."

## Postgraduate Tuition Waivers and Graduate Teaching Support

GABORONE—THE UNIVERSITY of Botswana confirms the introduction of tuition fee waivers for eligible full-time postgraduate students. The measure is intended to support postgraduate enrolment and to strengthen teaching and learning capacity within the University. Under the approved arrangement, eligible Doctor of Philosophy students may receive a full tuition fee waiver, while eligible Master's students may receive a partial tuition fee waiver. Access to the tuition waiver is subject to meeting prescribed eligibility requirements and completion of an approved application and selection process in accordance with University regulations and policies. The waiver is not automatic qualification upon admission. Terms and conditions

apply. Students who are granted tuition waivers will be required to support teaching and learning activities within the University. These activities may include teaching undergraduate courses, conducting tutorials, practical sessions, and other related instructional duties. Assignments will be made by the relevant academic units and carried out under the supervision of Heads of Department. Any engagement of beneficiaries in University work outside teaching and learning responsibilities will be considered on a case-by-case basis and processed through the relevant Deputy Vice Chancellor. Further details on eligibility criteria, application procedures, and implementation will be communicated through official University channels.

## Bootcamp for Moshupa Senior School boys

AT THE HEAD OF THE REOPENING OF schools, Moshupa Senior Secondary School conducted a week-long transformative bootcamp facilitated by the Men's Conference Organisation. Led by Louis Sibanda, the programme brought together eager young men preparing to begin Form 5 in 2026.

The bootcamp sought to empower the boys with essential life skills while addressing pressing challenges such as alcohol and drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, and academic performance.

With the support of dedicated teachers and the school head, the program featured a dynamic mix of intellectually stimulating games, physical fitness activities, and thought-provoking debates. Speakers, including Men's Conference patron Kgosietsile Ngakaagae, Director of Public Prosecutions, and Kgosi Oscar Mosielele of Moshupa, shared valuable insights on managing pressure, resolving conflicts peacefully, and striving for excellence.

Prison officials, police officers, and health care workers from the DHMT also contributed to discussions on academic excellence, student health, the impact of poverty on education, and strategies for combating GBV. The event



underscored the Men's Conference and the School's commitment to fostering a supportive community for young men to thrive, with attendees

praising the opportunity to engage with inspiring leaders and peers. "It was a resounding success, with the boys gaining invaluable insights

and skills to shape their futures," said a participant. The Men's Conference continues to promote positive change, empowering young men to

become confident, responsible, and compassionate leaders of tomorrow. Source: Ministry of Child Welfare & basic Education

## Access Bank Invests in Student Wellness

- 1,270 learners provided dignified space for guidance and counselling
- Supporting education goes far beyond what happens in the classroom - Ratang Icho Molebatsi

ability to receive support and guidance that is crucial during their formative years. The new facility will address this gap by creating a welcoming environment where learners can speak openly about their challenges, receive guidance, and be provided with care in moments of need.

"Supporting education goes far beyond what happens in the classroom. True learning thrives when students feel safe, heard, and cared for. This space represents our belief that every child deserves access to emotional and physical wellbeing support as they navigate their educational journey," said Ratang Icho-Molebatsi, Finance Director at Access Bank Botswana.

ACCESS BANK'S FINANCE & Legal Teams reinforced their commitment to promoting holistic educational support and student wellbeing through an investment of P85,000 for a new Guidance & Counselling space and sick bay at Bokamoso Junior Secondary School in Gaborone. The porta cabin is expected to be operational in the near future. The new space was made possible through employee-driven fundraising efforts and personal contributions.

The initiative has provided 1,270 learners with a porta cabin serving as a safe, private, and confidential space for emotional support, counselling, and basic health care. Prior to this intervention, Bokamoso Junior Secondary School lacked a dedicated wellness space, limiting students'

This project exemplifies the power of cross-departmental collaboration for community impact. By pooling resources and expertise, the Finance, Procurement, and Legal teams have created a lasting legacy that will benefit generations of learners at Bokamoso Junior Secondary School. "This initiative reflects our collective commitment to investing in Botswana's youth and supporting the communities where we operate," said Thato Mmole, Head of Legal & Compliance.

The investment aligns with Access Bank's broader corporate social responsibility philosophy, which prioritises education, child wellbeing, and community upliftment. By addressing fundamental needs that impact learning outcomes, the Bank continues to actively partner in national development with employees at the helm.



## Dikgosi embrace ConCourt

FROM PAGE 1

"Botswana said in large numbers they wanted a directly elected President and a Constitutional Court, but those views did not find expression in the commission's final report," Boko said, questioning whose directive was being followed when such popular views were set aside.

He stressed that constitutional review is often misunderstood, saying it is not about changing the Constitution for political convenience, but about assessing whether it remains relevant to modern realities. Boko said the Constitution's complex language, written in English, often confuses even legal experts, leading to conflicting interpretations that stall justice. Citing past cases, Boko said the absence of a Constitutional Court has resulted in serious human rights violations. He referred to instances where individuals were left without recourse after the Court of Appeal, currently the highest court in the land, ruled against them. He also mentioned the case of a Mosarwa man whose body remained in a morgue for three years due to burial restrictions, a situation Boko said would have been resolved sooner had a Constitutional Court existed. The man was eventually buried in 2024 on Human Rights Day following a change in administration.

Boko argued that a Constitutional Court would provide faster and more accessible justice, particularly for ordinary citizens who cannot afford legal representation. He said such a court could take up cases on its own initiative, allow petitions from individuals at no cost, and be assisted by "friends of the court", some of the country's best legal minds, thereby easing the burden on the High Court, which he described as a general court rather than a specialist

constitutional forum.

He also raised concerns about the marginalisation of customary law and traditional leadership, saying the current legal framework favours statutory and foreign laws at the expense of Botswana's own traditions. Boko said a comprehensive constitutional review would help restore the dignity, powers and integrity of traditional leaders. Turning to comparisons with other countries, Boko noted that South Africa introduced an interim constitutional arrangement that allowed for the establishment of a Constitutional Court even as constitutional negotiations continued. He said Botswana could adopt a similar approach, ensuring that constitutional disputes arising during the review process are resolved without delay.

"We cannot wait for the review to be completed while people's rights are violated. The Constitutional Court is not the review itself, but it is necessary to support the review process," he said.

Boko confirmed that during the current term of office, government will commence a comprehensive constitutional review focusing on the distribution of powers, the establishment of institutions, and the possible expansion not reduction of human rights protections.

Boko acknowledged that he should have consulted Ntlo ya Dikgosi earlier on the proposed reforms. "It is better that I come late than not come at all," he said.

Chiefs in attendance thanked the President for what they described as a comprehensive and clarifying presentation. They said their earlier reservations about the constitutional review bill were not due to opposition, but stemmed from a lack of understanding of its objectives and processes.

# VACANCY

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Gaborone**

# Foreigners control local gambling

KITSO RAMONO  
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As acute shortage of skilled manpower continues ■ Yet, gambling revenue approaches P1 billion mark

THE REGULATION OF Botswana's fast-growing gambling industry continues to rely heavily on foreign expertise, largely because the country has no local institutions offering formal training in gambling-related fields, the Gambling Authority has revealed.

Speaking during a media engagement on Thursday, Acting Chief Executive Officer Moruntshi Kemorwale said the absence of local training programmes has left the Authority with little choice but to outsource specialised regulatory functions to international consultants. "We continue to rely on external skills because locally we have limited capacity to conduct certain specialised tasks.

There is no training college or university in Botswana offering gambling-related training," said Kemorwale, decrying that while the gambling industry has expanded rapidly, the development of local expertise has not kept pace, creating a skills gap that places regulators at a disadvantage compared to operators who often have access to international technical support.

Kemorwale said gambling regulation requires highly specialised expertise, including gaming systems auditing, compliance monitoring and technological oversight, skills that are scarce even globally but entirely absent in local training institutions. "This industry is evolving very fast. If regulators do not keep up, they are always a step behind. As a result, we learn as we go," he said, adding that regulators often depend on conferences, masterclasses and collaboration with fellow regulators from other countries to build capacity.



Gambling Authority Ag. CEO, Moruntshi kemorwale

The skills shortage has also affected enforcement capacity, as Gambling Authority is forced to depend on external consultants to test systems, conduct audits and assess compliance. He said the situation has resulted in foreign professionals dominating the technical side of gambling regulation in Botswana, not because of policy preference, but due to necessity.

The lack of local training institutions offering gambling-related qualifications also limits long-term skills transfer and sustainability, leaving the country dependent on imported expertise. Unless Botswana develops its own training pathways

in gambling regulation and gaming systems, the skills gap will persist as the industry continues to grow, Kemorwale warned.

### P1 billion gross revenue

Meanwhile, Kemorwale announced that Botswana's gambling industry is on course to generate close to P1 billion in gross annual revenue by the end of the current financial year.

He cautioned that growth in the gambling industry must be carefully managed to ensure it does not undermine social wellbeing or public trust. "The industry has grown faster than anticipated. That growth brings opportunities, but

it also places greater responsibility on the regulator to ensure fairness, transparency and safety," Kemorwale said. He revealed that current estimates place gross gambling revenue at around P700 million, with projections indicating the figure could reach P1 billion by the end of the 2025/26 financial year. He said the growth has been driven largely by digital platforms, remote betting and increased consumer access. Kemorwale, however, cautioned against portraying gambling as a reliable source of income for players. "Gambling is a business meant for profit. If players were consistently winning, the industry would

collapse," he said.

### Key Challenges, Payouts

Responding to public concerns about fairness and transparency, the Gambling Authority has engaged an international gaming testing laboratory to audit gambling systems operating in the country. Kemorwale said the exercise will assess whether games are fair and compliant with licensing conditions, adding that the Authority will make the findings public once the audit is completed. "What is unacceptable is unfair play, misleading practices or systems that deny players legitimate recourse," he said.

Kemorwale said the Authority continues to face operational challenges, with public complaints commonly linked to delayed or disputed payouts, unclear terms and conditions, system failures during betting and advertising practices by some operators.

He said compliance levels across the industry remain uneven, noting that while some operators engage constructively with regulators, others struggle with record-keeping, consumer complaint resolution and responsible gambling controls.

According to Kemorwale, their Responsible Gambling Programme has begun to show measurable results, with gambling prevalence declining from 5 percent in 2020 to 3.4 percent in 2025.

"Responsible gambling is not optional. It is central to regulation," he observed.

The programme focuses on public education, counselling referrals and community partnerships, adding that online gambling has made it necessary for awareness campaigns to reach even areas without physical gambling outlets

[PIC:GORATAONE KGOSIMORE]

# Illegal Gambling Mentors warned

■ Gambling Authority crackdown on paid betting classes

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THE GAMBLING AUTHORITY Botswana has warned the public against individuals purporting to be gambling mentors who charge fees to "teach" people how to win, following reports of a growing illegal trend.

The Authority cautioned members of the public to desist from engaging such self-styled mentors, who often mislead clients with promises of guaranteed winnings. The so-called mentors reportedly conduct paid classes or training sessions, exploiting the public's desire for quick wealth.

In light of this, the Gambling Authority has asserted that it is working closely with Botswana Police Service to identify and apprehend those involved.

Addressing the media on Thursday, 16 January 2025, Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Gambling Authority of Botswana, Moruntshi Kemorwale, noted instances like the one above demonstrates the rapid growth of the gambling industry which has come with serious challenges. If left unchecked, he said this could have devastating consequences on the society.

Other challenges, he pointed, include problem gambling, increased participation, and youth exposure

"If gambling growth is not properly controlled, it has the potential to destroy families, communities, and ultimately nations. Unregulated or poorly regulated gambling can become a silent catastrophe

, a slow-burn crisis that does not announce itself with explosions, but quietly erodes social fabric, productivity, mental health, and economic stability," he emphasized.

He further cautioned punters against chasing wealth through gambling, urging responsible gambling and early intervention when gambling behaviour begins to spiral out of control. He rubbished the myth that one can get rich through gambling, stating that the house wins over time.

Intensified Public Education Kemorwale added that the Authority continues to strengthen public education and awareness programmes aimed at promoting responsible gambling, through working with media practitioners, social media influencers, community organisations, sports bodies, community leaders, private companies and digital platforms to ensure responsible gambling messages reach the public.

Through the Motshameko o Phepha campaign, an initiative aimed at educating the public on responsible gambling, the Gambling Authority has recorded a notable decline in gross gambling revenue. Out of the targeted 500 sites, 173 have already been visited, underscoring ongoing efforts to enforce responsible gambling practices.

He reaffirmed Gambling authority's commitment to strengthening regulation, including engaging international regulators, technology experts, law enforcement agencies to ensure maximum compliance.

# BDP mulls coalition

The opposition Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) Executive Secretary, Ame Makoba is adamant that they can cause an upset during the 2029 general elections, citing the party's popular vote of 30% against the ruling Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC)'s 37%. With the favourable statistic, he insists that no party can match them pound for pound. But numbers can be deceiving, especially in politics. BDP suffered a humiliating defeat during the historic 2024 general election, with the UDC victory bringing an end to continuous rule spanning close to 60 years. The BDP walked away with a paltry four (4) parliamentary seats in 2024. Makoba tells **STAFF WRITER BAKANG TIRO** that going forward, BDP will consider forming a coalition with other opposition parties to launch a comeback to state power.

### Q: WHO IS AME MAKOBA?

AM: I am a member of the BDP in Gaborone Central Constituency, Village Ward. I started my activism as a student politician at University of Botswana in the early 2000s. I have grown through the structures of the party as well as the administration. At present I am the Executive Secretary (CEO) of the Party.

### Q: Take us through what your daily routine is like at BDP office, managing the affairs of the party as Executive Secretary?

AM: My primary responsibility is to implement the decisions and directions of the Central Committee, to serve as the link between the Party leadership, the Party headquarters and the structures of the Party and members all around the country. These responsibilities also include stakeholder management, being communication with media or organizations and so on. I am the administrative head of the Party in short.

### Q: You are holding the BDP CEO position at a crucial time when

### the BDP is preparing for the 2029 general elections. How is your office coordinating?

AM: So far so good. We have a new Central Committee that has accepted the challenge of leading an opposition Party. We are trying to modernize the Party, to renew and revitalize it and the enthusiasm so far is good. The Party has demonstrated that it has a base all around the country and scores of party members are eager to continue serving the BDP with loyalty in accordance with its values, principles and its constitution. We don't expect the rebuilding exercise to be easy, but we are prepared for it and so far, it is both exciting and challenging.

A lot of reforms aimed at improving our policy contribution, dialogue, and debate are underway, and soon the public will begin to experience renewed BDP that is more policy focused and which proposes alternatives to governance and policy formulation and implementation.

### Q: The BDP lost two by elections, the Kgalega South parliamentary



BDP Executive Secretary, Ame Makoba

### and Moremaoto local government seat, what do you think contributed to BDP loss?

AM: Firstly, we were encouraged to see that a lot of people were still voting for BDP, even though it didn't yield the desired results. But we have a base that we will continue to build on. Reviews are underway to prepare post-elections reports. But one can safely say that the issue of having less Members of Parliament and Councillors than before means that we have less boots on the

ground, so we have less ground force power than we used to have and so it's a bit of a struggle to run around. We are learning opposition politics and are confident that we will come right eventually.

### Q: Do you believe BDP can bounce back to power in 2029?

AM: I have no doubt that the BDP can come back in 2029. We have a very determined generation of leaders, led by President Mpho Balopi and behind them another layer of leadership coming up. We are

in it to win it. We don't expect it to be easy but we exist to contest elections and to win elections if possible. So yes, we can and we intend to win 2029.

### Q: Would the party approach 2029 solo or would opt for a coalition?

AM: It is a matter for the Central Committee and ultimately the Congress of the Party to decide upon. That discussion has not been had at present. But as you see, we are quite a force on our own and our numbers show that we have a good chance. We have a 30% popular vote against the ruling party's 37%. Pound for pound, no individual party can match us. Our chances will improve as we improve our public discourse and contributions to public policy.

### Q: What are some of key legislative reforms that you believe UDC government should enact to improve the lives of Batswana?

AM: Evidently, times are tough and it requires that every policy decision that our government undertakes must be for the benefit of our people. Government should focus more on bread-and-butter issues. Recently, for example, we understand that government has introduced the policy where our citizenship is, for lack of a better word, up for sale. Whether that is of direct benefit to the Motswana or not is a matter that is still to be fully understood. I am just trying to drive the point that we must focus

on ourselves and uplift Batswana. Government must be pragmatic and realistic. Another example, government increased the oldest pension against sound fiscal advice, and consequently fails to honour the new pension on time. It was provided for. Government has undertaken to create a 24-hour public service, but is our economy generating enough to be able to sustain that?

BDP was always a pragmatic, realistic and practical par. We are realists. We encourage government to avoid populist moves and focus on governing and rather allow reality to guide them.

### Q: What is your view on the Government Political Party Funding?

AM: Political party funding was approved under our rule, and we are certainly for it. We still support it fully and think that it should be implemented because our democracy has matured. PPF will strengthen democracy. The country has progressed quite a lot in terms of development, so surely there is room to accommodate political party funding, particularly once the economy begins to stabilize, as we hope that it will soon

### Q: Gender equality remains a pie in the sky for political parties, especially in leadership positions as demonstrated by women representation in the current Parliament. How does BDP intend to close this gap going forward?

AM: To our credit, the BDP has produced more women MPs and Councillors than any other party in this country. Dr. Chiepe, Dr. Nasha,

Ms. Venson-Moitoi, Ms. Makgato, Ms. Phumaphi and so on. In the past, the party has given waivers on certain application requirements to not only women but even the youth because they were on the margins of politics.

This is possibly one of the things that the party will consider in order to open up opportunities for capable women and youth so that they may serve their country through their party. There is a lot that they can offer.

### Q: What is your message for BDP members and supporters in general?

AM: Opposition politics is clearly not easy. Nobody said it will be easy, but it is a challenge like that which I founding fathers faced in 1962 when they formed this Party. Let us embrace it and let us be a generation that will rewrite the history of the party and country. Let us stand up and be counted no matter the odds.

### Q: Your parting shot.

AM: I would like to encourage every Motswana who is of eligible age to get registered during the ongoing supplementary registration, if they are not registered already, so that we may participate in the democratic elections of the country now and in the future. One does not have to be a politician to exercise his or her right to vote and select leaders.

You just have to be a patriot who stands up, joins the queue and makes what they think is the best decision for their community by electing preferred leaders. So please participate in your democracy at least at a voting level. Thank you.

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# Boko on Death Penalty, Queer claims

FROM PAGE 1



directed prosecutors to abandon the case.

He also referred to the LEGABIBO case, noting that the courts affirmed the right of advocacy organisations to speak and organise on behalf of sexual minorities, without ruling on the legality of same-sex relationships themselves. "The courts were clear. Advocacy is allowed. That does not mean endorsement or encouragement of same-sex conduct," Boko said.

On same-sex marriages, Boko said there have been no cases before Botswana courts seeking its recognition. He noted that in other jurisdictions, including Europe, courts have ruled that marriage is legally defined as a union between a man and a woman, and that any other arrangement must be described using a different legal term. "We benchmark locally and internationally, and we follow the rule of law," he said.

Boko concluded by reiterating that he has never advocated for the legalisation of same-sex relationships or the abolition of the death penalty, urging Botswana not to be misled by rumours. "There is nowhere I have said or encouraged anything of that nature," he said

# Education ministry in ICU- Teachers

Ministry retract decision on firing temporary teachers ■ BOSETU unhappy with minister Kgafela-Mokoka

BAKANG TIRO  
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TEACHER TRADE UNION, BOTSWANA Sector of Trade Union (BOSETU) has blasted the ministry and Child Welfare and Basic Education for being confused and in chaotic after the ministry retracted its initial decision to suspend engagement of temporary teachers.

A savingram from North East region education office has announced on Thursday that as part of enforcing compliance, temporary teachers who have served more than one year will no longer be engaged. On Friday, the ministry headquarters in Gaborone nullified the decision, a development that draw public criticism outrage towards the ministerial leadership.

In an interview, BOSETU Publicity Secretary Oreeditse Nyatso said the unions were never engaged in the decision made by the ministry. Nyatso said BOSETU has always been vocal about welfare of temporary teachers, there are instances where they could go for months without being remunerated for work done.

"The minister Dr Nono Kgafela-Mokoka's action and attitude towards unions is clear. she does not recognize their input. disregarding unions is disregarding teacher. we are at a point where we have lost confidence in the ministry of education



Education Minister, Nono Kgafela Mokoka

leadership, they do not value dialogue and it's not surprising that they contradict themselves on what they believe in," said Nyatso.

Additionally, Nyatso said the ministry is not honest at all, adding that they wrote the fake withdrawal as a response to widespread public outrage from parents, teachers, and stakeholders. He said BOSETU places it on record that this episode reflects a deeper and troubling crisis of leadership and commitment within the ministry.

Nyatso noted that BOSETU's considered position is that the minister has effectively abdicated responsibility over education matters and demonstrates little to no regard for the state of public education in Botswana. He said it's a fact that ministry has not been engaging temporary teachers, and many classes have not been taught as the regions decried lack of funds.

"We are certain that schools will be told by regions that there are no funds for temporary teachers. this has been on going and we challenge the ministry to prove us wrong by assisting schools with temporary teacher. the withdrawal is just a cosmetic Public Relations stunt," said Nyatso on Friday.

According to Nyatso, teachers have lost confidence in the minister of education. it is clear her priorities are far from welfare and productivity of teachers. He said for several years now, the Ministry has deliberately

turned a blind eye to: the rapidly growing learner population, severely dilapidated and unsafe school infrastructure and ballooned classroom sizes, with some schools in Gaborone at 58 learners per classroom instead of 30. "Teachers are overworked, overstretched, and systematically frustrated through poor planning and policy indecision. The Ministry's actions—or lack thereof—suggest a blatant disregard for teachers' welfare, professional dignity, and mental well-being," said Nyatso.

## Ministry

Efforts to contact minister Kgafela-Mokoka for a comment proved unsuccessful. Meanwhile, Akanyang Mmoi on behalf of Permanent Secretary in a statement issued on Friday said the decision has to sideline temporary teachers is withdrawn with immediate effect.

Mmoi said in the best interest of teaching and learning, temporary teachers have been engaged, and their contribution to the education sector is highly valued and appreciated.

"Temporary teachers are typically appointed to address specific needs such as: covering for educators on study leave or extended sick leave, supporting learners with special educational needs and assisting during periods of school expansion while permanent positions are being secured," said Mmoi.

# 'ConCourt will protect human rights – Ramogapi'

LETTICIA MAKUKU  
editors@thepatriot.co.bw

THE MINISTER OF WATER AND Human Settlement, Oneetses Ramogapi said that the establishment of a constitutional court will protect human rights as research indicates that the high court is saturated with criminal cases that take years to be resolved which can lead to the violation of human rights as some accused persons can be held in custody for years. He said that during a kgotla meeting which was held on Monday in Palapye.

Ramogapi was consulting with Palapye residents on numerous issues including the establishment of a constitutional court where he stated that consultations with the public is vital to sensitize citizens on the importance and functions of the constitutional court. He said that citizens who participated in the general elections will be given an opportunity to vote for or against the establishment of the constitutional court as it was part of the promises made by the UDC during their campaigns for the 2024 general elections and a 2/3 criteria will be used to make the final decision. He further said that the main

advantage of the constitutional court is that cases will be resolved faster because there are going to be constitutional amendments concerning appeals and there will be Judges who specialize in constitutional acts.

When touching on other issues, Ramogapi officially launched six investors for the Bonno National Housing Programme where he noted that the investors have pledged a P4000 minimum living wage for the workers of the project which is expected to commence soon. He urged the investors to hire youth from Palapye village and purchase all building materials in Palapye to empower local businesses. Ramogapi highlighted that the delay of the commencement of the project was due to land title deed issues. He urged Palapye residents to cooperate and work well with investors as they are contributing to the growth and development of Palapye village.

As Palapye will soon be declared town, Ramogapi spoke on a few developments that are expected in the area. He spoke on issues of green energy noting that a bunch of solar panels are expected to be installed in Leupane lands to assist the Botswana Power Corporation grid, there will also be solar plant in Hulwane lands near Morupule Coal mine. He further said that on the opposite side of Majestic five hotel, they are expecting to have an industrial economic zone to boost the economy of Palapye as well as create employment. He further stated that despite all the developments that are expected to take place, Palapye will still be having Chiefs as the Bogosi act is being amended. This is to try and curb criminal activities that come with the growth of Palapye.

Ramogapi also spoke on the bad internal roads issues that need immediate attention. He noted that potholes are being fixed and there will be grating and graveling of



Ramogapi'

internal roads as well as the maintenance of Palapye Primary Hospital as soon as possible. Following his visit to the hospital on 1st of January, he applauded workers of Palapye Primary Hospital for keeping the hospital afloat despite all the challenges that come with having to serve a much larger population than it is supposed to. He said that the construction of a new hospital is still in the pipeline, it was delayed by the DM model but will soon be constructed through normal tendering process.

For her part, the Matron of Palapye primary Hospital, Mrs Boikhutso Rammidi lamented on the different challenges currently faced by the hospital, especially shortage of vital and essential medications as they are in short supply. She noted that Palapye is supposed to service 8000 people and is currently servicing 52 000 which

has resulted in a serious shortage of vital medications. She urged residents to start with clinics when they are not well and only come to Palapye Primary Hospital upon referral to avoid overwhelming nurses and doctors at the hospital because they are serving a large population, both from Palapye and surrounding areas.

For his part, the Village Development Committee (VDC) Chairperson, Mr Prince Oathltho noted that the new primary school in extension 5 is not opening this January as many had anticipated, he said that correct dates of the official opening will be communicated to the public. He said the dumping site is also being moved to make room for the developments of the village. He further said that Palapye turning into a town is a welcome development amongst residents and the youth of Palapye are active in the development of Palapye as they are currently working on a wall to prevent flooding at the Lotsane graveyard and local clusters are also doing a great job in curbing criminal activities around Palapye.

The public was given an opportunity to comment and ask questions on the issues that their area Member of Parliament had touched on. Mr Huwa Kenosi, a resident of Palapye said that Palapye needs town planning and as a retired Town planner, he is offering his services to assist in the development of Palapye. Mr Isau Kwenaetsile condemned the new Ikageng programme noting that it will disadvantage some citizens who do not yet qualify for the old age pension yet are retired as some do not have any source of income and were relying on the Ipelegeng programme. Ms Paphane Gabonelelwane pleaded with Ramogapi to build her a house through the Bonno programme because despite having a degree, she wheelchair bound and cannot find employment to provide shelter for her children.

# From Fencepost to Fortune

■ The High-Value Cactus Revolution Coming to Botswana

CONVERSATION WITH BANUSI Mbaakanyi of Gola Ventures on Seizing the Nopal Opportunity  
For generations, the cactus has been a familiar feature of Botswana's landscape: a hardy, thorny plant used for fencing and, occasionally, for foraging. But what if this unassuming shrub is about to become the next cornerstone of commercial agriculture in our semi-arid nation?

This isn't the wild cactus of the past. This is the cultivated, spineless Nopal cactus: a drought-resilient, high-yield crop capable of turning marginal land into a profitable bio-energy and agro-processing hub. To unpack this emerging opportunity, we spoke with Banusi Mbaakanyi, a business development specialist and director at Gola Ventures, which champions sustainable agricultural value chains. "Our farming hasn't always had guaranteed off-takers," Mbaakanyi begins, laying bare one of the most significant gaps in Botswana's agricultural sector. "We've seen funds poured into farming, yet our contribution to GDP sits at 1.7%. The missing link is a structured market."

Enter the Nopal cactus, and the company driving its commercialization, Nopal Renewable Energy Corporation (NREC). The Crop of the Future, Already Here

The cultivated Nopal cactus presents a transformative opportunity for a country like Botswana.

• Built for Harsh Climates: It uses up to 80% less water than traditional crops and thrives on degraded land, improving soil quality over time.

• High-Yield, Low Effort: As demonstrated on NREC farms in Namibia, Nopal grows quickly, offers year-round harvests, and requires minimal inputs.

• Guaranteed Buyers: NREC plans to serve as the primary off-taker for the crop, purchasing harvests for bio-energy production, a major de-risking factor for farmers. "Farming with the mind of takers, just knowing that alone is an empowerment of livelihood," says Mbaakanyi.

More Than Energy: A Smorgasbord of Agribusiness Potential

Beyond bio-energy, the Nopal cactus opens doors to diverse value-added industries, ripe for SMEs, youth entrepreneurs, and communal farmers.

• Food Products: Jams, syrups, sauces, salads, gluten-free flour.

• Cosmetics: High-value cactus seed oil that can fetch premium global prices, up to €400/kg (Approx. P6,616/kg).

• Fodder: With cladodes comprising 90% water, the crop provides lifesaving livestock feed during drought.

"We're not seeing many of us in agro-processing," Mbaakanyi observes. "Just go into any retail store and see how much we import. This cactus stimulates backward

linkages to production and forward linkages to processing. It's a complete value chain."

Clusters: The Power of Farming Together  
To scale this opportunity, Mbaakanyi advocates for a cluster development model: simple in concept, powerful in effect.

"Clusters mean linked businesses located close together," she explains. "You have your farm, I have mine. We don't both need to buy tractors; one can service both. Extension officers train us together. When a big retailer needs volume, we coordinate planting as a cluster and ensure continuous supply."

This approach preserves each farmer's independence while enabling collective access to machinery, knowledge, infrastructure, and markets. It's farming more competently; strategic, coordinated, and efficient.

A Vision of a Transformed Rural Economy  
Looking ahead 5 to 10 years, Mbaakanyi sees a bold future.

"I envision a time when nobody suffers because every farmer has a field full of a valuable crop they can sell. Botswana has the potential to sustain our people, our youth, and our food security. This crop grows, you harness it. It's a lifetime opportunity."

The message is unmistakable: Nopal is not merely a plant; it is a pathway to sustainable income, climate resilience, and agricultural transformation. For farmers seeking a profitable, low-risk crop with a guaranteed market, the future is green, and it's ready to take root in Botswana.

Source: Farmers Platform Magazine

## TENDER NOTICE



### BOTSWANA PUBLIC OFFICERS PENSION FUND

TENDER FOR PROVISION OF ASSET CUSTODIAL SERVICES  
TENDER NO: BPOPF/INV 004/ 2025-2026

- BPOPF invites proposals from all reputable, experienced, and duly licensed providers of local asset custodial services operating in Botswana. This includes, without limitation, entities currently providing such services to the BPOPF.
- Bidders are required to provide proof of payment of the non-refundable deposit and their preferred email address where the Invitation to Tender ("ITT") document will be sent. Alternatively, the ITT can be collected from the BPOPF office at Plot 54366, Unit 3, Second Floor, Peelo Place, CBD, Gaborone.
- Bidders will be required to submit proof of compliance with the conditions of the ITT, which include the following:
  - proof of valid insurance cover in line with NBFIRA's Financial Resources Requirement Rules for Custodians (2023) Clause 7.3 (a) (ii)
  - minimum 25% equity shareholding by Citizens of Botswana
  - 50% citizen representation at Board level
  - 70% citizen representation at the executive/top management level
- Submissions must be received no later than **12 noon on Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> February 2026**.
- A non-refundable deposit of **BWP5,000.00** must be made via EFT in favor of the Botswana Public Officers Pension Fund.

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Proof of payment should be emailed to: tenders@bpopf.co.bw Tel: 3717158

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# Botswana, Turkey: 45 years of diplomatic ties

On Tuesday, Turkey and Botswana will officially mark 45 years of diplomatic relations, a development that Turkish Ambassador to Botswana Ahmet Idem Akay describes as an era of rich diplomatic relations. Botswana opens Embassy in Ankara to solidify diplomatic relations. In an interview with **STAFF WRITER BAKANG TIRO**, Akay said Botswana and Turkey are shining examples of stable and successful diplomatic relations anchored on mutual respect and unity.

**B**OASTING OVER 36 YEARS OF diplomatic service, Akay said during his journey of Turkey diplomatic missions, Botswana is his 8th post abroad and his previous posts include China, Denmark, Germany, Iran, Libya, Thailand and Laos respectively.

“This year also marks exactly three years of my stay in Botswana as Turkish diplomat. Botswana is a great example of democracy and stability. I witnessed the 2024 historic election that resulted in change of government. The transition was peaceful and that what sets Botswana apart from the rest,” he said.

## 45 years journey

According to Akay, Turkey-Botswana relations have developed significantly since 1981, especially after the opening of the Turkish Embassy here in Gaborone back in 2014. He said Botswana and Turkey have come a long way to reach the 45 years anniversary of diplomatic relations.

“Soon, Botswana will also open an Embassy in Ankara. Thus, our bilateral relations will continue to grow,” said the upbeat Akay, explaining that diplomatic relations were established on 20th January 1981 through a joint communiqué issued by the Turkish and Botswana Ambassadors to the United Nations (UN) in New York city, USA.

He said high level visits constitute an important part of Botswana-Turkey diplomatic relations citing that Botswana’s former minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Phandu Skelemani visited Turkey in 2009, 2010 and



Turkish Ambassador to Botswana Ahmet Idem Akay

2012.

In addition, Akay said the 45th anniversary of Turkey-Botswana diplomatic relations will be celebrated with an event at Turkish Embassy on Tuesday noting that photographs and documents detailing the 45th anniversary journey will be exhibited. He said the Minister of International Relations Dr Pheno Butale is expected to grace the event as guest of honour.

**Strategic relations**  
Akay said Dr Butale visited Turkey twice last year and attended the 4th edition of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum (ADF) between 11-13 April 2025.

He said Dr Butale later carried out a bilateral visit to Ankara from 12 to 14 August 2025 and he was accompanied by the minister of Minerals and Energy Bogolo Kenewendo.

“During the latest bilateral visit, an agreement on VISA Waiver for Holders of Diplomatic, Official, Service and Special Passports, and Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on political Consultations between the two foreign ministries were signed,” he said.

Furthermore, he said other main bilateral documents include the General Agreement on Cooperation between the government of Botswana and Turkey in 2009 and the Agreement on Trade, Economic and Technical Cooperation signed by the two governments in May 2010 as well.

## Gaborone host JCC

Akay said the Turkey-Botswana Joint Commission for Cooperation (JCC) is the main bilateral mechanism of the two

countries. The JCC, he said, is a platform where views are exchanged on different fields such as trade, energy and mining, agriculture, health, education, culture and tourism.

He said the first meeting of the JCC was held in September 2012 in Ankara and the second one was held online in March 2021 due to COVID-19 pandemic.

“The third meeting of the JCC is planned for March 2026 in Gaborone. On the Turkish side, the Co-Chairman is the Minister of Justice His Excellency Mr. Yilmaz Tunc.

This will mark the first time ministerial level visit from Turkey to Botswana,” he underscored.

Akay said Turkey has made immense contribution to Botswana’s economic development at community level through the flagship projects under Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA).

He said within the last five (5) years, TIKA has provided assistance to Botswana totalling P1.7 million through different projects in the fields of education, agriculture, textile and donation of food hampers to 2910 families nationwide.

## Future forward

Meanwhile, Akay said he believes that by 2031 when Botswana-Turkey celebrate 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations, the two nations would have reached higher levels all fields of cooperation enjoyed by two friendly nations.

He noted that the potential areas for bilateral cooperation include mining and energy, construction, infrastructure development, education, health and tourism.

He added: “I believe that with the opening of the Botswana Embassy in Ankara soon, our bilateral relations will continue to develop further. I am looking forward to having my Botswana counterpart in Türkiye. It will make my job much easier.”

# The fate of the UN’s Pact for the Future lies far beyond New York

The Pact for the Future marks a powerful moment of multilateral ambition, yet its success rests on inclusive, real-world implementation beyond diplomacy, writes **AMBASSADOR COLLEN VIXEN KELAPILE**

**A**FTER MONTHS OF MARATHON negotiations among member states, the world’s leaders gathered in New York on 22 September 2024 to adopt the landmark Pact for the Future. This milestone came just days after I completed my term as chief of staff to Dennis Francis, president of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly—yet I remained in New York to witness history unfold.

President Francis often referred to the pact as “the biggest harvest of the season,” and when his successor, Philemon Yang, brought down the famous “Hammer of Thor” (gavel)—a precious gift to the UN from Iceland in 1952—I felt a profound sense of fulfillment for being part of a process of such magnitude, one with consequences reaching into every corner of daily life. I had the honor of supporting President Francis to carefully steer the final stages of this outcome, building on the work of his predecessors, Presidents Abdulla Shahid and Csaba Körösi.

The pact was shaped not only by leadership at the UN but also by broad engagement across society. The ImPact Coalitions that emerged from the May 2024 UN Civil Society Conference in Nairobi contributed vital perspectives rooted in lived experience. The result reflects the harsh realities faced by communities worldwide, and its ambition is unmistakable: to restore trust in multilateralism and spark a seismic shift in global governance for people and the planet.

We owe immense gratitude to the permanent representatives of Germany, Namibia, Jamaica, the Netherlands, Sweden, Rwanda and Zambia—a committed group who co-facilitated the Pact and its annexes with remarkable resolve. Alongside the UN secretary-general’s bold 2022 report entitled Our Common Agenda, and the unyielding advocacy of small states like Singapore and Qatar, their work kept multilateral cooperation alive at a time when cynicism toward global institutions is growing.

Comprising five chapters and 56 actions—and accompanied by the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations—the pact is deliberately ambitious. It breaks new ground including commitment to purposefully engage in long overdue reform of the Security Council as the primary custodian of our collective peace and security. Yet such ambition comes with heavy expectations. As the African

proverb reminds us: “You can’t carry an elephant carcass with thin legs.” We must mobilize political will and every available capacity to implement what we have agreed.

Central to this will be civil society. Multilateral commitments only matter when translated into tangible improvements in communities, something I have witnessed firsthand through my recent work with the International Communities Organisation. Operating directly with communities in conflict-affected regions, ICO shows how grassroots experience can inform global implementation frameworks.

In Cameroon, Cyprus, Kosovo and in the Middle East, ICO has helped establish inclusive structures—such as Gender Coordination Committees—which provide local authorities with tools to design gender-responsive policies and enhance civic participation. These mechanisms ensure that gender-based vulnerabilities are not treated as an afterthought but tackled as core barriers to sustainable peace and equality. These kinds of practical models are essential to turning the pact’s commitments into real progress where it is needed most.

Because implementation matters. Without urgent action, the pact risks joining the long list of unfulfilled multilateral promises, deepening public frustration and the prevailing sentiment that UN summits change little. The pact must therefore be treated as a living document. It demands that governments lead boldly in partnership with civil society, youth, women and girls, the private sector, academia, financial institutions, philanthropy, and local communities. The principle of “leaving no one behind” must be operational, not rhetorical.

Member states do not “own” the pact. It reflects the mandate of world leaders acting on behalf of “We the Peoples,” as the UN Charter states. National governments must now embed its goals into policies and budgets, while welcoming actors who can accelerate implementation. Partnerships are already essential to achieving the 2030 Agenda—and they will be vital to the pact’s success.

There are proven cases of what can be achieved through productive partnerships. In Kosovo, the Forum for Non-Majority Communities—supported by the government and ICO—demonstrates how strengthening dialogue between authorities and minority groups can advance rights, empower communities, and improve trust

in institutions. This is the pact in action: multilateralism realized through local cooperation.

There will always be limits to stakeholder participation in formal UN processes; the institution remains a community of sovereign states. But rather than allowing that to restrict us, we should embrace the ample room that exists for collaboration. As the saying goes: “If they don’t give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair.” Civil society’s role is not to replace states, but to help them succeed.

ICO’s support for the implementation of Universal Periodic Review recommendations offers a strong example. By helping governments follow through on commitments they themselves have made, ICO translates multilateral agreements into measurable gains, demonstrating how purposeful international accountability can improve lives.

As we enter the second year of implementation, early indicators reveal the scale of the task ahead. This is why ICO’s For Our Future report, launched in December 2025, will be an important contribution: It will showcase lessons learned from on-the-ground experiences and successful models that can help accelerate delivery of the pact’s commitments.

Since earning ECOSOC (United Nations Economic and Social Council) consultative status in 2021, ICO has strengthened its bottom-up approach, combining diplomacy, community empowerment, and social development, shaped through experience in conflict-affected regions. It ensures communities are not passive beneficiaries, but engaged partners shaping their own futures. That is the essence of leaving no one behind.

The Pact for the Future stands as a triumph of multilateral cooperation at a time when such unity is under threat. Its credibility now rests on our collective ability to act. Implementation requires every hand, every voice, and every sector—working together to ensure that the promise agreed in New York becomes a reality felt around the world. [diplomatiourier.com]

*Ambassador Collen Vixen Kelapile is a distinguished diplomat with three decades of experience shaping policy and negotiations at the United Nations. The views presented in this article are the author’s own and do not necessarily represent the views of any other organisation.*

## UNAUTHORISED LEASING OF SIM CARDS AND MOBILE MONEY WALLETS

BOCRA has noted, with concern, that some members of the public are leasing (hiring out) or re-selling registered SIM cards and mobile money wallets to third parties. This practice contravenes the ethos behind registration of SIM cards. BOCRA advises the public that the ramifications for contravention include:

- **Criminal Liability** – In case the SIM card or mobile wallet is used to commit fraud, money laundering, scams, or any other illegal activity, the registered owner will be held liable.
- **Identity Theft** – Sharing your registered SIM card exposes personal information and financial data to misuse.
- **Loss of Funds** – You may lose access to your mobile money account and any funds stored within it.
- **Service Suspension** – SIM cards found to be used in contravention of SIM Card Registration and KYC regulatory instruments will be deactivated by the respective service provider.

The public is therefore advised to desist and refrain from the leasing and/or re-selling of SIM cards and related mobile money wallets with immediate effect.



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# Opinions, Reviews & Analysis

## Comment

# Please Boko, drop theatrics

**A** RECENT INCOGNITO VISIT TO Princess Marina Hospital in Gaborone by President Duma Boko, the Minister of Health-Dr Stephen Modise and senior government officials brought them face to face with what ordinary Batswana struggle through every day.

Why did the Minister and the President act surprised about what they saw? Didn't the Minister visit PMH – a stone's throw away from his office, as part of his familiarization tour when he first came into office?

Health is a fundamental human right recognized under international law. Both Boko- a human rights lawyer and Modise -a medical doctor, understand this principle very well, and should therefore be deeply concerned when citizens are deprived of this right under their leadership. They are arguably the most suitable individuals in cabinet to address a myriad of challenges facing our healthcare system, among them shortage of medicines, both essential and basic supplies required to run health

and fix healthcare system problems

facilities and basic laboratory and medical consumables.

The UDC government found the healthcare system already in a sickbed, in ICU in fact. They did not arrive from Mars or some other planet. They even used the deplorable state of the health sector as campaign fodder during the UDC campaigns, convincing the masses that they will bring drastic and tangible transformation in just 100 days. But fourteen months later, we are worse off! The situation has deteriorated.

**The theatrics**  
Boko and Modise have come on national television, radio and social media promising that they are working around the clock to ensure that every Motswana has equitable access to healthcare. The reality on the ground tells a different story. People continue to return home without their prescribed medications, and patients are still required to bring their own consumables in

order to receive care at public hospitals.

People are dying from non-communicable diseases, while others are referred to private health facilities because government does not care about them. Many others are sitting at home waiting for death after they were turned away from health facilities and do not have the financial resources to seek assistance in private health facilities. Boko and Modise are watching all this from the comfort of their air-conditioned offices in designer suits and powerful colognes.

Late last year, during the State of the Nation Address (SONA 2025), Boko claimed that there has been improvements in the health care sector.

Ever since then, the situation has only deteriorated to crisis levels rather than recover as promised. Until public health facilities are adequately resourced, both in personnel and medical supplies, claims of improvement remain hollow. Access to quality health care is a constitutional

and a moral obligation that should not be glossed over or relegated to theatrics and showmanship.

To date, the State of Public Health Emergency declared in August 2025 -poorly conceived by Boko and his ilk, remains clouded in controversy over what it sought to achieve and the results thereof. One wonders, did Boko first find out about the state of health care in the country before such declaration?

All that the nation was shown, live on social media platforms, was a convoy of Botswana Defence Force (BDF) trucks purportedly loading medicines and leaving the Central Medical Stores (CMS) in Gaborone for different destinations around the country. Even now, there are still no medicines, no basic medical equipment and supplies, not even stationery to record particulars of patients in government health facilities. Nothing!

What happened to Boko's promises to the nation that efforts were underway to mobilise funding from the private

sector through Botswana Development Corporation (BDC). Such efforts fell flat on their face, we are told. To this day, challenges in the health sector remain largely unaddressed despite repeated assurances to the public.

Pictures of loads of medical supplies being loaded onto the largest aircraft at the BDF- the Hercules C130 cargo aircraft, were beamed to the nation. Not long before then, press statements flooded media platforms declaring tonnes of donations of medicines, medical equipment and other supplies arriving from good Samaritans in different parts of the world.

Was this only showmanship or theatrics calculated to deceive Batswana into believing that a solution has been found their medical woes are a thing of the past?

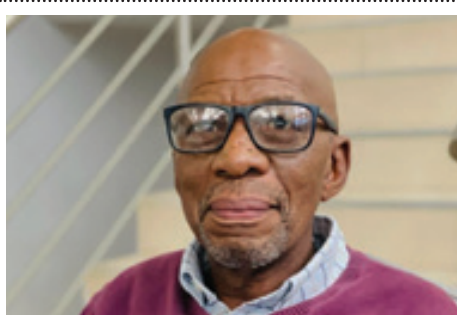
**Delapidation**  
The least said about dilapidation in government health facilities, the better. Overcrowding, and congestion in health facilities has become accepted as normal. We learn that Ultrasound scans, which

have become a front-line diagnostic tool are still in short supply in government health facilities. We also hear about shortage of MRI for most health facilities, leading to congestion where few are available. Some of the challenges are aggravated by poor leadership and lack of innovation.

Like, why can't public health facilities exploit proximity to others and share resources and/ or personnel e.g Princess Marina Hospital and Sir Ketumile Masire Teaching Hospital that has been availed to the public. In any case, inside indicate that there are many MRI machines around Gaborone in Private facilities.

Media reports indicate that the Permanent Secretary in the MoH has jumped ship, when her superiors wanted to throw her under the bus.

But the guy with blood on his hands is the Minister! Instead of lashing out and dismissing critics as talking nonsense when complaining about his ministry, Dr Modise should resign his post after such colossal failure due to his dereliction of duty.



**ADAM PHETLHE**  
ON SUNDAY!

**A**S THE MOMENT OF RECKONING IS WELL and truly upon us, it is not clear whether or not President Advocate D.G. Boko will make public and its entirety the forensic audit report due in March 2026. Truth be told, the company entrusted with the responsibility to produce the report, Dubai-based Alvarez & Marsal (A&M) Middle East Limited was solely appointed by him together with the terms of reference.

For all intents and purposes therefore, this is a process fashioned in some way along the provisions of Presidential Commission of Inquiry wherein the President has the sole discretion to either publicly releasing it or not. The scope of the audit firm is to investigate financial misconduct, corruption, fraud and embezzlement committed during the presidencies of former Presidents Ian Khama and Mokgweetsi Masisi while its purpose is to provide a detailed breakdown of financial misconduct, identify those who aided and abetted the misconduct and recommend corrective legal action.

When the forensic audit was conceptualised and finally set in motion, different voices emerged. On one hand, the overwhelming voice was a solid stamp of approval on the scope and purpose given tell-tale signs of uninterrupted

## Will Forensic Audit Report be released as is?



**Boko**

trail of facilitated corruption and other forms of malfeasance. On the other, anti-forensic audit voices suggested the process was nothing else but political witch hunt against principally, the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) members and other political opponents. The latter voice premised its discomfort on the fact that the period under investigation (2014-2024) is the period when the BDP was in power. Through this discomfort, predictably, it stood to reason the forensic audit is meant to single-handedly expose and punish BDP members and other political opponents while turning a blind eye on others presumably with ties to the current administration. That said, the President has promised this is no witch hunt but to establish who did what, with whom and at what cost to Batswana. He single-handedly bears the duty to deliver the said promise. When all is said and done, the long arm of the law will take its course and determine the fate of those who will be found to be on the wrong side of it.

There is no reason whatsoever for the President not to publicly release the report as is. This because his administration were not in charge of the country for the period being audited. On this logic, the President and his team are expected to be squeaky clean of any wrongdoing. It will give the President the stamp of approval in terms of the legitimacy and transparency of the forensic audit project. Value for money on the project will not be in question. It will be a huge political

statement that corruption no longer has a place in present day Botswana.

The President said during the launch of the Public Engagement Platform for the forensic audit back in August 2025 that "As the audit progresses, I am advised that we are at a stage where it is propitious to invite members of the public to come forward and provide any information they may have on corrupt practices, fraud and or embezzlement of public resources." It will be a tragedy of epic proportions if not betrayal of equal measure for the President to withhold the forensic audit report or release it piece-meal for his own political or other convenience.

But are the President or members of his government squeaky clean because they were not in government between 2014 and 2024? Hard to determine except to say corruption and other forms of malfeasance run across societal divide whether holding public office or not. In this regard therefore, it is possible members of the current administration at whatever level may have engaged in corrupt misconduct. That is why the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime (DCEC) has told the nation that it is vigorously investigating Ministers from the previous and current administrations. It is expected that the DCEC would have played a supporting back-room role in assisting the forensic audit team with hard-to-ignore documentary or other forms of evidence to

follow up on investigating members of the current administration including the President himself for the period under investigation without fear, favour or prejudice. Should members of the current administration be adversely fingered by the forensic audit report, it will put the current administration in bad light that the administration is constituted by individuals with serious and challenged ethical and moral pedigree. While it will be a good thing to make such a good finding, it will do very little to separate the current administration from the previous one.

Considered as a process whose aim is to render corruption and other forms of malfeasance no longer options in Botswana for decades to come,

there is every reason to demand the release of forensic audit as is as will be presented to the President. It will be totally against the spirit of transparency and accountability if the report will be withheld from members of public who I believe, have contributed immensely for its success assuming success will be achieved. Members of the public cannot be valuable for their support in the creation and success of the forensic audit but subsequently become invaluable to receive it in its entirety. It is imperative that those who would be fingered have the original report in case they want to take it on judicial review for this or the other reason.

As I conclude, I submit without fear of contradiction that the processing of the forensic

audit report will make or break the President and by extension, the Umbrella for Democratic Change. Such processing will demonstrate whether or not Batswana would have been taken for granted to rally around a process they would ultimately question its ownership and legitimacy. The consequences of not releasing the report in its entirety are too ghastly to contemplate. Public trust in transparently dealing with corruption fairly will be severely eroded. Batswana do not only deserve the entire report but are entitled to it. I am prepared to be persuaded otherwise as always.

Judge for Yourself!  
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### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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email to dibelela@thepatriot.co.bw /  
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## Indigenous Council Protests Derogatory Term

**T**HE BOTSWANA KWEDOM COUNCIL (BKC), representing the Indigenous San people, has officially protested against the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) for its use of the derogatory term "Mosarwa." In a formal complaint submitted to the BDP Secretary, the Council condemns the term's historical and cultural offensiveness, emphasizing that its usage undermines the dignity and identity of the San community.

The letter articulates the Council's grave concerns regarding the continued reference to "Mosarwa," describing it as dehumanizing and a violation of the Indigenous San people's dignity and right to self-identification. The BKC asserts that such terminology perpetuates discrimination and marginalization of Indigenous groups in Botswana, urging political representatives to recognize the impact of their language on vulnerable communities.

In their correspondence, the Council emphasizes that any apology offered by the BDP must include a full acknowledgment

of the harm caused, responsibility for the violation, and a commitment to implement preventive measures. They assert that a mere apology without accountability or institutional commitment is insufficient to address the injury inflicted upon the Indigenous San people.

Citing relevant legal frameworks, including the Constitution of Botswana, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the BKC calls for the BDP to publicly cease the use of the term "Mosarwa" and any similar derogatory references. They demand a formal acknowledgment of wrongdoing and a commitment to educational measures aimed at preventing future occurrences.

The letter concludes with a strong reminder that the dignity, identity, and rights of Indigenous San people are non-negotiable and should be respected by all political entities in a democratic Botswana.

**\*A mere apology without accountability is insufficient.\***

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**Gaborone**

# Ngamiland: The Paradox of Poverty amid Riches

BONIFACE KEAKABETSE\*

“WHERE INK MEETS TRUTH, SILENCE finally bleeds.” Growing up in Ngamiland often feels like growing up in Gaza — not because of bombs or war, but because of the quiet devastation that comes from being forgotten. Here, the suffering is not loud; it is slow, generational, and bureaucratic. It is the ache of watching your homeland feed the nation’s pride while its people remain hungry for opportunity.

Ngamiland and the wider North West are among Botswana’s richest in natural endowment. The Okavango Delta, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is the lifeblood of Botswana’s tourism economy; a magnet for global travelers and a source of immense revenue. Add to that the region’s fertile floodplains, vast cattle posts, and untapped mineral resources, and you have the makings of an economic powerhouse.

Yet Ngamiland remains one of Botswana’s poorest districts. Roads crumble with neglect. Schools struggle to inspire hope. Young people migrate in search of jobs that should have existed here all along. The paradox is sharp and cruel. A District that sustains national prosperity is itself trapped in deprivation.

This reality becomes painfully clear the moment you enter Maun, the biggest village in Ngamiland and the gateway to the Delta. Coming from Francistown, the poor, uneven roads tell a story of long-term neglect. Inside Maun itself, narrow streets and potholes wrestle daily with rising traffic from tourists and residents alike. As soon as you leave Maun toward Gantsi, the roads all but disappear. A symbolic and literal reflection of how quickly development fades once you step away from the tourist circuit.

For decades, this has been an untouchable topic. A truth whispered in corridors and cattle posts but rarely spoken in public, for fear that acknowledging it might invite

accusations of regionalism or unrest. But silence cannot build roads, and denial cannot feed communities. It was only a matter of time before this truth surfaced — not to divide, but to demand justice.

This injustice is not unique to Botswana. Across Africa, the same story repeats itself, areas brimming with natural wealth whose people live in poverty.

In Nigeria’s Niger Delta, billions of dollars flow from oil each year, powering Africa’s largest economy. Yet the communities that produce this wealth live among oil spills and polluted rivers. The roads that carry tankers to ports rarely lead to functioning schools or hospitals.

In Zambia’s Copperbelt, copper built the nation’s economic backbone, but decades of extraction without reinvestment have left behind ghost towns, environmental ruin, and joblessness. The people who dug the mines now live in the shadows of their own history.

Even Botswana’s Central District, home to the diamonds that made the country a global model of economic management, still struggles with rural poverty. The sparkle of diamonds has not illuminated every corner of the communities that mine them.

And then there is the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) perhaps the most striking mirror of Ngamiland’s fate on a global scale. The DRC sits atop vast riches: cobalt, coltan, gold, and diamonds — minerals that power the world’s technology and luxury industries. Yet its people remain among the poorest on earth. The world prospers from Congolese resources while Congolese families live without power, roads, or peace.

Ngamiland may not share the DRC’s turmoil, but it shares its paradox: a land rich enough to transform lives, yet governed in ways that keep that wealth far from home. Here, the quiet violence is economic — the steady draining of local potential to sustain



distant development.

For too long, national development has followed a top-heavy model, centralizing wealth in Gaborone and a handful of urban centers. The regions that produce much of the country’s income — through tourism, agriculture, or minerals — are left waiting for trickle-down promises that never arrive. This must change. Decentralization and

fair revenue-sharing are not acts of charity; they are acts of justice. If even a fraction of Ngamiland’s tourism levies, mineral royalties, or agricultural profits were reinvested locally, the region could flourish. Its youth could innovate, its farmers could prosper, and its natural resources could finally benefit the people who live among them. Growing up in Ngamiland teaches

resilience, but resilience should not be the only inheritance of its children. The Okavango Delta’s wealth must do more than fill national accounts — it must fill classrooms, clinics, and community projects. Ngamiland does not need pity. It needs partnership, fairness, and recognition. Until that happens, this land of breathtaking beauty will remain a land of broken

promises — a paradise paradoxically poor. \*Boniface Keakabetsa is a writer and social commentator from Maun, Botswana. Through “The Bleeding Pen,” he challenges complacency and spotlights issues of inequality, governance, and the human stories often buried beneath national statistics.

## Oil, Money and Margin Calls

■ What the Venezuela Shock Means for Botswana’s Wallet

CROSS KGOSIDIILE

THE CROSSWORD

OIL MATTERS BECAUSE IT SITS AT the intersection of real activity and global finance: it fuels transport and industry, sets costs across supply chains, and anchors large cross-border flows that shape currencies, reserves and investment decisions. When control of oil reserves becomes contested, markets do not only count barrels; they reprice risk, shift capital, and change the terms on which countries borrow and trade.

For Botswana, a small, open economy that imports refined fuel and relies heavily on diamond receipts, the economic mechanics are straightforward and immediate. A rise in oil prices increases the import bill, drains foreign-exchange reserves and puts downward pressure on the Pula. That sequence forces harder choices for monetary and fiscal authorities: defend the currency, tighten policy and slow growth, or accept higher inflation to protect jobs and spending. Conversely, a fall in oil prices can ease fuel costs but may coincide with weaker global demand and lower commodity prices, offering only partial relief to an economy already strained by weak diamond demand.

The petrodollar era illustrates how oil revenues become financial power. When oil is sold in a dominant currency, exporters



Venezuela Oil

recycle receipts into global assets, creating deep links between energy markets and international capital. Disruption in a major producer therefore ripples through capital flows and risk premia: sovereign and corporate borrowing costs can rise, foreign direct investment decisions may be

delayed, and insurance and hedging costs climb. Those shifts matter to Botswana because they affect the cost of financing infrastructure, the value of external assets, and the stability of reserves used to smoothen shocks.

The most likely near-term outcome

is heightened volatility rather than a neat price windfall. That volatility compounds existing fiscal pressures from the diamond slump and narrows policy space. The prudent response is financial: preserve liquidity, stress-test budgets against oil-price scenarios, consider targeted hedges for fuel exposure, and accelerate diversification away from single-commodity dependence. In short, distant battles over oil translate into local balance-sheet choices; understanding that transmission is the first step toward resilience.

**The Crossword 2026**  
Botswana’s Q3 rebound offers a tangible, if fragile, opening to ease social strains that deepened during the downturn, notably pressures on public health services and spikes in Gender-Based Violence, provided policymakers convert temporary revenue gains into targeted, sustained interventions.

Economic stabilisation also creates an opportunity to address the social dynamics that worsened under austerity. Periods of depressed economic activity coincided with alarming levels of Gender-Based Violence and other protection concerns; recent reporting and assessments documented concentrated spikes in sexual violence and related crimes during times of heightened household stress. By directing resources to survivor services, legal aid, and community prevention programmes, financed through a transparent allocation of windfall revenues, authorities can expand access to counselling, strengthen police and social-welfare responses, and support livelihood programmes that reduce household tensions.

These improvements are not automatic. The critical policy choice is to prioritise recurrent, high-impact social spending and targeted programmes that have clear monitoring and maintenance plans, rather than one-off consumption of revenues. Investments that combine health system resilience (stock management, staffing, outreach) with social protection and job-creation for vulnerable households will have the largest effect on both health outcomes and the drivers of interpersonal violence.

As we open The Crossword’s 2026 season, our conversation will examine how fiscal choices made now can translate a mining-led rebound into measurable reductions in service shortfalls and protection risks, and what indicators to track, from clinic stockouts and outpatient wait times to reporting and prosecution rates for GBV. The Q3 recovery is a necessary first step; turning it into durable social progress will require deliberate, evidence-based policy and sustained civic engagement.

\*Facebook posts

## Infrastructure crisis

Ours is not a funding problem, but planning failure



Students taught outside due to shortage of classrooms

ANY SERIOUS INFRASTRUCTURE model must budget for full life cycle costs, that is to build, operate, maintain, and renew. Building hospitals with no maintenance plan is not development, it’s delayed collapse. The same applies to schools, roads, water systems, and clinics. When ceilings fall, beds disappear, lights don’t work, and roads kill people, the state has already failed its duty of care.

Our infrastructure problem is not a funding problem, it’s a planning failure.

In the financial year 2021–2022, I submitted an unsolicited paper, advising government to pause new mega projects and prioritize fixing what was already there but collapsing. At the height of Covid 19, President Masisi spoke about Motswana wa Sekei. I naturally, assumed he was serious about it. I gave advice that, in maintenance, gvt could put money directly into the construction economy, empowering Botswana and we could use that as an economic stimulus. Where I went wrong, was to draw comparisons with the economic stimulus post 2008 recession under President Khama. I shouldn’t have mentioned Khama,

The approach of funding locals construction economy would have done three powerful things at once:

1. Saved lives (roads, hospitals, schools)
2. Created mass local employment

3. Kept money circulating inside Botswana

Instead of sending billions to foreign mega-contractors who repatriate profits, maintenance driven infrastructure would have built Botswana capacity, grown SMEs, and strengthened skills in every district.

“Motswana wa sekei” idea was especially strategic. Maintenance work is perfect for:

- Small contractors
- Local artisans
- Youth construction teams
- Community-based enterprises

It decentralises opportunity and turns infrastructure into an economic engine, not just a ribbon cutting exercise.


At the time, maintenance back log was estimated to be P47 billion. I gave advice that it could be funded over 2 financial years. It was manageable especially when weighted against:

- Road fatalities
  - Hospital system collapse
  - Education infrastructure decay
  - Long-term productivity losses
- Repair and maintenance was being proposing repair as national recovery.

History is full of good advice that was ignored because they were not glamorous. Mega projects photograph well. Maintenance saves lives quietly.

One day, when files are opened, a lot of good will come out.

Louis Benedice Sibanda  
Facebook

|  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| <b>IN THE HIGH COURT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA HELD AT GABORONE</b>  |                               |
| <b>CASE NO. CVHGB-000522-25</b>  |                               |
| <b>BOTSWANA SAVINGS BANK</b><br>And  | <b>Plaintiff</b>              |
| <b>TSHEPO MOTHUPI</b>  | <b>Defendant</b>              |
| <b>NOTICE OF SALE IN EXECUTION</b>   |                               |
| BE PLEASED TO TAKE NOTICE THAT pursuant to the Judgment granted by the Honourable Court the following immovable property hereunder of the Defendant will be sold by public auction by Deputy Sheriff to the highest bidder as follows:-  |                               |
| <b>DATE OF SALE:</b>   | 29 <sup>th</sup> January 2026 |
| <b>TIME OF SALE:</b>   | 10:00hours                    |
| <b>PLACE OF SALE:</b>  | Tribal Lot 5009, Mogoditshane |
| <b>PROPERTY TO BE SOLD:</b> Defendant’s right, title and interest on a certain piece of land being <b>Tribal Lot 5009, Mogoditshane</b> , under Deed of Transfer <b>No MA603/2015</b> made in favour of the Defendant together with development thereof being sitting room combined with kitchen, three bedrooms house, bathroom with toilet, screen wall, electric fence, unfinished and two rooms house. |                               |
| <b>TERMS AND CONDITIONS:</b> Cash or Bank guaranteed cheque otherwise detailed and conditions of sale may be inspected at the Plaintiff’s Attorneys Office.  |                               |
| <b>DATED AT GABORONE THIS 17th DAY OF DECEMBER, 2025.</b>  |                               |
| <b>MESHACK MOSHABI c/o RAMALEPA ATTORNEYS</b>  |                               |
| Plaintiff’s Attorneys<br>Plot 4853, Independence Avenue<br>Extension 11, Gaborone<br>P.O. Box 70567<br><b>GABORONE(UB)</b><br>(VR/mm/2046) 71623026 /73301311  |                               |
|   |                               |

# Business

## Banks' funding struggle

- Banking sector vulnerable due to concentrated deposit base
- Sector liquidity & Funding market liquidity are subdued
- Central Bank drawing measures to supports market liquidity

**BAKANG TIRO**  
editors@thepatriot.co.bw

**T**HE CENTRAL BANK, BANK OF Botswana (BoB), has indicated that the local banking sector is facing funding risks due to high level of deposit concentration.

The bank revealed on its latest Financial Stability Report (FSR), a statutory report that provides an in-depth assessment of the vulnerabilities that could elevate risks to the stability and resilience of the Botswana financial system by the FSC.

The report provides analytical and performance updates for the financial sector, examining its impact on economic activity and welfare.

The FSR encourages public discourse and engagement on financial stability issues and provides information to support stakeholders' interests and self-reflection on financial risk assessment processes. The report noted that the banking sector remains vulnerable to funding risk arising from a concentrated deposit base.

BoB further said the commercial banks' funding structure is concentrated on a few wholesale deposits, as reflected in the top 20 deposits to total deposits ratio of 40 percent noted in September 2025 from the previous 43 percent in December 2024.

According to the report, the downward movement is mainly attributable to previously repatriated pension funds being deployed into long-term assets. Though a decline, BoB said concentration funding remains high and continues to suggest high funding costs due to the inherent volatility and expensive nature of wholesale deposits. "That notwithstanding, the



**BoB Governor, Lesego Caster Moseki**

banking industry continues to demonstrate healthy levels of credit intermediation, with an intermediation ratio of 80.3 percent in August 2025 (2024:81.3 percent)," explained BoB.

In addition, BoB said the rate of intermediation has shown marginal growth in the first half of 2025 and has remained above the 50 – 80

percent range since December 2024, continuing to support enduring economic growth.

**LOANS**

Commenting on the developments, an independent economist and financial markets analyst Lame Bothata said the banks are struggling to recover loans, especially unsecured

personal loans from borrowers.

He said difficulties by the banks to have adequate funding capacity would result in low collections in the short to medium term.

"Funding risks that our commercial banks are exposed to translate into in the high household debt that is now spiraling to over P70 billion. Banks are struggling to recover loans

from the unsecured loans as the borrowers' finances are also subdued. "Things are tough," he said.

Bothata also said the banks could be facing a double-edged sword as businesses could also struggle to repay their loans to the banks amidst slow economic activity, particularly that government procurement has slowed down as a result of subdued revenue as diamond sales remain weak.

**LIQUIDITY CRUNCH**

Meanwhile, BoB's FSR report said during the second quarter of 2025, average daily market liquidity increased from P1.037 billion recorded in the first quarter of 2025 to P1.557 billion, albeit remaining below historical levels.

It said the increase was mainly attributable to Government expenditure spurred by SACU funds and loan inflows from external creditors such as the African Development Bank and the OPEC Fund for International Development. However, the limited fiscal space in an economy heavily dependent on government spending continues to constrain market liquidity.

"Under these circumstances, the Bank of Botswana has implemented multiple interventions to support market liquidity, first by slashing the primary reserve requirement to zero, which at the time released about P1.8 billion into the market," BoB said.

"Secondly, by extending the maturity of repurchase agreements (repos) with commercial banks from overnight to 7 days and further to 30 days," emphasized the central bank.

The bank further said the extended maturity of repos is expected to aid effective liquidity risk management by enhancing the predictability of banks' liquidity projections and asset/liability maturity mapping over a longer horizon.

Furthermore, BoB said it raised the threshold for trading foreign currency with commercial banks from USD1 million to USD5 million, in an effort to preserve the official foreign exchange reserves and encourage interbank trading for foreign currency.

"In addition, the foreign currency trading margins between the Bank and commercial banks were increased to +/-7.5 percent to enhance the flexibility of the Pula exchange rate and encourage the potential to accommodate an increase in Pula liquidity."

Sefalana's PBT down 10%



**Sefalana Holding Company MD Chandrakanth (Chandra) Chauhan**

**T**HE BOARD OF SEFALANA informs its Shareholders that Sefalana's Group profit before tax for the 26-week period ended 26 October 2025 (the half year) will be between 10% and 12% (approximately P22 million to P26 million) lower than that reported for the comparative 26 week period ended 27 October 2024, which amounted to P219 million. This is predominantly as a result of the tough economic environment experienced in Botswana following the decline in the Diamond sector and the currency adjustment made to the Pula in July 2025. Sefalana will be publishing its consolidated financial results of the Group for the 26 week period ended 26 October 2025 by the end of January 2026. This will include commentary on the drivers for the performance during the period. [bse.co.bw]

## Gambling Authority targets P1 billion

- Revenue forecast for 2025/26 financial year
- Gambling Authority faces acute skills shortage

**BAKANG TIRO**  
editors@thepatriot.co.bw

**T**HE LOCAL GAMBLING watchdog – Gambling Authority – is optimistic that the industry is poised for significant growth, targeting a Gross Gambling Revenue of P1 billion in the 2025-25 financial year, acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of GA Moruntshi Kemorwale has said.

Briefing the media on Thursday in Gaborone, setting the 2026 roadmap, Kemorwale said the industry has been resilient despite some emerging challenges, such as problem gambling, among others. He said the Authority has made significant progress since its establishment, with gross gambling revenue currently estimated at P700 million.

He said they have put in place a robust licensing framework, developed licensing guidelines, such as for promotional competitions and SMS/virtual/digital games, rolled out a national Responsible Gambling Programme that has reduced the prevalence of problem gambling from 5% in 2020 to 3.4% in 2025, and increased public awareness and leveraged partnerships to spread messages around gambling risks. "We have also improved data collection as well as our reporting by adopting integrated reporting as espoused by the International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC), and improved our stakeholder engagement across the sector," said Kemorwale.

Kemorwale said the industry itself has grown substantially, both before the establishment of the Authority



**Gambling Authority CEO, Moruntshi Kemorwale**

[PIC: GORATAONE KGOSIMORE]

and more markedly thereafter. He added that they have seen a steady increase in the number of licensed operators, a sharp rise in player participation, and significant growth in gross turnover across the betting and gaming segments.

"We are confident that, by the end of the financial year, the industry would have reached a gross gambling revenue of P1 Billion Pula. This is a significant rise, considering that the industry has been hovering around revenue of P230 million per year," he said, adding that such growth reflects broader global trends, increased digital access, and changing

consumer behaviour.

"However, it also places greater responsibility on the regulator to ensure that growth does not come at the expense of fairness, transparency, and social well-being. We are thus at crossroads, as the industry. It is either we swim or sink. We need to double our efforts in ensuring safety for all," said Kemorwale.

Meanwhile, Chief Operating Officer (COO) at Gambling Authority, Mompoti Rammekwa said there have been a few compliance issues, but admitted that there are hiccups taking into consideration the nature of the gambling business.

She said the authority continues to ensure that there is effective compliance so as to protect consumers from any exploitation arising from forms of illegal gambling (operators). To this end, the Gambling Authority emphasizes public education to safeguard the interests of consumers.

**Skills gap**

Kemorwale admitted that the Gambling Authority is facing a challenge of acute shortage of skills as it rolls out its mandate. He said this is so because there are no gambling training institutions locally, and therefore, they are forced to look in the international market for consultants in some areas.

Consequently, Kemorwale said there is an urgent need to introduce a central electronic monitoring system as provided by the Gambling Act. "We need to strengthen our enforcement capacity. You snooze; you lose. Sadly, the Authority continues to rely on external skills or consultants. This is so, because locally, we have limited skills to conduct certain specialised tasks key to the proper regulation of the industry," said Kemorwale anxiously.

He noted that they are regulating an industry that has grown faster than many anticipated, adding that rapid growth brings opportunities, but it also brings challenges. These include compliance pressures, technological complexity, enforcement demands, heightened public scrutiny, as well as threats to the personal lives of our employees, who are tasked with regulating an industry that is comprised of the White and Black market.

## StanChart explores full sale of its Botswana franchise

**S**TANDARD CHARTERED PLC (the Group) announced in November 2024 its intent to explore the potential sale of its Botswana WRB business, further to the Group's strategic priorities as set out at our Q3 2024 results, aimed at accelerating income growth, and returns.

Through market engagements, bidders have made it clear that they see significant value in the combined scale of the full SC Botswana franchise – including in the potential for efficient funding, operational leverage, and client coverage.

The Group has therefore decided to explore the potential sale of the full Standard Chartered Botswana franchise. This process is expected to take 12-15 months to complete and is subject to regulatory and other approvals.

Mpho Masupe, CEO and Head of Coverage, Standard Chartered Botswana, said: "The strength and attractiveness of the full SC Botswana franchise is a testament to the hard work of the entire SC Botswana team, and we remain committed to securing the best possible outcome for them, our clients and our shareholders. We strongly believe that Standard Chartered Botswana is well-placed to thrive under new ownership with the necessary local scale. We will work closely with colleagues and clients to



**Mpho Masupe, CEO Standard Chartered Botswana**

minimise disruption during the sale process, which will take some time."

Dalu Ajene, Head of Coverage and CEO, Africa, said: "Standard Chartered is committed to our global strategy of combining differentiated cross-border corporate and investment banking capabilities and leading wealth management expertise for affluent clients. We have operated in Africa for 170 years; the continent remains core to our network, and we have invested

heavily in recent years. Over the last three years, we've seen Wealth assets under management in sub-Saharan Africa more-than doubled from \$1.7billion to \$4.0billion driven by growth in our affluent franchise in Kenya and Nigeria.

We will do our utmost to minimise disruption and uncertainty during this period as we continue to work in the best interests of all our people and stakeholders."

## CONSUMERS HIT HARD

## Weak Pula drives up retail prices

KITSO RAMONO

editors@thepatriot.co.bw

**B**OTSWANA CONSUMERS ARE increasingly feeling the pinch at the till as retailers raise prices to survive rising import costs caused by the Pula's continued weakness against the South African Rand.

Bank of Botswana data shows that over the year to December 2025, the Pula depreciated by 5.7 percent against the Rand, the currency that matters most for everyday prices in Botswana. South Africa supplies most of the country's food, groceries, and household goods, meaning that even small exchange rate shifts quickly filter into shop prices. Retailers say they are caught in the middle.

Dithuto Madae, who owns a Saverite franchise in Bobonong, said higher import costs have left retailers with limited room to absorb losses.

"Most of the stock we sell comes from South Africa, and it is priced in Rands. When the Pula weakens, our buying price goes up immediately. We try to hold prices for as long as we can, but at some point, we

are forced to adjust; otherwise, the business cannot survive," Madae said.

He said consumers often blame retailers for price hikes without seeing the pressures faced by businesses behind the scenes. "Customers are unhappy, and we understand them, but retailers are also feeling the same pressure. Electricity, transport, and supplier costs are all rising at the same time," he said.

The pressure intensified toward the end of the year. In the month to December 2025 alone, the Pula depreciated by 1.6 percent against the rand, even as it strengthened against major global currencies such as the US dollar and Japanese yen. Economists say those global gains offer little comfort to households because most goods on Botswana shelves are effectively rand-priced.

Independent economist Khutsafalo Garebolthe said the currency's performance explains why the cost of living remains stubbornly high.

"The problem is not how the Pula is performing globally, but how it is performing against the rand. As long as Botswana relies heavily on South African imports, any weakening of the Pula against



VP and Finance Minister, Ndaba Gaolathe

the rand will translate directly into higher prices for consumers," Garebolthe said.

He said the impact is usually gradual rather than sudden, making it harder for households to cope. "Prices don't jump overnight, but month by month, the food basket becomes more expensive. That slowly erodes household incomes, especially for low- and middle-income earners," he said.

While a stronger Pula against the US dollar helps contain fuel prices and some imported goods, Garebolthe noted that these benefits are often outweighed by higher costs from South Africa.

The weaker rand exchange rate also poses a challenge for policymakers, as it imports inflation into the economy and limits the room for interest rate relief at a time when consumers are already under strain.

Analysts warn that until Botswana reduces its dependence on South African imports, both retailers and consumers will continue to feel the impact of rand movements, with households ultimately bearing the heaviest burden through higher prices at the till.

## Sefalana gives away P4.7m in cars, phones

KITSO RAMONO

editors@thepatriot.co.bw

**S**EFALANA HOLDINGS ON WEDNESDAY concluded the second leg of its Drive Your Dream Car competition, giving away prizes worth P4.7 million to retail customers across its Shoppers and Liquor stores, following a campaign that attracted more than 1.5 million entries.

The latest draw focused on Sefalana's retail customers, with shoppers standing a chance to win weekly smartphones and grand prizes in the form of brand-new vehicles. In total, the retailer gave away 728 smartphones, with each participating store awarding one smartphone every week during the competition period.

The headline prizes were 15 Honda vehicles, made up of 10 Honda Amaze cars and five Honda Elevate SUVs, awarded to customers who met the competition requirements.

To qualify, customers were required to purchase any three participating products, spend a minimum of P100, and swipe a registered Sefalana Rewards Card, which automatically entered them into the draw. No manual entry forms were used.



A total of 15 Honda cars, including Honda Elevate and Honda Amaze models, were won in this round of the competition

The retail competition ran from 13 October 2025 to 9 January 2026, following an earlier wholesale phase of the Drive Your Dream Car campaign. During the first phase, which targeted Sefalana's wholesale customers, a similar number of prizes were awarded.

Across both phases, Sefalana gave away a total of 30 vehicles, split evenly between wholesale and retail customers.

In addition to customers, Sefalana also ensured that employees were included in the campaign. A separate staff-only competition saw employees compete for prizes that

included one Honda Elevate and several smartphones.

Speaking during the draw, Sefalana Franchise and Marketing Executive Reginald Klinck said the company deliberately adopted a fully digital entry and draw system to improve efficiency, transparency and security.

All entries were generated automatically through the Sefalana Rewards Card system, ensuring that only registered customers with verified contact details qualified. According to Sefalana, unregistered cards were automatically excluded, reducing the risk of disputed or untraceable winners.

The draw itself was conducted digitally by Infinity, a South African tech company that manages Sefalana's loyalty programme, while the entire process was independently audited by external auditors Grant Thornton to ensure compliance and fairness.

Infinity representative George Lombard explained that winners were randomly selected by the system, recorded electronically and shared immediately with Sefalana management for verification and announcement. Weekly draws were conducted throughout the campaign, culminating in the final vehicle giveaways.

Sefalana said the scale of participation, with 1.5 million entries recorded during the retail phase alone, showed strong customer uptake of its loyalty programme and reinforced the retailer's strategy of using rewards-based promotions to drive repeat spending across its stores.

Prize handovers are expected to take place once all winners have been verified and contacted, a process Sefalana said could take several weeks due to the geographic spread of winners across the country.

## Ministerial clarification on the Purchase of Botswana Diamond



**F**ROM A MINISTERIAL PERSPECTIVE, we would like to provide clarity regarding the purchase of Botswana diamonds within Botswana.

Botswana does not restrict the sale of diamonds to only two buyers, nor is it impossible for members of the public or visitors to purchase Botswana diamonds locally. While rough diamond sales are governed by specific contractual arrangements at the upstream level of the value chain, Botswana has a well-established downstream diamond industry that enables lawful access to diamonds through approved channels.

Members of the public can purchase Botswana diamonds in Botswana through licensed diamond retailers, jewellery stores, and authorised beneficiation companies, which offer polished diamonds and finished

diamond jewellery sourced from Botswana's diamond value chain. These entities operate under national laws and international standards that ensure transparency, traceability, and ethical sourcing.

Botswana continues to promote local beneficiation, citizen participation, and responsible access to its diamonds, ensuring that diamonds mined in Botswana contribute meaningfully to national development while remaining accessible to global and local consumers through the appropriate legal and commercial frameworks.

We welcome continued interest in Botswana diamonds and encourage engagement through recognised and licensed channels within the country.

**Ministry of Minerals and Energy  
Gaborone**

## Lucara increases private placement to \$165m

**L**UCARA DIAMOND CORP. IS PLEASED to announce that due to strong demand it has elected to increase the previously announced non-brokered private placement to an aggregate of 1,031,250,000 common shares in the capital of Lucara at a price of \$0.16 per Common Share for gross proceeds of \$165.0 million. All dollar amounts reflected in Canadian dollars unless otherwise stated.

The Company expects that the net proceeds of the Private Placement will be used to advance the Karowe Underground Project, including for shaft equipping, conveyance commissioning and lateral development, extraction and drill horizon development, as well as for general working capital and corporate purposes.

William Lamb, President and CEO of Lucara, commented, "The decision to upsize this equity financing reflects strong investor demand, led by the continued support of the Lundin Family Trusts. The upsized proceeds meaningfully strengthen the Company's capacity to advance the Karowe UGP and execute key development milestones targeted for 2026."

The Offered Securities will be issued on a private placement basis pursuant to exemptions from prospectus requirements under applicable securities laws, and will be subject to a Canadian statutory hold period of four months and one day from the date of issuance. The Company may pay a finder's fee of 5% in connection with a portion of the Private Placement. Completion of the Private Placement will be subject to regulatory approval, including



William Lamb, President and CEO of Lucara

the approval of the Toronto Stock Exchange (the "TSX") and other customary regulatory approvals and closing conditions for a transaction of this nature including, but not limited to, execution of subscription agreements between the Company and the subscribers to the Private Placement. The Private Placement is also conditional upon the Company not being required to obtain any shareholder approvals in respect of the Private Placement (whether by way of exemption by the TSX or otherwise). The Company anticipates closing of the Private Placement to occur in late January, subject to receipt of all necessary regulatory approvals.

Trusts settled by the late Adolf H. Lundin (the "Lundin Family Trusts") have indicated their intention to participate in the Private

Placement in order to maintain, and potentially increase, their interest in the Company by subscribing for up to \$70.0 million of the Private Placement. Nemesia S.a.r.l, a private entity controlled by the Lundin Family Trusts is currently the Company's largest shareholder, and as such, any participation in the Private Placement by the Lundin Family Trusts would be considered a "related party transaction" as defined under Multilateral Instrument 61-101 - Protection of Minority Security Holders in Special Transactions ("MI 61-101"). The Company intends to rely on exemptions from the formal valuation and minority shareholder approval requirements of MI 61-101 and the TSX Rules related to the Company's financial hardship. [PRESS RELEASE]

## JOB VACANCY

Vetagric Suppliers (Pty) Ltd requires the services of the following Professional:

## FINANCE MANAGER

## Description

We are looking for an accomplished Finance Manager with at least 5 years of experience in financial management and strategic oversight. You will be responsible for managing and optimizing our financial operations, ensuring compliance, and providing strategic insights to drive business growth.

## MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

- Timely and accurate preparation of monthly Group management accounts.
- Preparation of monthly management accounts for head office companies.
- Involvement in budgeting and forecasting process.
- Prepares balance sheet and cash flow, and forecast modeling.
- Review of client contracts and proposals, including pricing decisions.
- Close liaison with divisional account managers to resolve issues.
- Regular overseas visits to understand territory results, budgeting and forecasting and controls reviews.

## REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS

- Qualified Accountant/ Degree in Accounting or its equivalent with 5 years of post-working experience.
- Minimum of 5 years of work experience in finance, accounting, or a related field.
- Proven experience in financial management, reporting, and analysis.
- Strong knowledge of financial software and systems.
- Expertise in financial modeling, budgeting, and forecasting.
- Excellent leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills.
- Strong problem-solving abilities and attention to detail.

**Note: salary and benefits commensurate with the current market.**

The qualified individual should forward their applications & CV's to the following address not later than the **2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2026** to:

**Human Resource Manager  
Vetagric Suppliers (Pty) Ltd  
Private Bag 00278  
Gaborone**

# Global economy shows resilience

**T**HE GLOBAL ECONOMY IS PROVING more resilient than anticipated despite persistent trade tensions and policy uncertainty, according to the World Bank's latest Global Economic Prospects report. Global growth is projected to remain broadly steady over the next two years, easing to 2.6% in 2026 before rising to 2.7% in 2027, an upward revision from the June forecast.

The resilience reflects better-than-expected growth—especially in the United States, which accounts for about two-thirds of the upward revision to the forecast in 2026. Even so, if these forecasts hold, the 2020s are on track to be the weakest decade for global growth since the 1960s. The sluggish pace is widening the gap in living standards across the world, the report finds: at the end of 2025, nearly all advanced economies enjoyed per capita incomes exceeding their 2019 levels, but about one in four developing economies had lower per capita incomes.

In 2025, growth was supported by a surge in trade ahead of policy changes and swift readjustments in global supply chains. These boosts are expected to fade in 2026 as trade and domestic demand soften. However, the easing global financial conditions and fiscal expansion in several large economies should help cushion the slowdown, according to the report. Global inflation is projected to edge down to 2.6% in 2026, reflecting softer labor markets and lower energy prices. Growth is expected to pick up in 2027 as trade flows adjust and policy uncertainty diminishes.

“With each passing year, the global economy has become less capable of generating growth and seemingly more resilient to policy uncertainty,” said Indermit Gill, the World Bank Group's Chief Economist and Senior Vice President for Development Economics. “But economic dynamism and resilience cannot diverge for long without fracturing public finance and credit markets. Over the coming years, the world economy is set to grow slower than it did in the troubled 1990s—while carrying record levels of public and private debt. To avert stagnation and joblessness, governments in emerging and advanced economies must aggressively



USA President, Donald Trump

liberalize private investment and trade, rein in public consumption, and invest in new technologies and education.”

In 2026, growth in developing economies is expected to slow to 4% from 4.2% in 2025 before edging up to 4.1% in 2027 as trade tensions ease, commodity prices stabilize, financial conditions improve, and investment flows strengthen. Growth is projected to be higher in low-income countries, reaching an average of 5.6% over 2026–27, buoyed by firming domestic demand, recovering exports, and

moderating inflation. However, this will not be sufficient to narrow the income gap between developing and advanced economies. Per capita income growth in developing economies is projected to be 3% in 2026—about a percentage point below its 2000-2019 average. At this pace, per capita income in developing economies is expected to be only 12% of the level in advanced economies.

These trends could intensify the job-creation challenge confronting developing economies, where 1.2 billion young people

will reach working age over the next decade. Overcoming the jobs challenge will require a comprehensive policy effort centered on three pillars. The first is strengthening physical, digital, and human capital to raise productivity and employability. The second is improving the business environment

by enhancing policy credibility and regulatory certainty so firms can expand. The third is mobilizing private capital at scale to support investment. Together, these measures can help shift job creation toward more productive and formal employment, supporting income growth and poverty

alleviation.

In addition, developing economies need to bolster their fiscal sustainability, which has been eroded in recent years by overlapping shocks, growing development needs, and rising debt-servicing costs. A special-focus chapter of the report provides a comprehensive analysis of the use of fiscal rules by developing economies, which set clear limits on government borrowing and spending to help manage public finances. These rules are generally linked to stronger growth, higher private investment, more stable financial sectors, and a greater capacity to cope with external shocks.

“With public debt in emerging and developing economies at its highest level in more than half a century, restoring fiscal credibility has become an urgent priority,” said M. Ayhan Kose, the World Bank Group's Deputy Chief Economist and Director of the Prospects Group. “Well-designed fiscal rules can help governments stabilize debt, rebuild policy buffers, and respond more effectively to shocks. But rules alone are not enough: credibility, enforcement, and political commitment ultimately determine whether fiscal rules deliver stability and growth.”

More than half of developing economies now have at least one fiscal rule in place. These can include limits on fiscal deficits, public debt, government expenditures, or revenue collection. Developing economies that adopt fiscal rules typically see their budget balance improve by 1.4 percentage points of GDP after five years, once interest payments and the ups and downs of the business cycle are accounted for. Use of fiscal rules also increases by 9 percentage points the likelihood of a multi-year improvement in budget balances. However, the medium- and long-term benefits of fiscal rules depend heavily on the strength of institutions, the economic context in which the rules are introduced, and how the rules are designed, the report finds. [PRESS RELEASE]

## Standard Chartered appoints Dalu Ajene Africa CEO



Newly appointed Standard Chartered Africa CEO, Dalu Ajene

**S**TANDARD CHARTERED HAS announced the appointment of Dalu Ajene as the Chief Executive Officer of the bank's operations in Africa, with dual responsibilities as the Head of Coverage for Africa.

Until his appointment, Ajene served as the Chief Executive Officer of Standard Chartered Nigeria, a position he assumed in April 2024. Under his leadership, the bank recorded strong year-on-year financial performance, including meeting the Central Bank of Nigeria's recapitalisation requirement of N200bn for national commercial banks ahead of the March 2026 deadline.

Before joining Standard Chartered, Ajene was the Chief Executive Officer of Rand Merchant Bank Nigeria, the bank stated in a statement on Thursday.

The bank said the appointment of Ajene, who has over 25 years' experience in the global financial services sector, reflects its culture of promoting excellence and reinforces confidence among stakeholders in the Nigerian financial industry.

Speaking on his appointment, Ajene said, “Having had the privilege of leading Standard Chartered Nigeria over the past two years, I am deeply honoured to now take on broader responsibilities across Africa.

This transition reflects the strength of our franchise, the resilience of our teams, and the impact we have delivered in a period of significant change and development.

“Across the region, Standard Chartered remains a key partner in trade finance, structured solutions, and development finance, leveraging technology to deliver client-centric services anchored on trust.

“I look forward to working closely with our experienced teams across Africa to accelerate growth across our Corporate & Investment Banking and Wealth & Retail businesses, mobilise catalytic capital, and create sustainable value for our clients, stakeholders, and the communities we serve.”

Ajene holds a Bachelor's degree in Economics from Dartmouth College and an MBA from Harvard Business School. He is also described as a leader passionate about driving a culture of high performance centred on people empowerment to deliver best-in-class service to clients and strong financial outcomes for stakeholders.

He takes over from Kariuki Ngari, who served as CEO, Africa, and Sarmad Lone, who previously oversaw the bank's Africa Coverage portfolio. [punchmg.com]

# CHOPPIES

*Great value for your money!*

**CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)**

**Provision of Security Services**

Choppies Distribution Centre (Pty) Ltd invites qualified and experienced security service providers to submit Expressions of Interest (EOI) for the provision of professional retail security service across the country.

**Scope of Services**

The required services are **Retail Manned Guarding**, with strong displayable guarding track record to the below:

- Loss prevention
- Company asset protection
- Criminal detection, apprehension, patrolling and surveillance
- Emergency response and crisis management support
- Customer service
- Compliance with all relevant laws, regulations, and safety standards

**Eligibility Criteria**

Interested service providers must:

- Be duly registered and licensed to operate in Botswana
- Demonstrate at least 5 years of relevant experience in retail security service provision
- Provide proof of trained and vetted personnel
- Have adequate insurance cover for personnel and operations
- Show evidence of financial and operational capacity

**Submission Requirements**

EOIs should include:

1. Company profile, registration documents and security operations licenses
2. Details of company personnel qualifications and training inclusive of summary of relevant company security experience and references
3. Minimum of three years independently audited financial statements
4. Proof of compliance with statutory requirements
5. Any additional retail security value-added services offered

**Submission Deadline:** 23/01/2026

**Submission Method:** [security@choppies.co.bw](mailto:security@choppies.co.bw)

**Reference:** EOI - Security Services 01/2026

# Tsodilo detects critical minerals, rare earth elements at Botswana project



**T**SX-V-LISTED Tsodilo Resources has announced the verification of significant critical minerals and rare earth element (REE) mineralisation from its 100%-owned Gcwihaba Metals project, in north-west Botswana.

The C26 and C27 targets were initially identified as geophysical anomalies through ground magnetic and gravity surveys. The company says diamond

core drilling of these anomalies confirmed skarn-hosted REE mineralisation 20 m to 50 m below surface.

The company notes that skarns and other project-area-proximate targets contain a polymetallic assemblage including 15 REEs and critical minerals such as copper, cobalt, nickel, vanadium and silver.

The company says a 15 000 m drill programme will begin this year to obtain a compliant National Instrument 43-101 resource statement.

Based on integrated geophysical modelling, drilling results and geological modelling of the confirmed skarn deposits, the company notes that it has defined a conceptual exploration target ranging from 81-million to 97-million tonnes at grades between 0.05% and 1.49% total rare earth oxide (TREO).

The REE exploration target measures 4 km in length.

Chairperson and CEO James Bruchs says the 1.49% TREO intercept at C27 represents

the highest grade recorded so far for Gcwihaba.

He says these results validate the company's systematic exploration approach and demonstrate evidence of a polymetallic REE skarn system with both vertical extent and grade.

He says the company's conceptual exploration target of 81-million to 97-million tonnes was generated through integrated magnetic and gravity geophysical modelling using a ground

magnetics inversion model, constrained by drilling results and geological interpretation.

He notes that this modelling was completed in-house using Paradigm Geologic Computer Aided Design, or GOCAD, software.

"Beyond REEs, the skarn system has returned encouraging base and precious metal values, including copper up to 0.41% in the C26 skarn, cobalt up to 320 ppm and silver up to 5.1 g/t in the C27 skarn.

"The 2026 drilling programme will focus on defining high-grade REE zones while further evaluating the polymetallic potential of the system to support preparation of an initial mineral resource estimate," says Bruchs.

Tsodilo says this represents the first systematic assessment of REE potential at the Gcwihaba metals project. [miningweekly.com]

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# Why luxury carmakers are now building glitzy skyscrapers

**B**UGATTI IS SYNONYMOUS WITH HIGH-performance, ultra-expensive supercars. But now the luxury French brand is entering a very different kind of race – not on the track, but in the skyline.

In the heart of Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, Bugatti is building its first residential tower.

With the cheapest apartments set to cost \$5.2m (£3.9m), the company is entering a fast-growing marketplace for the world's super-rich – branded residences.

Being constructed by a growing number of luxury firms, including fellow carmakers Porsche and Aston Martin, they typically offer glitzy, fully-furnished apartments, where the company's brand name or logo is often prominently, and repeatedly, on show.

Other businesses that have entered the sector are Swiss watch firm Jacob & Co, and Italian fashion houses Fendi and Missoni.

Bugatti is building its 43-storey Dubai tower in partnership with UAE-based developer Binghatti Properties. The most expensive penthouses in the Bugatti Residences By Binghatti building will include large, private lifts for the owners' cars, so they can park them inside their apartments.

"For many car or watch enthusiasts, it's not just about owning the vehicle or the timepiece, but experiencing the brand in their everyday life through real estate," says Muhammed BinGhatti, chairman of Binghatti Properties.

The buyer list for the Bugatti project includes Brazilian football star Neymar Junior and opera singer Andrea Bocelli, adds Mr BinGhatti. Neymar is said to have paid \$54m for one of the penthouses.

Global demand for branded residences has "accelerated" in the past two years, according to a new report by estate agent company Knight Frank.

It adds that while there were 169 such schemes in 2011, today there are 611, and the number is forecast to rise to 1,019 by 2030.

Currently, the US has the highest number of branded apartment buildings, centered on the skylines of Miami and New York, but Knight Frank says that the Middle East, in second place, is seeing the biggest growth. It says this is being "driven largely by rapid expansion in the United Arab Emirates

(UAE) and Saudi Arabia."

"Branded residences appeal most to individuals with extreme brand loyalty - people who want to live and breathe a particular brand," says Faisal Durrani, head of research at Knight Frank Middle East.

On a city-by-city basis, Dubai in the UAE now leads the way when it comes to the number of branded residences projects in development, according to a separate report on the sector by fellow property firm Savills.

This is said to be fuelled by the continuing high number of wealthy people relocating to the city and purchasing luxury homes.

Durrani adds that prices for branded apartments in low-tax Dubai are often cheaper than elsewhere in the world. He describes the cost of such properties in the city as "extremely affordable compared with cities like New York and London".

Until recently, branded residences were dominated by hotel chains such as Four Seasons and Ritz-Carlton, but non-hotel luxury brands are now taking a growing share of new projects.

Porsche's Design Tower in Miami opened in 2017, while Aston Martin's Residences Miami launched last year, and Jacob & Co's project on Al Marjan Island in the UAE is due to be ready in 2027.

For such companies, real estate offers a new revenue stream with relatively low risk, as property development partners handle construction, and buyers pay a premium for the aesthetic and exclusivity associated with their brand.

According to BinGhatti, branded apartments are typically between 30 and 40% more expensive than non-branded luxury homes.

Many new branded schemes feature private members' clubs, wellness facilities and exclusive services - from chauffeured cars and yacht access, to private jet partnerships.

A new tier of branded properties is also being marketed around shared passions like gastronomy, wellness, and even longevity science. In London, the forthcoming Six Senses Residences in Bayswater, being built by the Six Senses hotel chain, will include a biohacking centre. This will offer therapies including as cryotherapy, or extreme cold treatment, which is marketed as boosting energy levels and enhancing skin tone.

Meanwhile, in Texas, Discovery Land



Bugatti skyscraper

Company's upcoming residential Austin Surf Club is centred around a vast man-made surf lagoon.

Business and consumer psychology experts say the boom in luxury branded apartments reflects a broader desire for social signalling and exclusivity.

Giana Eckhardt, a professor of marketing at King's College London, argues that such homes have become a new form of "social

status currency", akin to a rare handbag or huge diamond ring.

"Ultra-wealthy consumers increasingly want status assets and goods that are not available to everyone," she says.

Eckhardt who specialises in consumer behaviour, branding and consumer culture, adds that luxury brands communicate a "person's place in a social hierarchy". "They want the social rewards that come with

being associated with these brands," she adds.

BinGhatti agrees that exclusivity is central to the appeal. "Clients really get the highest level of exclusivity.

"Every unit is unique and that gives them a special feeling of owning a one-of-a-kind [apartment] across the entire planet."

Yet business psychologist Stuart Duff, of UK firm Pearn Kandola, cautions that

many people may find the idea of branded apartments to not be in good taste, especially if the brand name is excessively on show.

"Having the presence of a brand everywhere within an apartment block could well reduce the perception of rarity and uniqueness, and lead to a feeling of bragging. And at worst being seen as vulgar and tacky." [BBC]



## Savings, Investments, Lending and Foreign Currency Rates effective from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026

### Savings and Investments Rates

| Description             | Normal Interest Rate* | Effective Interest Rate* | Minimum Opening Balance (Pula) |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Current                 | 0.00% - 3.00%         | 0.00% - 3.00%            | 100                            |
| Call                    | 0.00% - 3.00%         | 0.00% - 3.00%            | 10,000                         |
| Ipele                   | 0.00% - 1.55%         | 0.00% - 1.56%            | 1,000                          |
| SureSave 12 Months      | 4.25%                 | 4.34%                    | 100                            |
| SureSave 24 Months      | 4.50%                 | 4.60%                    | 100                            |
| SureSave 36 Months      | 4.25%                 | 4.34%                    | 100                            |
| Lebando                 | 1.85% - 2.35%         | 1.87% - 2.38%            | 1,000                          |
| EasySave                | 3.00% - 5.00%         | 3.04% - 5.12%            | 100                            |
| Fixed Deposit 91 Days   | 4.25% - 13.50%        | 4.31% - 14.42%           | 1,000                          |
| Fixed Deposit 6 Months  | 4.50% - 13.50%        | 4.57% - 14.42%           | 1,000                          |
| Fixed Deposit 12 Months | 5.25% - 10.50%        | 5.35% - 11.05%           | 1,000                          |
| Fixed Deposit 24 Months | 5.25% - 7.00%         | 5.35% - 7.24%            | 1,000                          |

### Lending Rates

| Description  | Normal Interest Rate*     | Average Effective Interest Rate (%) |
|--|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Monetary Policy Rate (MoPR)                                      |                           | 3.5%                                |
| Bank Gaborone Prime Lending Rate                                 |                           | 7.51%                               |
| Mortgage Rate  | Prime - Prime +8%         | 10.25%                              |
| Overdraft Rate (revolving credit lines)                          | Prime - Prime +13.50%     | 15.90%                              |
| Credit Card Rate   | Prime +10% - Prime +15%   | 19.57%                              |
| Lease loans  | N/A                       | N/A                                 |
| Personal loans (excluding overdrafts mortgage, and credit cards) | Prime +3% - Prime +25.49% | 14.12%                              |
| Other long term loan rates (Commercial loans)                    | Prime +4% - Prime +13.5%  | 12.99%                              |

### Foreign Currency Rates

| Months    | Range Nominal Interest Rate (Min) | Range Nominal Interest Rate (Max) | Range Effective Interest Rate (Min) | Range Effective Interest Rate (Max) | Minimum Opening Balance (Individuals) | Minimum Opening Balance (Business) |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 Month   | 0.75%                             | 2.25%                             | 0.75%                               | 2.27%                               | 1000                                  | 1000                               |
| 3 Months  | 1.25%                             | 2.75%                             | 1.26%                               | 2.78%                               | 1000                                  | 1000                               |
| 6 Months  | 2.00%                             | 3.50%                             | 2.02%                               | 3.56%                               | 1000                                  | 1000                               |
| 9 Months  | 2.25%                             | 3.75%                             | 2.27%                               | 3.82%                               | 1000                                  | 1000                               |
| 12 Months | 2.50%                             | 4.00%                             | 2.53%                               | 4.07%                               | 1000                                  | 1000                               |
| Call      | 0.00%                             | 1.50%                             | 0.00%                               | 1.51%                               | 100                                   | 100                                |

\*Rates apply to amounts from USD1K to USD1M. All rates for USD1M and above are negotiable.

### ZAR rates

| Months    | Range Nominal Interest Rate (Min) | Range Nominal Interest Rate (Max) | Range Effective Interest Rate (Min) | Range Effective Interest Rate (Max) | Minimum Opening Balance (Individuals) | Minimum Opening Balance (Business) |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 Month   | 2.00%                             | 5.00%                             | 2.02%                               | 5.12%                               | 10000                                 | 10000                              |
| 3 Months  | 2.25%                             | 5.25%                             | 2.27%                               | 5.38%                               | 10000                                 | 10000                              |
| 6 Months  | 3.35%                             | 6.25%                             | 3.30%                               | 6.43%                               | 10000                                 | 10000                              |
| 9 Months  | 3.50%                             | 6.50%                             | 3.56%                               | 6.70%                               | 10000                                 | 10000                              |
| 12 Months | 3.75%                             | 6.75%                             | 3.82%                               | 6.96%                               | 10000                                 | 10000                              |
| Call      | 0.00%                             | 2.75%                             | 0.00%                               | 2.78%                               | 500                                   | 500                                |

\*Rates apply to amounts from ZAR10K to ZAR1M. All rates for ZAR1M and above are negotiable

### GBP rates

| Months    | Range Nominal Interest Rate (Min) | Range Nominal Interest Rate (Max) | Range Effective Interest Rate (Min) | Range Effective Interest Rate (Max) | Minimum Opening Balance (Individuals) | Minimum Opening Balance (Business) |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 Month   | 0.25%                             | 1.25%                             | 0.25%                               | 1.26%                               | 1000                                  | 1000                               |
| 3 Months  | 0.50%                             | 1.50%                             | 0.50%                               | 1.51%                               | 1000                                  | 1000                               |
| 6 Months  | 1.00%                             | 2.00%                             | 1.00%                               | 2.02%                               | 1000                                  | 1000                               |
| 9 Months  | 1.50%                             | 2.50%                             | 1.51%                               | 2.53%                               | 1000                                  | 1000                               |
| 12 Months | 1.50%                             | 2.50%                             | 1.51%                               | 2.53%                               | 1000                                  | 1000                               |
| Call      | 0.00%                             | 0.25%                             | 0.00%                               | 0.25%                               | 100                                   | 100                                |

\*Rates apply to amounts from GBP1K to GBP1M. All rates for GBP1M and above are negotiable

### EUR rates

| Months    | Range Nominal Interest Rate (Min) | Range Nominal Interest Rate (Max) | Range Effective Interest Rate (Min) | Range Effective Interest Rate (Max) | Minimum Opening Balance (Individuals) | Minimum Opening Balance (Business) |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 Month   | 1.00%                             | 1.50%                             | 1.00%                               | 1.51%                               | 1000                                  | 1000                               |
| 3 Months  | 1.50%                             | 2.00%                             | 1.51%                               | 2.02%                               | 1000                                  | 1000                               |
| 6 Months  | 1.75%                             | 2.25%                             | 1.76%                               | 2.27%                               | 1000                                  | 1000                               |
| 9 Months  | 2.00%                             | 2.50%                             | 2.02%                               | 2.53%                               | 1000                                  | 1000                               |
| 12 Months | 2.00%                             | 2.50%                             | 2.02%                               | 2.53%                               | 1000                                  | 1000                               |
| Call      | 0.00%                             | 0.15%                             | 0.00%                               | 0.15%                               | 100                                   | 100                                |

\*Rates apply to amounts from EUR1K to EUR1M. All rates for EUR1M and above are negotiable

## Quarterly Deposit and Lending Rates 2025 October - December 2025

### Actual Deposit Interest Rates

| Type of Deposit Account   | October 2025 Interest Rates (%) | November 2025 Interest Rates (%) | December 2025 Interest Rates (%) | Range Interest Rates (%) |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Current                   | 0.00% - 3.00%                   | 0.00% - 3.00%                    | 0.00% - 3.00%                    | 0.00% - 3.00%            |
| Call                      | 0.00% - 3.00%                   | 0.00% - 3.00%                    | 0.00% - 3.00%                    | 0.00% - 3.00%            |
| Savings                   | 0.00% - 4.50%                   | 0.00% - 4.50%                    | 0.00% - 4.50%                    | 0.00% - 4.50%            |
| 3 months                  | 3.50% - 13.50%                  | 4.25% - 13.50%                   | 4.25% - 13.50%                   | 3.50% - 13.50%           |
| 6 months                  | 3.75% - 13.50%                  | 4.50% - 13.50%                   | 4.50% - 13.50%                   | 3.75% - 13.50%           |
| 12 months                 | 4.50% - 10.50%                  | 5.25% - 10.50%                   | 5.25% - 10.50%                   | 4.50% - 10.50%           |
| 24 months                 | 4.50% - 7.00%                   | 5.25% - 7.00%                    | 5.25% - 7.00%                    | 4.50% - 7.00%            |
| Foreign Currency Call ZAR | 0.00% - 2.75%                   | 0.00% - 2.75%                    | 0.00% - 2.75%                    | 0.00% - 2.75%            |
| Foreign Currency Call USD | 0.00% - 1.50%                   | 0.00% - 1.50%                    | 0.00% - 1.50%                    | 0.00% - 1.50%            |

### Actual Lending Interest Rates

| Type of Deposit Account   | October 2025 Interest Rates (%) | November 2025 Interest Rates (%) | December 2025 Interest Rates (%) | Range Interest Rates (%)  |
|---|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Monetary Policy Rate  | 1.90%                           | 1.90%                            | 1.90%                            | 1.90%                     |
| Prime Lending Rate  | 7.51%                           | 7.51%                            | 7.51%                            | 7.51%                     |
| Mortgage Rate   | Prime - Prime +8%               | Prime - Prime +8%                | Prime - Prime +8%                | Prime - Prime +8%         |
| Overdraft Rate (revolving credit lines)                                     | Prime - Prime +13.50%           | Prime - Prime +13.50%            | Prime - Prime +13.50%            | Prime - Prime +13.50%     |
| Credit Card Rate  | Prime +10% - Prime +15%         | Prime +10% - Prime +15%          | Prime +10% - Prime +15%          | Prime +10% - Prime +15%   |
| Lease loans   | N/A                             | N/A                              | N/A                              | N/A                       |
| Unsecured Personal loans (excluding overdrafts, mortgage, and credit cards) | Prime +3% - Prime +25.49%       | Prime +3% - Prime +25.49%        | Prime +3% - Prime +25.49%        | Prime +3% - Prime +25.49% |
| Other long term loan rates  | Prime +4% - Prime +13.5%        | Prime +4% - Prime +13.5%         | Prime +4% - Prime +13.5%         | Prime +4% - Prime +13.5%  |

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# lifestyle

# Soul Dialogues

**PART 4: MEDITATIONS**  
**SOLOMON KGOSI**

**T**HIS ARTICLE IS INSPIRED BY THE Temple of Heaven. A place of worship, perspective and abundance. Meticulous circles inside circles, number sequences cast in stone; the temple is as beautiful as it is precise.

The Temple is said to symbolise the link between the earth and the sky. It is within those ornate walls beneath a vast sky that emperors prayed for what we all pray for, food and favour.

Like all the old buildings and art we experienced in China, the Temple was unlike anything I had ever seen, in its mastery of craft, in its permanence and in its quiet knowing. I marveled and I touched every surface I could, I counted the number of steps to the middle and looked up at the wide sky above. I wondered one more time what inspired, fueled and sustained people to create masterpieces on this scale.

Six months later, I had dinner with two Batswana and two Chinese people. We met in a Chinese restaurant in Gaborone. As I waited for my dinner companions to arrive, my eyes wandered around the restaurant. I must admit I couldn't help but judge the decor. It was a far cry from the art and function I had experienced in China.

My dining companions arrived and we were ushered upstairs by the host. We took our seats in a private room. As soon as we sat down, waiters paraded through with dish after dish. The food was arranged on the carousel in the middle of the table. We tucked into the food with healthy appetites.

Some of us were meeting for the first time. There was a need for some translation so our conversation started off haltingly. As our tongues were tickled by flavours and our bellies were warmed by the food, our conversation became real.

It began something like this...  
So what do Batswana really think of China?

There was a pause. One of the Batswana dared to respond.

"Well," he began tentatively, "I think if you ask the average Motswana, especially in the rural areas, they think all Chinese just sell cheap stuff"

The Batswana watched the Chinese faces to gauge offence? Surprise? Defensiveness? All of the above?



The response from the Chinese gentleman was open and vulnerable. "Your answer explains a lot. Every time I try to engage with Batswana business people for large business opportunities, I am met with suspicion and questions about China's real intentions."

I felt the Batswana begin to relax. The answer inspired some openness in return. Personal views, prejudices and ignorance were shared. The lady across from me said, "Well, it is not surprising that people respond that way, all I ever read in the news is negative news

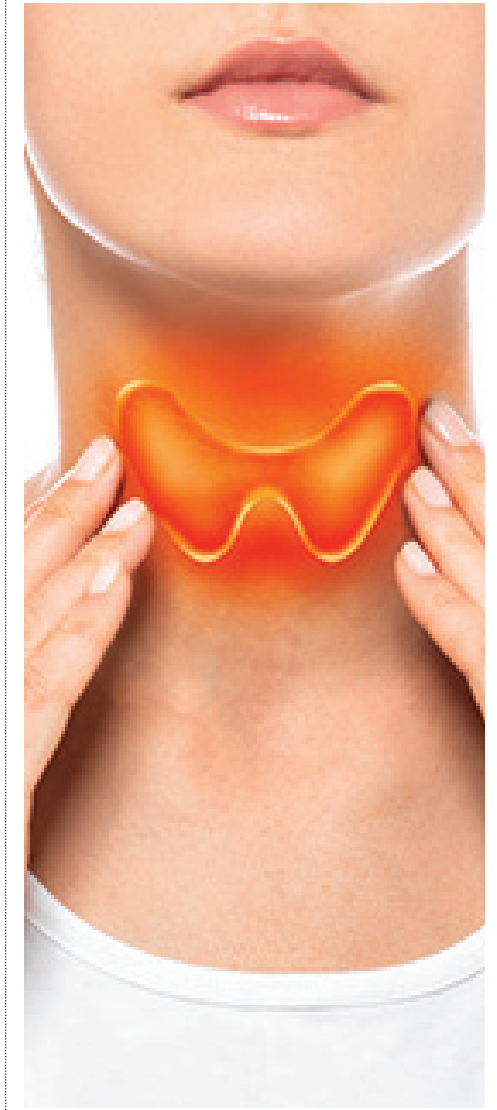
of African countries being on the wrong side of Chinese deals." One Motswana remained quiet through the early rounds of this discourse. She listened as her dining companions sought to understand why the mistrust was the default and why so many didn't even question it.

She listened as the diners shared views on individualism versus collectivism, on how many Chinese or Batswana each group (zero) actually knew at a personal level. The diners shared some history of their two nations; the portions their nations remember with pain and the countries that had held space for them at their lowest. When the gentleman across the table asked her what she thought, she said... "you know, as I listened to you speak I realised that the fundamental problem is that we do not know each other. As Africans, of course we mistrust any wanderer to our shores. History has taught us that people come to this continent to take, to tell, to control, to profit; rarely if ever does a strong person or country show up to this part of the world to offer collaboration or real partnership." "So maybe," she continued, "our mistrust is not about China per se, it is simply the wound that history has left us with." The dinner conversation was in its own way a prayer for food and favour.

The Temple of Heaven  
Beneath the sky's eternal dome,  
Where earth meets heaven in sacred tone,  
Rises a temple, solemn, grand,  
A prayerful gift from human hands.  
Its circles speak of heaven's grace,  
Perfect symmetry, time's embrace.  
Blue-tiled roof meets morning light,  
A bridge of hope, serene and bright.  
Here emperors knelt on sacred ground,  
Where whispers of harvest once were found.  
Petitions rose with incense air,  
As hearts and heaven joined in prayer.  
The stones remember each humble plea,  
For rain, for plenty, for harmony,  
A nation's faith carved into stone,  
In silence, the past still makes itself known.  
Now travelers walk where rulers prayed,  
In awe of the beauty their hands have made.  
The Temple of Heaven, timeless, true,  
A circle eternal, connecting me and you.

*\*\*The Soul Dialogues are a six-part series about the road less travelled. A wanderer by the name of Solomon Kgosi returns home to Botswana after an unlikely journey to China. Solomon tells of finding himself in a foreign land celebrating the human desire for intimacy and enduring purpose.*

## Thyroid Awareness Month: Importance of Early Detection and Education



**I**N HONOR OF THYROID AWARENESS Month, St. George's University (SGU) School of Medicine is shining a spotlight on empowering Africans to have a greater awareness of thyroid disorders, conditions that often go undiagnosed despite their widespread prevalence. Thyroid diseases, particularly hypothyroidism (an underactive thyroid) and hyperthyroidism (an overactive thyroid), are among the most underdiagnosed health issues worldwide, with an estimated 200 million people experiencing the diseases. It is estimated that Africa carries a large share (over 25%) of the global thyroid disorder burden. Yet, due to the subtle and often nonspecific nature of symptoms such as fatigue, unexplained weight changes, hair loss, and mood fluctuations, many individuals live for years without realizing they have a thyroid problem.

Early Detection in Thyroid Disease Diagnosis  
Timely diagnosis of thyroid disorders can make a profound difference. When detected and treated promptly, patients can avoid serious complications from thyroid disorders, including infertility, cardiovascular disease, and metabolic imbalance.

Healthcare professionals recommend that adults, especially those over age 35 or with a family history of thyroid disease, include thyroid function tests as part of their annual health screenings. These simple blood tests measure hormone levels and allow doctors to spot potential dysfunction before it progresses.

Preventive steps may include:  
Scheduling regular thyroid screening  
Maintaining balanced iodine intake  
Monitoring persistent or unexplained symptoms  
Managing stress levels  
Following a healthy diet and staying physically active  
Avoiding excessive or unregulated supplement use

How SGU Prepares Future Doctors for Comprehensive Preventive Care  
SGU's comprehensive curriculum combines theoretical knowledge with hands-on clinical experience, enabling students to identify subtle indicators that may indicate underlying thyroid dysfunction or other endocrine disorders. SGU encourages the public to actively recognize the critical importance of thyroid health and vigorously promote a culture of preventive care, thereby empowering communities to achieve greater well-being. By adopting a healthy lifestyle and practicing self-health awareness, individuals can significantly reduce their risk of developing thyroid disorders and establish enduring habits for long-term health.

# Dithejwane Hills Heritage Hike 2026

**M**ULTITUDES DESCENDED IN Molepolole last Saturday for the flagship annual Dithejwane Hills Heritage hike 2026, organised by Kweneng Hiking Club (KwHC).

Members of hiking clubs from different parts of the country, including Kgatleng Hiking Club (KHC) also attended the hike in large numbers.

Dithejwane Hills – Bakwena's pride O, fair Dithejwane Hills, thine ancient stones do tell

Tales of yore, in whispers to the wind's sweet swell

A path unwinding, steep and slow dothst climb

To thine apex, where secrets in silence do entwine

With every step, a tale dothst weave

Drops of sweat, like precious gems, do relieve

The weary heart, that dothst roam and stray

In Kweneng's hills, magic dothst hold its sway

Where ancestry begun, our kin do rest

In times past, a fortress fortified by stone walls, nest

Their spirits linger, in these hills they dwell

Guarding the heritage, our stories to tell

No throngs, save wind, and stones that breathe

A poetic climb, where moments do enlase and breathe

Join thou the journey, let the summit's call  
Dithejwane's magic, in wonder, dothst enthrall



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# Sport

# Morocco vs Senegal

**A**FRICA CUP OF NATIONS 2025 hosts Morocco moved to within one game of ending their long Africa Cup of Nations title drought after defeating Nigeria 4-2 on penalties following a tense, goalless semi-final in Rabat on Wednesday night.

In front of a packed Stade Prince Moulay Abdellah, the hosts held their nerve in a dramatic shootout, with goalkeeper Yassine Bounou emerging as the decisive figure after saving two Nigerian spot-kicks. Yousef En-Nesyri then sealed the victory with a composed final effort to send the Atlas Lions into their first AFCON final in 21 years, where they will face Senegal on Sunday, January 18 at Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium in Rabat.

The match itself was a finely balanced contest, marked by early intensity and cautious control as the magnitude of the occasion became clear. Morocco showed their attacking intent from the outset and nearly capitalised on a defensive error inside

three minutes, only for Semi Ajayi to redeem himself with a crucial block to deny Ismael Saibari.

Brahim Diaz was a constant threat in the first half, curling narrowly wide and later missing with a header, while Achraf Hakimi's deliveries caused persistent problems for Nigeria's backline. Stanley Nwabali, however, stood firm in goal for the Super Eagles, producing key saves to keep the scores level.

Nigeria responded through Ademola Lookman, whose effort from range tested Bounou, while Victor Osimhen was kept quiet by a disciplined Moroccan defence that gave him little space to operate.

After the break, Morocco gradually asserted greater control, pushing Nigeria deeper and creating the clearer openings. Abde Ezzalzouli twice went close, once forcing a sharp save from Nwabali late in normal time as the hosts pressed for a breakthrough. Calvin Bassey was outstanding at the heart of Nigeria's defence, repeatedly repelling Moroccan attacks.

Extra time brought few genuine chances as fatigue set in and caution prevailed. Hamza Igamane and Eliesse Ben Seghir both had opportunities for Morocco, but neither side could find the decisive goal, sending the tie to penalties.

The shootout swung dramatically. After early conversions, Nwabali saved Hamza Igamane's attempt to give Nigeria an advantage, but Bounou immediately restored parity by denying Samuel Chukwueze. When the Moroccan keeper later produced a strong save to stop Bruno Onyemaechi, the momentum shifted decisively. En-Nesyri made no mistake with the final kick, sparking celebrations around the stadium.

For Morocco, the victory lifted the weight of expectation that has followed them throughout the tournament as hosts and keeps alive hopes of a first AFCON crown in 50 years. Nigeria, meanwhile, saw their bid for a second consecutive final end in disappointment and will now contest the third-place play-off against Egypt in Casablanca.



Morocco face Senegal in the final of AFCON 2026 on Sunday in Rabat

## WTT Champions: African stars suffer early exit



Quadri Aruna

**I**T WAS A DISAPPOINTING START for Africa's table tennis stars at the WTT Champions Doha, as Quadri Aruna of Nigeria and Hana Goda of Egypt bowed out early in the singles event of the \$500,000 tournament taking place at the Lusail

Sports Arena, Qatar. Egypt's Omar Assar was the first to fall, losing 3-1 to Japan's Shunsuke Togami on Wednesday, January 7.

What could have been a breakthrough for Goda ended in defeat despite a spirited performance

against former world No. 1 Zhu Yuling. Yuling, who enjoyed a stellar 2025 capped by victory at the United States Smash, proved too experienced for the Egyptian prodigy. Goda, however, continues to break new ground, having become

the only African player to reach the Women's Singles quarterfinals at WTT Champions level—first at Montpellier 2024 and again at Frankfurt 2025.

In Doha, Goda lost the opening game 11-8 but rallied to dominate the second 11-5. The third and fourth games were enthralling, filled with rallies and precision. Goda came close to victory in the third, but Yuling's composure carried her through 15-13. The fourth followed a similar pattern, with Goda fighting for every point before Yuling sealed the match 12-10 to complete a 3-1 win. For Aruna, it was a one-sided affair as China's Liang Jingkun, the tournament's sixth seed, claimed a convincing 3-0 victory. Despite the loss, Aruna showed glimpses of his trademark power, suggesting he is warming up into the new season.

African hopes now turn to the upcoming WTT Star Contender Doha 2026, scheduled for January 13-18, where Aruna, Assar, and Goda are expected to be joined by other African stars in what promises to be another thrilling showcase at the Lusail Sports Arena.

## Ntunganga in J300 Australia

**B**OTSWANA TENNIS SENSATION Ntungamili Raguin, who is currently playing in the qualifiers of the Australian Junior open in Traralgon, Australia, has started 2026 on the same note as last year, qualifying for his first J300 after defeating Australian Elijah Dikkenberg 6-4, 6-3 in his last qualifying match.

On Friday, Raguin defeated the world number 29 to advance to the singles second round of the World ITF J300 in Traralgon, Australia. He beat Matteo Gribaldo of Italy 6-3, 6-2 in 1hr 20 minutes, and was scheduled to play Ryan Cozad of the USA on Saturday at 11 am Australian time.

According to the latest ITF World Rankings, Raguin joined the World Top 100, thus qualifying to play in the qualifiers of the Australian Open Junior. Before winning back-to-back home tournaments in Gaborone, Botswana in November 2025, Ntunganga was ranked number 200.

Raguin made history in 2025, winning five world ITF junior singles titles, one regional Youth singles title



Tennis sensation, Ntungamili Raguin

and two junior doubles titles. He won 3 ITF J100 singles titles in Algeria, Kenya and Botswana, he also won ITF J60 singles titles in Kenya and Botswana. Ntunganga was also part of the Botswana Davis Cup team that got promoted to group 4 in July 2025.

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