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'ConCourt is a disaster' - expert



Boko

IN A SERIES OF ARTICLES providing a comprehensive analysis to enhance understanding the Constitution (Amendment) Bill 2025 - Bill No. 14 of 2025, Dr Letshwiti Batlhalefi Tutwane* (PhD) -Regulatory Law and Policy, dives into the raging debate about the appropriateness of Government to rush to establish the Constitutional Court at a time when the country is grappling with a myriad of challenges, from ana ailing health sector to crumbling education sector to an economy on deathbed.

He writes: "As we dissect this Bill, we should ask ourselves what are our values as Batswana. Are they reflected in the substance of this law? And ideally what values should shape the constitution in view of a largely British dominated constitution and years of rule by a conservative government?"

I prefer a wholesome review of the constitution because it makes it easier to see the values that inform the entire document. It is also sensible and cheaper. A rushed process risks serious mistakes that will impact generations.

In democratic nations, constitutions serve to allocate power 'in a manner that is regarded as morally acceptable' (Elliott & Thomas 2020, p. 22). In other words, power must be legitimized and leaders must strive to obtain

consensus from the citizenry. This ensures that leaders are accountable. 'One of the main purposes of a constitution is to put in place a set of arrangements that enjoys popular legitimacy, which enables the people of a given country to be governed in a way that they regard as acceptable and which thereby renders legitimate the exercise of power by the institutions of government' (Ibid).

It is also important to understand that constitutions make assumptions. In the case of Americans, two assumptions underline their original constitution in its first ten amendments. The first one is that 'first comes rights, then second comes government'. Individuals have natural rights given by God that have nothing to with government.

The second one is that government officials are servants, agents/stewards or fiduciaries of the people-the agency theory of government (Barnett & Blackman 2018, p. 3). So politicians rule with the consent of the governed and the constitution and all laws must reflect this. That's why politicians are required to account to the voters. This American invention has received international acclaim and is synonymous with modern constitutionalism. This gives us another prism with which to assess any constitutional law".

With these analytical tools we now proceed to analyse the Bill.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 8

Panda farmers lose millions

■ As floods wipe away crops in Pandamatenga farms

SOLOMON TJINYEKA
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PANDAMATENGA COMMERCIAL farmers in the Chobe Region are counting losses following heavy rainfall that has battered the area in recent days, flooding vast sections of croplands in Botswana's key grain-producing region.

An executive member of the Pandamatenga Commercial Farmers Association, Ryan Neal, said the area recorded more than 300 millimetres of rainfall within seven days, including about 200 millimetres that fell in a single day. He explained that the intense rainfall overwhelmed farm drainage systems, causing floodwaters to spread across several farming blocks.

However, he said the full extent of the damage had not yet been determined, as water levels have not fully receded and many farms remain submerged. "There is serious concern



Farmers assessing the damage caused by floods at Pandamatenga farms on Friday [INSERT: Ryan Neal]

that continued rainfall could result in widespread crop losses. If the wet conditions persist, some crops may

be completely written off," Neal said. According to Neal, more than 8,000 hectares have been planted

this season, although the number of hectares affected by flooding is still unknown. He added that while

the rain has temporarily stopped, more rainfall is forecast over the next few days, raising fears of further damage. "Farms 2, 4, 6 and 8 in Pandamatenga are currently the worst affected, with water still draining slowly," he said.

Neal further confirmed that officials from various government departments, including the District Commissioner's office and the Ministry of Agriculture, have visited the area to assess the situation and are expected to report back. "Farming operations will only resume in about a week or so, and that is when farmers will have a clearer picture of the damage," he said.

On insurance, Neal said most farmers are individually insured, mainly through the National Development Bank (NDB), but assessments will determine the

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BPF holds UDC at ransom

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OPPPOSITION BOTSWANA Patriotic Front (BPF) will make a final decision on their working relationship with the ruling coalition Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) next year, preferring to maintain the current working arrangement, The Patriot on Sunday has learnt.

BPF Publicity Secretary, Ogaufi Nthobelang said they are exploring options on how to work with the UDC ahead of 2029 general elections, but reiterated that the 2027 Congress will make a resolution on

■ Wants more positions in Govt. "For now we will retain the current working arrangement." -BPF



Ookeditse

the matter. "It is the mandate of party members to decide at our elective congress next year," said Nthobelang.

At the moment, Nthobelang said BPF would continue working with UDC at Parliament, Councils and in other forums that form part of government. He said UDC is an important partner to BPF, adding that they contributed a lot to UDC victory in 2024 general elections where they dethroned Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) who had been in power for 58 years.

"Our roadmap is broader this year and our relationship with UDC is part of the roadmap. We are looking

at ways on how we can best nurture our relationship with them. We are part of the UDC government. We have assistant ministers, council chairpersons and mayors under this government," he observed, adding that the parties fought together in the trenches in pursuit of regime change in Botswana.

Therefore, they believe that their members should have a significant role to play in the UDC government where deserving members should be hired. "We still want more positions in the government. We believe we will get more.

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WUC cuts BUAN water supply, varsity fails to reopen

as Sebele community face debilitating water shortage



Councillor for Sebele Airport Ward in Gaborone North Constituency, Michael Botumile

THE BOTSWANA UNIVERSITY OF Agriculture and Natural Resources (BUAN) is at risk of being unable to reopen after the Water Utilities Corporation (WUC) halted its water supply.

This action stems from an accumulated debt of almost P100 million in overdue water payments, severely jeopardizing the university's functionality.

Councillor for Sebele Airport Ward in Gaborone North Constituency, Michael Botumile said the disconnection began in early December 2025, amid BUAN's

ongoing struggles with the debt.

Despite repeated warnings from WUC, the institution has not cleared the balance, leading to the current shutdown. This crisis also affects the nearby Sebele community, which shares the same water meter, leaving local homes without access and worsening the overall impact. The situation remains critical.

The cutoff results from BUAN's repeated failure to pay its long-standing arrears, and this is not the first such interruption. To date, attempts to resolve the matter have yielded no favorable outcomes.

BIUST, BTU sign cooperation agreement

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BOTSWANA INTERNATIONAL University of Science and Technology (BIUST) and Botswana Teachers Union (BTU) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate in developing and delivering training and community focused activities that promote scientific literacy and inspire learners' interest in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM).

The partnership will also support teachers in integrating practical, research informed approaches into their practice.

Welcoming guests to the MoU signing ceremony on Wednesday, the Vice Chancellor of BIUST, Professor Olotgetswe Totolo noted that this collaboration is built on a shared national priority, strengthening education outcomes in Botswana by investing in teachers, expanding learner support and accelerating STEAM literacy across all levels of schooling.

"The Botswana Teachers Union is the largest independent educators union in the country, representing more than 26 000 teachers across primary, secondary and tertiary education. Beyond advocating or the welfare of educators, BTU plays a critical role professional development and in shaping education improvement efforts nationwide. That purpose aligns strongly with BIUST mandate, to build national capacity for a knowledge driven economy through science, technology, innovation and high impact partnerships," he said.

Prof Totolo noted that through their Outreach and Engagement Directorate, they have initiatives that strengthen inquiry based learning, deliver STEM festivals, support mentorship programmes and deepen school engagement to cultivate curiosity, creativity and innovation among learners across Botswana. He further said that a flagship initiative in this work is Girls Excelling in Mathematics (GEMS), which supports young women, particularly from rural underserved communities through mentorship, skills development and confidence building to pursue STEM pathways.

"The MoU reinforces our shared commitment to advancing gender equality in STEM education, including



Signing of the MoU

expanding opportunities for GEMS participants through joint programming. This partnership also comes at a strategic moment as Botswana prepares to host the African Astronomical Society (AFAS) conference later this year. The conference will spotlight Botswana's progress in science and innovation and our joint work will be visible through meaningful teacher and school outreach," he said.

Prof Totolo said the collaboration will strengthen the education system in practical ways; equipping teachers, inspiring learners and expanding opportunities that will shape Botswana's future economy. He further said that the MoU must be active to improve classrooms, strengthen teaching and practice, ignite learner ambition and position Botswana to compete through innovation.

For his part, the president of BTU, Mr Agang Gabana said the MoU is in line with their objectives, which promote educational development in Botswana. He said partnering with BIUST is an opportune moment for BTU members and leaders as they will learn from the ec expertise that BIUST possess across different sectors of the economy.

Gabana noted that the introduction and

emphasis on STEAM at basic education level requires a teaching workforce that is well equipped and knowledgeable to teach learners. He said this partnership is vital for BTU and BIUST as it will foster mutual support, shared responsibilities and resource sharing, inspiring all to pursue educational excellence for teachers and learners. He said it will provide diverse perspectives, enhanced credibility and a larger network, creating synergy that yields better outcomes than individual efforts.

"BTU is where it is numerically today, representing more than 26 000 members because of its robust commitment to the development of education in Botswana. Our involvement in the development of education has been our priority, encouraged by our slogan being 'we educate'. As we look back as union, our footprints are clearly visible across all the sectors of the economy where some men and women benefited from the education we contributed to building more than 8 decades ago. We are not apologetic about our desire for a better education for our Botswana," he said.

The Chief of Palapye's representative, Kgosi Amigo Nthebolang applauded BTU and BIUST for coming together to develop and strengthen the education system of

Botswana. He said that Palapye is privileged to have housed a great institution like BIUST that continues to take Botswana to greater heights and produce learned graduates not only from Botswana but from other African countries. He urged BTU sensitive educators to stop engaging corporal punishment as it is now against the law and can have a negative impact on learners. The Deputy Vice Chancellor of Teaching and Learning at BIUST, Professor Elijah Shemang, said the MoU marks a milestone in achieving the mandate of BIUST of engaging in the improvement of the education system of Botswana through STEM festivals and GEMS.

"We see BTU as a key partner to facilitate most of our outreach programmes. We are committed to supporting education from the lower levels to the higher levels. We have an obligation to the nation to ensure that we are active in both facilitating the learners and teachers. After the signing of the MoU, both BIUST and BTU are going to engage in intensive planning on how we are going to implement it. We have to ensure that our programme with both the BIUST and secondary education calendars to endure interaction and be able to facilitate progress," he said.

Setting the Standard for 2026 Building Futures, Not just Facilitates



TODAY WE FORMALISED A partnership that is far bigger than a signing. Together with Lucara Botswana, we are partnering to develop the

Molepolole Youth Centre as a real solution for young people and the community. This marks the first-ever partnership between Lucara Botswana and the Ministry

of Youth and Gender Affairs - a milestone in both our histories, and a strong signal of what purposeful public-private collaboration can look like.

Molepolole was deliberately and data-driven selected. With one of the largest youth populations in the southern region of the country, alongside high incidences of youth crime and gender-based violence, the need for a meaningful intervention was clear. This centre is designed to respond directly to those realities.

The Molepolole Youth Centre will be a protective and productive space which will keep young people engaged, supported and equipped. A hub for skills, entrepreneurship, mentorship, innovation, creativity, mental-health support and positive social development. A space that reduces idleness, crime and GBV by replacing risk with opportunity, and isolation with purpose.

This is how we start the year, by investing in solutions that strengthen communities and change life trajectories. And this is only the beginning.

Source: Lesego Chombo facebook page

BPF dawdles on UDC

FROM PAGE 1

Our expectation is that our members will be appointed to positions in Land Boards and other parastatals," he buttressed.

Late last year in Maun, President Duma Boko said BPF will soon become part of the coalition, noting that they consider them a strategic partner.

After winning elections, Boko appointed two BPF members into his cabinet, being Lawrence Ookeditse -assistant Minister of Health and Baratiwa Mathoote -assistant Minister of Trade. Justifying the inclusion of BPF members in cabinet, Boko said the decision demonstrates that the UDC government is inclusive and shares ideology with the BPF.

Constitutional Court

Meanwhile, Nthobelang said BPF welcomes the establishment of constitutional court by the UDC administration. He said the court will be inclusive to all sections of the society be it church, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and even the individual Batswana.

After BPF leaders suffered political persecution during the BDP administration, Nthobelang said the constitutional court is an important structure in upholding

fundamental human rights. He noted that the high court currently acts as a constitutional court but at the lowest level or influence.

Furthermore, Nthobelang said BPF will intensify their footprint with a tour of 14 regions planned for the central committee to resuscitate party structures. According to him, BPF has grown in leaps and bounds and want to kill the notion that it is a regional party, only based in GaMmangwato territory.

"We contested 2024 general election in different constituencies outside Serowe. We have footprint steps in South, Chobe and Ngamiland. We want to embark on strong membership drive nationally. We are not a small party. We won five parliamentary seats. This should not be taken for granted," said Nthobelang, adding that they continue to recruit strategic and experienced members from the BDP as well as the Botswana Congress Party (BCP) to cement their position as an influential political formation in the whole country.

Deceptive relationship
Discussing the developments, political commentator Kitso Morekisi said the two parties need each other desperately ahead of the 2029 general election. He said it

had been anticipated that BPF would use the unity talks between the two parties to demand more share from the UDC government.

He said it was expected that after the 2024 general election, BPF would easily join UDC more so that some of its MPs were appointed into cabinet. "But that seems not to be the case. BPF considers itself a very important strategic partner to UDC administration.

President Boko equally consider the BPF so, demonstrated by inclusion of BPF into government through cabinet appointments. Interesting times lie ahead for both parties," said Morekisi.
In addition, Morekisi said the past issues that strained the two formations' relationship such as allocation of constituencies disputes will continue to be a defining moment as two parties pursue cordial marriage. "We have witnessed a fresh standoff between the two parties late last year during Kgalagadi South parliamentary by-election when both parties fielded candidates. Expectation was that BPF would yield to UDC. That development signaled a relationship not built in trust between the two parties," said Morekisi.



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Botala Energy to boost SADC energy mix

PATRIOT: KINDLY INTRODUCE THE leadership of Botala Energy (Pty) Ltd.

MOD: Botala Executives include Mr Kris Martinick -Chief Executive Officer; Modisana Botsile -Country Manager; Dr Steve Lennon -Executive General Manager Power Developments; Mr Craig Basson, Director, Chief Financial Officer and Company Secretary; Dr Wolf Martinick, Director and Chairman; and Mr Peter Grant, Non-Executive Director.

PATRIOT: Listed on Australian Stock Exchange and Botswana Stock Exchange, Botala Energy (Pty) Ltd have been in the news about plans to develop liquefied natural gas (LNG) in Botswana, for some time now. What is the latest about the LNG project and where is it located?

MOD: The project is located in the Sandveld area, in the Central District of Botswana, just after Mogorosi village on the way to Thabala. We have secured the land and are currently in the process of setting up the necessary infrastructure, buildings and securing environmental approvals.

PATRIOT: When do you anticipate going into full production? And when should Botswana expect to start enjoying the benefits of this project? Are you also targeting export, to where?

MOD: We are targeting 2027 for full production and targeting both local use and export to neighbouring countries, especially heavy industries in the Greater Johannesburg region and the copper mines of Zambia and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Gas will become an additional fuel source for power generation within Botswana and the region. The commencement of production will be a milestone for an increase in local jobs as well.

PATRIOT: Mining companies are often accused of fracking in their extraction processes. Will you be applying any fracking in your mining operations?

MOD: We do not do fracking like the shale gas industry which has much harder rocks. Instead, we stimulate the coal to enhance gas flow by a combination of acid washing the coals to dissolve calcides that block natural gas flow pathways in the coal and extend and connect these by forcing silica sand into these pathways and prevent

As Botswana grapples with energy challenges, that often force under-privileged communities and industries to rely on harmful energy sources that pollute the environment and aggravate climate degradation, a diversified energy mix is imperative. **STAFF WRITER DITIRO MOTLHABANE** chats to Botala Energy's Country Manager, Modisana Botsile about their role in the matrix.



BOTALA ENERGY BOARD & MANAGEMENT
Back row (standing left to right): Dr Steve Lennon -Executive General Manager Power Developments; Mr Kris Martinick -Chief Executive Officer; Modisana Botsile -Country Manager. Front row (seated left to right): Mr Craig Basson, Director, Chief Financial Officer and Company Secretary; Dr Wolf Martinick, Director and Chairman; Mr Peter Grant, Non-Executive Director.

them from collapsing.

PATRIOT: Briefly explain the benefits of using LNG compared to other energy sources already available in Botswana.

MOD: LNG is cleaner than most energy sources like coal. LNG is readily transported and is in great demand, especially by South African industries that depend on gas and have been advised that the traditional supply from SASOL will end in mid-2027.

PATRIOT: How many permanent and temporary jobs do you hope to create at full production?

MOD: We are looking at over 200 employees. We expect our gas to also generate additional jobs in industries that will be established because of the availability of a reliable supply of gas.

PATRIOT: What benefits will or are already accruing to communities in your area of operation i.e. Botala Energy's Corporate Social Investment (CSI)?

MOD: Our focus is on recruiting workers from local villages and teaching them new skills where possible. Most of our workforce comes from the greater Serowe region. One example is our employment of women from

Mogorosi village who undertook the work to line and help maintain our evaporation ponds. Botala Energy has donated large volumes of clothing, books, toys, footballs and bicycles to children of the SOS orphanage in Serowe village.

PATRIOT: Three months ago, Botala Energy's plans received a vote of confidence from Botswana Government after its mining investment arm, the MDCB, confirmed plans to exercise its option under Section 40 of the Mines and Minerals Act to acquire a 15% equity interest in the Serowe CBM Project.

MOD: Yes, this will be a boost to the market by demonstrating government's support and confidence in the development of Botswana's substantial coal bed methane gas potential. We expect that this will be the trigger to attract other investors and industries to recognise the important contribution gas can make to the development of Botswana.

PATRIOT: What other projects are Botala Energy undertaking in Botswana?

MOD: Botala's current operations in Botswana include the Serowe CBM Project -Project Naledi, LNG Plant, Renewables and the proposed Leupane Energy and Industrial Hub.

PATRIOT: What are the downstream benefits of Botala's LNG, the value chain so to speak?

MOD: It has a multiplier effect as we will look at supplying LNG to the great Gauteng region and it will add to the country's exports.

PATRIOT: In closing, what can you promise Botswana to look out for, considering that 2027 is only a couple of months away?

MOD: The Serowe Coalbed Methane (CBM) project by Botala energy will lead to the development of a new industry using indigenous resources which contributes to ambitious aspirations towards Botswana becoming energy self-sufficient and a powerhouse in the region. Botswana should prepare to exploit opportunities that will be presented by Botala Energy, through our project.

The LNG project can support other industries downstream. This is even more important at this time, considering that Botswana government is working aggressively to promote economic diversification. Collectively, the downstream industries will generate many jobs for locals.

FACT FILE

Full names: Modisana Botsile
Nicknames: Mod
Hobbies: Cars
Family: Wife and Kids
Book Reading: The Warren Buffett Way
Favourite Dish: Tswana Cuisine
Favourite Sport: Basketball
Favourite Holiday Destination: Bali and Paje

Panda farmers lose millions

FROM PAGE 1

role of government evaluators and insurance companies. "Each farmer has their own insurance policy. We will only be in a position to determine how many farmers are insured once the assessments are complete," he said.

Meanwhile, Member of Parliament for the Chobe Constituency, Oscar Mapulanga, confirmed that several farming fields in Pandamatenga Village, particularly Farms 2, 4, 6 and 8, have been severely affected by flooding. "The floods have caused extensive damage to agricultural infrastructure and crops, posing a serious setback to farmers' livelihoods and food production efforts," Mapulanga said.

He urged farmers to exercise extreme caution when navigating waterlogged areas, warning that floodwaters remain heavy and conditions on the ground are still unsafe in some locations. "Safety must remain a priority during this period," he said.

Mapulanga added that damage assessments are ongoing and that the full extent of the losses will only be known once floodwaters subside and farmers can safely access their fields.

"We have engaged the Pandamatenga Councillor, Honourable Sairos Ere, and are working closely with affected farmers and relevant authorities to ensure accurate assessments are conducted and that appropriate interventions and support mechanisms are put in place," he said.

'Costly Con court vs empty clinics' - Saleshando

With a collapsing economy, BCP criticise prioritising Constitutional court over basic services

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THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (LoO), Dumelang Saleshando has accused the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) government of pursuing a misplaced and costly constitutional agenda while critical sectors such as health, education and infrastructure continue to deteriorate.

Speaking at a press conference on Monday, Saleshando said the proposed amendment to establish a Constitutional Court raises serious procedural, financial and governance concerns, warning that the process has been driven without proper consultation or public education.

Saleshando argued that the ruling party has abandoned its earlier stance against piecemeal amendments to the Constitution. He recalled that while in opposition, the party had pledged to deliver a comprehensive constitutional review supported by a nationwide public education campaign.

According to Saleshando, past constitutional review exercises already exposed a major knowledge gap among the public, with a significant portion of submissions unrelated to constitutional

issues, evidence, he said, that education must precede any reform effort.

Red flags, Costly project
The opposition leader raised concern over how the bill was handled after it failed to secure support at the Ntlo ya Dikgosi. He said subsequent attempts to engage dikgosi outside formal processes undermined institutional integrity and constitutional norms.

Saleshando also described Parliament's handling of the bill as unprecedented, noting that it was debated by only one elected member of the House, while ruling party MPs remained largely silent. He suggested this silence reflected internal pressure and a belief that constitutional matters were being reserved for a narrow legal elite.

While stressing that the opposition is not opposed to a Constitutional Court in principle, Saleshando questioned its timing, citing Botswana's worsening fiscal position.

Drawing from his role on Parliament's Finance and Estimates Committee, he said government has already warned that the budget deficit will widen further, despite earlier commitments to fiscal consolidation. In that context, he argued, funding a referendum and establishing a new court would place unnecessary strain on public



Saleshando

finances.

Health, jobs sidelined

Saleshando contrasted the proposed court with what he described as urgent national priorities, including shortages of medicines in hospitals, unemployment among young people, teacher shortages and lack of textbooks in schools, and deteriorating road infrastructure.

He said citizens would overwhelmingly prioritise jobs, healthcare and education over a new constitutional institution, particularly when there are currently no constitutional cases before Botswana's courts.

Consultation or marketing?

The opposition leader dismissed ongoing outreach efforts on the Constitution as superficial, arguing that the substance of the amendments had already been decided. He said genuine consultation must be conducted by independent actors and include civil society, trade unions and opposition parties, groups he noted have largely rejected the piecemeal approach to constitutional reform.

Saleshando accused the President of pushing what he described as a personal project, warning that unilateral decision-making risks eroding accountability and

the social contract between government and citizens. He also rejected claims that Botswana's Constitution requires validation by a Constitutional Court, pointing out that the country had previously come close to adopting a revised Constitution without such a mechanism.

Opposition launch campaign
Saleshando said the opposition will launch its own nationwide campaign to educate citizens, in plain language, about the implications of the proposed amendments and to mobilise resistance ahead of any referendum. He warned that allowing incremental changes without broad consensus could set a dangerous precedent, urging Botswana to assert ownership of the Constitution.

The press conference also revisited earlier concerns raised by the opposition, including government's interest in acquiring Debswana shares. Saleshando questioned the financial logic of committing billions to what he described as a declining, loss-making asset, warning that such decisions could further weaken Botswana's credit standing.

He cautioned that continued unilateral policy decisions risk deeper fiscal stress and potential financial blacklisting.

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BNF's radical changes

- Mohwasa withdrawn from UDC NEC assignment
- Takes BNF control, consolidates power
- Boko grooms Mohwasa for BNF presidency- Analyst

BAKANG TIRO

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A DECISION BY BOTSWANA National Front (BNF) to redeploy party vice president Moeti Mohwasa from the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) central committee will consolidate his power and influence in both the party and government, political analysts have observed.

On Tuesday, Mohwasa announced that he would be stepping down from the UDC central committee indicating that the decision was collectively endorsed by BNF central committee and he welcomed it. Consequently, the BNF named president Duma Boko, BNF Chairman Moses Bantsi, Secretary General Dr Stephen Modise and BNF Women's League president Monica Molome as its new delegates to UDC NEC.

Prior to his redeployment, Mohwasa tirelessly served as UDC's Head of Communications for over a decade, a development that observers said it played a crucial role in positioning UDC as brand that subsequently changed government after nearly six decades of Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) rule.

Political analyst, Kitso Morekisi said Mohwasa is a political heavyweight within the new administration top hierarchy. Morekisi said the BNF has strategically positioned Mohwasa to take control of the



Mohwasa

PIC:GORATAONE KGOSIMORE

party as he would be relieving Boko burden of leading three institutions being the BNF, UDC and the government respectively.

"Mohwasa has gained power within the BNF and government.

He said technically acts as a confidante and advisor to the President on the matters of national importance and to his ministerial role influence, he links the government with the broader public service and other important quarters of the society," he said, adding that Mohwasa now occupies a position of influence at party level and government, adding that he commands lot of respect from BNF members.

Mohwasa said people shouldn't take his redeployment from UDC as a surprise citing that the former BNF vice president

the late Dr Micus Chimbombi wasn't part of UDC NEC but rather focused on building BNF.

Succession plan

Another analyst, retired political science lecturer at the University of Botswana (UB) Dr Adam Mfundisi said Mohwasa is being groomed by President Boko to take over the reign of power after he is out of office. He said BNF entrusting him with party mobilisation and rebuilding of structures, he is positioned to be closest to the rank-and-file members of the BNF.

Dr Mfundisi said this will positively cement Mohwasa's grip on the party to ascend to the helm of the BNF after President Boko.

Moreover, he said it places him in a better position to take over the UDC as the BNF is supposedly the natural leader of the UDC. "Yes, the Alliance for Progressives (AP) must be worried as its leader Ndaba Gaolathe is vulnerable to the covert onslaught of the BNF and the rise of Minister Mohwasa as the super Minister in government. He is a close confidant of president Boko," said Dr Mfundisi.

BNF vulnerable

Meanwhile, Dr Mfundisi said he is shocked by the announcement that Mohwasa as the VP of the BNF will be the chief builder and mobilise of the party. Currently, Dr Mfundisi said the BNF is not in good organisational posture in terms of effective vision, structures, philosophy, strategies policies, and ideology.

"There is a need for a paradigm shift to make it more attractive to the voters as it has been in the past, where it presented itself as a progressive and socialist inclined. To relieve the VP of the BNF and the Minister in the Presidency of his UDC NEC duties to concentrate on building the party is a positive development given the current organisational challenges," he said.

Dr Mfundisi also said the BNF is at its weakest as well as vulnerable within the UDC formation, adding that AP is practically challenging the hegemony of the BNF as most strategic ministerial portfolios are under the AP operatives.

He said these portfolios include the VP and Minister of Finance, Foreign Relations, Home Affairs, and Tourism, adding that Mohwasa seems to be a super minister who is deemed to be the defacto VP of Botswana.

"President Boko strengthened and reinforced the OP, including the Ministry of State Presidency under Minister Mohwasa. This reminds me of the last term of President Uhuru Kenyatta in Kenya who covertly raised the status of Fred Matiengi to be the supper minister taking over the duties of the then Deputy President William Ruto," said Mfundisi.

Female traditional tradition, modernity

AMANDA DAVID

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IN BOTSWANA, A NATION WHERE Christianity is the dominant faith, embracing African spirituality has proven to be a daunting path for many, especially for young women answering the call of their ancestors. Many who are brave enough to take on the journey face skepticism and stigma, yet they choose to persevere as they navigate the complexities of this heritage.

Ame Lefatshe popularly known as Gogo Lefatshe is a practicing healer in Ramotswa village, her training and experience has pushed her to be a spiritual educator who endeavors to advocate for spiritual enlightenment in Botswana, also being a Psychological Counselor by profession has helped her to be mindful of the emotional aspect of the spiritual journey.

Giving a brief description of her journey as a healer, Lefatshe explains that she has been practicing for almost five years now and that the journey has never been an easy one as the signs have always been there from a young age. She would fall sick with no explanation, experience excruciating physical pain, depression and suicide thoughts were some of the challenges she faced before embracing her calling.

After having embraced her journey as a traditional healer, Lefatshe realized that there is a lot of stigma in modern society against traditional healers and there are a number of misconceptions with the biggest one being that healers are demonic. Lefatshe further explained how she has always been perplexed by stereotypes surrounding African Spirituality, some of which include most people thinking female healers are weak compared to men.

"There are so many misconceptions surrounding African spirituality, some people think healers are just these dirty, uneducated people. But I don't let anything

get to me whether they call me evil or what because I know who I am, I know what I do to change people's lives and that is what keeps me going, positive feedback from my clients," she echoed boldly.

Asked what the one thing she would want people to understand about traditional healers and African spirituality, Lefatshe said "I just want people to know that we are human beings with feelings, I am not saying people should believe in what we believe in, I am just saying society should respect and accept that some of us believe in African Spirituality, we have different paths, different backgrounds, we didn't choose to be healers, society's ill treatment weighs on our souls"

Another young traditional healer is 26 year old Kemmone Motsamai of Oodi village who has been a healer for two years and like most traditional healers she often fell sick with no explanation during her childhood. Motsamai further noted that for most of her life she was in denial about her calling and resorted to partying and alcohol abuse.

Though her journey as a healer is still new, she has faced a number of challenges too, some of which include judgment from people who know her past, stigma from family and friends who do not understand anything about her ancestral calling. Another major challenge Motsamai has faced is people doubting her healing abilities because she is a woman and they believe she does not have the strength to be a healer.

"They call me young, a slay queen and often ask how I can heal people when I am so young. As a young healer people take me for granted, they call me names. I am being judged, I am being cursed but I have nothing to do but to wake up every morning and do my job, it is not nice honestly but at the end of the day my ancestors are always there for me. A healer is a very sensitive person they are the most

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healers navigate

challenged people, they go through hell, so when dealing with a healer please be supportive, and be gentle around them," she sighed.

Granny Loeto, a resident of Francistown shares a testimony about her daughter's miraculous recovery after a short illness ten years ago. "My daughter was very sick, and medical doctors could not help her because they could not establish what was wrong with her. But a traditional healer popularly known as Mma B took her in and treated her with traditional herbs, and within hours my daughter was lively again," she added.

Loeto believes that traditional healers like Mma B are unsung heroes in Botswana's healthcare system. She further reiterated that traditional healers are an important part of the nation's culture though Botswana are not open to embracing them because Botswana is deemed a Christian nation.

In 2018 The South African Journal of Psychiatry volume 24(2018) published a report from a study titled Profiles of traditional healers and their healing practices in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa, with the aim to explore the journey towards becoming a traditional healer, the types of interventions and key practices in the management of

mental disorders, and the extent to which traditional healers collaborate with conventional medical practitioners.

Results of the study indicate that "Most of the healers were female (80.5%) and only half (49%) had a traditional healing certificate. Healer training typically consisted of six key steps and was mostly facilitated by a non-family member or trainer, as directed by the ancestors. Most healers treated physical illnesses (86%) and called on their ancestors to assist with diagnoses (90%). Only 40% of healers treated mental illnesses. While some healers revealed tensions in working with Western practitioners, the majority were open to collaboration (71%)."

The conclusion drawn from the research reads: "Traditional healers may have an important role to play in the development of culturally-relevant mental health care in South Africa. This study contributes to a greater understanding of what it means to be a traditional healer, and the types of treatment provided. The findings emphasize that conventional mental health practitioners need to make equal effort to collaborate, especially if we are to provide culturally-relevant mental health care in traditional South African settings."

Govt turns to business for help

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■ Launch sponsorship campaign for Africa School Feeding Summit

BOTSWANA HAS UNVEILED A TIERED sponsorship framework ranging from P50,000 to P200,000 as it intensifies preparations to host the 11th Africa Day of School Feeding (ADSF), placing the private sector at the centre of delivering one of the African Union's most significant education and nutrition platforms.

The sponsorship structure, spanning Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze and customised packages, was announced during a national school feeding breakfast meeting as government acknowledged fiscal constraints while calling on business, development partners and industry leaders to step in.

Deputy Permanent Secretary for Operations in the Ministry of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Kabo Moseki, said the scale was designed to attract broad-based participation while ensuring the event meets continental standards. "At the highest level, Platinum sponsorship stands at P200,000, followed by Gold at P150,000, Silver at P100,000 and Bronze at P50,000, with customised options available based on specific needs of the event," Moseki said.

He framed the contributions as investments rather than donations, arguing that national representation and



DPS for Operations, Ministry of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Kabo Moseki

international exposure demanded shared responsibility.

Private sector

Government officials made it clear that hosting the Africa Day of School Feeding, scheduled for 28 February to 1 March 2026, cannot be funded by the state alone amid tightening revenues. "Economic conditions are challenging, but when national interests

are at stake, partnerships become critical," Moseki said, urging companies to match Botswana's continental ambitions with tangible support.

The event is expected to attract over 500 delegates from across Africa, including ministers, senior government officials, development partners, academia, youth groups and civil society, a scale that places

Botswana under continental scrutiny.

Continental confidence
Keynote speaker Dr Casey Olabode Stephens, Senior Education Policy Officer at the African Union, said Botswana's selection to host the 11th ADSF reflected confidence in the country's long-running school feeding programme, which spans nearly three decades. "Hosting this event is a statement of trust by the African Union, but also a test of national coordination, credibility and delivery," Dr Stephens said, emphasizing that school feeding is now viewed as a multisectoral investment, linking education, nutrition, agriculture and economic productivity, rather than a social welfare intervention.

Beyond meals

Secretary General for Education in the Ministry of Basic Education and Child Welfare, Steve Bothasitse, said the focus of the 2026 summit will extend beyond food provision to include clean water, hygiene, safety and sustainable energy in schools. "School feeding is an investment in learning, health and attendance. If children are hungry, attention drops and outcomes decline," Bothasitse said.

He added that the summit would also serve as a platform to showcase scalable models that strengthen local supply chains and community resilience.

Operators reject tourism price hikes

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Tourism Minister, Wynter Mmolotsi

TOURISM OPERATORS ACROSS Botswana have expressed strong opposition to a proposed increase in tourism-related user fees and service charges, following the government's announcement that a new Presidential Directive will take effect from 1 April 2026.

The government recently announced the implementation of a Presidential Directive on the review and increase of user fees and services charged within the tourism sector. The directive has sparked concern and uncertainty among industry players, particularly small and locally owned operators.

According to a savingram seen by this publication, the directive was approved by Cabinet and signed by Acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, Boniface G. Mphethe, on 23 December 2025. The savingram states that Cabinet approved the revision of user fees, service charges, and the introduction of new revenue streams under the Ministry, in line with Presidential Directive 36 of 2025.

The revised fees and service charges are set to come into effect on 1 April 2026. The Ministry of Environment and Tourism has been instructed to initiate the necessary processes, including reviewing relevant regulations and gazetting the new fees, to ensure smooth implementation. The Ministry is also required to submit quarterly reports on revenue collection to the Ministry of Finance, beginning at the end of June 2026.

However, tourism stakeholders say the directive was introduced without adequate consultation.

The Botswana Guides Association (BOGA), an organisation established in 1999 to represent professional guides and small safari operators, has expressed disappointment and concern over the proposed fee increases. BOGA Chairperson, Kenson Kgaga, said the association was shocked to learn about the new charges, as they were not consulted prior to Cabinet approval.

Addressing the media in Maun, Kgaga said the proposed fees have caused panic and confusion within the tourism industry, particularly among small businesses and mobile safari operators. "Some of these prices are ridiculous. In many cases, the fees have doubled, and this will have a serious impact on local tourism operators," Kgaga said.

He added that BOGA had previously engaged the Minister of Environment and Tourism last year to raise concerns about penalties and to request a review of certain fees. "Instead of reviewing them downward, the government has increased them," he said.

Kgaga further revealed that the association has not received official communication from government confirming the directive. He said efforts to engage the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Environment and Tourism were unsuccessful, with the PS reportedly indicating that he had no knowledge of the new charges. "This response suggests the directive may indeed be true, and if

implemented, it will negatively affect small tourism operators, especially mobile safari businesses," Kgaga said.

He also raised concerns over poor road conditions within national parks, saying many tourism vehicles often get stuck during the rainy season, further impacting business operations.

Despite the concerns, Kgaga urged BOGA members to remain calm. "We will continue engaging government. We will not rest until this matter is resolved," he said.

Meanwhile, Member of Parliament for Chobe Constituency, Simasiku Oscar Mapulanga, has also voiced concern over the proposed fee increases. Mapulanga said some fees are set to double, while others may even triple. He criticised the lack of consultation, noting that many tourism operators are still recovering from the economic effects of COVID-19. While acknowledging that certain fee increases such as those related to commercial photography by foreign companies may be understandable, Mapulanga warned that the changes could disadvantage local operators. "It is essential that local businesses are gradually eased into these changes and supported to participate sustainably," he said.

Mapulanga said he plans to engage tourism operators in the Chobe region to gather feedback and ensure their concerns are considered before final implementation. Female tourism guide Patricia Mpho also criticised the proposed fees, saying some licence costs have increased sharply. She cited Category F licence renewals, which previously cost P1,000 per year but are now proposed at P5,000.

Mpho said the increase will heavily affect boat operators on the Thamalakane and Boro rivers, where activities are seasonal and depend on water levels. "Boat cruises only operate from around September to December. We also charge lower prices for locals, so paying P5,000 will result in losses," she said, calling on government to review the proposed fees, warning that large tourism companies operating in prime Okavango Delta areas will benefit, while small operators bear the brunt of the increases.

Efforts to get a response from the Ministry of Environment and Tourism were futile as they did not respond our questionnaire.

'Marina at breaking point' – Ombudsman

- Ombudsman finds a collapsing health system
- Princess Marina Hospital is technically not functional

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Tiroyakgosi

HEALTH INVESTIGATION REPORT BY the Ombudsman has identified a sad state of affairs in public health hospitals nationally emanating from operational challenges with Princess Marina being in a complete breakdown.

The office of the Ombudsman on Tuesday presented the findings of a six months investigations into the healthcare crisis at public health facilities. The Ombudsman Stephen Tiroyakgosi said the public hospitals are in a serious disarray but what is more concerning is that the national referral hospitals are sitting at a breaking point.

He said patients are often left waiting 36 to 120 hours before being triaged, after being referred to Princess Marina Hospital, they can wait an additional 3 to 5 days before receiving assistance.

Tiroyakgosi said the investigation found a shortage of bedding at Princess Marina, Tsabong and Lethakeng hospitals as well as a lack of privacy. Still at Princes Marina, the Ombudsman investigation also found that the hospital was working beyond its limits. Tiroyakgosi said as per the findings the

prolonged delays often lead to extended hospital stays for patients across the country and significantly increase operational costs, a situation that is most prevalent at Princess Marina Hospital.

"The other observation is that the hospital has only one entry point into its emergency unit, something that contributes significantly to overcrowding and delays in patient care. We also found that P283 million Pula was spent from 2021 to 2025 on in-service training for specialists. However, following this training, many of these specialists left for greener pastures,"

said Tiroyakgosi.

In addition, Tiroyakgosi said they have found that there are 101 specialists in the public sector, compared to 107 in the private sector, excluding the visiting personnel from the University of Botswana (UB).

BDU

Meanwhile, president of Botswana Doctors Union (BDU) Dr Kefilwe Seema said the Ombudsman report is a welcome development as it uncovered lot of challenges besieging the public health

sector.

Dr Seema said BDU as a stakeholder in health sector, it has raised alarm about the poor conditions of service in the public health especially at Princess Marina Hospital. He said the hospital is old and needs to be assisted, adding that it is overstretched to a breaking point.

"There is also human resource for health aspect. There is critical shortages be it the doctors, nurses or specialists. Everyone is in dire shortage. The equipment is obsolete and needs to be replaced. It cuts across our public health facilities," said Dr Seema.

Dr Seema said denial of health leading to death is taking away a right to life therefore the government is obliged to really step and ensure that citizens are health through policy making and distribution of resources accordingly not necessarily on needs of politicians for political mileages.

He also said the Ombudsman must have recommended accountability, adding that their believe is that the budget allocated to health ministry is enough to take care of Botswana should accountability be made a priority in the government health system.

Meanwhile, Dr Seema said the current challenges besieging the health sector has demoralized staff morale in the public health sector. He said many healthcare workers found patients die due to lack of resources and that has affected the workers psychologically. "We all need to be transparent and accountable. We only have one Botswana and we need to come together to come up with solutions. If it means, we reprioritize as country we should do that to save the current situation we find ourselves in," said Dr Seema.

US Embassy donates GIS computers to UB

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA'S Okavango Research Institute (ORI) has received eight high-end Geographic Information Systems (GIS) computers from the United States Embassy.

Valued at approximately P400,000, the state-of-the-art computers are expected to significantly strengthen ORI's capacity to conduct advanced geospatial analysis. The equipment will enable researchers and students to process large satellite and LiDAR datasets, undertake sophisticated spatial modelling, and run complex simulations related to climate change, flooding, fire dynamics, and wildlife habitat studies.

Speaking at the handover ceremony on Thursday in Maun, UB Acting Vice Chancellor, Professor David Katzke, expressed appreciation to the United States Government for the donation, noting that it comes at a critical time when advanced technology and data-driven approaches are reshaping how universities generate knowledge and prepare graduates for the future.

Professor Katzke said high-end computing infrastructure is essential for modern geospatial science, as it enables advanced spatial analysis, modelling, and visualisation. He stressed that for the Okavango Research Institute—situated within one of the world's most significant wetland ecosystems—such capabilities are vital for cutting-edge research in

environmental management, climate change, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable development. "These tools will help us inform management decisions that promote sustainability and resilient livelihoods within this World Heritage ecosystem," he said.

Prof Katzke further noted that the donated computers will significantly enhance the institute's GIS laboratory, providing students and researchers with access to tools that meet international standards. "They will support postgraduate training, interdisciplinary research, and collaborative projects with local and international partners, ensuring that our graduates are equipped with relevant, future-ready skills.

In this way, the donation directly contributes to building the human capital required for Botswana's transition to a knowledge-based economy," he added.

He also highlighted the value of the strategic partnership between the University of Botswana and the United States Embassy, which extends beyond infrastructure support to include academic exchanges, research collaboration, and capacity development.

"Such partnerships reaffirm our shared belief that investment in education, science, and technology is one of the most effective ways to promote sustainable development and mutual prosperity," Katzke said.

Meanwhile, Acting Minister of Higher Education, Shawn Nthale, said the donation directly supports Botswana's national aspirations to build



a knowledge-based economy. Nthale emphasised that GIS and geospatial technologies are increasingly critical in addressing complex challenges such as environmental management, climate change, biodiversity conservation, land-use planning, and disaster risk reduction.

"For an institute located in the heart of the Okavango Delta—one of the world's most important ecosystems—advanced GIS capacity is not a luxury, but a strategic necessity to support efforts to manage this World Heritage site," he said. He added that

the high-end computers will significantly enhance teaching, learning, and research at ORI.

"They will enable students, researchers, and practitioners to work with advanced spatial data, undertake cutting-edge analysis, and generate knowledge that informs policy and supports sustainable development, both nationally and regionally. In doing so, they help position Botswana as a centre of excellence in environmental research and geospatial science," Nthale said.

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Opinions, Reviews & Analysis

Comment

MPHO BALOPI -THE BOTSWANA Democratic Party (BDP) president finds himself implicated in the investigation of a former senior cabinet minister and fellow domkrag member and -Kefentse Mzwini, for corruption and money laundering. Balopi has issued a statement confirming that indeed Mzwini paid him P1.6m in hard cash to purchase five farms in Kgatleng area.

Although Balopi claims that the transaction, in hard cash, did not break any laws, it raises questions about his integrity as a law-abiding citizen. Paying for the five farms in hard cash, regardless of the denominations it was split into, instead of transfer through a bank account

Balopi should step aside

should have raised red flags. But such large sums of cash delivered to Balopi did not raise eyebrows, he says.

Balopi may be complicit in the violation of the provisions of the Financial Intelligence Agency, which demands that citizens file a suspicious transaction report with them as soon as it is detected. From time immemorial, Balopi's party -the BDP, who led Botswana since independence in 1966 have been indifferent to growing complaints about escalating corruption. Their loss in October 2024 general election was partly due to widespread allegations of corruption at government enclave, masterminded

by the rulers. The implication of the BDP president in the Mzwini saga deals a damaging blow to the party, particularly at a time when they are trying to rebuild and win back public confidence to make a come-back in 2029. Balopi's image has been tainted by the allegations, and the BDP will struggle to convince Botswana that he is the cleanest man on earth. Political rivals will skin him alive during campaigns ahead of 2029. In addition to his involvement in a questionable transaction, a few years ago after a BDP electoral victory, as the party's secretary general he was reported to have said "It is our time to eat". This coming from

a leader of a ruling party that had been in power forever could mean only one thing. In fact, over the years allegations of corrupt conduct have been swirling around him, but they remained unproven.

Balopi's link to Mzwini saga will hurt the BDP badly. To save face, and give BDP a realistic chance ahead of 2029, Balopi should step aside from the party presidency to focus on clearing his name. If he refuses to step aside, the BDP central committee should impeach him and call a special congress to elect a new leadership.

In his statement Balopi said: "I expect that more malicious reports will arise as clearly

some of us are in the public eye and facing continual scrutiny. Brace yourselves. As for me, I am committed to submitting to the law at all times when required to until my name is cleared in all present and future allegations of wrongdoing."

A plain reading of the statement confirms that indeed Balopi is aware that more allegations of wrongdoing against him are coming. It is just a matter of time. It is only logical that step aside to avoid embarrassing himself and the party he leads by being dragged into controversies that border on aiding and abetting criminal conduct either by him or those around him.

Should he ignore counsel to vacate office, Balopi risks dragging the BDP into the mess, as his partners in crime continue to make rounds before the courts. Sooner or later, he may be called to explain receipt of such large sums of cash without declaring the same to the relevant authorities. Whether the transaction was violated financial statutes or not, the public will continue to pass judgment on him and view such developments with suspicion. Voters will in turn punish him and his BDP at the polls as they consider them not the cleanest leaders in the land.

Therefore, the BDP President- Mpho Balopi would do well to step aside to clear his name in the controversial transaction worth millions, before the FIA and/ or other state agents pay him a visit or the voters send a loud and clear message at the polls.



ADAM PHETLHE
ON SUNDAY!

DEATH ROW PHENOMENON IS DESCRIBED by scholars as 'the severe psychological distress, mental deterioration and physical suffering experienced by prisoners for extended periods in harsh, isolated conditions while awaiting execution. This prolonged anguish often characterised by the constant dread of impending execution, has led to international legal challenges, with some courts viewing it as a form of torture or inhuman treatment, violating human rights standards.'

The result of the death row phenomenon is the death row syndrome which is described by the same scholars as the 'manifestation of psychological illness that can occur...'. The purpose of this conversation is to discuss the death row phenomenon in the context of Botswana in so far as it relates to human rights as the flagship of the Boko administration. At almost every opportunity, the administration

Waiting in Death Row is horrid human rights violation



never fails to remind all and sundry that is a human rights government. The immediate and obvious question for me is whether or not death row inmates rights are not violated by 'anguish inhuman, or degrading treatment, or even torture, potentially invalidating the execution itself under international law.'

For avoidance of any doubt, I am a staunch proponent of the death penalty principally for the reason that it fits the premeditated and callous manner people commit murder. In the process, the value of victims and their families is unfairly cast aside. On the flipside, I believe notwithstanding my position on the death penalty, that the prolonged anguish death row

inmates are subjected to violate their right to dignity and well-being while awaiting execution.

The right to dignity protects any human being whatever their circumstances, against humiliation of whatever nature and being treated as a non-human being or an object. It is from this premise that while acknowledging death row inmates would have lost almost all other human rights as provided for in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution and enjoyed by others not in the death row category, they are nevertheless still human beings entitled to the right to dignity.

Death penalty has been a topical issue for time immemorial and continues to this day. Various international instruments like the European Court of Human Rights found in the case of Soering v United Kingdom that 'prolonged incarceration on death row constituted cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Someone observed that 'for prisoners on death row, the decades of harsh conditions are endured in a state of both certainty and uncertainty-the certainty and mounting tension that execution is an inevitability that looms ever closer, but uncertainty about exactly when it will happen, and how long the lengthy legal process, with its many delays and improbabilities, will leave the prisoner in this state.'

Bringing it home
A good number of death row inmates have been waiting for the hangman for a long period

and they are still counting. It is not clear whether all of them or some of them have exhausted their Constitutional right of approaching the President in terms of the Prerogative of Mercy provisions, whether the President has rejected their appeals and so on. Whatever the case, it is safe to conclude they are still on death row because the court decision that they have a date with the hangman still stands.

Notwithstanding that death row prisoners would have spent a fairly longer amount of time in jail while awaiting their time with the judicial processes, they still spend a fairly longer amount of time after the judicial processes have concluded. One is not oblivious to the meticulous and attention to detail that these matters require at every level. Equally so, it is not in dispute that the prolonged anguish of death row prisoners awaiting administrative decision (Prerogative of Mercy process) after the judicial processes takes forever. Such that justice delayed is not justice denied, it is unclear to me why the administrative process should take forever as is the case currently. That is to say, the presidency that will be seized with processing the administrative process should in the overall interests of the death row inmates be speeded up so that they know their fate the soonest and importantly, so as to minimise death row phenomenon and death row syndrome.

The death row phenomenon will not be helped

by the fact that the human rights government now in place and whose President is alleged to be anti-death penalty, will be overly eager if anything to sign death warrants for the execution of those who have been sentenced to death by courts of law and who presumably, will have lost appeals for mercy. The timeframe for a decision on the prerogative of mercy is inordinately long and therefore exacerbating the anguish of the death row inmates.

In the circumstances, it should be fair to suggest the death row phenomenon will be with us for the foreseeable future considering the slow pace at which murder cases are handled together with similar pace at which administrative processes unfold after the conclusion of the judicial processes. It undoubtedly flies against the human rights position of the Boko administration. 'The severe psychological distress, mental deterioration and physical suffering by death row prisoners for extended periods in harsh, isolated conditions while awaiting execution' will continue to violate the right to dignity of death row inmates. Death row inmates deserve the right to know their fate in the shortest possible time. Waiting in prolonged anguish after being sentenced to death somewhat amounts to double jeopardy. I am prepared to be persuaded otherwise as always. Judge for Yourself!

adamphetlhe08@gmail.com

Financial New Year's Resolutions

CROSS KGOSIDIILE
THE CROSSWORD

START THE YEAR BY PROTECTING YOUR household from shocks, cutting avoidable costs, and building small, steady savings that grow into real security. Botswana enters the new year with clear economic strains: persistent unemployment and inequality have left many households vulnerable despite the country's middle-income status. Official statistics point to unemployment near 27.6%, and price volatility continues to affect purchasing power and household planning. At the same time, national growth has been uneven: the economy slowed because of a contraction in the diamond sector,



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trusted motshelo circles or cooperatives to provide short-term liquidity and local investment opportunities, and push employers and civil society to scale financial literacy and market-aligned training. Formal financial products that build on motshelo practice can bridge tradition and modern convenience, while digital tools reduce record-keeping risk and improve transparency. Encourage local institutions to support these hybrid approaches so that community trust and formal protections work together.

3. Diversify income and skills. Pursue short courses, part-time work, or small entrepreneurial projects that reduce reliance on a single employer or sector and improve resilience against sectoral shocks.

Managing Debt and using Financial Services wisely
For households carrying debt, adopt a disciplined repayment plan that targets the most expensive obligations first while maintaining minimum payments on others. Where possible, consolidate high-interest loans into lower-cost options and avoid new unsecured borrowing for nonessential items. For those with access to formal financial services, consider low-cost savings products and mobile platforms that make regular saving automatic and transparent. Use automatic transfers or mobile wallets to make saving habitual and reduce the temptation to spend.

Community Approaches and Scaling Financial Capability
Community and collective approaches matter. Use

nonessential items and treat credit as a last resort.

A Simple Habit Framework: Protect, Plan, Diversify
A financial resolution is a set of habits: protect, plan, and diversify. Start small, measure progress, and adjust as conditions change.

With steady steps, a deliberate emergency buffer that can include formal or digital Motshelo, tighter cashflow management, and diversified income streams, Botswana households can move from surviving shocks to shaping a more secure financial future.

Source: Facebook

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Schools remain health hazards

Conditions of schools and boarding facilities comparable to schools from countries that are emerging from civil wars



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

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MORE THAN A YEAR INTO THE UDC government's tenure, schools across Botswana remain in a deplorable state, with boarding facilities posing serious health risks to students, according to Tswapong South Member of Parliament Dr Kestegile Gobotswang.

In a scathing social media post, Dr Gobotswang accused President Duma Boko of prioritizing foreign travel, the Constitutional Court Bill, and cannabis legislation over the maintenance of educational facilities.

"Learners who stay in the hostels are frequently exposed to fungal infections because of filth from poorly maintained ablutions," Dr Gobotswang wrote.

"The situation is compounded by hostels that are extremely overcrowded. Under normal

circumstances the hostels will be closed."

The opposition MP specifically cited Ramokgonami and Mokobeng boarding junior secondary schools as examples, urging President Boko and the Minister of Education to conduct site visits similar to the recent presidential tour of Princess Marina Hospital.

Dr Gobotswang described conditions at the facilities as comparable to "schools from countries that are emerging from civil wars," questioning whether any other middle-upper income country exhibits such neglect of its public education system.

The criticism comes as President Boko has faced questions about his priorities since taking office. Dr Gobotswang characterized the president as "terribly insensitive and out of touch with reality," pointing to his recent leave during

what the MP described as an economic and health crisis.

In his statement, Dr Gobotswang anticipated government defenders would cite inherited problems from the previous administration. However, he rejected this explanation outright, noting that the UDC was elected specifically on promises to address such issues.

"The excuse that you inherited the mess is monotonous and it will not fly. We reject it with the contempt it deserves," he stated.

‘The Constitutional court, as proposed in the Bill, is a disaster’

■ A comprehensive Analysis: Understanding the Constitution (Amendment) Bill 2025 – Bill No. 14 of 2025

DR LETSHWITI BATLHALEFI TUTWANE*
PART 1

BOTSWANA IS PRESENTLY AT A turning point, gifted with a new government and a real opportunity to witness seismic change after decades of one party rule. Batswana have given the new government of the Umbrella for the Democratic Change (UDC) the privilege to drive this process. Realising that this is a rare opportunity to bolster our democracy and the Constitution being a sacrosanct law that governs all of us, irrespective of political affiliation, I believe that public education is desperately needed. It is for this reason that I have decided to do a clause by clause analysis of all the 20 clauses of the Constitutional Bill, which proposes a new institution, the Constitutional Court.

As political scientists often say, democracy works better when the voting public is well informed. Much of the debate so far has been whether to have this court or not. There is no discussion whatsoever about the content of the Bill. It is like there is no Bill before parliament at all. The discourse at the moment is dominated by the President of Botswana and his ministers and in their frenzied eloquence they are not talking about what the bill proposes—a glaring omission. Very few MPs have debated the bill. This is a national tragedy.

Constitutions have permanence and therefore constitutional making must be pursued with sober minds and seriousness. A lesson from the Americans delineates this. Americans are stuck with ‘the right to bear arms’, a constitutional provision that dates back to another era (1791) when America did not have a professional army or police service. It is conveniently exploited by those with a particular political view while dozens of Americans are slaughtered in gun violence day in and day out. A billion-dollar gun lobby has since merged and blocks every attempt to amend the constitution.

If Batswana vote unwisely on any constitutional proposal they must know that it will be very hard and financially draining to organize another referendum to clean

the mess. To start with, parliamentarians of a majority party in parliament can simply stand in their way—block the thing on the floor of parliament!

The constitutional amendment to establish a Constitutional Court must not be assessed in isolation but located within the broader framework of constitutionalism.

Why do nations make constitutions? A constitution serves three purposes. The first one is to define (limit) government power. A constitution typically determines what power is allocated to the President and cabinet, to parliament and to the judiciary and how it is to be exercised. It anticipates abuse and guards against excessive usage of power by any of these three branches of government—separation of powers. As Lord Acton long warned us ‘Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely’.

Secondly, a constitution is a guardian of fundamental rights. Where governmental power ends, the rights of citizens begin. The constitution guarantees rights: from the right to life, to free movement, to freedom of speech, to privacy and similar. And as a guarantor of rights, the constitution leans on the doctrine of the rule of law. First conceptualized by Professor AV Dicey in 1885 and refined by Lord Bingham into 8 sub rules, the concept provides among others that, the laws of the land should apply equally to all (unless where objective differentiation is required), the law must afford adequate protection of fundamental rights and means must be provided for resolving, without prohibitive costs or undue delay bona fide civil disputes.

Finally, a constitution provides a covenant, a symbol and aspiration of a nation. A constitution is thematic. It is developed within a particular historical context by a people and normally to right some wrongs. It reflects a people’s shared values. A couple of examples are apposite.

The famous Declaration of Independence by the thirteen United States of America in Congress on 4 July 1776 was informed by their oppression under the King of Great Britain. They listed several instances of abuse, including refusal by the King to assent to laws necessary for the public good,



President Duma Boko

[PIC: GORATAONE KGOSIMORE]

dissolving Representative Houses many times and ‘has made judges dependent on his will alone for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries’. The King had also forbidden his governors ‘to pass laws of immediate and pressing needs’ and obstructed the administration of justice by refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.

This explains why for many years Americans believed so much in the rule of law (at least in domestic policy). A US president and his advisers are not allowed to be members of Congress (except for the Vice President).

They do not want to repeat the mistakes of the past. That is why the Declaration talks of fundamental rights as natural, inalienable rights and that all men are created equal. The cherry on top is ‘life, liberty and happiness’. These are American constitutional values. Of course, now the Americans have gone the other way round,

offending against the rule of law both locally and abroad.

Right next door, the constitution of our neighbours in South Africa was largely meant to right the wrongs of apartheid. The preamble to their constitution signals this:

“We, the people of South Africa, Recognise the injustices of our past; Honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land;

Respect those who have worked to build and develop our country; and Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity”.

This explains why South Africa for instance has an Employment Equity Act and that allows for positive discrimination in the workplace and it is absolutely constitutional (See In South African Police Service v Solidarity obo Barnard (2014) ZACC 23). Botswana does not have such. South Africa also banned racial discrimination in their constitution. So in essence they have built the Freedom Charter (1955) into

their constitution: ‘South Africa belongs to all those who live in it, black and white’. These are South African values. The SA constitution was aptly described by former Con Court judge Albie Sachs as ‘a coherent, functional and value-based framework in which all these problems can be dealt with’. This was also emphasized by SA con court judges Ackermann and Goldstone in Carmichele v Minister of Safety and Security [2001] ZACC 22 (para. 54):

Our Constitution is not merely a formal document regulating public power. It also embodies, like the German Constitution, an objective, normative value system.

As we dissect this bill, we should ask ourselves what are our values as Batswana. Are they reflected in the substance of this law? And ideally what values should shape the constitution in view of a largely British dominated constitution and years of rule by a conservative government?

I prefer a wholesome review of the constitution because it makes it easier to see

the values that inform the entire document. It is also sensible and cheaper. A rushed process risks serious mistakes that will impact generations.

In democratic nations, constitutions serve to allocate power ‘in a manner that is regarded as morally acceptable’ (Elliott & Thomas 2020, p. 22). In other words, power must be legitimized and leaders must strive to obtain consensus from the citizenry. This ensures that leaders are accountable. ‘One of the main purposes of a constitution is to put in place a set of arrangements that enjoys popular legitimacy, which enables the people of a given country to be governed in a way that they regard as acceptable and which thereby renders legitimate the exercise of power by the institutions of government’ (Ibid).

It is also important to understand that constitutions make assumptions. In the case of Americans, two assumptions underline their original constitution in its first ten amendments. The first one is that ‘first comes rights, then second comes government’. Individuals have natural rights given by God that have nothing to do with government.

The second one is that government officials are servants, agents/stewards or fiduciaries of the people—the agency theory of government (Barnett & Blackman 2018, p. 3). So politicians rule with the consent of the governed and the constitution and all laws must reflect this. That’s why politicians are required to account to the voters. This American invention has received international acclaim and is synonymous with modern constitutionalism. This gives us another prism with which to assess any constitutional law.

With these analytical tools we now proceed to analyse the Bill.

*Dr Letshwiti Bathalefi Tutwane (PhD), Regulatory Law and Policy. Dr Tutwane is also with the Leeds Law School and has sat on the Freedom of Speech panel of the International Association of Constitutional Lawyers (IACL). In 2018, Dr Tutwane received extensive training on constitutionalism in Seoul (South Korea) under the auspices of the IACL and the Korean Ministry of Justice. He is well published in peer-reviewed academic journals across the world.

‘The old order is not coming back. We should not mourn it. Nostalgia is not a strategy’

MARL CARNEY*

“IT’S A PLEASURE – AND A DUTY – TO BE with you at this turning point for Canada and for the world. Today, I’ll talk about the rupture in the world order, the end of a nice story, and the beginning of a brutal reality where geopolitics among the great powers is not subject to any constraints.

But I also submit to you that other countries, particularly middle powers like Canada, are not powerless. They have the capacity to build a new order that embodies our values, like respect for human rights, sustainable development, solidarity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of states.

The power of the less powerful begins with honesty.

Every day we are reminded that we live in an era of great power rivalry. That the rules-based order is fading. That the strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must.

This aphorism of Thucydides is presented as inevitable – the natural logic of international relations reasserting itself. And faced with this logic, there is a strong tendency for countries to go along to get along. To accommodate. To avoid trouble. To hope that compliance will buy safety.

It won’t.

So, what are our options? In 1978, the Czech dissident Václav Havel wrote an essay called The Power of the Powerless. In it, he asked a simple question: how did the communist system sustain itself?

His answer began with a greengrocer. Every morning, this shopkeeper places a sign in his window: “Workers of the world, unite!” He does not believe it. No one believes it. But he places the sign anyway – to avoid trouble, to signal compliance, to get along. And because every shopkeeper on every street does the same, the system persists.

Not through violence alone, but through the participation of ordinary people in rituals they privately know to be false.

Havel called this “living within a lie.” The system’s power comes not from its truth but from everyone’s willingness to perform as if it were true. And its fragility comes from the same source: when even one person stops performing — when the greengrocer removes his sign — the illusion begins to crack.

It is time for companies and countries to take their signs down.

For decades, countries like Canada prospered under what we called the rules-based international order. We joined its institutions, praised its principles, and benefited from its predictability. We could

pursue values-based foreign policies under its protection.

We knew the story of the international rules-based order was partially false. That the strongest would exempt themselves when convenient. That trade rules were enforced asymmetrically. And that international law applied with varying rigour depending on the identity of the accused or the victim.

This fiction was useful, and American hegemony, in particular, helped provide public goods: open sea lanes, a stable financial system, collective security, and support for frameworks for resolving disputes.

So, we placed the sign in the window. We participated in the rituals. And largely avoided calling out the gaps between rhetoric and reality.

This bargain no longer works. Let me be direct: we are in the midst of a rupture, not a transition.

Over the past two decades, a series of crises in finance, health, energy, and geopolitics laid bare the risks of extreme global integration.

More recently, great powers began using economic integration as weapons. Tariffs as leverage. Financial infrastructure as coercion. Supply chains as vulnerabilities to be exploited.

You cannot “live within the lie” of mutual benefit through integration when integration becomes the source of your subordination.

The multilateral institutions on which middle powers relied—the WTO, the UN, the COP – the architecture of collective problem solving – are greatly diminished.

As a result, many countries are drawing the same conclusions. They must develop greater strategic autonomy: in energy, food, critical minerals, in finance, and supply chains.

This impulse is understandable. A country that cannot feed itself, fuel itself, or defend itself has few options. When the rules no longer protect you, you must protect yourself.

But let us be clear-eyed about where this leads. A world of fortresses will be poorer, more fragile, and less sustainable.

And there is another truth: if great powers abandon even the pretence of rules and values for the unhindered pursuit of their power and interests, the gains from “transactionalism” become harder to replicate. Hegemons cannot continually monetize their relationships.

Allies will diversify to hedge against uncertainty. Buy insurance. Increase options. This rebuilds sovereignty – sovereignty that was once grounded in rules, but will be increasingly anchored in the ability to withstand pressure.

As I said, such classic risk management comes at a price, but that cost of strategic

autonomy, of sovereignty, can also be shared. Collective investments in resilience are cheaper than everyone building their own fortress. Shared standards reduce fragmentation. Complementarities are positive sum.

The question for middle powers, like Canada, is not whether to adapt to this new reality. We must. The question is whether we adapt by simply building higher walls – or whether we can do something more ambitious.

Canada was amongst the first to hear the wake-up call, leading us to fundamentally shift our strategic posture.

Canadians know that our old, comfortable assumption that our geography and alliance memberships automatically conferred prosperity and security is no longer valid.

Our new approach rests on what Alexander Stubb has termed “values-based realism” – or, to put it another way, we aim to be principled and pragmatic.

Principled in our commitment to fundamental values: sovereignty and territorial integrity, the prohibition of the use of force except when consistent with the UN Charter, respect for human rights.

Pragmatic in recognising that progress is often incremental, that interests diverge, that not every partner shares our values. We are engaging broadly, strategically, with open eyes. We actively take on the world as it is, not wait for a world we wish to be.

Canada is calibrating our relationships so their depth reflects our values. We are prioritising broad engagement to maximise our influence, given the fluidity of the world order, the risks that this poses, and the stakes for what comes next.

We are no longer relying on just the strength of our values, but also on the value of our strength.

We are building that strength at home. Since my government took office, we have cut taxes on incomes, capital gains and business investment, we have removed all federal barriers to interprovincial trade, and we are fast-tracking a trillion dollars of investment in energy, AI, critical minerals, new trade corridors, and beyond.

We are doubling our defence spending by 2030 and are doing so in ways that builds our domestic industries.

We are rapidly diversifying abroad. We have agreed a comprehensive strategic partnership with the European Union, including joining SAFE, Europe’s defence procurement arrangements.

We have signed twelve other trade and security deals on four continents in the last six months.

In the past few days, we have concluded



Carvey

new strategic partnerships with China and Qatar.

We are negotiating free trade pacts with India, ASEAN, Thailand, Philippines, Mercosur.

To help solve global problems, we are pursuing variable geometry— different coalitions for different issues, based on values and interests.

On Ukraine, we are a core member of the Coalition of the Willing and one of the largest per-capita contributors to its defence and security.

On Arctic sovereignty, we stand firmly with Greenland and Denmark and fully support their unique right to determine Greenland’s future. Our commitment to Article 5 is unwavering.

We are working with our NATO allies (including the Nordic Baltic) to further secure the alliance’s northern and western flanks, including through Canada’s unprecedented investments in over-the-horizon radar, submarines, aircraft, and boots on the ground. Canada strongly opposes tariffs over Greenland and calls for focused talks to achieve shared objectives of security and prosperity for the Arctic.

On plurilateral trade, we are championing efforts to build a bridge between the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the European Union, creating a new trading block of 1.5 billion people.

On critical minerals, we are forming buyer’s clubs anchored in the G7 so that the world can diversify away from concentrated supply.

On AI, we are cooperating with like-minded democracies to ensure we will not

ultimately be forced to choose between hegemony and hyperscalers.

This is not naive multilateralism. Nor is it relying on diminished institutions. It is building the coalitions that work, issue by issue, with partners who share enough common ground to act together. In some cases, this will be the vast majority of nations.

And it is creating a dense web of connections across trade, investment, culture on which we can draw for future challenges and opportunities.

Middle powers must act together because if you are not at the table, you are on the menu.

Great powers can afford to go it alone. They have the market size, the military capacity, the leverage to dictate terms. Middle powers do not. But when we only negotiate bilaterally with a hegemon, we negotiate from weakness. We accept what is offered. We compete with each other to be the most accommodating.

This is not sovereignty. It is the performance of sovereignty while accepting subordination.

In a world of great power rivalry, the countries in between have a choice: to compete with each other for favour or to combine to create a third path with impact.

We should not allow the rise of hard power to blind us to the fact that the power of legitimacy, integrity, and rules will remain strong — if we choose to wield it together.

Which brings me back to Havel. What would it mean for middle powers to “live in truth”?

It means naming reality. Stop invoking the “rules-based international order” as though it

still functions as advertised. Call the system what it is: a period of intensifying great power rivalry, where the most powerful pursue their interests using economic integration as a weapon of coercion.

It means acting consistently. Apply the same standards to allies and rivals. When middle powers criticise economic intimidation from one direction but stay silent when it comes from another, we are keeping the sign in the window.

It means building what we claim to believe in. Rather than waiting for the old order to be restored, create institutions and agreements that function as described.

And it means reducing the leverage that enables coercion. Building a strong domestic economy should always be every government’s priority. Diversification internationally is not just economic prudence; it is the material foundation for honest foreign policy. Countries earn the right to principled stands by reducing their vulnerability to retaliation.

Canada has what the world wants. We are an energy superpower. We hold vast reserves of critical minerals. We have the most educated population in the world. Our pension funds are amongst the world’s largest and most sophisticated investors. We have capital, talent, and a government with the immense fiscal capacity to act decisively.

And we have the values to which many others aspire.

Canada is a pluralistic society that works. Our public square is loud, diverse, and free. Canadians remain committed to sustainability. We are a stable, reliable partner—in a world that is anything but—a partner that builds and values relationships for the long term.

Canada has something else: a recognition of what is happening and a determination to act accordingly. We understand that this rupture calls for more than adaptation. It calls for honesty about the world as it is. We are taking the sign out of the window. The old order is not coming back. We should not mourn it. Nostalgia is not a strategy.

But from the fracture, we can build something better, stronger, and more just.

This is the task of the middle powers, who have the most to lose from a world of fortresses and the most to gain from a world of genuine cooperation. The powerful have their power. But we have something too – the capacity to stop pretending, to name reality, to build our strength at home, and to act together.

That is Canada’s path. We choose it openly and confidently. And it is a path wide open to any country willing to take it with us.”

*Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney speech in Davos, Switzerland

Business

Revenue sources under pressure

■ Finance Minister Ndaba is expected to present a tight budget ■ Govt facing diverse revenue risks, GIA at lowest level of P251m

BAKANG TIRO
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THE GOVERNMENT IS FACING substantial revenue risks in the upcoming 2026/27 financial year driven primarily by anticipated decline in minerals revenue as well as subdued economic growth.

The Ministry of Finance (MoF) revealed this week in the Draft Budget Strategy Paper that over the years, the economy has not generated sufficient tax revenue to keep up with rising expenditure needs.

Against this backdrop, economic observers point that the Minister of Finance Ndaba Gaolathe would outline a tight budget focused on prudent spending while putting an emphasis on cutting costs in short to the medium term.

The Draft Budget Strategy Paper has noted that the Ministry of Finance calculations indicate a cumulative increase of P308.5 billion in tax revenue in the 2018–23 period compared to P480.1 billion in public spending.

The ministry said currently mineral revenues are estimated to reach P10.3 billion in 2025/26 compared to a historical average of P25.3 billion, reflecting lower sales of diamonds. Beyond this, it said the recovery in

mineral revenue is expected to be prolonged with receipts anticipated to remain below post-pandemic recovery levels.

The shortfall is likely to persist over the medium to long term with a possibility of a non-recovery or partial recovery due to the ongoing structural challenges related to declining prices, competition from lab grown diamonds, rising production costs and changing consumer preferences in the diamond market.

“Rough diamond prices are anticipated to sell at a low of USD99.3/carat by the end of 2025 below USD128.8/carat in 2024. If prices fall below this level in the remaining months of this financial year, this could reduce mineral revenues than what is currently projected,” the Finance ministry explained.

Delving into the Government Investment Account (GIA) status, MoF said the current fiscal landscape has left Government deposits held at the Bank of Botswana at historically low levels. The low levels of GIA are beyond sustainable levels, following a sharp decline in revenue inflows during 2024.

By December 2024, the GIA closed at its lowest balance of P0.251 billion, compared to P8.6 billion a year

■ Botswana’s current economic position remains under pressure



VP and Finance Minister, Ndaba Gaolathe

[PIC: BGCIS]

earlier. The ministry added that since then, inflows have remained volatile and at times insufficient to meet expected Government expenditure requirements.

EXPENDITURE RISKS

Meanwhile, MoF said the pressure to increase spending without exercising expenditure restraint, reprioritising, or providing room for any adjustments to accommodate the high expenditure commitments has been unsustainable, with each new budget postponing the start of the fiscal consolidation plan.

In the past years (FY2014/15-FY2023/24), total spending has grown on average by an additional 1.7 percentage points per annum to P85.5 billion faster than growth in revenue which grew on average by 5.3 percent to P74.3 billion.

This was driven by both higher current and capital spending, due to acceleration of projects from the Transitional National Development Plan, including recurrent costs arising from past development projects. Over the medium term, without no fiscal action, MoF indicated that total spending is expected to exceed revenues by an additional 11 percentage points on average per year.

“Consistent with this, budget deficits are anticipated to persist over

the medium term.

This is expected to put more pressure on borrowing requirements than is currently the case, with implications for debt sustainability,” MoF said the strategy paper.

FISCAL STRATEGY

Additionally, the ministry said Botswana’s current fiscal position remains under strain, with foreign exchange reserves at their lowest levels in recent history and revenue performance, particularly from diamond sales, falling below expectations.

It said the 2025/26 financial year has underscored the urgency for strengthening fiscal resilience and diversifying revenue sources beyond traditional mineral earnings.

This suggests that in 2026/27 financial year, the strategy should prioritise on rebuilding fiscal buffers, revenue maximisation, improving expenditure efficiency, and accelerating structural reforms that support sustainable, inclusive growth.

“Lessons from the previous financial years highlight the need for prudent fiscal discipline, stronger prioritisation of spending, and a renewed commitment to economic diversification to safeguard the country’s long-term financial stability,” said MoF.

Copper exports grow

... as diamonds’ sales decline

KITSO RAMONO
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BOTSWANA’S ECONOMY showed growth in the third quarter of the year, but experts say the improvement does not mean the country is out of trouble, especially in the mining sector.

Presenting the third-quarter GDP results, First National Bank Botswana (FNBB) analyst Innocent Keoagile said the economy grew by 8.2 percent, mainly because last year’s performance was very weak. This effect, known as a “base effect,” makes growth look bigger than it really is.

“In simple terms, the economy is growing from a low point, which makes the percentage increase look high,” Keoagile said.

Diamonds dragging the economy Mining, which has always been the backbone of Botswana’s economy, continues to slow down. According to Keoagile, diamond production has been falling since 2021 because global demand has not fully recovered after COVID-19.

To reduce costs, diamond producers have cut production, leading to mining’s shrinking role in the economy. Mining’s contribution to GDP has dropped sharply from about 24 percent in 2022 to just 8.7 percent in the latest figures. Diamonds still make up most of Botswana’s mining output, but



FNBB Analyst, Innocent Keoagile

their dominance is slowly being challenged.

Copper on the rise

Keoagile said copper production is growing and is beginning to play a more visible role, especially in exports. Copper now accounts for about 22 percent of Botswana’s exports while diamonds have dropped to about 54 percent.

However, he cautioned that copper is still too small to replace diamonds. “Copper contributes less than 0.5

percent to the total economy, so while it helps, it cannot yet carry the economy,” he said.

Why the Pula Is Not Affected

Some concerns were raised about whether weak diamond sales could affect the value of the Pula. Keoagile explained that this is unlikely. He said the Pula is pegged to the South African Rand and a basket of international currencies, meaning its value is not directly affected by what happens in Botswana’s mining sector.

Agriculture shows improvement

Agriculture performed better in the third quarter, growing by 3.1 percent, helped by improved rainfall and better weather conditions. Livestock farming grew by 4.9 percent, while crop production also improved. The reopening of the Maun Botswana Meat Commission plant helped create more market opportunities for farmers.

Despite the improvement, agriculture still contributes less than 2 percent to the economy, mainly because most farming in Botswana is done for household use rather than for business.

Tourism continues to recover

Tourism also showed signs of recovery as more visitors returned to the country. The sector has been growing steadily since COVID-19 and is expected to continue expanding over the next two years. Botswana’s political stability and government support are helping tourism, although poor infrastructure and limited high-quality facilities remain a challenge.

Modest growth expected

FNBB expects Botswana’s economy to grow by about 2.5 percent, supported by stable diamond production and gradual improvement in other sectors. Keoagile said the results show that while the economy is improving, Botswana still needs to reduce its heavy dependence on diamonds and grow other sectors to secure long-term stability.

Borrowers heighten banks’ credit risks

■ IMF warns of mounting pressures on the financial sector

BAKANG TIRO
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THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY (IMF) has cautioned that the local financial sector is facing mounting pressures, a development that could put local banks under strain.

The IMF made the warning on its latest Country Report for Botswana published late December 2025.

As part of contributing factors to growth dampening risks, IMF said delays in third party payments are translating into delays on mortgage and other loan payments. It also said the growing share of privately employed borrowers heightens banks’ credit risk, especially during economic downturns.

According to the IMF, the recent decline in diamond prices contributed to weakened repayment capacity among mining companies.

“Moreover, the growing interconnectedness between banks and non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs)—especially through pension fund financing of government deficits—warrant, close monitoring given the potential for spillovers if the macro-economic environment deteriorates further,” the IMF explained.

According to the IMF, the recent increase in commercial banks’ exposure warrants close monitoring, particularly if fiscal or financial conditions were to



deteriorate.

To corroborate IMF findings, the Bank of Botswana (BoB) has indicated that the local banking sector is facing funding risks due to high level of deposit concentration. BoB indicated 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.

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

BoB also said 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

Furthermore, the FSR report noted that the banking sector remains vulnerable to funding risk arising from a concentrated deposit base.

BoB also 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.

Meanwhile, the IMF said the authorities have made notable progress in strengthening the financial sector stability framework, adding that as planned, the Liquidity Coverage Ratio and Capital Buffer guidelines should be fully operational by end of 2025.

“The Emergency Liquidity Assistance (ELA) framework and a comprehensive stress testing framework are expected for the first half of 2026, while the Net Stable Funding Ratio remains pending. The revised 2023 Banking Act, which strengthens the legal basis for financial stability oversight and monetary operations, was enacted into law in May 2023 and promulgated in August 2025,” said the IMF.

Jindal Energy Botswana’s first cohort of Graduate Engineers



Jindal Energy Botswana 2nd Cohort of Graduate Engineer Interns

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JINDAL ENERGY BOTSWANA celebrated the graduation of its first cohort of 20 Intern Graduate Engineer Trainees on Wednesday. The young engineers successfully completed the company’s 2025 Talent Development Programme and are now officially part of the workforce, ready to contribute to Botswana’s energy and infrastructure growth.

The P5.5 million programme was created to build local technical expertise in the power and energy sector. It gave graduates from Botswana’s universities hands-on experience, practical skills, and training in workplace safety, preparing them to take on real projects that support national development.

Neeraj Saxena, Country Director and Project Head at Jindal Energy Botswana,

reflection of the strong partnership between Botswana and India.

“These graduates are stepping into a programme that connects them to real work, global exposure, and professional growth,” he said.

The Minister of Labour and Home Affairs, Major General Pius Mokgware, applauded Jindal for preparing young professionals for the workforce.

“This is about more than jobs, it’s about building skills, discipline, and confidence for the future,” he said.

Vimal Srivastava, Head of Human Resources at Jindal Energy Botswana, explained that the programme carefully selects top graduates from local institutions through rigorous assessments and interviews. Over two years, trainees receive ongoing technical and professional training, mentoring, and performance evaluations, with the best candidates moving into full-time roles.

“This programme is about developing engineers who are not only technically capable, but also ready to take responsibility and contribute meaningfully to Botswana’s energy sector,” Srivastava said.

Toise is CAAB CEO

THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT and Infrastructure is pleased to announce the appointment of Captain Thuto Toise as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) designate of the Civil Aviation Authority of Botswana (CAAB).

With over 30 years of experience in globally regulated aviation environments - Captain Toise brings a wealth of expertise in strategic leadership, operational management



Toise

and financial stewardship.

His distinguished career includes roles as Captain for Etihad Airways and Ethiopian Airlines, as well as senior positions at Air Botswana and Air Mauritius.

As CEO designate - Captain Toise is poised to provide visionary leadership and governance to CAAB, leveraging his extensive experience to drive growth and excellence in Botswana’s aviation sector.

Source: Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure - Botswana

Cavista to host Botswana's first Global Hackathon

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AMERICAN-BASED SOFTWARE development company Cavista Technologies, which operates from Botswana, will host the country's first global hackathon as part of its drive to nurture local tech talent and reduce youth unemployment.

The two-day hackathon will take place on February 21 and 22 at Botswana Accountancy College (BAC) and will run simultaneously with similar events in India, Nigeria and Dallas, Texas, marking Botswana's debut participation in the global Cavista hackathon series.

Speaking during a media engagement, Cavista Technologies General Manager Katlego Arnone said the event forms part of the company's broader mission to empower communities through technology and innovation.

Cavista Technologies, a portfolio

company under Cavista Holdings, was registered in Botswana in late 2023 and officially opened on 10 September 2024 by former president Dr. Mokgweetsi Masisi. The company specialises in software development and engineering, serving global clients, particularly in the United States.

Arnone said Cavista operates in four countries, Botswana, Nigeria, India and the Philippines, allowing the company to provide 24-hour software development support to its global partners.

"Our vision is to be the most innovative and respected technology solutions provider, and our mission is to empower clients with the world's best technology solutions," he said.

He revealed that Cavista Botswana currently employs 35 engineers, all locally recruited, with plans to grow the workforce to 500 employees within the next five years. The company also targets undergraduate students, whom it trains through what



Cavista Technologies hosted a hackathon in India recently

it calls the 'Cavista Way', a culture that promotes work-life balance, innovation and ownership.

"We don't call people employees here; we call them owners. When someone feels like an owner, they are motivated to ensure the company succeeds," Arnone explained.

The upcoming hackathon is expected to attract about 300 participants, including university students, industry experts, sponsors and technology partners. Cavista has already secured partnerships with key players such as BTCL Group.

A hackathon is a competitive innovation event where participants collaborate intensively to develop technology-based solutions to real-world challenges within a limited time. According to Arnone, the event will feature coding challenges, innovation workshops, mentorship sessions, team collaboration and prize competitions.

Winners will receive significant prizes and opportunities to further develop and commercialise their solutions, with some

participants potentially transitioning directly from campus into entrepreneurship or employment.

Beyond talent scouting, Arnone said the initiative shows Cavista's commitment to community development, skills transfer and job creation.

"Our engineers in Botswana are building software used in the American care-at-home market. This shows that Botswana has world-class talent that can compete and deliver globally," he said.

Cavista also emphasises local procurement, community engagement and support for disadvantaged groups as part of its corporate responsibility. Arnone described the hackathon as more than a competition, calling it a platform for learning, collaboration and innovation with purpose.

"We are not just building on past successes. We are creating the next generation of genius solutions together, one hackathon at a time," he said.

Know Your Corporate Leader



Full Name: Dr. Raphael Dingalo

Position: Registrar

Institution: Botswana Teaching Professionals Council

Date Started: 01st April, 2023

Nature of business: BOTEPCO is a statutory body mandated for the regulation, registration, licensing, and professionalisation of teachers in Botswana.

Absa could opt for full ownership of Botswana business

- Lender determined to reduce its reliance on SA, which accounts for 65% of group earnings

ABSA, WHICH WANTS TO BE AMONG the top three lenders in Africa, could pursue full ownership of its subsidiaries in Kenya and Botswana as it seeks to reduce its dependence on South Africa, which accounts for 65% of its earnings.

The Johannesburg-based lender owns majority stakes in banks in Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

Charles Russon, who heads the bank's Africa portfolio, did not rule out acquisitions in furtherance of the group's ambition to build a pan-African lender.

"We want sustainable, client-driven growth," Russon said from Davos, where he is attending the World Economic Forum (WEF). "If you take that as a premise, you can obviously drive organic growth by setting up appropriately and not having our own artificial barriers as Absa. Then there is organic growth and being precise about the sectors that we want to win in."

"But if that doesn't get us to a position where we are in the top three, we then have to ask ourselves how we achieve our aims. That might require bolt-on acquisitions like we have done with the acquisition of wealth and retail banking businesses of Standard Chartered in Uganda.

"And, of course, if the right opportunity presents itself that we believe makes sense as an inorganic play, either as a partner in some shape or form or an actual acquisition, we will look at it."

To tap into opportunities in the fast-growing East African region, the group wants to consolidate its Tanzanian business



Charles Russon, Group Executive - Africa Regions

to build scale in an economy that is expanding at about 5% a year.

Absa has two banks in Tanzania and is engaging with the country's government to merge the two institutions.

Outright ownership

Russon said it doesn't make sense that the group doesn't have outright ownership of some of its franchises.

"We have a great footprint. We have achieved significant growth over the years, but there is a lot more that we can achieve. There are some countries like Kenya, Botswana and Tanzania where we are not structurally set up appropriately," Russon said.

"In Tanzania, we have two banks, which

is not the best outcome. In Kenya, we own about 65%, and in Botswana just short of 65%. This means we hold 100% of the risk but get 65% of the earnings. These are things that are within our control to look at and deal with."

Absa group CEO Kenny Fihla in December unveiled a new strategy based on four pillars: customer-led growth, building a diversified pan-African business, driving excellence and pursuing new growth opportunities.

At the heart of the strategy rejig is the lender's need to wean itself off dependence on South Africa, Kenya and Ghana for earnings. [businessday.co.za]

In-Stores

Bayport Botswana recognised for Client Protection Standards

BAYPORT FINANCIAL SERVICES BOTSWANA is proud to announce the successful renewal of its Gold Level Client Protection Certification by the MicroFinanza Rating (MFR) Certification Committee, reaffirming the organisation's commitment to ethical, transparent, and responsible lending practices.

The Gold Level is the highest level of achievement under the MFR Client Protection Certification framework and signifies full alignment with the Universal Standards for Social Performance Management. This renewal confirms that Bayport continues to meet the most rigorous international standards designed to protect and empower clients.

Bayport Financial Services, Head of Corporate Affairs and ESG, Ms. Kabo L. Tladi said "This achievement reflects our consistency, discipline, and unwavering focus on putting clients first. Client protection – it is embedded in our culture and guides how we design products, engage clients,

and conduct our business every day."

The certification process evaluates institutions across key areas including transparency, responsible pricing, fair treatment of clients, data privacy, complaint resolution, and prevention of over-indebtedness. Bayport's ability to sustain Gold Level Certification demonstrates not only quality service delivery, but also the organisation's capacity to maintain these standards year after year.

As a leading payroll-based lender in Botswana, Bayport remains committed to promoting financial wellness by providing responsible access to credit that supports clients' long-term financial goals. This value-driven approach is further strengthened through the Bayport Academy, which delivers financial literacy education aimed at empowering clients to make informed financial decisions. Bayport Botswana extends its appreciation to its clients, partners, and employees for their continued trust and support, which make achievements such as this possible.



Bayport Botswana CEO, Sinclair Sithole

Kara joins Engen Botswana Board

ENGEN BOTSWANA LIMITED ("ENGEN" or "the Company") wishes to announce the following non-executive director appointment: With effect from 01 January 2026, Engen appointed Mr Ravi Ishwar Bhoodia Kara to the Board of Directors. The appointment is subject to approval by the shareholders at the next AGM of the company.

Ravi Kara is presently the Finance Head: Commercial at Engen Petroleum, South Africa. Being a Chartered Accountant by background, with sound leadership exposure has equipped him with the financial knowledge to understand the industry and the highly complex and



Ravi Kara

competitive nature of Oil & Gas Industry in General. Ravi has held several senior management roles at Engen Petroleum,

Enterprise Performance Manager, previously managed Engen's International Business as Financial Services Manager managing 15 countries. Ravi is the Chairman of the Board of Engen Eswatini and is a Board Member for Engen Lesotho. He was a Board Member for Engen DRC and Engen Mauritius. Ravi is a seasoned Oil & Gas senior manager, with a strong financial and commercial background. In addition to his accounting qualification, he has completed several executive programmes and recently graduated from DUKE CE.

The Board welcomes Ravi and looks forward to his contribution to the Board's continued strength. [bse.co.bw]

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The Patriot Woman

The Patriot woman

Policy reforms crucial for improved tourism industry

AMANDA DAVID
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THIS WEEK FRANCISTOWN WAS HOST to the 2026 Tourism Pitso at Adansonia Hotel under the theme Tourism As A Catalyst For Economic Transformation And Sustainable Growth Through Partnerships. The conference, which was last held over a decade ago, attracted a diverse group of industry stakeholders from both private and government entities.

During a panel discussion centred on sectoral policy issues in tourism, CEO of Civil Aviation Authority of Botswana Dr Bao Mosinyi touched on policies that impact on tourism, citing that one of the policies currently being pushed forward is a policy that promotes connectivity.

“One aspect that we have not been emphasizing for a few years as a country is domestic connectivity. Part of the problem with domestic connectivity is that government owns 23 airstrips around the country, and a good number of these airstrips are currently closed because they do not comply. If we are going to connect the country to enable tourism to flourish, most of these airstrips will have to be operational and compliant,” he added.

Another panelist Boatametse Modukanele, the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, said tourism is affected by a number of policies that are not directly in the tourism ministry such as land and immigration issues, which then requires the host ministry to engage with other ministries on issues of policy reforms that affect tourism.

He said one of the policies that are currently under review are immigration policies, especially VISA issues because a lot of tourists come from outside the country and require visas.

“One of the areas that we have been engaging on that is taking quite a bit of time is the Uni-Visa for the KAZA region, because as part of what tourists do, they do not just come for one destination. They can come into South Africa and then pass to Botswana without having to apply for another visa,” he noted.

Speaking on behalf of private businesses

in the tourism industry, local hotel owner Kelebogile Callender also emphasized that policy change is needed to facilitate businesses to diversify income streams as well as survive and prosper.

Giving a brief account of the challenges they face in the tourism industry, Callender noted that increment of licensing rates during a financial crisis is discouraging for local business owners. She said when local peridium was introduced, the intention was to facilitate guest houses to grow and benefit directly from government travel, which is not what is happening on the ground.

“Instead, it is detrimental in that we are held at ransom by travellers on peridium in that they force us to give them rates that are below cost and thereby stifling city tourism. A suggestion is that the money must be split. Half must be paid directly to the tourism operator and half must be given to the government official. Our businesses are sacrificed to appease government employees; thereby failing to achieve the goal of developing and growing the industry,” she added.

Officiating the Vice President of Botswana Ndaba Gaolathe affirmed that the government is actively implementing a wide range of reforms to ensure that the tourism sector becomes an anchor towards economic diversification, citizen empowerment and sustainable development.

Such reforms include review of legislation such as the Tourism Act of 2009 to optimise operational efficiencies and align with international best practice; additionally, Parliament passed the Community Based Natural Resources Act in 2025 to ensure that communities are better empowered to partner with government in developing the tourism industry.

Touching on the theme, the Vice President said “This theme is not a mere tagline, but a national commitment to position tourism as a driver of inclusive growth, job creation, environmental stewardship, and community empowerment. It emphasizes the need to explore delivery of strategic tourism investments through partnerships and positions tourism as a strategic pillar in our development agenda”.



Vivo laboratory retains ISO 17025 reaccreditation

- Reaccreditation underscores the company's focus on consistency and credibility in fuel quality management



Vivo Energy Botswana Managing Director Sesupo Wagamang

VIVO ENERGY BOTSWANA, THE company that distributes and markets Shell fuels and lubricants in Botswana, has secured ISO 17025:2017 reaccreditation for its Francistown fuel testing laboratory, reinforcing the company's commitment to internationally benchmarked quality, safety, and operational excellence in the petroleum sector.

The reaccreditation, granted by the Southern African Development Community Accreditation Service (SADCAS), covers the chemical analysis of diesel and petrol using critical ASTM test methods, including density (D4052), distillation (D86), and flashpoint (D93). These parameters are essential for verifying fuel quality, safety, and regulatory compliance across the national supply chain.

This marks the third successful periodic

assessment since the laboratory's initial accreditation in 2022. Following an on-site assessment conducted in July 2025, reaccreditation was formally confirmed in November and will remain valid until 2027.

Commenting on the milestone, Vivo Energy Botswana Managing Director Sesupo Wagamang said the reaccreditation underscores the company's focus on consistency and credibility in fuel quality management.

“Achieving reaccreditation is never about a once-off audit, it's about the standards we uphold every day. This milestone reflects our team's dedication to quality, accuracy, and continuous improvement, and our shared responsibility in supporting safe and reliable high quality fuel supply,” Wagamang said.

“For us, fuel quality is non-negotiable because it directly affects safety, equipment integrity, and customer confidence.”

The ISO 17025:2017 accreditation certifies that a laboratory demonstrates technical competence, produces reliable and traceable results, and operates a robust quality management system aligned with validated test methods. Annual surveillance assessments ensure continuous compliance and reinforce confidence in the data used for both business decisions and regulatory assurance.

As Botswana's only ISO 17025:2017-accredited fuel testing laboratory, the Francistown facility plays a strategic role in supporting Vivo Energy Botswana's nationwide operations. Accurate and dependable testing safeguards fuel handling processes, protects customer and industry infrastructure, and ensures products consistently meet required specifications.

Wagamang noted that the laboratory's role extends beyond compliance to underpinning the company's broader value proposition. “Our customers and partners rely on the assurance that the fuel they receive meets the highest standards,” he said. “This reaccreditation strengthens trust across our value chain and supports safe, compliant operations throughout our network.”

The achievement also reflects sustained investment in people, systems, and continuous improvement. The laboratory operates within Vivo Energy Botswana's Integrated Management System, embedding quality, safety, environmental stewardship, and operational discipline into daily activities. Ongoing competency development, method validation, internal audits, and equipment integrity programmes ensure the facility remains resilient and future-ready.

According to Wagamang, the reaccreditation is a strategic signal of the company's long-term outlook. “Maintaining ISO 17025 standards requires discipline and consistency year after year,” he said. “It reaffirms our commitment to technical excellence and supports sustainable business performance by ensuring that quality is built into every litre we supply.”

Vivo Energy Botswana operates under the Shell licence and continues to position quality assurance as a cornerstone of its operations, with the Francistown Laboratory remaining central to its fuel integrity and risk management framework.



CHEF DE PARTIE

Job Title: Chef de Partie
Reports To: Executive Chef
Location: Bush Based

Becoming a Great Plains Conservation Employee places you in a unique position from day one, unlike any other role you will find in Africa. We are a conservation group here to “Conserve and Expand Natural Habitats”. Employment opportunities with us ensure you are an ambassador for conservation and protecting our fragile but pristine areas, and this will be at the heart of everything you do. From the very beginning, you will start to make a difference in protecting the African continent. We are seeking highly motivated, energetic, and dedicated individuals, regardless of gender, who have a passion for the outdoors. Successful candidates will be based in the remote areas of the Okavango Delta, Botswana.

PURPOSE OF THE JOB:
The Chef de Partie (CDP) works in the kitchen supporting the Head and Sous Chefs. The role is made up of many varying responsibilities including, preparing, cooking, and presenting, high quality dishes and kitchen administration within their allocated section.

KEY RESPONSIBILITY AREAS

- Consults daily with Sous Chef, Head Chef and or Executive Chef on the daily requirements, functions and also about any last-minute events.
- Demonstrates full awareness of all menu items, their recipes, methods of production and presentation standards.
- Assists with any stock control systems in place eg Ordering, Issuing, Receiving and Stock Taking
- Produces own work in accordance to set deadlines in order to assist and encourage others in achieving this aim.
- Ensures effective communication between staff by safeguarding and friendly working environment.
- Setting an example to others for personal hygiene and cleanliness on and off duty.
- Responsible for ensuring high standard of kitchen Health, Hygiene & Safety.
- Assess quality control and adhere to the Great Plains service standards.
- Responsible for junior chefs
- Any other duty within reasonable scope of work

COMPETENCIES

- Attitude of listening and learning.
- Excellent Communication skills.
- Organization in the workplace.
- Able to work under- pressure and unsupervised.
- Good people skills.
- Well dressed and groomed.
- Attention to detail.
- High level of professional work ethic.

Interested applicants should email a cover letter and updated CV to the below listed email addresses. The subject heading of the email should be written as:
Chef de Partie.

To: hr@greatplainsconservation.com
Cc: opportunities@greatplainsconservation.com

The remuneration package will be offered according to experience and qualifications of the successful candidate. We do not accept hand deliveries.

CLOSING DATE: 23RD JANUARY 2026 TO 09TH FEBRUARY 2026.

PLEASE NOTE, DUE TO THE HIGH VOLUMES OF APPLICATIONS ONLY THOSE WHO ARE SHORTLISTED WILL BE CONTACTED.

WWW.GREATPLAINSCONSERVATION.COM



lifestyle

Soul Dialogues

Part 5: China in Verse

SOLOMON KGOSI

MY TIME IN CHINA SHOOK A LOT of things loose, in my heart, in my tongue, in my mind, in my spirit, and in my hands. I felt safe and so my heart was open. My eyes were mesmerized by the artistry in the food laid before me, and so my tongue found the courage to welcome foods I couldn't name.

My imagination was enthralled and so my mind went down paths that were new. My spirit felt welcome and so it expanded to take up more room. My fingers reached for a pen and together with my hands I was moved to write.

I come from a place and time in Botswana where writing as something to pursue was not even a whisper of a thought. Growing up in rural Botswana my compositions were often read out to the entire student body at assembly. None of us assembled there expected me to move on to write more than that.

Writing was my companion into early adulthood. But as life's disappointments and hurts collected in my heart, tongue, mind and spirit they slowly but steadily spread to my hands. For more than a quarter of a century my hands were unwilling to write. They were in the grip of a deep paralysis that I couldn't shake. I mourned the writing that remained stuck and unable to flow. Until one day when I found myself in China. Far from everything familiar, my hands began tingling back to life.

Sitting in a hotel room in China, I wrote about people of flesh and blood. People whom a nation with such a rich and long history continues to celebrate. People who never allowed life's disappointments and hurts to paralyse them against their being. I wrote about Tan Kah Khee, about Confucius, about Chinese New Year and about so very much more.

Tan Kah Kee (1874-1961)

Education was not just a mission for Tan Kah Kee; it was his life's heartbeat. To him, it was both a personal calling and a national responsibility.

From the age of 20, he was already deeply engaged in community schools and welfare, guided not by external persuasion but by an inner conviction: "Since the age of 20, I was deeply interested in how our clan schools were run, and how community welfare actually worked. It was a strong passion for which I had a natural calling."

This passion defined his every decision.

Education Before Business

When financial advisors urged him to safeguard his wealth instead of spending on schools, Tan Kah Kee's response was unwavering: education first. He reasoned



that while a business collapse affected one man, the collapse of a school affects generations. This was total dedication—placing the collective good above personal fortune.

Inclusive Education

Tan Kah Khee opposed narrow or discriminatory schooling, believing education must serve all. "Everyone is entitled to education, and schools that discriminate along narrow community groupings are not what we need." This inclusive outlook fostered unity, discipline, and pride among overseas Chinese while nurturing loyalty to their cultural roots.

Education and Nation-Building

For Tan Kah Kee, education was inseparable from national survival. He saw schools as factories of citizenship—places where minds were shaped, discipline instilled, and future leaders prepared.

His efforts in Jimei and Xiamen not only advanced academics but also catalyzed community development, turning villages into centers of cultural achievement.

A Lasting Example

Tan Kah Kee's philosophy of total dedication to education continues to

resonate. His sacrifices remind us that true nation-building begins with investing in the minds of the young. His life teaches that prosperity is fleeting, but education is enduring.

He is rightly remembered as an educator, reformer, patriot, and moral giant of Asia—a man who lived out his conviction that: "The most important responsibility of schools is to enlighten the people, improve society, and protect the nation."

Confucius (died 479BC)

In quiet halls of thought and grace, He spoke of virtue, time, and place. That harmony begins within, Where peace of heart and mind begin. He taught that kindness lights the way, That our deeds must match the words we say.

To serve, to learn, to live with care, Brings wisdom's calm to all we share. Respect the old, uplift the youth, Seek not for gold, but seek for truth. Through self-control, the heart refines, And balance flows through all mankind. Confucius' voice still softly calls, Through classrooms, temples, city walls. His ancient truths, forever new,

Guide nations, hearts, and me, and you.

Chinese New Year

The moon is full, the streets are bright, Lanterns bloom like stars at night. Families gather, hearts renew, As red and gold paint every view. The air is filled with drums and cheer, Old wishes meet the dawning year. Firecrackers echo through the skies, As hopes arise and spirits rise. Elders bless, the children beam, Red envelopes pass like flowing streams. Each prayer a seed of peace and grace, Each smile a light time can't erase. Through every city, field, and song, Tradition's heartbeat beats so strong. Chinese New Year, the world can see, The joy of life, of unity

I have returned to Botswana. I continue to write. I also continue to wonder why China was the antidote for my paralysis.

"The Soul Dialogues are a six part series about the road less travelled. A wanderer by the name of Solomon Kgososi 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.

A new source for the Zambezi

Decades of conflict in Angola prevented research; now the first full-length paddle of the river provides new data

MIKE CADMAN

THE ZAMBEZI RIVER IS ONE OF Africa's best-known waterways, but a new scientific report has created a stir by showing that its source is in Angola, not Zambia, and that it is more than 10% longer than previously recorded.

The research also shows that clean water from the Angolan highlands contributes as much as 70% of the volume over the Victoria Falls, more than 500km downstream, far more than suspected. This influx of pure water has important environmental implications for the health of the river, surrounding wetlands, Lake Kariba and the Zambezi Delta, where the river enters the sea in Mozambique.

Researchers from The Wilderness Project, which was founded in 2018 to study African freshwater systems including the Okavango and the Zambezi, paddled from the traditionally accepted source in Zambia and along Angola's Lungwebungu River to ascertain which rose furthest from the sea. They calculated that using the Angolan source, the Zambezi is 342km longer than previously thought.

In 2022 and 2023, in conjunction with the National Geographic Okavango Wilderness Project and the Wild Bird Trust, researchers paddled the entire length of the Zambezi, including the Lungwebungu's 1,032km.

The Zambezi is now considered to be 3,421km long, still the fourth-longest river in Africa, behind the Nile, Congo and Niger. This discovery redefines our understanding of the Zambezi system: without the Angolan Highlands Water Tower, the mighty Zambezi would be significantly reduced in flow

— Research from The Wilderness Project "By surveying both headwater sources and combining high-resolution satellite imagery with our expedition findings, this study reveals that Angola's Lungwebungu River extends 342km farther from the ocean than the Zambian source," the researchers state in Assessment of Source Regions of the Zambezi River: Implications for regional water security, published in the journal Hydrology & Earth System Sciences in September 2025.

The river originates in the Angolan Highlands Water Tower (AHWT), a region of high rainfall that gives rise to a number of other major rivers, including the Cubango and Cuito, which join to form the Okavango River that flows into the Okavango Delta in Botswana.

"In addition, the AHWT contributes almost three-quarters (roughly 70%) of the total flow of the upper Zambezi River," the researchers write. "This discovery redefines our understanding of the Zambezi system:

without the AHWT, the mighty Zambezi would be significantly reduced in flow.

"Victoria Falls, a Unesco world heritage site that gets roughly 70% of its water from Angola, would also be vastly diminished, and hydroelectric dams across the region would struggle to produce electricity," they add.

Much of the region through which the Lungwebungu flows was the scene of intense fighting during Angola's war for independence (1961-1974), which was followed by civil war (1975-2002). For decades minefields have made research in the area dangerous and difficult. Research efforts have also been hampered by the remoteness of the region.

The Lungwebungu flows through deep Kalahari sands that filter its waters, a cleaning process aided by the huge Kameia wetlands and Luena flats. These wetlands also play an ecologically important role in the ecosystem of the upper Zambezi, but until recently this was poorly recorded.

"While our results are exploratory, they represent the first combined assessment using multiple lines of evidence: greater river length, higher discharge, water quality, and wetland coverage; collectively, these attributes position the Angolan rivers as the more significant source of the Zambezi," say the researchers. "This effort marks the first time the Angolan portion of the Zambezi basin headwaters has been scientifically surveyed." The Zambezi basin covers about 1,370,000km² spread across eight countries — Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe — and is home to about 50-million people.

It is the largest river basin in Southern Africa and a significant biodiversity hotspot, with more than 200 species of mammals, 700 species of birds, 290 species of reptiles and amphibians and 190 species of fish having been recorded.

The wildlife areas bordering Zimbabwe and Zambia along the middle Zambezi and the upper Zambezi upstream from the Victoria Falls are important for conservation and are major international tourism attractions.

The Zambezi basin plays a key role in the livelihoods of millions of people but faces increasing environmental challenges due to climate change, development and human water use. Rainer von Brandis, research director for the project, says: "Our teams have spent years exploring and scientifically documenting the AHWT, uncovering its hidden role as the lifeblood of the Zambezi and [while doing so] showing why protecting it is vital for the future of this mighty river and its people." [financialmail.businessday.co.za]

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2025 Choppies Big Birthday Bonanza Grand Finale



Choppies CEO Ramachandran Ottapathu



Choppies CFO Vidya Sanooj



Bamalete Paramount Chief Kgosi Mosadi Seboko



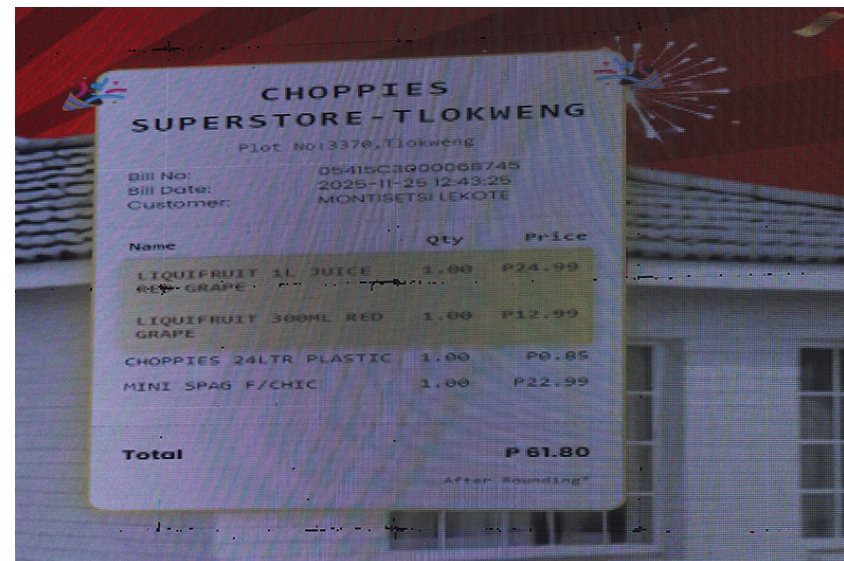
GCC Deputy Mayor Mankie Sekete - MP for Ramotswa Hon Maboo, Bamalete Paramount Chief Kgosi Mosadi Seboko, Area Councilor, Choppies CEO Ramachandran Ottapathu, Choppies Group Cooperative Director Sanoch conducting the Grand Prize draw for a house



Choppies Marketing & PR Manager Kebonyemodisa calling the winners



Alvin Sebetele giving welcome remarks



Attendees watching the draw

• Choppies changes lives, spectacularly

Choppies on Friday concluded the draw of the 2025 Big Birthday Bonanza, a flagship promotion held in celebration of the retailer's long-standing presence in Botswana and its continued commitment to rewarding loyal customers. The competition ran for three months, from 16th October to 25th December 2025, and invited customers to enter by purchasing any participating products from any Choppies store nationwide. Each purchase earned shoppers a chance to win weekly prizes, including P1,000 Choppies vouchers, with two winners per store every week. Beyond the weekly rewards, the promotion also featured life-changing prizes, including 10 Suzuki Super Carry mini trucks, four Toyota single-cab Hilux vehicles, and a grand prize of a fully built two-bedroom house located in Block 6.

This year's Bonanza recorded an impressive five (5) million entries, marking a 20 percent increase from last year, underscoring the growing popularity of the promotion among Batswana. In a new addition to the campaign, Choppies introduced a Marathon Customer prize, aimed at recognising the most loyal shopper, one who made the highest number of qualifying purchases throughout the competition period. As has become standard practice, the draw was conducted digitally, a system Choppies has used consistently for the past two years to ensure transparency and credibility. The process was overseen by independent auditors from Grant

Thornton, further reinforcing the integrity of the draw. Speaking at the event, Choppies Group Chief Executive Officer Ramachandran Ottapathu said the Big Birthday Bonanza was introduced more than two decades ago with a clear purpose: to make a real and lasting difference in the lives of ordinary Batswana. He said the choice of prizes such as vehicles and homes was deliberate, noting that these rewards have the power to transform livelihoods. Ottapathu shared a personal encounter with a previous grand prize winner, who used his winnings to start a small business and now positively contributes to his community, an outcome that, he said, reflects the true spirit of the promotion. He also expressed gratitude to Choppies' suppliers, staff, marketing teams and media partners, emphasising that the success of the Bonanza is built on strong partnerships and community support. Ottapathu noted the overwhelming response from the public, saying the promotion continues to generate widespread excitement and a strong sense of community ownership. "This promotion belongs to the customers," he said, adding that Choppies remains nothing without the continued support of the communities it serves. The Grand prize winner for the 2025 Choppies Big Birthday Bonanza is Montisetsi Lekote, who walked away with a fully furnished two-bedroom house in Block 6, Gaborone. The house comes fully furnished by Furnmart Furniture and includes one year of fully

sponsored home security provided by Viper Security, further enhancing the value of the grand prize. Choppies Big Birthday Bonanza 2025

- GRAND PRIZE WINNER
Montisetsi Lekote - Winner of a two-bedroom house in Block 6, Gaborone

- SUZUKI SUPER CARRY WINNERS**
- Lesego Motshereganyi - Choppies, Bobonong
 - Masimba Ndagurwa - Choppies Superstore, Tlokweng
 - Kago Maokisa - Choppies, North Gate Mall
 - Kefilwe L. Haake - Choppies Superstore, Kang
 - Patrick Montsho - Choppies Superstore, Nata
 - Mary Williams - Choppies Superstore, Ramotswa
 - Cindy Keitshokile - Choppies Superstore, Serowe
 - Isakuee Mawano - Choppies Superstore, Maun
 - Tiroyaone Nkago - Choppies Superstore, Lethakeng
 - Kealeboga Rakopi - Choppies Superstore, Moshupa

- TOYOTA HILUX WINNERS**
- Peggy Mokabati - Choppies Superstore, Jwaneng
 - Golebaone Kabotho - Choppies Superstore, Nata
 - Kelebogile Masocha - Choppies Superstore, Sebina
 - Bothe Lerothodi - Choppies Game City Hyperstore



Grand Prize Winner Montisetsi Lekote



Andrei Stenin Press Photo Contest Opens

THE 12TH ANDREI STENIN International Press Photo Contest has officially opened in Moscow, with submissions now underway. The annual contest, held in memory of Andrei Stenin, a photojournalist with the Rossiya Segodnya Media Group who was killed near Donetsk in the summer of 2014, traditionally launches on his birthday, December 22.

Dmitry Kiselev, Director General of the Rossiya Segodnya International Media Group:

"For the 12th time, the Andrei Stenin Contest is preparing to open submissions, a moment that is always joyful and exciting. This year is particularly special, as we have prepared a surprise that we are confident will delight participants. We are pleased to announce a new category, Energy of Life, which will be open to photojournalists aged 34 and over. Our mission remains unchanged: to discover new names and give young photographers a strong start. At the same time, we are very interested in the work of established professionals, who help set benchmarks for the next generation. We look forward to projects from both seasoned masters and emerging authors – together, they form the diverse, vivid, and sometimes contradictory picture of contemporary photojournalism. We are proud to be part of this process."

Categories and entry terms

The competition features six categories: Top News, Sports, My Planet, Portrait, A Hero of Our Time, Top View, and the newly introduced category Energy of Life.

Entries in Top News, My Planet, and Portrait, A Hero of Our Time may be submitted as either single images or photo series. The Sports and Top View categories accept single images only.

The Energy of Life category is open to photographers aged 34 and older, while the remaining five categories are open to participants aged 18 to 33.

Professional photographers may submit applications through the competition's official website in Russian and English through February 28, 2026.

The prize fund for the 2025 competition awards 125,000 rubles for first place, 100,000 rubles for second place, and 75,000 rubles for third place in each category. The recipient of the competition's top honor, the Grand Prix, will receive 700,000 rubles. The awards ceremony for the 12th Andrei Stenin International Press Photo Contest is traditionally scheduled to take place in Moscow between September and November 2026.

A distinguished jury and notable laureates Over the years, the competition's jury has featured internationally acclaimed photographers, including Vladimir Vyatkin (Russia), Gabriele Ceconi (Italy), Sefa Karacan (Türkiye), and Juan Cañete (Argentina), among others.

The list of laureates includes world-renowned photojournalists such as Yelena Anosova (Russia), recognized for her powerful series on women in prisons; Danilo Garcia Di Meo (Italy), awarded for Letizia: The Story of an Invisible Life, documenting the life of a paralyzed girl; and Alejandro Martínez Vélez (Spain), honored for his reportage on migrants in Belgrade. In 2025, the competition's Grand Prix was awarded to Yekaterina Yakel (Russia) for her series Russian Character: Obstacle Course, which portrays war veterans who, despite injuries and trauma, continue to demonstrate courage and resilience in peaceful life.

This year's competition continues its long-standing tradition of showcasing winning works through touring exhibitions in Russia and abroad. Over the past 12 years, exhibitions featuring the competition's award-winning photographs have been presented in numerous countries, including China, South Africa, Mexico, Argentina, Uruguay, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Türkiye, Lebanon, Germany, Spain, Italy, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Egypt, and others.

Botswana's passport power surges

BOTSWANA'S PASSPORT HAS RISEN TO the top, surpassing its southern African neighbours Namibia, Lesotho, eSwatini and Malawi in the 2026 Henley Passport Index rankings. With a visa-free score of 178, Botswana is significantly ahead of Namibia, Lesotho, eSwatini and Malawi, who each have fewer destinations accessible without a visa. This ranking highlights the effectiveness of Botswana's diplomatic ties, regional mobility agreements and visa exemption policies, which provide more access to global destinations compared to its peers. Let's break down the key factors contributing to Botswana's passport power.

Botswana's Visa-Free Access: A Gateway to Global Mobility

Botswana has successfully negotiated an extensive set of visa-free access agreements with countries from all continents. According to the Botswana Government and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, citizens can travel freely to 192 destinations, a feat that is largely attributed to its global partnerships and bilateral visa-waiver treaties. In stark contrast, Lesotho, Malawi, eSwatini and Namibia each have fewer visa-free destinations. This broad global network is one of the primary reasons why Botswana has a higher ranking in the Henley Passport Index compared to its neighbours.

Botswana's diplomatic engagement has led to a favorable visa-exemption list. It has formalised treaties with multiple European Union nations, including Germany, France, Italy, Spain and Sweden, as well as with major powers like the United States and the United Kingdom. These agreements, reflected in the Henley Passport Index 2026 rankings, provide Botswana passport holders with significant freedom to travel globally without needing to secure a visa in advance.

The Importance of Regional Mobility Agreements

Botswana's position in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has also played a crucial role in boosting its passport power. As a member of SADC, Botswana has entered into mutual visa-free agreements with many of its southern African neighbours, including Namibia, Lesotho and eSwatini. However, Botswana stands out for its deep regional cooperation and the broad scope of its agreements, which allow not only visa-free travel but also identity-card usage for cross-border travel in certain cases, enhancing the



convenience of movement.

In February 2023, Botswana and Namibia reached a landmark agreement that allows citizens of both countries to travel using only their national ID cards rather than passports. This agreement reflects the deep regional ties and mutual trust between these two nations, but it also highlights the comprehensive mobility strategies that Botswana has in place. Compared to Lesotho, eSwatini and Malawi, whose visa arrangements remain relatively limited, Botswana's leadership in these regional pacts is a significant factor driving its higher visa-free score.

Diplomatic Engagement and International Relations: A Key Growth Driver

Botswana's diplomatic approach goes beyond the regional scope and includes expanding its visa-exemption network through engagement with global players. Its ties with North America, Asia and the European Union have paved the way for its strong position in the Henley Passport Index 2026. Countries such as Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom have consistently granted Botswana passport holders visa-free access, something that has bolstered the country's international standing.

Botswana's foreign policy emphasises collaboration and it actively

engages with the African Union (AU), Commonwealth and other multilateral bodies to improve the visa freedom of its citizens.

As a result, the country has managed to secure visa-free access to countries in Europe, Asia and the Americas, contributing to its remarkable global mobility score, a feat its immediate neighbours, such as Namibia, Lesotho, Malawi and eSwatini, struggle to replicate. Botswana's continued participation in international agreements reflects its growing reputation as a diplomatic force.

How Botswana's Passport Compares with Namibia, Lesotho, eSwatini and Malawi

When examining the official visa-exemption agreements published by the respective governments, Botswana's passport power shines even more.

According to official data from Botswana's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Namibia, Lesotho, eSwatini and Malawi offer fewer visa-free and visa-on-arrival destinations for their citizens than Botswana does. Countries like Malawi and Lesotho have limited agreements with European and North American nations, reflecting their regional focus rather than a broad international strategy.

While eSwatini and Lesotho maintain agreements with southern African countries, they do not have comprehensive global agreements like Botswana. Namibia,

though close to Botswana in terms of visa arrangements, has faced recent visa restrictions for some countries like the United States and the United Kingdom.

Botswana has managed to keep its visa-free network broader by maintaining strong ties with major international destinations.

This combination of global mobility agreements, regional cooperation and economic diplomacy puts Botswana far ahead of its neighbours in the global visa mobility index.

The Economic and Policy Drivers Behind Botswana's Success

The Botswana government's policies also have a substantial impact on its passport ranking. Economic diplomacy has played a critical role in fostering international relationships and increasing Botswana's global standing. By maintaining an open economy and focusing on foreign investment, Botswana has built strong trade and diplomatic relationships that allow it to engage in mutually beneficial visa-exemption agreements.

As a stable, resource-rich nation with an attractive investment climate, Botswana has leveraged its economic position to engage in a range of bilateral and multilateral agreements. These agreements not only boost its tourism and trade sectors but also contribute to the growing mobility of its citizens. Policies aimed at economic diversification, infrastructure development and political stability have

improved the country's position on the Henley Passport Index, as citizens benefit from an increasingly global passport with wider access to international markets.

Botswana's relationship with the global community, built on strong economic and political foundations, makes it stand out. This approach contrasts sharply with countries like Lesotho, Malawi and eSwatini, whose economic policies may not always align with broader visa-exemption goals. These nations, while stable, face economic constraints that hinder the development of broad international relationships.

Why Botswana's Passport Power is Set to Rise Further

Looking ahead, Botswana's diplomatic efforts are likely to continue boosting its passport mobility. With the continued expansion of regional trade agreements and visa liberalisation talks with countries across Africa and beyond, Botswana is positioning itself as a leader in global mobility. As the country strengthens its ties with both regional and global powers, its visa-free access is expected to grow even further.

As Botswana continues to lead in the SADC region and deepen its diplomatic relationships, it will likely continue to climb the ranks, making it a top contender in the global passport mobility race. The country's focus on economic diversification and international partnerships ensures that its passport will remain powerful and globally competitive.

The Driving Forces Behind Botswana's Success

Botswana's Henley Passport Index ranking of 178 visa-free destinations is a direct result of its strategic diplomatic efforts, regional agreements and expanding international ties. Its broader visa-free access, compared to neighbouring countries like Namibia, Lesotho, eSwatini and Malawi, is a testament to its effective foreign policy, economic diplomacy and regional leadership.

With continued growth in its international relationships and a focus on regional mobility agreements, Botswana has positioned itself ahead of its neighbours on the global mobility index. This strategic approach ensures that Botswana's passport will remain one of the most powerful in southern Africa for years to come, benefiting both its citizens and its economy. [travelandtourworld.com]

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Sport

Letsile dares Americans

BAKWADI LEKOPANE & KITSO RAMONO

AS THE 2026 WORLD Athletics Relays draw close, Olympic Gold Medalist, Letsile Tebogo has thrown a challenge to the United States team. Posting on social media X, Tebogo wrote "we don't need the hype when we have the heart. Tell the US to bring their fastest...they are still going to be looking at our back numbers."

The 2026 World Relays will be held in Gaborone, Botswana on May 2 and 3.

Teams Coaches Botswana Athletics Association (BAA) has also announced the appointment of Team Managers and Coaches who will lead national teams at the upcoming World Athletics Relays. They have been selected from respective BAA affiliates in recognition of their experience, competence, and continued contribution to the development of athletics in Botswana.

World Relays Gaborone 26 2nd - 3rd May 2026

Team Manager: Moshe Gochela
Assistant Managers: Thabo Giddie, Mmoni Molokwe
Head Coach: Mogomotsi Otsetsewe

Assistant Coaches: Kebonyemodisa Dose Mosimanyane, Justice Dipeba, Chilume Ntshwarang

75% Ready, patriotism first With just over three months to go before the World Athletics Relays Gaborone 26, Botswana is on track to host the first-ever event in Africa. Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Moses Bantsi confirmed that preparations are 75% complete, with final touches on the National Stadium, including track installation and seat numbering, ongoing.

But Bantsi stressed that the event is about more than facilities. In a message directed at both the media and the public, he urged patriotism to guide reporting and public discourse.

"Constructive criticism is welcome. But if we constantly highlight the negatives and ignore the good, who will come to Botswana? We must tell our own story and present our country proudly," he said.

75% Ready: WAR 26 CEO preaches patriotism over criticism



Botswana's sprint sensation, Letsile Tebogo

Bantsi warned that persistent negative coverage could discourage athletics enthusiasts, tourists, and investors, who play a crucial role in supporting local businesses and ensuring the success of the relays. "If people are scared away by bad reports, the event could fail, and that would be a loss for Botswana, our economy, and our global reputation," he said.

Drawing lessons from his experience organizing events in Malawi, where media coverage often painted a different picture from reality which was bad, Bantsi said the relays represent an opportunity to showcase Botswana's growth, talent, and potential to the world. "Patriotism helps our nation grow and promotes our country internationally," he explained.

Beyond national pride, the relays are expected to boost sports tourism and inspire young athletes. "We want visitors to know Botswana, our athletes, and our achievements. Hosting this successfully demonstrates our pride, capability, and vision for the future," Bantsi added.

Ntunga in historic breakthrough



Raguin

N TUNGAMILI RAGUIN HAS qualified for the main draw of the Australian Junior Open, becoming the first Motswana in history to achieve that milestone.

A composed and dominant performance in the final round confirms his place on one of tennis' biggest stages.

This is a landmark moment for Botswana Tennis and powerful statement about the rise of our next generation on the world stage.

Remarkable run Raguin concluded an outstanding debut at ITF J300 Traralgon after a hard fought three hours semifinals battle on Tuesday, narrowly losing 6-4, 3-6, 4-6 to Kuan-Shou Chen of Chinese Taipei.

At 16 years old, Raguin reached the semifinals of his first ITF J300, defeating opponents from Australia, The United States of America, France and Spain including players ranked No.29, No.23 and No.2 in the world. This performance marks a major milestone for his development and proud moment for Botswana Tennis.

An exceptional tournament that highlights resilience, maturity and strong potential at the highest junior level.

Source: Botswana Tennis Association



Township Rollers was scheduled to play city rivals Gaborone United on Sartuday at Royal Aria Stadium in Tlokweng

Sebele anchors World Relays team

AS BOTSWANA PREPARES TO welcome the world for the 2026 World Athletics Relays, all eyes are on the undisputed fastest woman in the nation's history, Tsaone Sebele.

Sebele, who holds the official National Record of 11.25 seconds, is set to anchor the women's 4x100m relay pool. Her record remains the gold standard for legal, wind-certified speed in Botswana, making her the tactical heartbeat of the national

sprint program. As the most senior member of the squad, Sebele's role is as much about mentorship as it is about elite pace. Alongside fellow veteran Leungo Matlhaku, she will provide the leadership and "big-game" composure needed to guide a talented, youthful team. Together, they aim to lead Botswana to glory on home soil this May, proving that the nation's sprint legacy is in the most capable of hands.



Sebele holds the official National Record of 11.25 seconds

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