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Not yet over... DCEC pursues Mzwini



- Insists Judge erred, search warrants were lawful
- Files appeal against Nyamadzabo's judgment
- Mzwini declines to comment on the case

BAKANG TIRO
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DIRECTORATE ON Corruption and Economic Crime (DCEC) is itching for war in its legal confrontation with former cabinet minister Dr Kefentse Mzwini, with DCEC appealing the judgment delivered by Judge President Barnabas Nyamadzabo that declared DCEC searches and seizures of Mzwini assets unlawful.

Mzwini last week secured important back-to-back

victories against DCEC and the Directorate of Public Prosecutions (DPP) with Judges Nyamadzabo and Oteng Motlhala ruling that Mzwini be granted access to some of his assets.

Responding to The Patriot on Sunday enquiries, DCEC Public Relations Officer, Otshopheng Otladising said they have noted judgment delivered by Justice Nyamadzabo on the 28th January and wish to state that they do not agree with it. She said in this regard, DCEC on 30th January 2026 filed an appeal with the Court of Appeal (CoA).

She said it is worth noting that the judgment by Nyamadzabo was arrived at without considering the Answering Affidavit of DCEC as the respondent in the matter, as such was filed outside the stipulated time frames set by the consent order by the two parties.

Otladising said with the

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UDC faction emerges

- UDC backbenchers, Madibelathopho gang up
- Faction met in Mahalapye, map way forward - claim
- Demand that UDC govt fire 'BDP' top civil servants

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CRACKS CONTINUE TO widen in the ruling Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC), after a new powerful faction known as the Wailers emerged behind the scenes, backed by UDC backbenchers in Parliament, The Patriot on Sunday has learnt.

The faction, which comprises of Madibelathopho cadres are demanding that the UDC administration led by President Duma Boko meet their demands, which include expelling some senior government officials. Information gathered by this publication suggests that the leaders of the emerging faction want UDC government to



Boko

implement cadre deployment of comrades who are considered to be now forgotten.

Sources say the faction has financial backing of some disgruntled UDC Members of Parliament (MPs) who are targeting radical changes within the government, with the MPs also feeling sidelined by UDC. It is said the ring leaders of the faction met recently in Mahalapye to map a way forward and recruit more members into the group including unhappy individuals from UDC contracting parties being the Botswana National Front (BNF), Alliance for Progressives (AP) and the Botswana Peoples Party (BPP).

The group is expected to work hand in hand with Madibelathopho to hold

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Union rivalry revived

'Amalgamated union, Motshwarakgole are selfish, disrespectful' -DPSM

- Motsamai sues Motshwarakgole, Amalgamated Union for defamation
- Amalgamated Union sue DPSM over PSBC Secretary appointment



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THE DIRECTOR IN THE Directorate of Public Service Management (DPSM) -Gaone Macholo has accused the National Amalgamated Union leaders of being selfish, after they dragged government to court challenging the appointment

of former Botswana Public Employees Union (BOPEU) President -Andrew Motsamai as the Secretary for the Public Service Bargaining Council (PSBC).

Earlier this week, National Amalgamated Union (commonly known as Manual Workers Union) filed an urgent court application

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Boko reflects on Dubai trip



President Boko participating in a high-level roundtable on Emerging Economies

DUMA GIDEON BOKO

AS THE WORLD Government Summit 2026 comes to a close, it was an honour to meet His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Abu Dhabi, during a dedicated session with African Heads of State, where we exchanged views on leadership,

governance, and Africa's place in a rapidly changing global order. I also took part in a high-level roundtable on Emerging Economies, engaging fellow leaders and policymakers on the real challenges facing developing nations, from access to capital and global financing constraints to institutional reform and inclusive growth. In my addresses, I

emphasized a principle that remains central to our transformation agenda: economic growth without institutional strength is impossible. Markets cannot function in weak systems. Investment avoids uncertainty. Development cannot be sustained without strong institutions, the rule of law, accountability, and capable

governance structures. Engagements such as the World Government Summit are critical because they bring leaders together to move beyond theory into action, to exchange ideas, shape global thinking, build strategic partnerships, and ensure that Botswana's development is anchored on strong institutions that deliver for our people and protect the future.

Tsogwane's idea for reforms

FORMER VICE PRESIDENT and Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) Chairman, Slumber Tsogwane has taken to social media like fish to water, often lacing posts on his Facebook page with wit, humour and inspiring thought leadership. In a Question & Answer session he hosted on the page on Friday morning, one commentator asked Tsogwane: "If given another opportunity, what is that one major thing (or 2) that you realize you didn't do well before

and given another opportunity you would do different?" Tsogwane replied: "If given another opportunity, I would prioritise two things; rebuilding genuine listening mechanisms with citizens and strengthening internal democracy and accountability within the party so that leadership reflects merit, performance, and service, not proximity to power. I am speaking for myself" Presumably the party he refers to is the opposition Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), which he belongs to.



Tsogwane

BIUST closed due to student strike

THE BOTSWANA International University of Science and Technology (BIUST) informs the public that the University has been temporarily closed following unlawful and violent student demonstrations that began on Tuesday, 3 February 2026.

The decision to close the institution was taken based on the directive of the Honourable Minister of Higher Education, Mr. Prince Maele in accordance with the BIUST Act CAP 57:05 Section 10(3), after a series of disruptive actions by a group of students. These actions included barricading access roads and forcefully removing fellow students from lecture rooms, resulting in a significant disruption to normal teaching and learning activities.



BIUST temporarily closed Insert/ Higher Education Minister ,Prince Maele



University management, working in collaboration with law enforcement agencies, made concerted efforts to restore order and ensure the continued operation of the institution. However, these efforts did not yield the desired outcome.

Consequently, the Ministry of Higher Education was engaged to provide guidance and support, culminating in the decision to temporarily close the University in the interest of safety and stability. Stakeholders are hereby

advised that this closure affects only teaching and learning activities. Other University services remain operational. Further updates regarding the reopening of the institution will be communicated in due course.

BIUST launches first-ever STEAM centre

THE BOTSWANA International University of Science and Technology (BIUST) will officially launch the BIUST STEAM Centre on 12 February 2026 at the University campus. This milestone marks the first initiative of its kind in Botswana and represents a significant step in strengthening national science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) education in line with the country's development aspirations.

The Centre has been established in partnership with STEMPower Incorporated, a United States-based

organisation founded by the Gelfand Family Charitable Trust, with over a decade of experience advancing hands-on STEM education across Africa. STEMPower's programmes focus on practical, laboratory-based learning at secondary and pre-university levels, promoting inclusivity and inspiring young people from diverse backgrounds to pursue STEM-related studies and careers.

The BIUST STEAM Centre is a dedicated learning facility that will provide free, age-appropriate, hands-on engineering and science laboratory experiences to local students who participate voluntarily. Under the guidance of trained laboratory mentors,

learners will engage directly with modern scientific and engineering equipment in a safe and supportive environment. A core objective of the initiative is to address "application bias" by enabling learners to move beyond theory and simulations to real laboratory practice.

As a STEM-based university, BIUST views the Centre as a strategic extension of its national mandate to build technical and engineering capacity. Practical STEM skills are essential for strengthening Botswana's production value chain, reducing reliance on imports, and supporting economic diversification. Locating the Centre within a university setting strengthens

ties between higher education and the community, ensures academic oversight, and supports long-term sustainability. The Centre is equipped with a state-of-the-art virtual computer laboratory with 30 desktop access points, as well as a fully equipped electronics laboratory, enhancing experiential learning in digital systems, electronics, and emerging technologies. As part of a growing network of over 90 STEAM Centres across sub-Saharan Africa, the BIUST STEAM Centre positions Botswana within a wider continental effort to invest in human capital, innovation, and the next generation of scientists and engineers.

World Bank Supports a Stronger, Resilient Health System

THE WORLD BANK'S Board of Executive Directors approved the Botswana Health Emergency Preparedness, Response and Resilience (HEPRR) Project, which will support the strengthening of the country's ability to withstand future pandemics, climate-related illnesses, and everyday health challenges. The project will help strengthen critical medicine supplies, accelerate detection of disease outbreaks, and make life-saving health data available in real time.

The project comes at a critical moment as Botswana faces overlapping threats from severe droughts,

floods, and vulnerabilities exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. These shocks disrupt essential health services and risk reversing hard-won gains in human capital. The State of Public Health Emergency declared in August 2025, due to nationwide medicine shortages, further underscores the urgency of this investment.

"On behalf of the people of Botswana, we welcome this timely partnership with the World Bank," said Dr. Stephen Modise, Minister of Health for Botswana. "This project responds directly

to our urgent national priorities, from the state of public health emergency we declared to the systemic vulnerabilities revealed by the pandemic and climate shocks. It is not just a financial investment; it is a strategic commitment to our shared vision of a resilient, data-driven health system that leaves no Motswana behind."

The project will provide support of \$43 million (\$40 million loan and \$3 million grant) towards transformative investments with a strong focus on efficiency, equity, and

resilience. It will advance Botswana's digital transformation by rolling out an electronic Logistics Management Information System (eLMS) to track medical supplies in real time from central warehouses to remote health posts, helping to prevent shortages and ensure uninterrupted access to essential medicines. A new climate-resilient National Drug Quality Control Laboratory will be established to safeguard the quality and safety of all medicines, strengthening public trust and treatment outcomes.

"This project goes beyond crisis response. It is about building a more efficient, equitable health system that delivers quality care every day and withstands emergencies," said Satu Kahkonen, World Bank Country Director for Botswana. "It is a strategic investment for Botswana and a vital step toward long-term resilience and sustainable growth."

The project will also enhance disease surveillance and response capacity. Investments in the National Public Health Laboratory will enable faster and more accurate detection of infectious disease threats, while national and district Rapid Response Teams will be trained and deployed to respond swiftly to emerging health risks. The project will actively promote gender equality by supporting the inclusion of more women in leadership roles within emergency response structures. The HEPRR Project will be implemented by the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Botswana Medicines Regulatory Authority over a five-year period.

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/botswana>



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Prospective bidders are informed that Botswana Bureau of Standards has resolved to cancel the above - cited tender. The decision was made pursuant to Regulation 66:4 (f) of the Public Procurement Regulations of 2023.

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M. Moswang

For /Managing Director

Elephant Society slams trophy hunting

SOLOMON TJINYEKA
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'We are not hyenas or dogs to be fed elephant meat while foreigners reap millions'

CONSERVATIONISTS, THE Elephant Protection Society (EPS), have intensified objection to trophy hunting in Botswana, warning that it is aggravating human-wildlife conflicts and does not deliver meaningful benefits to communities. The organisation has recently made headlines for openly challenging trophy hunting operations in the northern parts of the country, particularly in wildlife concessions surrounding Maun.

Speaking on the ongoing hunting activities in the NG35 concession, Nawa said trophy hunting has negatively altered the natural behaviour of wild animals, making them more aggressive and unpredictable around human settlements. According to Nawa, these

behavioural changes have contributed to a rise in dangerous encounters between people and wildlife. He cited a tragic case from Shokomoka settlement, which lies along a major elephant corridor.

"In Shokomoka, a 12-year-old boy was attacked and injured by a buffalo. Fortunately, he survived," Nawa said. "But three months later, his mother was attacked and killed by an elephant in the same area. That is very sad indeed."

Nawa said EPS investigations indicate that the attacks may be linked to trophy hunting activities in the area. He explained that animals that are frequently pursued or injured during hunts tend to become aggressive, stressed, and less tolerant of human presence.

"These animals are encouraged and disturbed by trophy hunters, and over time their behaviour changes," he said. "The result is increased danger for people who live close to wildlife corridors."



Nawa

The EPS Director further argued that trophy hunting has never brought tangible development to communities such as Shokomoka. Instead, he said residents are often given elephant meat after successful hunts, while hunting companies earn millions of pula from foreign clients. "We are not hyenas or dogs to be fed with elephant meat while foreigners reap millions from our natural resources," Nawa said. "This is not development. It is exploitation."

Nawa maintained that the promised economic benefits of trophy hunting have failed to materialise for most rural communities. He said jobs created by the hunting industry are limited, seasonal, and largely benefit a few individuals, while the risks of living with dangerous wildlife are borne by entire villages.

As an alternative, EPS is advocating for the development of photographic tourism in wildlife-rich areas such as

NG35. Nawa said photographic tourism offers long-term and sustainable benefits without encouraging violence against animals.

He suggested that government and conservation partners could invest in drilling boreholes and establishing community-owned campsites, which would attract tourists while providing permanent employment opportunities for local residents. "Photographic tourism creates direct jobs, skills development, and dignity for communities," Nawa said. "It allows people to benefit from wildlife without bloodshed and without increasing conflict."

Nawa stressed that Botswana's conservation model should prioritise coexistence between people and wildlife, rather than practices that place communities at risk.

He called on authorities to reconsider the role of trophy hunting and to engage communities in conservation approaches that promote safety, sustainability, and shared economic benefits.

UDC faction emerges

FROM PAGE 1

government accountable. "The faction is taking shape and will put forward its demands to the UDC leadership. Deployment of BDP and BCP members into government is one of issues that are being protested. Also, MPs backing group are also equally frustrated and feel purged from government affairs by Boko's trustees," a source said.

It is said the appointment of former Mogoditshane MP Sedirwa Kgoroba, BCP member as ambassador to Mozambique is one notable move that is annoying UDC comrades. Before his appointment, Kgoroba was one of the most vocal critics of UDC government on social media.

Early unrest over missing cadre deployment opportunity began soon after the UDC formed government with members from AP and BNF argue that the nomination of councilors has failed to prioritize loyal party cadres who had invested years in building the coalition. UDC members protested that some seats were allocated to individuals coming from political parties outside the UDC such as Botswana Patriotic Front (BPF) and BCP.

Cadre deployment

In an interview last week, UDC Executive Secretary Dr Patrick Molutsi said the UDC is against cadre deployment, noting that several UDC members have called on the government to fire senior civil servants appointed during BDP era.

He said the UDC is focused

on nation building and that requires all Batswana to be on board regardless of their political affiliation.

Dr Molutsi said UDC is committed to upholding high standards of governance hence it's stance on cadre deployment, observing that some UDC members are pushing for it. According to him, cadre deployment has negative consequences citing that it has polarized nations such as South Africa, Angola and Zimbabwe amongst others.

Also, Boko has reiterated that the UDC would not adopt cadre deployment to reward its members with government positions but rather chooses meritocracy. He has publicly said some party members have approached him seeking favours, but he will not entertain calls for cadre deployment.

Last week during a Ntlo ya Dikgosi session, former President Ian Khama also criticized the UDC government saying they are still holding onto people from the past BDP administration, referring in particular to Director General of the Directorate of Intelligence and Security Services (DISS), Peter Magosi.

He said there can be no way UDC governs with the old abusers, adding that in the previous BDP regime there was massive abuse of office, violating the rule of law, gross incompetence and greed. "And some of the perpetrators of all these are still employed under the new Botswana UDC government," said Khama in an interview last week with this publication.

Navigating cross culture marriages

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MARRIAGE IS A UNION of two beings, a merging of lives, and often a blend of culture and tradition from two families. In cross culture marriages, both individuals are expected to embrace differences to find harmony in the blend of heritage.

Malebogo Jakalasi a young modern Motswana woman who married into the Zezuru culture five years ago shares her experiences, unexpected culture shock and how she navigates merged traditions and finding unity in diversity.

In an interview, Jakalasi noted that she grew up in a family where she was allowed to dress however she likes, but when she married into the zezuru community, she was expected to dress more conservatively. She further describes that as a zezuru wife, she wears white long dresses covers her head and shoulders, and during weddings and funerals she is

expected to also have a wrap over her long dress from the waist down.

She further said her biggest culture shock that she only learnt of after marriage is that during funerals, those that follow tradition exclusively do not use services of a mortuary when a family member dies; they are kept in a room at home, on a pile of river sand for two days, and on the day of the funeral, a home-made coffin carries the deceased in a van to their final resting place.

Though she has embraced being a zezuru wife wholeheartedly, Jakalasi admits she has a zezuru persona and her original persona. In her everyday life away from her in-laws, Jakalasi dresses how she wants and does not wear a head wrap.

Asked how she felt the first time she was expected to lead a big task as a zezuru wife, Jakalasi said last year she was tasked with planning her sister-in-law's wedding, and she echoed that "It was overwhelming, I felt like the

responsibility was given was too much. As a zezuru wife, when there is a wedding within the family you carry the responsibility of meals, finances and overall ensure that everything runs smoothly. It was both overwhelming and challenging because it was my first time being given such a huge responsibility."

In December 2014, Centre for Human Potential (chfp.com.au) published an article titled Do Cross Cultural Marriages Work? which took an in-depth assessment of cross culture marriages while offering couples ways to effectively navigate their journey. "Healthy communication practices between partners becomes critical in deciding which traditions and holidays will be acknowledged or not honored for each family and which new traditions and holidays will be celebrated as a new blended family. Cross cultural marriages can be difficult in this sense, especially when they considering spiritual or religious practices and

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Judiciary pushes for gender parity



Chief Justice Ketlogetswe

- Four women appointed to High Court bench
- Justice Jennifer Dube becomes first female Judge President

Chief Justice Ketlogetswe emphasised that the appointments form part of broader strategic reforms aimed at strengthening inclusivity within the Judiciary, clarifying that they are not intended to marginalise male legal practitioners but to promote fair representation.

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THE JUDICIARY HAS taken a significant step towards gender parity with the appointment of four women to the High Court, marking a major milestone in efforts to promote equitable access to positions of power and influence.

Speaking at the official opening of the Legal Year 2026 on 3 January, Chief Justice Gaolapelwe Ketlogetswe said the appointments were a deliberate move to empower more women to assume leadership roles within the justice system.

"As evidenced by the recent appointments to the High Court bench, four of the eight newly appointed judges are women," said Chief Justice Ketlogetswe noting that the process was conducted through the Judicial Service Commission.

He added that the Judiciary remains committed to increasing female representation, with plans to extend the same approach to future appointments to the Court of Appeal and any other courts that may be established over time.

In a historic development, the Chief Justice also announced that Justice Jennifer Dube will be transferred to the Maun High Court, where she will serve as Judge President. Her appointment makes her the first woman in the country to hold the position of Judge President.

The gender bias of mourning in Botswana

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IN BOTSWANA, WHEN DEATH befalls the whole community cries, but in reality women bear the weight of bereavement. Botswana's mourning rituals perpetuate a gender bias that gives women the bulk of emotional labour and ritual responsibilities.

A staunch advocate for social justice and human rights, and former court president Ludo Mosojane spoke to this publication about the double standards perpetuated by local mourning practices. She however first reiterated that Botswana is emerging from male dominated social patterns which imposed a system that disadvantaged women and the girl child, highlighting that over the years Botswana society experienced a great shift in terms of a number of traditional practices.

"The shift was driven by quite a number of factors among them the enlightenment influenced by Christian beliefs, self-awareness on the part of the younger women who have become assertive and vocal concerning their lives," she added.

Giving a brief description of the gender bias Mosojane noted that historically mourning rituals adversely affected women in many ways adding that in most cultures women are expected to lie on a mattress for

the duration of the preparation for burial and it is not so for men. She went on to add that after the burial women are expected to wear mourning garments for a certain period of time to mark her so that men may avoid her, primarily because it is believed that dating a widow could attract an illness dubbed Boswagadi, which is not the case with their male counterparts as there was never any warning about dating a widowed man.

"I have heard of cultures where a widowed woman may not give people a handshake as she may give them bad luck, she may not walk through some grazing flock of goats, sheep, and cattle as this may cause the animals to miscarry. Widowhood used to impose stigma on women. These taboos isolated mourning women and added burdens on their lives," she added.

On a positive note, Mosojane highlighted that the younger generation of women have silently empowered themselves to make choices they are comfortable with on how to handle the process of losing a loved one.

She however noted that although the majority of young women today chose not to wear mourning garments, they remain intimidated by the idea of cleansing because there is a myth that failure to go through a cleansing ritual may attract an incurable illness and many



Botswana's mourning rituals perpetuate a gender bias that gives women the bulk of emotional labour and ritual responsibilities

submit to cleansing for fear of the unknown.

Additionally Mosojane emphasized "Personally, I would like to advocate for the bereaved to be given a respectful space to mourn with dignity and freedom. A bereaved woman should not be given added burdens through harsh cultural expectations most of which have reached a sell by date."

SCIELO (scielo.org.za) South Africa published a theological study in 2022 titled Patriarchal Nature of Mourning From

An African Perspective which reads "According to Olukayode (2015:68), the travails of a widow begin immediately when her husband is declared dead; she is immediately made to go through various traditional rites, disregarding her pain and process of grieving. Africans argue that those rituals are meant to protect widows and not to harm them; however, some of these practices and beliefs are wicked and dehumanize the very essence of their womanhood.

During this period, the

woman is isolated from the outside world and her mobile phone is immediately given to a close relative who will answer her mobile phone on her behalf"

The study further goes to note that "The woman is considered as being unclean after the death of her husband. Women who have had their partners pass away are victimized in most African cultures (Yama 2010). In the Igbo culture, a woman whose husband recently passed away is not allowed to interact with other

people. She is instructed not to speak to anyone except with other fellow widows. She is not supposed to respond even when she is greeted as she is viewed as still intricately linked to her husband's spirit. She is also not expected to leave the room where her deceased husband's body is in while funeral arrangements are made. They provide her with a stick to chase away the flies from her husband's body. The widow will stay in the room until the day of her husband's burial (Elliott 2011:9)."

Segolame Seidisa, a young woman who lost a child over a year ago spoke about her experience in mourning practices as a Motswana woman. She noted that when she first left the hospital, her partner was instructed not to meet with her as it is considered a bad omen to see the mother of your child after she has lost a child. Seidisa further noted that due to her Seyei culture, she was forced to stay in confinement for a month, which was not the case for her partner.

"Even if he was in the next room, we were not allowed to meet; we spoke over the phone only. I stayed indoors for a month, without doing anything. My mother did all the chores. I bathed three times a day to allow my body to rest and recover. After the mourning period, me and my partner were brought together by a pastor," she said.

Union rivalry revived

FROM PAGE 1

objecting to DPSM and other six public service unions endorsement and appointment of Motsamai as PSBC Secretary. Amalgamated argued that Motsamai is not fit to occupy the PSBC top post, and should be replaced by Secretary General of Botswana Sectors of Educators Trade Union (BOSETU), Tobokani Rari.

Responding to Manual Workers Union in an interview on Wednesday, DPSM Director Gaone Macholo said they will respond to the lawsuit. She said it is not a surprise that the union and its leadership would always find a reason to stall progress during collective bargaining, adding that the union is self-centered and enemy of progress.



Motsamai



Macholo

“We have been all working tirelessly including Manual Workers to ensure that the bargaining council is coming alive. There is immense progress made collectively and I regret any inconveniences at this point and time,” said Macholo optimistically.

Macholo said the employer and union parties have been engaging meaningfully on the appointment of Secretary of the PSBC but Manual Workers instead opted to pollute the progress. She said the agreed rules of appointment were that the two parties are to nominate their own candidate with DPSM opting for Motsamai as its candidate.

“The unions caucused and brought Rari’s name forward. So, the next step was that voting has to take place between the two. The rules of appointment were to go with simple majority vote and other trade unions agreed with that. However, Manual Workers objected.

Its disrespect to principle of majority,” said Macholo. Macholo said should voting reach a tie, other methods of appointment that were agreed to included interviewing of the candidates or advertisement of the position which employer doesn’t have any objection for the purposes of effective collective bargaining.

In addition, Macholo said it is unfair for Manual Workers Union to accuse DPSM of buying other trade unions who don’t support the union whenever things are not going Manual Workers way. She said Manual Workers is simply being disrespectful to the autonomy of other unions as well as disrespecting the institutional integrity of DPSM. “We don’t have any capacity or whatsoever interest to interfere on the affairs of independent trade unions. Those unions have their own wisdom and it must be respected,” said Macholo.

Dispute
Addressing the media on Monday, Deputy Chief

Executive Officer of Manual Workers Union Robert Rabasimane said there is a dispute between the employer and Manual Workers over appointment of the bargaining council Secretary General.

Rabasimane accused Macholo of manipulating the progress noting that it is in nature of Macholo to appoint people not based on merit but on personal friendships.

He said the union is not necessarily seeking an order against other public sector trade unions that are cited as respondents but the order is focused on interdicting DPSM not to appoint Motsamai.

The cited unions are BOSETU, Botswana Teachers Union (BTU), Botswana Land Boards Local Authorities and Health Workers (BLLAHWU), Botswana Public Employees Union (BOPEU), Botswana Nurses Union (BONU) and Botswana Doctors Union (BDU).

Motsamai and PSBC are also cited as respondents on the

matter. In the court papers, Manual Workers Union said it is seeking an order directing that the office of the Secretary of PSBC to be properly advertised to the general public and within the public service, in accordance with the PSBC constitution and applicable principles of fairness, transparency and merit based selection etc.

Motsamai vs. Motshwarakgole

Meanwhile, Mtsamai instituted a legal action against veteran Manual Workers unionist Johnson Motshwarakgole over what he described as defamatory while questioning his integrity.

Motsamai through his attorneys from Otto Itumeleng Law firm is demanding public retraction from Motshwarakgole or failure to do so will result in a matter being pursued before the courts of law.

However, Matchwarakgole fired back through his attorneys from Charles Colombia Consultancy noting that he wouldn’t retract alleged defamatory statements against Mtsamai.

Motshwarakgole has stated that Mtsamai lacks integrity in many facets as he was implicated in financial misappropriation worth P15 million that was supposed to be paid to one minister by BOPEU and BOPEU NEC at the time blocked the deal.

He also said Mtsamai backstabbed workers during the 2011 public service strike as Mtsamai agreed to three percent salary hike during the Ian Khama Botswana Democratic Party (BDP)’s administration then.

Trophy hunting debate rages on

SOLOMON TJINYEKA
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THE 2026 TROPHY hunting quota released by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) has sparked heated debate among conservation groups, animal rights activists, and trophy hunting advocates in Botswana and abroad.

According to official DWNP statistics, the government has issued a quota of 415 elephants for hunting in 2026, up from 410 elephants in 2025. The continued increase has drawn criticism from conservation organisations concerned about long-term sustainability and genetic impacts on elephant populations.

Botswana reintroduced trophy hunting in 2022 after an almost eight-year moratorium between 2014 and 2021. Since its return, elephant hunting quotas have steadily increased from 294 elephants in 2022, 356 in 2023, 400 in 2024, 410 in 2025, and now 415 in 2026.

Conservation concerns

The latest increase comes despite a comprehensive scientific assessment published in late 2025 by conservation organisation Elephant Without Borders (EWB). The report estimates Botswana’s elephant population at approximately 140,000 animals, with 94 percent concentrated in northern Botswana, a population that EWB says has remained largely stable since around 2010.

EWB’s modelling indicates that the current hunting rate of about 0.3 percent of the national population exceeds what the population can sustainably absorb when future ecological risks are considered. The organisation recommends limiting elephant hunting to 0.2 percent annually, roughly 280 elephants per year to preserve population resilience, prevent the depletion of mature bulls, and safeguard genetic diversity and social structures.

Expert defends government

However, Professor Joseph Mbaiwa of the Okavango



Professor Joseph Mbaiwa, Okavango Research Institute (ORI)

Research Institute (ORI) has defended the government’s decision to increase the quota.

Mbaiwa said Botswana has an abundance of elephants and communities should benefit from the country’s natural resources. He noted that Botswana follows CITES recommendations, which allow the hunting of up to 400 elephants annually, arguing that an increase of 15 animals does not pose a threat given the size of the population.

He further stated that Botswana’s Elephant Management Plan indicates the country could sustainably hunt close to 700 elephants per year without negatively affecting population growth.

Mbaiwa dismissed EWB’s concerns, arguing that elephant populations in Botswana continue to grow at an estimated 7.2 percent annually, while mortality rates remain low. He added that Botswana’s elephant population has increased from around 50,000 in the early 1990s to about 140,000 today, with elephants increasingly expanding into areas such as Kweneng, Kgalagadi, and Mmadinare.

Regarding concerns about the depletion of mature bulls and genetic diversity, Mbaiwa said older bulls are often solitary and less reproductively active, arguing that hunting them allows the country to benefit economically rather than losing them to natural deaths. He also said multiple genetic studies have shown no evidence that

current hunting levels threaten elephant populations.

Mbaiwa further called on government to explore value-addition, including the establishment of elephant meat processing facilities in areas such as Kasane or Maun, to allow broader community benefits.

Lion hunting hullabaloo also raised concerns over the reintroduction of lion trophy hunting after a decade-long ban imposed in 2014 due to declining lion populations.

The 2026 quota allows the hunting of nine lions, a move critics say lacks transparency, particularly in the absence of publicly released, independent population assessments and pride structure analyses.

Mbaiwa, however, said available data indicates Botswana has a population of over 5,000 lions, describing it as relatively healthy. He argued that harvesting fewer than 100 lions annually would not threaten population viability, provided hunting occurs in clearly identified problem areas. He nonetheless urged DWNP to improve transparency by issuing public statements and engaging stakeholders through scientific dialogue, warning that silence fuels suspicion.

Human wildlife conflict Mbaiwa also expressed concern over continued retaliatory killings of lions by farmers, especially through poisoning, which he said affects non-target species such as

vultures. He called for stricter enforcement, including fines and jail terms for offenders.

He emphasised that human-wildlife conflict is unavoidable in Botswana but must be managed through mitigation measures such as early warning systems, improved monitoring, adequate resources, and better land-use planning.

“There is a need to promote coexistence. We will never eliminate human-wildlife conflict, but we can manage it,” he said.

Community benefits

Mbaiwa further stressed that communities must directly benefit from trophy hunting, citing cases such as NG35, where special hunting quotas were issued without sufficient community involvement. He argued that communities should be empowered to appoint hunters and share in the benefits, rather than decisions being imposed from outside.

On tourism land-use planning, Mbaiwa said photographic tourism should remain dominant in prime areas such as national parks and the inner Okavango Delta, while trophy hunting should be confined to peripheral areas, a system he said allows both models to coexist.

DCEC pursues Mzwini



Mzwini

FROM PAGE 1
court having disregarded what was proffered as a response to the allegations made by applicants (Mzwini), only one side of the story was canvassed before courts. She said the DCEC therefore is adamant that they legally searched and seized all the properties mentioned in the case.

“To set the record straight, we wish to highlight that DCEC obtained a search warrant to search and seize properties connected to the offences it is investigating against the Mzwini. Such search and seizure warrants were obtained legally and executed in terms of the law,” said Otaadisang.

Also, the Attorney General Chambers (AG) confirmed in a public issued statement that the government has formally noted an appeal challenging Nyamadzabo’s ruling that declared passport flagging unlawful, interdicted warrantless searches and ordered the return of seized property.

The Attorney General said it has since carefully considered the reasoned ruling delivered by the Honourable Court,” the statement reads before making it clear that the State is not backing down.

Dr Mzwini on Thursday declined to comment on the appeal decisions by the state.



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6 months	1.50-1.50%	1.50-1.51%	500
12 months	3.25-4.00%	3.25-4.31%	500
24 months	4.00-4.75%	4.00-4.82%	500
Over 24 months	4.25-5.00%	4.25-5.08%	500
USD	(Lowest-Highest)	(Lowest-Highest)	(USD)
3 months Fixed Deposit	0.00-0.25%	0.00-0.26%	No Minimum Balance
6 months	0.00-0.50%	0.00-0.52%	5000
Over 12 months	0.00-0.75%	0.00-0.76%	5000
ZAR	(Lowest-Highest)	(Lowest-Highest)	(ZAR)
6 months	1.75-1.75%	1.75-1.76%	1 million
Over 12 months	2.75-2.75%	2.75-2.78%	1 million
Baroda Prime Lending Rate (BPLR) 7.51% p.a. w.e.f. 23.06.2025			
Lending Rates	Nominal Interest Rates (%)	Average Effective Interest Rates (%)	
MoPR	3.50 %	3.50%	
Baroda Prime Lending Rate	7.51 %	7.51%	
Mortgage Facility	7.51-18.26%	11.39%	
Overdraft Facility (Revolving Credit Lines)	7.51-18.51%	10.54%	
Credit Card	NA	NA	
Lease Loans	NA	NA	
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Govt advised to modernise energy policies

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

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

A number of major industrial players are exploring establishing central solar generation hubs designed to support several of their operations across the country.

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

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

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

For investors and project developers, this ambiguity carries practical implications. Preliminary insights from renewable energy companies suggest that a significant pipeline of solar projects may be slowed by uncertainty around future tariff structures and transmission rules.

Without a defined formula for determining transmission fees, developers struggle to model the long-term economic viability of large solar installations. In many global markets, the cost of transporting privately generated electricity is calculated using a standard fee per megawatt hour multiplied by the amount of power transmitted. Botswana has not yet established its own version of this fee. As a result, the financial assumptions that typically underpin such projects remain fluid, making it difficult for companies to commit capital with confidence.

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

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

"The country needs one decisive legal clarification: that moving self-generated electricity across multiple company sites qualifies as self-use, not resale. With that



single ruling, developers would only require a generation licence and a wheeling agreement. It removes the core regulatory uncertainty and immediately unlocks investment, financing, and large-scale private solar deployment," he says.

He argues that establishing a wheeling framework would not only stimulate renewable energy development but also catalyse broader reforms that position the country as a regional leader in energy transition.

Regional examples show the feasibility of such an approach.

International examples demonstrate that frameworks enabling renewable energy transmission do not weaken national utilities; they often strengthen them. In South Africa, for example, private solar generators pay connection and transmission charges that provide stable revenue streams for the grid owner while enabling investment in clean energy infrastructure.

This has unlocked billions of rand in private capital while helping to maintain and upgrade utility networks. Namibia's system similarly allows commercial solar producers to operate at scale while ensuring that Namibia's national utility retains control and earns revenues from grid usage.

"Rooftop solar has really taken off in Australia...the reason being

that the government makes it worthwhile," said Dr. Rasbash.

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

This transitional moment presents an opportunity to design a clear, forward-looking framework that supports both system security and industrial demand. Countries around the world use different approaches, ranging from sophisticated nodal pricing systems that adjust charges based on grid congestion to the simpler postage stamp model used in Mexico and parts of the United States, where a uniform transmission fee applies regardless of distance or location. A transparent structure of this nature would provide developers with predictability, reduce reliance on expensive grid electricity, and allow the national utility to recover costs associated with network usage and power losses.

The benefits of modernising Botswana's energy laws extend far beyond individual companies. Allowing renewable energy generated at one facility to be used by another could reduce strain on the national grid, improve energy security, and lower the long-term cost of doing business.

Companies able to rely on stable, clean, self-generated power would be better positioned to expand operations, create jobs, and reinvest savings into innovation and growth. Perhaps most importantly, a modern framework for renewable energy transmission would open space for independent power producers to supply additional capacity into the national system, supporting Botswana's ambition to strengthen its energy resilience.

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

energy adoption.

The path forward is clear and achievable. With new guidelines under development and growing interest across the private sector, Botswana now has the opportunity to attract investment, stabilise energy costs, and strengthen long-term energy security.

The window for reform is open, and with decisive modernization, the country can transform untapped potential into a resilient, sustainable, and economically competitive energy future powered by the sun.

A questionnaire was sent to BERA on December 4th 2025, with the subject matter Questionnaire about Electricity Wheeling. Among other things, The Patriot on Sunday sought to understand BERA's current interpretation of electricity wheeling under the existing legal framework, given that the Electricity Supply Act allows self-generation but does not clearly define whether multi-site

transmission constitutes resale, private distribution, or internal balancing, and what immediate regulatory steps are underway to close this legislative gap.

Further, we sought to understand the realistic timeline for completing the analysis, consultations, and policy updates needed to establish a formal wheeling framework, and how is BERA coordinating with the Department of Energy and BPC to ensure alignment from policy intention through to implementation.

We also wanted to understand international wheeling models or tariff methodologies which BERA was benchmarking against as it develops Botswana's framework, and what principles will guide the formulation of a fair, transparent wheeling charge, including cost-recovery for transmission, distribution, maintenance, grid management, and losses.

\$550 bln investment plan: Japan, US eye synthetic diamond production

A PLAN TO BUILD A SYNTHETIC diamond plant in the United States is a prime prospect in Japan's \$550-billion investment package, as the allies push to expand production of a material vital to chip and high-precision manufacturing, sources said.

It could be among the first batch of projects, details of which Reuters is reporting for the first time, set to be unveiled ahead of a U.S. visit by Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi planned as early as March, the two sources said.

Both declined to be identified as the matter is private. "The United States wants to accelerate domestic production of synthetic diamonds," one of the sources said. "By involving Japanese companies, Washington hopes to build a U.S.-Japan supply chain that does not rely on China."

China's recent moves to put export controls on some artificial diamonds has underscored the strategic importance of the material, most of which is now produced in China.

The synthetic diamond project involves Element Six, part of De Beers Group, the world's leading diamond company, the source added. The news comes as Japan accelerates efforts to finalise projects under the initiative agreed as part of Tokyo's deal with Washington to lower tariffs on Japanese exports.

Its investment package would include equity, loans and loan guarantees from state-owned agencies Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) and Nippon Export and Investment Insurance (NEXI).

At the same time, President Donald Trump is raising tariffs on South Korea, which it accuses of dragging its feet on adopting a similar agreement reached last year. Also likely to figure in the first

batch of projects is a large-scale power-generation project, involving Japanese industrial conglomerate Hitachi Ltd (6501.T), opens new tab, the sources said.

The deal value of the projects was not immediately known.

Japan's trade ministry declined to comment on the projects under discussion, saying it was in talks with the United States to swiftly put together the project pipeline, but nothing had been decided.

Element Six said there were no formal agreements currently in place regarding any potential projects. Hitachi said it was engaged in discussions with the Japanese and U.S. governments, but declined further comment.

The U.S. commerce department and its Japan embassy did not immediately respond to a request for comment outside business hours.

A major infrastructure project involving construction of a data centre linked to SoftBank Group (9984.T), opens new tab also remains a finalist, Reuters reported this month. One of the hardest known materials, diamond is crucial to high-precision manufacturing.

It is used for ultra-fine polishing of semiconductors, machining hard metals and ceramics in quantum devices, and dissipating heat in advanced electronic systems.

Artificial diamonds also have dual-use military applications, in turning out munitions and radar components.

Reporting by Tamiyuki Kihara and Makiko Yamazaki; Additional reporting by Nobuhiro Kubo, John Geddie and Clara Denina; Editing by Clarence Fernandez and Louise Heavens.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/japan-us-eye-synthetic-diamond-production-under-550-bln-investment-plan-2026-01->

Driving Botswana's Economic Transformation Through Digital Innovation

THIS MORNING AT AVE MARIA, during the Ministry of Communications and Innovation Strategy Retreat, the Assistant Minister, Honourable Shawn Ntshale, delivered a compelling call to action that highlighted both Botswana's proud economic legacy and the urgent need for decisive transformation.

For decades, Botswana has been recognised globally for prudent resource management, successfully leveraging diamond revenues to attain Upper Middle Income Country status. However, Honourable Ntshale stressed that past achievements alone cannot secure the nation's future.

To reach high-income status by 2036, Botswana must grow its Gross National Income (GNI) per capita at a sustained rate of 6.1 percent significantly higher than the volatile 2.9 percent average growth recorded between 2016 and 2025. This sharp contrast, he noted, places the country at a critical inflection point requiring a departure from "business as usual."

While acknowledging the country's major milestones including expanded national infrastructure, improved health outcomes through free antiretroviral treatment, and universal primary education the Assistant Minister pointed to persistent structural challenges. Youth unemployment remains unacceptably high at 38.5 percent,

poverty stands at 15.4 percent compared to the Upper Middle Income Country average of 1.5 percent, and the economy remains heavily dependent on diamonds, which account for nearly 90 percent of exports. Compounding these challenges is the near absence of Foreign Direct Investment and high-tech exports, limiting diversification and innovation. It is against this backdrop that Government has introduced the Botswana Economic Transformation Programme (BETP), a bold and unified national strategy aimed at accelerating sustainable and inclusive growth. The programme sets a clear vision of a high-income Botswana that is digitally enabled, export-driven, and economically diversified, where every citizen is employed, empowered, and fulfilled. By 2036, BETP seeks to raise GNI per capita to at least USD 15,730, mobilise multi billion dollar investments, and significantly reduce unemployment through large scale job creation.

Honourable Ntshale emphasised that the Ministry of Communications and Innovation occupies a central role in delivering this vision.

As the designated champion for Financial Services and Digitalisation economic focus area, the Ministry is responsible for modernising ICT services, digitising government functions, and building a vibrant



Ntshale fintech ecosystem. Beyond this mandate, the Ministry serves as a critical enabler for all other sectors of the economy, including agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, and social services.

He highlighted key constraints undermining competitiveness, particularly the high cost of mobile data, which averages USD 13.87 per gigabyte in Botswana compared to USD 4.30 in neighbouring

South Africa. Addressing such systemic barriers through policy and regulatory reform is essential to reducing business costs, stimulating innovation, and attracting investment into high growth sectors.

To ensure effective delivery, the Ministry will adopt the 8 Step Big Fast Results (BFR) Methodology during the 2026-2027 financial year. This implementation focused approach prioritises clear ownership, measurable outcomes, rapid problem-solving, and transparent public reporting. Priority outcomes include lowering the cost of data, driving measurable foreign direct investment into the digital economy, launching new digital government services, and creating sustainable, high skilled jobs particularly for young people. In closing, Honourable Ntshale urged participants to treat the strategy retreat as a pivotal moment for the nation. The scale and urgency of Botswana's challenges, he said, demand bold leadership, disciplined execution, and an unwavering focus on results. The Ministry of Communications and Innovation reaffirmed its commitment to harnessing the transformative power of technology to build a prosperous, diversified, and digitally empowered Botswana in line with the national vision for 2036. Source: Ministry of Communications and Innovation -Botswana

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PART 3
DR LETSHWITI TUTWANE*

THE FIRST SITUATION WHERE THE court has exclusive jurisdiction applies only to a very narrow range of disputes, such as those between organs of the State in the national and provincial sphere or disputes over the constitutionality of parliamentary and provincial Bill or in respect of matters involving an amendment to the Constitution itself and questions as to whether Parliament or the President has failed to comply with a constitutional duty.

In all other instances the Constitutional Court shares concurrent jurisdiction with the High Courts and the Supreme Court of Appeal.

In the second scenario, here are two examples where the court felt it had to intervene to protect the interests of justice. In *Jaftha v Schoeman and Others* [2004] ZACC 25 the Con Court declared a section of the Magistrate's Act unconstitutional for allowing execution against the homes of poor debtors, where they would lose their security of tenure.

In *Gundwana v Steko Development CC and Others* [2011] ZACC 14 the Con Court once more declared that is unconstitutional for a Registrar of the High Court to declare immovable property specially executable when ordering default judgment under rule 31(5) of the Uniform Rules of the High Court to the extent that this permits the sale in execution of the home of a person.

Clause 4 amends the controversial section 69 of the Constitution. Section 69 of the Constitution gives the High Court jurisdiction to hear and determine any question whether a person has been validly elected as an Elected Member, Specially Elected Member or Speaker of the National Assembly as well as whether any such person has vacated their seat or, in the case of the Speaker, their office.

Clause 4 of the Bill would replace the High Court with the Constitutional Court

in section 69 as the only court that has jurisdiction to hear and determine whether any such person has been validly elected as Elected Member, Specially Elected Member or Speaker, or has vacated their seat or office, and there is no appeal from the determination. Imagine an opposition electoral petition that is argued before judges solely appointed by the president. And without appeal. The more things change, the more they remain the same.

Section 75 of the Constitution provides that a person who sits or votes in the National Assembly when that person is not entitled to do so shall be liable to a monetary penalty that is recoverable in the High Court at the suit of the Attorney-General.

Clause 5 of the Bill would amend section 75 by replacing the High Court with the Constitutional Court as the court in which the penalty shall be recoverable.

Clause 6 of the Bill would insert new sections 94A to 94D into the Constitution. New section 94A states that: "Subject to this Constitution, the judicial authority of Botswana shall vest in the courts." It is not clear why this provision is included other than that it appears to be based on a section of the South African Constitution, which states that: "The judicial authority of the Republic is vested in the courts". The Constitution of Botswana is fundamentally different to that of South Africa, and its provisions cannot simply be superimposed on the Constitution of Botswana. In this regard, see comments on clauses 7(b), and 8(a) below.

The new section 94B would continue the position of Chief Justice who, it states "shall be appointed by the President" and "shall exercise responsibility over the judicial function of all the courts". The Chief Justice is a judge of the High Court (see section 95(2) of the Constitution). The new section 102C (1) (a), which is inserted by clause 11, would also make the Chief Justice a judge of the Constitutional Court.

The new section 94C establishes the

position of a Deputy Chief Justice who, it states, "shall be appointed by the President". The new section 102C (1) (b), which is inserted by clause 11, would make the Deputy Chief Justice a judge of the Constitutional Court. Once more this does not limit the power of the president but increases it all the more. When the President appoints both the CJ and his Deputy and potentially other judges, does it limit or expand his influence on the judiciary?

Clause 7 (a) would amend section 95(1) to oust the jurisdiction of the High Court "to hear and determine any application or question arising out of a matter involving the enforcement or securing the enforcement of fundamental rights as contained in sections 3 to 16 of the Constitution or in any other law".

Clause 7(a) also narrows the jurisdiction of the High Court from "unlimited original jurisdiction to hear and determine any civil or criminal proceedings" to "original jurisdiction to hear and determine any civil or criminal proceedings". This would cause inconsistencies within the Constitution because certain qualifications for appointment as a judge of the High Court refer to "a court having unlimited jurisdiction in civil and criminal matters in Botswana". In this regard, see sections 96(3) (a) and (b) which state that:

"(3) A person shall not be qualified to be appointed as a judge of the High Court unless—

(a) he or she holds, or has held office, as a judge of a court having unlimited jurisdiction in civil and criminal matters in Botswana, in a Commonwealth country or in any country outside the Commonwealth that may be prescribed by Parliament or a court having jurisdiction in appeals from such a court; or

(b) he or she is qualified to practise as an advocate or attorney in such a court and has been qualified for not less than ten years to practise as an advocate or attorney in such a court;"

See also section 100(3) of the Constitution, which has almost identical qualifications for appointment to the Court of Appeal, as well as the definition of "high judicial office" in section 127(1), which is defined as: "high judicial office" means the office of a judge of a court of unlimited jurisdiction in civil and criminal matters in Botswana, a Commonwealth country or in any country outside the Commonwealth that may be prescribed by Parliament or the office of judge of a court having jurisdiction in appeals from such a court".

Section 95(4) of the Constitution states that: "The High Court shall sit in such places as the Chief Justice may appoint." Clause 7(b) would add the words "and shall have such divisions as the Chief Justice may determine" to section 95(4), and clause 8(a) would replace section 96(1) to provide that: "The Chief Justice shall appoint a Judge President from among the judges of the High Court to head a division of the High Court". This appears to be another case of simply copying what is in the South African Constitution.

The idea of "Divisions" of the High Court and a "Judge President" for each "Division" appears to be taken from the South African Constitution. South Africa's high court consists of Divisions for its provinces because each province has its own provincial laws. Divisions of the South African Courts, which corresponded with provinces, date back to the apartheid era. Botswana has only one High Court – it does not have provinces with different laws that require divisions and Judge Presidents.

The amendments made by clauses 8(b) and 8(c) to sections 96(5) and (6) of the Constitution would remove the references to persons acting as Chief Justice because the new section 94D (3), inserted by clause 6, the Deputy Chief Justice would "perform the functions of the Chief Justice when the Chief Justice is absent or there is a vacancy in the office of the Chief Justice".

Section 99(2) states in paragraph (c) that



Dr Letshwiti Batlhalefi Tutwane

the judges of the Court of Appeal shall be: "(c) the Chief Justice and the other judges of the High Court: Provided that Parliament may make provision for the office of President of the Court of Appeal to be held by the Chief Justice ex officio." Clause 9 would replace paragraph (c) with: "other judges of the High Court". If the intention is that the Chief Justice would no longer be a member of the Court of Appeal, paragraph (c) might rather have been replaced with "(c) judges of the High Court other than the Chief Justice".

*Dr Letshwiti Batlhalefi 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 world order is undergoing a deep-running transformation'

SERGEY LAVROV*

THE FIRST TWENTY DAYS OF 2026 brought an even more impressive mix of developments, dwarfing what we witnessed throughout 2025. We witnessed unprecedented developments, including a blatant armed intervention by the United States in Venezuela, which left dozens of people killed and wounded, followed by capturing Venezuela's legitimate President Nicolas Maduro and his wife and taking them out of the country. At the same time, Cuba and other Latin American and Caribbean countries are facing threats too.

External forces have made no secret of their intentional efforts to destabilise Iran, which is a matter of grave concern. In particular, a would-be prominent personality in today's world, the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas, has recently said that by supporting these protests, the international community – as represented by the European Union, it seems – is pursuing regime change in this country. I will not even mention the fact that most Western countries are seeking to continue using the Kiev regime in their military confrontation against Russia. There may be less talk about inflicting what they call a strategic defeat on Russia these days, but everything points to the fact that this goal remains on the mind, and in the plans, primarily among European leaders.

Just look at German Chancellor Friedrich Merz's perorations about once again making the German army the strongest force in Europe. It was also he who said that Russia should not be allowed to have its way in Ukraine since this would amount to appeasing Adolf Hitler.

Few people paid attention to it, but it should not have gone unnoticed. We remember well and must never forget what happened several times over the course of history when the German leadership assumed this kind of an arrogant posture. Speaking of World War II – we cannot avoid recalling it, for obvious reasons, I would like to note that discussions on amending the country's constitution have been gaining traction in Japan. This goes beyond building up the army's offensive capabilities, but also revising the non-nuclear status. They have been quite open about it.

Of course, the world order is undergoing a deep-running transformation. It is telling that the West has been actively pushing its narrative about a rules-based order by contrasting it with international law in its original meaning for the past decade, while today this term has vanished from public

discourse.

All Western European countries are struggling to come to terms with what is happening in the world considering the policy as declared and adopted by President of the United States Donald Trump, and how this policy can be part of their rules-based order. This time, it is not the collective West which writes these rules, but just one of its members. This came as a major shock for Europe. This is what we are witnessing.

Clearly, what is going on and the international actions of Trump has been talking about are signs of competition. The US-led West created rules which served as a foundation for the globalisation model. Until recently, it was a world-wide process, and China outcompeted its Western competitors in trade, economics, investment and infrastructure by adopting this playbook. China's economic performance speaks for itself.

We can see efforts to deal with this situation through sanctions, tariffs and duties. The United States wants to strike deals even if for now there are no common criteria similar to those which shaped the way the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO operated. While supposed to form the bedrock of the world order which suits the West, all these rules have become void.

This game is based on the "might is right" principle. We are watching it. We can hold an interactive dialogue on changes in the conceptual vision and concrete processes in the development of a new world order. But the consequences are not only influencing the Global South and East countries but also the crisis trends within the Western community.

Greenland is a relevant example. It has become a household word, and it was hard to imagine discussions around it before, including prospects for the preservation of NATO as a unified military-political bloc.

Speaking of Greenland, we proceed from the assumption that if Western countries wish to talk the talk, it's their choice and right to do so. As for us, we will deal with all our partners in the Global Majority countries and in the Western states that are interested in talking with Russia and discussing concrete mutually beneficial projects based on the principles of equality.

We would like to apply the universal norms of international law everywhere, but the main principles are equality, mutual respect and a balance of interests. These are the absolutely unwavering principles when it comes to interaction on the international stage, whether you call it rules or international law.

The principle of equality cannot be taken out of the equation. In an equal dialogue,



Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

those who have more resources will have greater influence on the outcome, yet it is vital to strive for results that will represent a balance of interests.

Russia will consistently uphold its interests without infringing on the legitimate rights of others or allowing them to take liberties with our legitimate rights. Our foreign policy, which is enshrined in the Foreign Policy Concept approved by President Vladimir Putin in March 2023, stipulates resolute defence of the vital interests of our nation and the creation of favourable conditions for sustainable development within the Russian Federation. It is of crucial importance to take principled actions to further strength our national sovereignty.

The amendments made to the Constitution of Russia in 2020 are vital for strengthening our national sovereignty. We are ready to work with all foreign states that will reciprocate and are willing to deal with us honestly on the basis of equality, without blackmail or pressure.

The so-called isolation of Russia has failed, no matter what our ill-wishers may say. The landmark events of the year were the celebrations of the 80th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War, including the parade in Red Square and the great number of foreign guests who attended it.

Speaking about the Second World War and its outcome, it is worth mentioning similar events held in Beijing on September

3, 2025, to mark the defeat of militarist Japan and the end of World War II. These two events have clearly shown that the overwhelming majority of countries do not wish to forget the memory, lessons and history of World War II. It is an important conclusion from the past year.

Neighbourly relations, cooperation
Foremost among these is our commitment to fostering a sustained relations and cooperation within the CIS, EAEU, CSTO, and SCO frameworks. We will continue, to advance the key flagship initiatives championed by the President. These are, principally, the formation of the Greater Eurasian Partnership and, building upon it, the creation of a pan-continental architecture of equal and indivisible security.

In concert with our Belarusian allies, we are promoting the development of the Eurasian Charter of Diversity and Multipolarity in the 21st Century. We have declared this initiative open to participation by all Eurasian states without exception.

Our relations with China, which I have mentioned, are unprecedented in their depth, level, and alignment on developments across Eurasia and the global stage. I would like to particularly underscore the privileged strategic character of our partnership with India, which the President visited this past December.

The Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty with the DPRK, whose fraternal

and allied assistance was instrumental in liberating the Kursk Region from the Ukrainian militants, stands as a practical embodiment of our efforts to bolster Eurasian security.

Regarding BRICS: every member of this association is a valued partner. Our ties with each were strengthened throughout 2025, laying a firm groundwork for enhanced cooperation across all spheres.

We are currently preparing for the third Russia-Africa summit. A key milestone in this process was the Second Ministerial Conference of the Russia-Africa Partnership Forum, which included Russia and African Union states, held in Cairo in December.

In the realm of multilateral diplomacy, we note the shared objective of strengthening BRICS and the growing global interest in the association. We provided full support to the Brazilian BRICS chairmanship in 2025, and our Brazilian friends have effectively continued numerous projects initiated at our BRICS summit in Kazan in autumn 2024.

Following our initiative, and with the support of the Group of Friends in Defence of the UN Charter, the General Assembly adopted two landmark resolutions: establishing an International Day against Colonialism in All Its Forms and Manifestations (observed on December 14) and proclaiming an International Day Against Unilateral Coercive Measures

(observed annually on December 4).

Furthermore, on our initiative, the UN Convention on Cybercrime was signed in Hanoi in autumn 2025. As the first instrument of its kind in international information security, it sets a precedent. We are hopeful that the ongoing discussions on the regulation of artificial intelligence will yield similarly concrete results.

The Ukrainian crisis

As the President has consistently emphasised, Russia remains committed to a diplomatic resolution. A review of the conflict's history, from its origins in 2014 and especially since 2022, reveals no shortage of goodwill from the Russian Federation regarding political settlements. Yet, on each occasion, our Western, primarily European, neighbours have taken deliberate steps to undermine these agreements. They are employing the same tactics towards initiatives put forward by the US Trump administration, seeking to dissuade it from reaching an understanding with Russia.

A reading of statements from European figures – be it Kaja Kallas, Ursula von der Leyen, Friedrich Merz, Keir Starmer, Emmanuel Macron, or Mark Rutte – makes it clear that they are seriously preparing for a war against the Russian Federation, and they make little attempt to conceal it. Our position on Ukraine is that any resolution must address the root causes of this crisis, which the West has deliberately cultivated for years to transform Ukraine into a security threat and a springboard against Russia on our very border.

They have actively encouraged the openly Nazi regime that seized power through the 2014 coup, a regime which has embarked on a path of legally and physically suppressing all things Russian – from education and language to culture, media, and the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church. We are committed to helping de-escalate tensions across a range of flashpoints I mentioned, from Venezuela to, I must particularly highlight, the Iranian situation. The latter must be resolved on the basis of respect for Tehran's rightful and peaceful use of nuclear energy. We are also convinced that a lasting settlement in the Middle East requires the final implementation of the UN decisions regarding the creation of a Palestinian state.

I would stress that this criterion remains entirely relevant in light of US President Donald Trump's current, high-profile initiative to establish a "Board of Peace."

*Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's remarks and answers to media questions during a news conference on the performance of Russian diplomacy in 2025

Opinions, Reviews & Analysis



ADAM PHETLHE
ON SUNDAY!

IF PARLIAMENT OBTAINS THE TWO thirds majority vote for the Constitution (Amendment) Bill of 2025, which seeks to establish the Constitutional Court, the nation will be headed for a Referendum. The Referendum Act of 1987 will be triggered to deliver the referendum via the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) for a YES or NO answer. For the referendum to pass, it must deliver a YES vote. But as it stands, the nation is divided over the Bill, with strong rejection from opposition parties, non-governmental organisations and other sectors of society.

Wrong footing
As soon as the Bill was presented in Parliament by Minister Moeti Mohwasa, the opposition BCP, Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organisation (BOCONGO), trade union federations, and some faith-based organisations rejected it outright. They demand a comprehensive Constitutional review to take precedence over the Con Court.

Interestingly, the ruling Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC)

Con Court referendum stands to fail



President Duma Boko

rejected a similar Bill during the Masisi administration, and even walked out of Parliament. They argued that the process was flawed and lacked legitimacy as Batswana were not consulted sufficiently. Back then, the BDP failed to garner

the mandatory two thirds majority in Parliament to send the Bill to a referendum. Those currently against the Constitutional court are raising the same reasons -lack of consultation!
After the Bill was presented, only two MPs

debated it. It is strange that a Bill seeking to amend the Constitution would be debated by only two MPs, after President Duma Boko delivered a lecture for three hours. The developments were a clear UDC political strategy: Boko was the only best placed man to motivate the Bill ahead of his own MPs. The Speaker allowed Parliament to be muzzled by Boko at the expense of the institution s/he leads.

Lack of bipartisanship
There is a school of thought proffered by some political scientists that for a referendum on any issue to succeed, it must enjoy a great deal of bipartisanship from across society. At the top tier of the said bipartisanship some argue, should be the major political party in the country. One of them posited that 'The biggest threat to a successful referendum is the running of a NO campaign by a major political party'. It therefore stands to reason that there is a real threat to the success of the Con Court Bill at Referendum given that the BCP -a major opposition political party is leading the charge for a NO vote. BOCONGO is also leading a NO vote on the side of civil society. The NO vote proponents argue that the Constitutional Court should be the creation of the Constitution, and therefore a comprehensive review of the latter should be prioritised. Batswana are divided right down the middle on the Con Court Bill. Although it is not clear which way the wind will blow, kgotla and Council meetings addressed by

cabinet ministers to promote the Con Court Bill show that they are having a tough time to even explain the benefits of same. Their main theme is that the Bill seeks to protect human rights. Yet, there are so many aspects therein which have to be explained for the appreciation of the wider society.

Referendum timing
The timing of the Referendum, just when Boko's administration is grappling with a myriad of challengers, could be a major deciding factor. An ailing economy delivers serious consequences for the socio-economic challenges directly affecting Batswana on a daily basis. At the top of these challenges is the public health sector. These challenges inevitably stand to influence the YES and NO votes during a Referendum.

Boko has made numerous statements which may have rubbed some voters the wrong way. Most recently he spoke about the social contract, suggesting that the ruling UDC does not have a contract with the electorate. His statement has been interpreted to suggest that he is not under obligation to deliver his election promises as articulated in the UDC manifesto.

From consultations by ministers, it is abundantly clear that there are mixed reactions to the establishment of the Con Court. There is no consensus and by extension, no meaningful bipartisan support for the establishment of the Con Court. History is replete with referendums that failed because of lack of bipartisan

support. Zimbabwe's 2000 Constitutional referendum was rejected by 54% of the electorate partly because it lacked universal consensus and bipartisan support from influential civil society organisations and the then Movement for Democratic Change. 'The referendum was viewed not just as a vote on the document itself, but a direct protest against Mugabe's administration, marking his first major electoral defeat.' This statement could apply to President Boko in the event he loses the referendum.

Owing to the glaring public discontent about the Con Court Bill from the major opposition political party; BOCONGO; trade union federations; other key stakeholders and some members of the public, it is reasonable to conclude the referendum on the establishment of the Con Court will not enjoy bipartisan support and therefore, stands to fail.

Regard should be had to the undisputed fact that the UDC was voted into power by the lowest popular vote (37%) in the history of Botswana elections. This percentage is crucial for the referendum. The political and other consequences of a failed referendum for the ruling party are too ghastly to contemplate. It could be in the interests of the UDC to withdraw the Bill for its political survival because the optics don't look good. I am prepared to be persuaded otherwise as always.

Judge for Yourself!
adamphetlhe08@gmail.com

BCP blames Minister for poor 2025 JCE results

- They are not a reflection of our children's intelligence

THE BOTSWANA CONGRESS PARTY (BCP) has received the 2025 Junior Certificate Examination (JCE) results with a profound sense of disappointment, though not surprise. Once again, our nation is confronted with an education system that is treading water, leaving thousands of young Batswana in a state of academic limbo.

While the Botswana Examinations Council (BEC) attempts to mask the decline with talk of statistical stability, the reality on the ground is clear: our education system is in a state of self-inflicted paralysis.

At the heart of this year's "not so impressive" performance lies a glaring administrative failure by the Ministry of Education: the chronic delay and total mismanagement of the recruitment and engagement of temporary teachers.

The "Empty Chair" Crisis: A Recipe for Failure

For much of the 2025 academic year, classrooms across the country, particularly in rural and marginalized areas, stood empty or were overseen by overburdened permanent staff. The BCP contends that you cannot expect a child to pass an



Caterpillar Hikuama, BCP Shadow Minister for Child Welfare, Basic and Higher Education

examination for a subject they were never taught.

- Delayed Contracts:** In 2025, we witnessed a recurring nightmare where the recruitment of temporary teachers was stalled for months due to budgetary constraints and administrative re-engineering. By the time many teachers were finally deployed, half the syllabus was already lost.

- The Special Needs Oversight:** The delay was particularly devastating for learners with special needs, who require consistent, one-on-one interaction. Frequent rotations and the late arrival of support staff have effectively robbed these vulnerable learners of their right to a quality education.

- Teacher Morale and "The Bare Minimum":** Temporary teachers, who are the lifeblood of our secondary schools, were subjected to demoralizing late payments and dehumanizing working conditions. A demotivated teacher, living in fear of their contract not being renewed, cannot be expected to provide the high-level mentorship our students need.

Our Position: Stop Gambling with Our Children's Future
The BCP Shadow Ministry views the 2025 results as the inevitable outcome of a government that treats teacher recruitment as an afterthought rather than a priority.

When the Ministry fails to fill over 1,000 vacancies until the final term of the year, it is not the administration that suffers, it is the child in Seronga, the learner in Ghanzi, and the student in Old Naledi who pays the price with an 'Ungraded' result."

The BCP demands the following immediate actions:

- Permanent Absorption:** Move away from the unstable "Temporary Teacher" model. Qualified teachers should be absorbed into permanent and pensionable positions to ensure classroom continuity.
- Early Recruitment Cycle:** The recruitment process for the 2026 academic year must be finalized before schools open, not three months into the first term.
- Automatic Payment Systems:** Implement a digital payroll system that ensures temporary staff are paid on time, every time, removing the financial anxiety that currently cripples our educators.

Conclusion
The 2025 JCE results are not a reflection of our children's intelligence, but a reflection of a ministry that has failed to provide them with teachers. We cannot continue to celebrate a 38% credit pass rate as a success when 60% of our children are being left behind by a broken recruitment system. These results are a wake-up call. We congratulate the students, teachers, and parents who persevered despite the odds, but we refuse to celebrate mediocrity. The BCP remains committed to a "People-Centred" education system that ensures every child, regardless of their background, has a fair shot at a bright future.

The current government must stop managing the decline of our education system and start leading its transformation.

The BCP calls on the Minister to stop focusing on the aesthetics of her office and start focusing on the thousands of empty desks in our classrooms.

* Caterpillar Kainangura Hikuama BCP Shadow Minister for Child Welfare, Basic and Higher Education

How the UDC blew it

THE UDC GOVERNMENT, MUCH LIKE General Khama in 2009 and President Masisi in 2019, came into power with a lot of goodwill from the people. There was genuine excitement. Genuine hope. Genuine confidence. Genuine faith. Genuine expectation. 2024 was, however, significantly different from the others. It was a first, even seen by some as a revolution of sorts. Aply, it was christened "The Second Republic." The first, of course, being the uninterrupted rule of the BDP since Independence.

Unfortunately, a significant percentage of all of the above has been slowly eroded. Resignation and disillusionment have set in. Much of the harm—real or imagined—has been self-inflicted. However, that need not be. The UDC can still reclaim the initial goodwill. It can still restore public confidence. To do that, it just has to capitalize on the low-hanging fruits. I list a few:

- Action the Declaration of Assets.** This would be quite telling and would put to bed whispers around the campfire that yesterday's paupers have suddenly become today's millionaires.
- Cut the Constituency Allowances** of those not holding any constituencies.
- Introduce Direct Election of the President.**
- Introduce electoral reforms** that would, amongst others, see the dawning of the dispensation of Proportional Representation.
- Reform the DISS as pledged.** Yes, there's less noise presently. But legislation weighs more than goodwill.
- Remove the DCEC, DPP, DISS, et al,** from under the Office of the President.
- Take up the health, education and economic crises** with the same dogged determination and singular focus as previous governments did with the HIV/AIDS and Covid-19 pandemics. Thus far the optics have outweighed and overshadowed the action.
- Let some prized heads at the government** enclave roll; heads that have been implicated or directly accused of conduct unbecoming



of public servants before and during this administration. We know them.

- Read the room concerning the current** debate surrounding a constitutional review process and the establishment of a constitutional court. It would be political suicide to run roughshod over public opinion.

- Tread carefully the apparent prioritizing** of antagonists, critics and opponents over battle proven cadres in deployment. Neutralizing your enemies shouldn't come at the cost of alienating your friends. The cost may ultimately prove too high. The revolution must not feed on its own children.

- Without prejudice or preempting the** process, bring the nation up to speed with the progress, if any, of the forensic audit. It mustn't come across as a scarecrow or paper tiger. And, as when the process concludes, disclose, unredacted, the findings of the same and the next steps.

- Overhaul and improve its communication** strategy. There are way too many gaffes and faux pas and terrible PR. If you are constantly

reacting, you've already lost. And the solution is not always to recruit the man who beat you to the punch and bloodied your nose.

- The economy needs a stimulus** of some sort, maybe even printing money to benefit from seigniorage. Also, it's a grave mistake to treat the agricultural sector as dispensable.

- The entire public service needs an** overhaul and a shakeup from the top down. There's too much deadwood, too much duplication and the wage bill is way too high. This is a double edged sword but necessary.

- Some SOEs are an unnecessary burden** on the national purse and either need to be shut down entirely or absorbed into others. Presently, some are nothing but mere ATMs with zero benefit to the nation.

These would be seismic, landscape altering and legacy building moves. Otherwise, the UDC may well be featured in an episode of "I Blew It," come 2029.

Mogotsi D Baloyi
Facebook

NOT NOW! BDP rejects Constitutional Court

THE JUDICIARY IS A NECESSARY component of any State. The Botswana judiciary has served the nation well and maintained independence for years. In our view, the judiciary in its current form is reputable enough.

Government has however proposed a new addition to the nation's judiciary - The Constitutional Court. The following is the BDP position on this proposal:

- Batswana know their priorities** and they ought to have been thoroughly consulted before commencement of the Bill. In 2023 and 2024, the BDP government undertook a constitutional review process that commenced with countrywide consultations. Many criticised the process as flawed. The current government's approach is in our view worse, and they must therefore learn from past experience. Consultations should have commenced before the Bill was tabled in parliament.
- The public purse is already strained**

as evidenced by shortage of medicines, occasional late payment of old age pensions, delayed payments to suppliers etc. Therefore, the Constitutional Court, which will come at an additional yet to be disclosed cost, would add another burden on the nation's coffers, when on the other hand Batswana are already not getting the best service and policy implementation from the government.

- The piece-meal approach is not** advisable. Government should have undertaken a holistic review of the entire constitution. The way we see it, the current process is a waste of money because yet another consultation process will have to be held later when the promised Comprehensive Constitutional Review is undertaken, if ever it will happen. Government has put the cart before the horse.

- Constitutional matters have been** argued and concluded before within our

current judicial system eg. Unity Dow vs Attorney General 1992 (Unity Dow Case), Letsweletse Motshediemang vs Attorney General 2019 (Same-sex relations decriminalisation case) etc. Therefore, in our view there is no immediate need to rush into the creation of a constitutional court.

Conclusion;
The BDP does not support the creation of the Constitutional Court at this present time because;

There are currently more pressing priorities eg. Medicines and medical supplies.

Batswana were not properly consulted before tabling the far-reaching Bill in parliament.

The nation's coffers are already strained. Our courts have in the past ably dealt with Constitutional matters.

The constitutional court cannot, therefore, be a priority at this present time.

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Business

2026/27 BUDGET

Will Ndaba butter the bread?

- Budget comes against tough economic conditions
- Households face rising cost of living as food prices soar
- BOFEPUSU calls for prudence to drive inclusive growth
- Critical Govt revenue sources under immense pressure



VP and Finance Minister, Ndaba Gaolathe

BAKANG TIRO

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FINANCE MINISTER NDABA Gaolathe will tomorrow (Monday) deliver the 2026/27 financial budget speech against the nation's high expectation that the budget would speak to job creation and secure households stability over tough economic conditions.

The budget would be the second under the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) administration.

The government is currently grappling with cash flow challenges owing to a significant decline in minerals revenue and challenges in tax collection.

Independent economist Lame Bothata said the budget is expected to offer answers to socio-economic challenges such as unemployment, declining household buying power and drying government coffers. He said the consumer buying power is immensely declining due to high food prices, adding that this makes it difficult for lower income households to afford a food basket.

"The question is whether Ndaba would butter the bread for us. The economic situation is worrisome.

Households' food security is under threat. Productivity is going down as businesses are feeling the pinch due to cash flow challenges. Government revenues are also under pressure. Hard times are upon us," he said.

However, Bothata said government is also facing pressure to diversify its revenue streams as the traditional streams such as minerals is extremely subdued due to weaker sales of diamonds globally. As a result, he said the government will opt to increase taxes as a way of making more money but that would further dampen economic prosperity as businesses and workers are already feeling the pinch.

He noted that the working class and some businesses are struggling to repay loans to commercial banks.

"The household debt is another growing concern from the economic point of view. Broadening taxes or increasing levies would be a blow to the people and businesses. BPC is already seeking tariff hike. Also, councils have adjusted fees for example on waste collection. We are in expensive economy," said Bothata.

BOFEPUSU

Meanwhile, Botswana Federation

of Public, Private and Parastatals Sector Unions (BOFEPUSU) has urged government to consider a fiscal strategy that supports inclusive growth.

It said there is a need to move from blunt austerity to strategic consolidation: Protect and prioritise spending that yields high job multipliers and long-term savings – preventive maintenance, primary healthcare, early learning, and grid investment.

In addition, BOFEPUSU said as part of progressive revenue measures, government must strengthen base erosion and profit shifting enforcement, close loopholes, and consider targeted wealth and property measures that do not dampen productive investment.

It said there must be use of green levies to fund transition programmes, with transparency and labour oversight.

REVENUE RISKS

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Finance in the 2026/27 Draft Budget Strategy Paper said over the years, the economy has not generated sufficient tax revenue to keep up with rising expenditure needs.

It cautioned that 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's 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.

According to the ministry, currently mineral revenues are estimated to reach P10.3 billion in 2025/26 compared to a historical average of P25.3 billion – which is primarily a result of lower sales of diamonds. Beyond this, 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," the ministry said.

Botswana is top stable African economy

- Absa AFMI 2025 ranks Botswana best economic destination

BAKANG TIRO

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THE ABSA AFRICA FINANCIAL Markets 2025 Index Report shows that Botswana's financial services sector and the broader economy have remained stable amid macroeconomic headwinds crushing several African economies.

According to the report, the country ranks top in Africa for macroeconomic environment and transparency, supported by strong external-debt discipline and consistent data transparency.

Absa Bank Botswana on Wednesday officially launched the AFMI report in Gaborone. The index assesses financial market development across the continent through the lens of transparency, accessibility and openness.

Now in its ninth year, it provides a benchmark for market infrastructure and an opportunity for policy-makers to learn from improvements across Africa. The



Absa Botswana Managing Director, Keabetswe Pheko-Moshagane

[PIC: GORATAONE KGOSIMORE]

report shows that Botswana has made significant African economy boasting of a positive macro-economic environment attractive to investors etc.

Absa Botswana Managing Director (MD) Keabetswe Pheko-Moshagane said Botswana's performance in the 2025 Index reflects both strength and opportunity.

Pheko-Moshagane said despite the challenges that the economy experienced in 2025, there are positive results that all need to be proud of and leverage on as stakeholders all work towards recovery.

She said Botswana improved to a score of 63, placing the country firmly in the top tier of African

markets. Additionally, she said Botswana continues to hold the highest pension-fund assets per working-age person in Africa, underscoring the strength of our long-term savings institutions.

"These strengths continue to anchor Botswana's reputation for stability, while the Index also highlights opportunities to further deepen liquidity, broaden the product set, enhance legal enforceability and accelerate innovation," she said.

She also said Absa Bank Botswana remains fully committed to supporting the development of our financial markets, mobilising capital responsibly and partnering with government to strengthen Botswana's fiscal and economic future.

"In 2025, we were proud to support the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Botswana in the country's first inflation-linked bond auction, a landmark development recognised in this year's AFMI as a major step in strengthening market depth and product diversification," said Pheko-Moshagane.

Decline in diamond prices eases

DIAMOND-PRICE DROPS became more moderate in January, especially in the small goods that had seen sharp declines in recent months. Buyers remained cautious due to price uncertainty and the impact of tariffs and geopolitical tensions. The US-India trade deal in early February lifted sentiment.

The market continued to bifurcate, though the divisions were less pronounced than last year. US prices were stronger than those in India, and diamonds over 1.20 carats outperformed smaller ones.

The RapNet Diamond Index (RAPI) – which tracks round, D to H, IF to VS2 diamonds – fell 1.3% in January for 0.30- and 1-carat goods after two months of sharper drops. The 0.50-carat RAPI decreased 1.2%.

Prices for 3-carat diamonds slid 1.6%, a reversal after recent stability.

Round, 1-carat, D to H, SI diamonds saw prices fall 0.1% for the month following a 24.1% slump in 2025. Post-holiday US retail was seasonally quiet. Jewelers showed demand for rounds and long facets of 1.50 carats and larger. European orders for 5-carat-plus diamonds were good. India's jewelry market dipped due to high gold prices. China remained weak.

De Beers reduced rough prices at its January sight, causing concern that lower-cost goods would flood the market.

Last year, an influx of lower-value rough from Angola and Russia contributed to weakness in polished under 1 carat.

The industry's other challenges



De Beers CEO, Al Cook

remain. US tariffs are limiting access to the most important retail market, though President Donald Trump reached a deal with India on February 2 that will cut the country's tariff rate from 50% to 18% and potentially exempt Indian diamonds from duties altogether.

Meanwhile, the spike in gold and silver prices has reduced consumers' spending power despite a sharp correction in early February. Diamond demand is permanently lower because of synthetics, China's slowdown, and social changes like dropping marriage rates. A sales recovery will take time.

In the short term, the market's ability to adapt by downsizing will determine whether prices improve.

RAPAPORT NEWS

Botala secures funding for first gas production well

KITSO RAMONO
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BOTALA ENERGY HAS RAISED A\$3 million from investors, fully funding drilling and gas flow testing at its Serowe coal bed methane project in Botswana, as the company moves closer to commercial gas production.

The Australian and Botswana-listed energy company said the capital was raised through an oversubscribed share placement, attracting strong backing from both new and existing sophisticated investors. The funds will allow Botala to drill and test its first targeted production well during the

current quarter.

Under the placement, Botala will issue about 60 million new shares at an issue price of five Australian cents, a 15 per cent discount to the company's recent trading average. Investors will also receive unlisted options as part of the offer. Members of the board have committed a further A\$1.2 million to the placement, subject to shareholder approval.

Proceeds will be directed toward drilling and stimulating the Serowe-3.5B well, progressing reserve certification and advancing a bankable feasibility study,

Investors raise A\$3 million for Botala Energy



Botala Energy CEO, Kris Martinick

which will assess the project's commercial viability. Funding will also support discussions with the Minerals Development Company of Botswana over a proposed project investment of about A\$4 million.

Chief executive Kris Martinick said the capital raise marked a key step in reducing project risk and advancing Botala's gas-to-LNG strategy. "Achieving commercial gas flows is critical to demonstrating the viability of the project and supporting the feasibility study as we move toward commercialisation," Martinick said.

Botala is developing its wholly-owned Serowe coal bed methane project to supply gas into Southern Africa, where demand is rising amid power shortages and a transition away from coal. The company is pursuing a phased development plan that includes a liquefied natural gas facility.

The project has secured production licenses, environmental approvals and government support in Botswana. In 2025, South African steel producer Scaw Metals signed a binding letter of intent to purchase gas from the project, providing a potential route to market. The placement is expected to settle later this month, with drilling activities scheduled to commence shortly thereafter.

LEA-BHC Construction SMMEs Demo Day

THE LOCAL ENTERPRISE AUTHORITY (LEA), through its Market Access Division, in partnership with the Botswana Housing Corporation (BHC), on Friday 30 January 2026 hosted the inaugural LEA-BHC Construction SMMEs Demo Day; a structured buyer-seller engagement platform that brought together local manufacturers and service providers within the construction and civil works sector to confront structural barriers inhibiting local SMME participation in the construction supply chain.

The session, held in Gaborone, convened 34 LEA-supported SMMEs from across the country, alongside BHC technical teams, the Botswana Bureau of Standards (BOBS), and LEA officials. The objective was to move beyond policy intent and enable direct, practical engagement on supplier readiness, standards compliance, pricing, capacity and facilitative procurement processes.

Opening the session, Ms. Shatho Orapeleng, Head of Market Access at LEA, noted that local construction SMMEs continue to face exclusion from large-scale projects despite sufficient capacity, compliance and readiness to supply. "One of the persistent challenges is the disconnect between available local capability and structured access to procurement opportunities, and this disconnect between large buyers and capable and compliant suppliers has resulted in missed opportunities, where local capability exists, but structured buyer-seller engagement, alignment



LEA Head Market Access, Shatho Orapeleng

and possibly some supplier development intervention is limited. This Demo Day is a deliberate intervention to close that gap by aligning supply with demand in a practical and transparent manner," she said.

During the engagement, SMMEs raised critical issues affecting local manufacturers, including: Inconsistent application of enforcement of citizen economic procurement and economic inclusion statutes in contractor-led procurement; Prevailing perceptions around pricing and quality of locally manufactured products; The adverse impact of imported products priced below market value, which is a form of dumping; Delay in payments to local suppliers by Contractors, and The bundling of large contracts that excludes specialised local manufacturers.

Industry participants called for direct purchasing from local manufacturers also known as "free issue", unbundling of construction tenders, clearer enforcement of local procurement reservation thresholds, and enhanced collaboration between project planners, engineers, architects, and manufacturers to ensure that specifications align with locally manufactured products.

Participants emphasised that sustained local

procurement would support long-term job creation, skills development, industrial growth and economic resilience, while also ensuring value for money for public procuring entities.

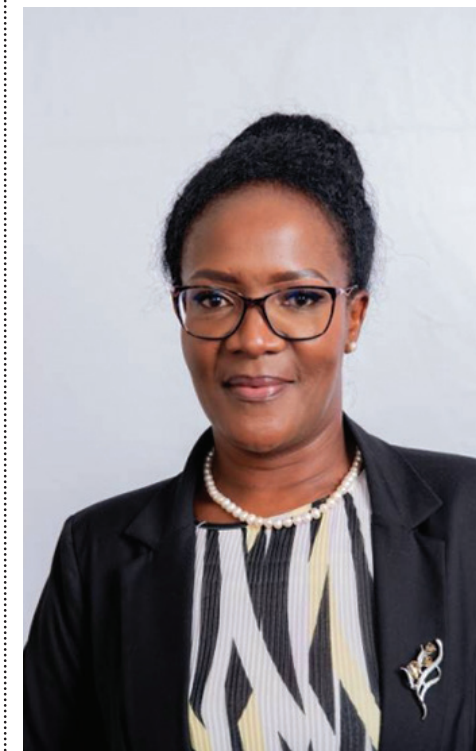
The Demo Day included one-on-one engagements between SMMEs and BHC representatives, allowing suppliers to present product specifications, demonstrate compliance, and receive direct technical feedback. BOBS and LEA teams were present to provide advisory support on standards, quality and market readiness, and ensuring that there was a clear pathway and action plan per SMME presented to improved supply chain participation.

The Demo Day concluded with intensive deliberations between LEA and BHC that resulted in agreement to sign a Memorandum of Agreement that will eventually establish a joint task team, involving key stakeholders, to develop actionable recommendations within the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) framework, interfacing with other citizen economic empowerment frameworks. As a quick win, the teams also agreed that BHC will consider for implementation; recommendations and mechanisms proposed by the collective to strengthen local supplier participation in upcoming BHC projects.

The LEA-BHC Construction SMMEs Demo Day marks a shift toward intentional, evidence-based procurement engagement, laying the groundwork for stronger institutional confidence in local enterprises and a future where homegrown solutions are at the forefront of building and developing Botswana's infrastructure

PPRA collecting data

For review of Price Guides



PPRA CEO, Tumelo Motsumi

THE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT Regulatory Authority (PPRA) informs stakeholders and the general public that it is currently undertaking a nationwide data collection exercise to inform the next review of the Price Guides.

The data collection exercise, conducted across the country, commenced on 19th January 2026 and is scheduled to conclude at the end of February 2026. The exercise covers the following localities: Francistown, Gaborone, Ghanzi, Hukuntsi, Jwaneng, Kang, Kanye, Kasane, Lethakane, Mahalapye, Maun, Palapye, Selebi-Phikwe, and Tsabong.

In accordance with Section 83 of the Public Procurement Act, 2021, (PP Act), PPRA is mandated to annually compile and issue Price Guides. The Price Guides present reference prices for commonly procured goods, services, and works, including their specifications and units of measure.

The Price Guides serve as an important reference tool for Procuring Entities (PEs), Procurement Units (PUs), and bidders, supporting contract value estimation, bid preparation, and the assessment of price reasonableness during tender evaluation.

The overarching objective of the Price Guides is to strengthen the public procurement system by promoting rationality, value for money, and informed decision-making.

Detailed instructions on the use of the Price Guides are available on the PPRA website (www.ppadb.co.bw) and the Integrated Procurement Management System (IPMS) portal (<https://ipms.ppadb.co.bw>).

February 2026 Deposit Interest Rates

Type of Deposit Account	Nominal Interest Rate (%)	Average Effective Interest Rate (%)	Minimum Opening Balance (BWP)
Current	0-3	0.06	0
Call	0.10 - 4.5	0.09	10,000.00
Savings (Tema)	0.50 - 2.75	0.65	500.00
91-Days Fixed Deposit	1.3 - 8	1.73	1,000.00
1-2 months	0.30 - 8	1.88	1,000.00
4-6 months	1.50 - 8	2.02	1,000.00
7-12 months	2.25 - 8	2.48	1,000.00
13-18 months	2.85 - 3.20	2.89	NA
19-24 months	2.85 - 3.20	2.91	1,000.00
Over 24 months	NA	0.00	NA
Ordinary Savings	0.00 - 0.50	0.04	100.00
Upfront Fixed Deposits	2.20 - 2.40	0.00	100,000.00

Type of Deposit Account	Nominal Interest Rate (%)	Average Effective Interest Rate (%)	Minimum Opening Balance (EUR)
Deposits			
Call	0.00 - 0.17	0.00	2,000.00
91-Days Fixed Deposit	0.00	0.00	2,000.00
1-2 months	0.00	0.00	2,000.00
4-6 months	0.00	0.00	2,000.00
7-12 months	0.00	0.00	2,000.00

Type of Deposit Account	Nominal Interest Rate (%)	Average Effective Interest Rate (%)	Minimum Opening Balance (USD)
Deposits			
Call	0.00 - 0.7	-	3,000.00
91-Days Fixed Deposit	0.00 - 0.15	0.18	3,000.00
1-2 months	0.00 - 2.68	0.03	3,000.00
4-6 months	0.00 - 0.28	0.06	3,000.00
7-12 months	0.00 - 0.25	0.15	3,000.00

Type of Deposit Account	Nominal Interest Rate (%)	Average Effective Interest Rate (%)	Minimum Opening Balance (GBP)
Deposits			
Call	0.00 - 0.25	0.00	2,000.00
91-Days Fixed Deposit	0.00	0.00	2,000.00
1-2 months	0.00	0.00	2,000.00
4-6 months	0.00 - 0.20	0.00	2,000.00
7-12 months	0.00 - 0.25	0.00	2,000.00

Type of Deposit Account	Nominal Interest Rate (%)	Average Effective Interest Rate (%)	Minimum Opening Balance (ZAR)
Deposits			
Call	0.00 - 0.3	0.02	15,000.00
91-Days Fixed Deposit	0.00 - 0.80	-	200,000.00
1-2 months	0.00 - 0.3	0.30	200,000.00
4-6 months	0.00 - 1.25	-	200,000.00
7-12 months	0.00 - 1.8	-	200,000.00

Lending	Nominal Interest Rate (%)	Average Effective Interest Rate (%)
Monetary Policy rate	3.50	3.50
Prime Rate	7.76	7.76
Mortgage Rate	Prime +0.5 to Prime +6	8.44
Overdraft Rate (revolving credit lines)	Prime +2	0.39
Credit Card Rate	0 to 34.80	30.60
Lease Financing	NA	NA
Personal loans	Prime to Prime + 18	15.92
Other long term loan rates	6.51 - 14.51	9.72

Debit Interest Rate on Unauthorised Overdraft: Prime Lending Rate + 12%. The Prime Lending Rate of 7.76% as published, has been independently determined by SCBB.

1- Nominal Interest Rate: This is the real interest rate + inflation rate
2- Average Effective Interest Rate: This is the actual interest rate which can be earned on an asset over a given period of time.

Please contact our 24/7 Client Care Centre on +267 361 5800 for more information.

Standard Chartered Bank is a member of the Deposit Insurance Scheme of Botswana.

Terms and Conditions apply

BTC introduces crystal clear Voice Calls powered by LTE

BOTSWANA TELECOMMUNICATIONS Corporation Limited (BTC) has officially introduced Voice over LTE (VoLTE), an advanced solution that enables voice calls to be transmitted over the long-term evolution (LTE) network, also known as 4G. Traditionally, the LTE network has been used exclusively for data and internet services only, however with the implementation of VoLTE, customers can now enjoy enhanced voice call quality that leverages this high-speed network.

This next-generation technology brings several significant improvements to the calling experience. By utilising LTE for voice calls, customers benefit from clearer, more natural, and high-definition (HD) audio, making conversations sound more life-like and reducing background noise. In addition to superior sound quality, VoLTE provides faster call connection times, eliminating unnecessary delays when initiating or receiving calls. Overall, the introduction of VoLTE ensures a more dependable and seamless calling experience for customers.

BTC as the first mobile network operator in Botswana to introduce VoLTE, continues to lead the market by reshaping expectations around voice communication and customer experience. With VoLTE, customers can talk and browse the internet simultaneously and send messages without dropped calls or interruptions. Customers simply continue to make calls the same way they always have, while enjoying a superior



BTC Chief Marketing Officer, Mike Siachitema

experience. BTC provides the service at no additional cost and requires no applications, downloads, or changes in calling behaviour.

BTC Chief Marketing Officer, Mr. Mike Siachitema, described VoLTE as "one among plenty of planned steps towards improving the customer experience for our BTC customers," noting that this is one way of showcasing BTC's commitment to transforming everyday communication. "We want our customers to experience a new level of clarity, speed, and reliability

when they make a voice call," he said. "VoLTE delivers crystal-clear HD voice quality, near-instant call setup, and allows customers to stay connected online while on a call; all provided at the same voice and SMS rates they are used to," added Mr. Siachitema.

Mr. Siachitema further highlighted that VoLTE enhances the roaming experience across Africa, delivering premium voice quality even beyond Botswana's borders. According to Mr. Siachitema, "poor call quality should not be accepted as normal. VoLTE is about redefining what a voice call should sound and feel like in a modern digital world; that is clearer audio, faster connections, and fewer drop calls," he added.

To access the service, customers must have a BTC 4G/LTE SIM card and a compatible smartphone. Activating the service is simple; open the phone's settings, select mobile network, enable VoLTE calls, and toggle Airplane Mode on and off. Once enabled, customers can immediately begin enjoying VoLTE-enabled calls.

By setting a new benchmark for mobile voice communication, BTC is not offering an exclusive upgrade, but extending an invitation to all customers to experience clearer, faster, and more dependable calling through future-ready technology. In a world that increasingly depends on reliable communication, VoLTE ensures that when a call connects, it stays connected, and every word is heard clearly.

NDB engages International Development partners on SME financing

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT BANK (NDB) has continued to strengthen strategic partnerships aimed at unlocking sustainable financing for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), as part of a fact finding and engagement visit by representatives from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

The visit formed part of an ongoing assessment process focused on exploring scalable financing schemes, productivity enhancement, and long-term investment opportunities for SMEs. During the engagement, the delegation held discussions with NDB management and undertook visits to selected NDB supported projects in the Central District, gaining practical insight into how development finance is supporting business expansion, value addition, and economic resilience.

These engagements provided an opportunity for information sharing and reflect NDB's deliberate approach of aligning international

development partnerships with on the ground perspectives and national development priorities.

Speaking on the engagements, Ms Neo Kootsholette, Head of Treasury and Capital Management at NDB, said the visit reflected the importance of transparent and structured dialogue between development finance institutions and international partners. Furthermore, the Bank was able to demonstrate its commitment to mobilising strategic capital partnerships that strengthen SME financing.

"As a development finance institution, NDB values and is intentional about building partnerships that go beyond funding to support productivity, sustainability, and long-term growth," said Ms Kootsholette. "Such interactions are important in ensuring a shared understanding of how different approaches can enable us to align capital, technical expertise, and innovative financing structures in a way that delivers measurable



Head of Treasury and Capital Management, Neo Kootsholette

economic impact."

The continued engagements are consistent with NDB's ongoing efforts to collaborate constructively with development partners and be a leading catalyst in contributing to the strengthening of sustainable financing frameworks that support inclusive economic growth.



BAKANG PHUTHEGO
BUSINESS WITH BK

Making every Pula count



VP and Finance Minister, Ndaba Gaolathe
[PIC: GORATAONE KGOSIMORE]

IN FEBRUARY 2025, THE MINISTER OF Finance, Ndaba Gaolathe's maiden 2025/2026 budget projecting revenue and grants of P75.49 billion lands at a decisive inflection point for Botswana's economy. On the surface the numbers signal stability: revenues climbed from P48.95 billion in 2014 to a 2022 peak of P79.79 billion and remain near those levels. Beneath that veneer, however, lies a structural paradox: fiscal strength concentrated in a few volatile sources—SACU receipts (P24.36 billion) and mineral revenue (P15.75 billion)—and weakened by an inefficient parastatal sector.

An analysis of Botswana's revenue over the past decade reveals a story of resilience punctuated by volatility. From P48.95 billion in 2014, revenues climbed to a peak of P79.79 billion in 2022 before settling into the projected P68-75 billion range for the mid-2020s. This trajectory underscores a persistent challenge: revenue remains susceptible to external shocks and commodity cycles.

Minister Gaolathe's 2025/26 breakdown lays this dependence bare: SACU Revenue (P24.36bn): The largest contributor, but a pool of funds determined by regional trade dynamics beyond Botswana's direct control; Non-Mineral Income Tax (P19.01bn): A rising star, indicating growth in the formal sector outside mining; Mineral Revenue (P15.75bn): Now in third place, a testament to diversification but a stark reminder of diamond dependency; VAT (P12.10bn) & Other Sources: Reflect domestic consumption and ancillary inflows.

This structure has funded Botswana's ascent. Yet, it is insufficient for its future. With SACU revenue external and mineral wealth finite, the imperative to cultivate a robust, domestically driven economy has never been clearer. The paradox, however, is that the state apparatus designed to drive this diversification is itself a primary obstacle.

Botswana is widely praised for political stability, prudent fiscal management, decades of diamond-driven growth, and a strong sovereign credit profile that supports favorable borrowing costs and investor confidence. That success has reinforced a common narrative: the country's economic setbacks are cyclical; temporary shocks tied to commodity prices, droughts or regional slowdowns rather than the result of deeper structural or systematic failures. For business leaders, investors and policymakers this perception matters because it shapes strategy, risk assessment and long-term investment decisions. But treating Botswana's challenges as merely cyclical risks underestimating persistent constraints that could limit future growth and returns.

Why Problems Are Seen as Cyclical Commodity dependence: Diamonds dominate exports and government revenues. Price volatility and global demand cycles produce visible booms and busts, encouraging analysts to treat downturns

regulators to universities, are necessary but constitute a permanent and growing draw on the treasury. Can these entities be run profitably, and are they genuinely driving a government agenda of revenue maximisation or an exported growth mandate? If not, why do they continue to exist in their current form as social service providers, sources of patronage, or instruments of industrial policy? This question has driven the debate over rationalisation for decades, yet political will to pursue structural transformation and meaningful reform of parastatals appears limited, leaving persistent fiscal and efficiency risks unaddressed. Going into the future, each parastatal's mandate should be crystal clear: provide valueadding services, pursue revenue maximisation, and deliver a strong return on capital employed for the government's pula investment.

As mentioned, the main revenue earners : SACU revenue (P24.36bn), nonmineral

income tax (P19.01bn), mineral revenue (P15.75bn) and VAT/other (P12.10bn) illustrate Botswana's current revenue mix: a large, regionally determined transfer at the top, growing formalsector tax receipts, continuing mineral rents, and consumptionbased inflows. These streams are essential for public finances but taken alone are unlikely to generate the broad, sustained employment Botswana needs.

Future job creation will come from entrepreneurship because scaled, mid-sized firms convert revenue into recurring formal jobs, supplier networks, and taxable activity in ways that capitalintensive revenue sources cannot. Entrepreneurship-led growth generates labourabsorbing demand across skill levels; upstream and downstream linkages that spread value across the economy; and a diversified export base that reduces reliance on volatile mineral rents and externally determined transfers like SACU. With SMEs and mid-sized firms

contributing disproportionately to VAT and corporate tax, deliberately supporting entrepreneurship directly strengthens the very revenue lines Botswana depends on, making growth both inclusive and fiscally sustainable.

Botswana's Economic Transformation Program (BETP) should be the focal delivery vehicle because it can translate strategy into execution: identifying investable firms and projects, mobilising blended and patient capital, streamlining tax and procurement interfaces, and coordinating agency KPIs to accelerate firm scaling. Consequently, entrepreneurship policy in Botswana must go beyond periodic reviews and pilot programmes: it must tackle the structural and systemic bottlenecks that prevent firms from surviving and scaling: access to longterm finance, predictable procurement and market access, skills matching, infrastructure reliability, regulatory

complexity, and weak firmsupport coordination.

Critically, simply "reviewing" entrepreneurship policy risks becoming cyclical windowdressing. True reform requires durable changes: digitised onestop regulatory services, timebound procurement and tax incentives tied to private-sector sales and job milestones, measurable targets for BETP and parastatal procurement, strengthened investor protection and venturescale finance, and accountability mechanisms that phase out programs that fail to deliver. Political commitment to these structural fixes not just periodic policy reviews is what will convert revenue into sustained employment through entrepreneurship and make Botswana resilient to commodity and regional shocks.

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

as transitory. With the rapid rise in the demand for lab grown diamonds, this disruptive phenomenon in the diamond industry, will be seen as cyclical but has deep bearing structures implications that affect natural diamond demand.

Strong macro track record and high credit ratings: Consistent fiscal prudence, healthy reserves, low sovereign debt, and relatively high credit ratings (which lower borrowing costs and attract capital) reduce fears of chronic mismanagement.

Political stability and governance: Regular elections, continuity in institutions and relatively low corruption (by regional standards) foster confidence that shocks will be managed and reversed.

External shock exposure: Climate events, regional trade conditions and global economic cycles create recurring but interpretable shocks that fit a cyclical narrative.

Demonstrated recoveries: Periodic rebounds after downturns reinforce beliefs that Botswana can bounce back without structural overhaul.

While cyclical forces are real, several structural and systematic issues underlie Botswana's vulnerability. For example, Botswana has approximately 63 state-owned enterprises (SOEs). 16 commercially driven and 47 non-commercial represent a massive concentration of national capital and ambition. In theory, they are levers for development. In reality, many are financial sinks that crowd out strategic investment.

Of the 16 commercial entities, only five have maintained consistent profitability. Giants like Air Botswana, Botswana Railways, and the Botswana Power Corporation are publicly acknowledged to be facing severe financial challenges and are important to the economic transformation of Botswana. The non-commercial 47, from

BHC makes two senior appointments



Director Property Development, Rebatho Nyenye



Regional Director South, Pinky Gubuamang

BOTSWANA HOUSING CORPORATION (BHC) has announced the appointment of Ms. Pinky Gubuamang as Regional Director – South, and Mr. Rebatho Nyenye as Director: Property Development.

They join the Corporation at a pivotal moment, bringing a wealth of experience, strategic insight, and leadership that will strengthen efforts to deliver quality housing

and drive sustainable development across Botswana.

"We extend our warmest welcome and best wishes to Ms. Gubuamang and Mr. Nyenye as they begin their tenure with the Corporation. We look forward to their leadership, meaningful contributions, and the positive impact they will make as we continue working together to build a better Botswana," said the corporation in a statement.



Stanbic Bank

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

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

BWP Deposit Interest Rates

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

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

Lending Interest Rates

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

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

Foreign Currency Deposit Interest Rates

Type of Deposit Account	Nominal Interest Rates (%)	Actual Interest Rates (%)	Minimum Opening Balance
SA RAND	SA RAND	SA RAND	SA RAND
Current	0.0%	0.0%	100.00
Call	0.00%-1.75%	0%-1.76%	500.00
1 Month	1.50%-2.50%	1.51%-2.53%	1,000.00
2 Months	1.60%-2.60%	1.61%-2.63%	1,000.00
3 Months	1.70%-2.70%	1.71%-2.73%	1,000.00
6 Months	1.80%-2.80%	1.81%-2.84%	1,000.00
12 Months	2.20%-3.20%	2.22%-3.25%	1,000.00
Over 24 Months	2.40%-3.50%	2.43%-3.56%	1,000.00

Type of Deposit Account	Nominal Interest Rates (%)	Actual Interest Rates (%)	Minimum Opening Balance
U.S. DOLLAR	U.S. DOLLAR	U.S. DOLLAR	U.S. DOLLAR
Current	0.0%	0.0%	50.00
Call	0.05%-1.00%	0.05%-1.00%	100.00
1 Month	0.25%-0.35%	0.25%-0.35%	100.00
2 Months	0.35%-0.42%	0.35%-0.42%	100.00
3 Months	0.37%-0.45%	0.37%-0.45%	100.00
6 Months	0.40%-0.60%	0.40%-0.60%	100.00
12 Months	0.45%-0.75%	0.45%-0.75%	100.00
Over 24 Months	0.75%-1.25%	0.75%-1.26%	100.00

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

Member of Deposit Insurance Scheme of Botswana

Why Botswana's financial markets will boost stability



JAMES NTHOYI
HEAD OF MARKETS
ABSA BANK BOTSWANA

THE ABSA AFRICA FINANCIAL Markets Index (AFMI), now in its ninth edition, remains one of the continent's most respected assessments of financial market development. Produced in collaboration with the Official Monetary and Financial Institutions Forum (OMFIF), the index provides a data-driven benchmark that evaluates the openness, transparency, and sophistication of African

financial markets. Covering 29 economies, the AFMI represents nearly 80% of Africa's population and GDP, offering a uniquely comprehensive lens through which to understand the continent's financial readiness and reform momentum.

On 4 February 2026, policymakers, regulators, economists, and market practitioners gathered in Gaborone to unpack the latest findings of this influential index. Their discussions painted a portrait of a continent navigating global uncertainty, yet steadily progressing through reform, innovation, and institution-building.

Africa's Mixed but Meaningful Progress
The latest AFMI results reveal a continent experiencing both forward movement and challenge. While a notable number of countries registered improvements in their financial market environments, many others faced stagnation or decline. This divergence reflects the strain of global geopolitical shocks, liquidity tightening, and volatility affecting currencies and external balances across African economies. Still, the index highlights that reform-minded countries

continue to outperform, demonstrating that institutional reforms, transparency initiatives, and regulatory strengthening yield measurable benefits even in difficult times.

Botswana's Consistent Strengths in a Challenging Year
Botswana's financial market ecosystem continues to be recognised for its institutional stability, predictable policymaking, and strong macroeconomic foundations. These characteristics position the country as a beacon of reliability within a rapidly shifting global environment.

In the 2025 edition of the AFMI, Botswana improved its overall ranking to 6th place, reflecting meaningful progress in strengthening transparency, governance, and financial market development.

The latest AFMI underscores Botswana's outstanding performance in several areas essential to investor confidence: macroeconomic transparency and data reliability; a robust and well-regulated pension fund industry; and a strong regulatory and governance environment

supported by institutions such as the Bank of Botswana, NBFIRA, and the Botswana Stock Exchange.

At a time when investors globally are prioritising safety, predictability, and transparency over scale, Botswana's disciplined macro-financial posture is increasingly recognised as a strategic advantage.

Important Reforms and Positive Momentum

One of the year's most notable developments was Botswana's adoption of netting legislation, a reform that strengthens legal certainty for financial contracts and aligns the country more closely with international standards. This step is foundational to deeper market activity, as it supports more efficient risk management and enhances trust among local and global counterparties.

Botswana has also continued advancing in sustainable finance. The Botswana Stock Exchange's sustainability initiatives, including the development of a segment for green, social, and sustainability-linked bonds, as well as new ESG disclosure



guidance, signal a forward-looking policy agenda aligned with global investor expectations.

Challenges
Despite its institutional strengths, Botswana faces structural constraints that hinder deeper capital market development. Market depth remains limited, with modest levels of secondary-market liquidity and a narrow product universe. Although Botswana's markets are stable, they remain small relative to continental peers, limiting opportunities for large-scale issuance and trading.

The country also experienced pressure in its foreign exchange environment, reflecting external sector dynamics and market liquidity constraints. These challenges underscore the need for continued reforms to enhance FX market transparency, resilience, and participation.

Additionally, Botswana's financial product offering remains comparatively narrow. While innovative steps have been taken in sustainable finance, the country still lags behind markets introducing instruments such as sukuk, asset-backed securities, and structured products.

Strategic Imperatives for Botswana

The AFMI insights point toward several areas where Botswana can accelerate progress and strengthen its financial markets:

1. **Deepen Liquidity and Expand Market Products:** Introducing a broader array of tradable instruments would attract diverse investors and stimulate secondary-market activity.

2. **Reinforce FX Market Structure and Transparency:** Enhancing transparency, improving interbank liquidity, and modernising reporting standards can strengthen FX resilience.

3. **Complete Legal Modernisation:** Advancing supporting regulations and aligning with global standards on collateral position enforceability and broad-based adoption of financial market master agreements will boost legal certainty.

4. **Leverage Pension Capital:** Diversifying pension allocations into infrastructure, corporate credit, private assets, green investment and structured products can deepen domestic markets.

5. **Scale Leadership in Sustainable Finance:** Building issuer capacity and channeling investment from a broader investor base can position Botswana as a regional leader.

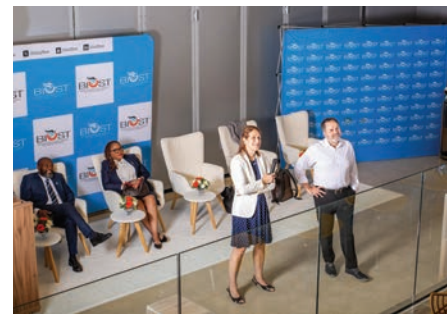
Conclusion: A Moment of Opportunity
Botswana's stability, transparency, and institutional maturity continue to set it apart in a challenging global financial landscape. As the AFMI discussions in Gaborone made clear, the country has already built a solid foundation and with targeted reforms in market depth, FX structure, legal frameworks, and sustainable finance, it can close the remaining gaps with Africa's financial market leaders.

Absa Bank Botswana remains committed to supporting this journey, working hand-in-hand with policymakers, investors, and market participants to unlock broader opportunity and position Botswana as one of Africa's most advanced and future-ready financial markets.

BIUST, MIT follow up on MASA Innovation Programme



Mr. Kabelo Nkwane, Acting Director, Value Chain and Cluster Development, Ministry of Trade and Entrepreneurship and Professor Patricia Makepe, Dean, School of Business and Professional Development



MASA Team with MIT Facilitators



Vice-Chancellor, Professor Otlogetswe Totolo, Ms Irene Grzybowski and Dr Marwan Hassoun



Ms Irene Grzybowski with Mr Mpho Edwin Tse, MASA student participant



Courtesy call with the VC Professor Otlogetswe Totolo



MASA Innovation Programme participants



Dr Marwan Hassoun with Mr Joseph Tinkane, a MASA participant



Mr Tsaone Swaab Thapelo, MASA participant giving feedback to the facilitators

The Botswana International University of Science and Technology and MIT University held a follow up meeting on the Mentorship in Action for Start-up Acceleration (MASA) Innovation programme which commenced in November 2025 at BIUST.

The MASA Innovation programme, which is modelled around MIT Sandbox, is one of the programmes under the Botswana Government- MIT partnership. The Botswana Government is funding this partnership through the Ministry of Trade and Entrepreneurship for a period of 5 years. Under this partnership, two programmes have been assigned to BIUST; the BIUST Student Entrepreneurship Fellowship Programme which is modelled around MIT Kuo Sharper Centre for Prosperity and Entrepreneurship's student fellowship programme, which is yearlong.

Upon giving an overview of the MASA Innovation programme, the Dean of School of Business and Professional Development at BIUST, Professor Patricia Makepe stated that the programme takes 4 months and the first cohort is about to complete it hence the need to do a follow up engagement on the progress of the student's projects with MIT experts. She noted that the programme is open to both undergraduate and postgraduate students so that when they complete their studies, they possess a business mind set which is key to tackling Botswana's unemployment challenge and economic diversification drive.

"We are looking into our students in science and

technology, particularly at BIUST because they have the core skills on how to set up innovation driven enterprises (IDEs) and this training is changing their mind sets so that they set up innovation driven enterprises instead of looking for employment. The students have ideas on innovation driven businesses, and we believe they are going to generate the greatest impact in terms of the contribution to the economy of our country. They are going to use their skills to set up businesses, produce products that they will sell locally and export into the African region, and this will change the economic landscape of the country. These innovation driven businesses will absorb graduates from different tertiary institutions including TVETs because they will need accountants, artisans to complement the technical expertise brought by our students," she said.

Makepe noted that the programme's bold intention is to create a foundation from which our billionaires will in the near future broaden Botswana's tax base from export revenues and transform Botswana's economy because the students will be the new diamonds.

For his part, the Acting Director of Value Chain and Cluster Development at the Ministry of Trade and Entrepreneurship, Mr Kabelo Nkwane stated that the duty of MIT is to execute the project and mentor the students to build capacity and his Ministry assists students to practicalize their ideas. He said that they assist students to overcome barriers pertaining to policies, regulations and licencing in cases where there are no policies that govern certain ideas that they

deem vital to the economy. The MASA Innovation programme has what is called Sandbox, fellowship, mentoring and boot camps that bring students together where they are given opportunities to pitch their ideas. "As a Ministry we will call organisations to listen to them and see if their ideas will work for the organisations. In cases where they need licences, we benchmark from other countries through Sandbox and make a license that allows them to operate. We are also financing this programme to ensure that all stakeholders work well together. Our duty is basically to coordinate the project and ensure that it achieves its objectives," he said.

BIUST students who enrolled for the programme in November 2025 had one on one session with representatives from MIT, Ms Irene Grzybowski and Dr Marwan Hassoun who connected them with different experts via Skype and also advised them on how to successfully execute their businesses.

Mr Tsaone Thapelo, a postgraduate student who enrolled for the programme said that Dr Hassoun's feedback on his project was vital because some of his ideas were fuzzy and he assisted him in making his business idea clear. He said that him and his team had mentorship sessions on a monthly basis and they assisted him in defining his clients, customer discovery, business model and many other things.

Mr Thuto Sebege, who is part of the Diamond Auction Intelligence team said this programme assisted him in getting his mind out of the lab to using his skills to change the lives of people. He said that

the mindset shift from STEM to entrepreneurship has been challenging but their interactions with MIT experts has been eye opening because Dr Hassoun advised them against focusing on only one customer base when pitching their ideas to investors and also the importance of networking. His team leader, Mr Onalethata Saubi noted that their project is going to assist Okavango Diamond Company to price their diamonds and because we are in the Artificial Intelligence era, they want to assist them in digitalizing and automating their processes to help save time and minimise unsold loads. He said that the sessions with Dr Hassoun have been helpful in terms of feedback and guidance.

Mr Michael Mudyarembura from the Nutra Salt team said the MIT mentors guided them with their business plan and they got advices from Dr Hassoun's connections via Skype who will further engage with them via email.

The MIT representative, Ms Irene Grzybowski noted that after doing follow ups with the students, she has realised that many projects are looking to solve real problems facing the country of Botswana. She said that this programme made them think differently about what it takes to start a business and is impressed that the students stuck through the programme.

Dr Hassoun urged the students to apply for the next cohort to continue their projects and ask for more resources and funding to bring their business to success.

MMG Khoemacau launches expansion project



MMG Khoemacau CEO, Zhao Jing Ivo

FRIDAY REPRESENTED A MAJOR milestone for Botswana's mining sector with the official launch of the MMG Khoemacau expansion project, a significant step forward in unlocking the full potential of the Kalahari Copper Belt.

The Botswana Investment and Trade Centre (BITC) is proud to have facilitated the MMG Khoemacau investment, which continues to demonstrate Botswana's attractiveness as a mining and investment destination. The expansion will see the mine grow from a 60ktpa copper-producing operation to an envisaged 130ktpa, strengthening Botswana's position as a key global supplier of copper and silver.

Khoemacau is a long-life copper and silver mine located in one of Africa's most prospective mineral regions. Ore mined underground using the longhole stoping method is transported via a purpose-built 35km bitumen haul road to the Boseto processing plant, where it is processed into copper concentrate before being transported to port and shipped to global markets. Since MMG announced its acquisition of the asset in November 2023 and completed the transaction in March 2024, the project has continued to gain momentum. The

mine currently produces between 43,000 and 53,000 tonnes of copper annually; with expansion plans set to significantly increase output and extend value for the country.

Beyond production, the project delivers strong national impact. The mine currently employs approximately 1,800 people, with an impressive 95% being citizens. With the planned expansion, employment is expected to grow to around 4,000 jobs, creating meaningful opportunities for Botswana and supporting local communities.

BITC played a central role in facilitating the project by coordinating key Government clearances, permits, and stakeholder engagement processes. The project has also seen the involvement of JCHX, a BITC-accredited company, which has secured a mining agreement lease with MMG Khoemacau, and further demonstrates the Centre's commitment to supporting investors and enabling partnerships that drive economic growth.

Projects such as MMG Khoemacau reflect Botswana's continued success in attracting high-impact investments that support industrial growth, skills development, and long-term economic sustainability. [Source: BITC]





Project Construction Site



Official Ground breaking of the project



Group Photo



Welcome remarks by Kgosi Justice Motthalane



Project Overview and keynote address by Far Property Director, Mr. Otaphathu Ramachandran



Keynote Address by Council Chairperson Hon. Obakeng Melome



Goodwill message by the District Commissioner Mr. Dick Kalantle



Guests



Token of Appreciation



Top table guests



Remarks by Mr. Prosper Shumbare - Project Manager -PDW



Vote of thanks by Area Member of Parliament Hon. Omphemetse Kwapa -Jwaneng Mabutsane constituency

FAR Property builds Commercial Centre in Sese village

▪ Brings a whole new shopping experience to Jwaneng township neighbourhood

Sese village is set for a new wave of growth following the groundbreaking for the development of a commercial centre by FAR Property- a real estate development and asset management company listed on the Botswana Stock Exchange (BSE), in partnership with Mabutsane District Council and the Sese Village Development Committee on Friday morning. The development, which marks major investment milestone for the partners, will bring much-needed services and job opportunities to the village and neighbouring communities in the outskirts of Jwaneng township. Welcoming guests to the groundbreaking ceremony, Kgosi Motthalane said the project was a sign that Sese was finally seeing

meaningful development. "I am happy that my village has grown to this point. Our children have been struggling to find jobs, and this development will help reduce unemployment," he said. FAR Property Director, Ramachandran Ottapathu said the project had been in the works for some time, with planning approvals taking longer than expected. He announced the commercial centre will cover 2,639 square metres and is valued at about P25 million. It will include shops, office space, a filling station and a police post. Construction will be carried out by Tetra Pellegance, owned by contractor Hamilton Morissa. Ottapathu said the project's biggest impact would be job creation. "In a small village like Sese, employment matters more than anything else. People will have income

and meaningful work, which helps the local economy," he said, adding that construction is expected to take six to seven months, with the centre likely to open before the end of the year (2026). Delivering the keynote address, Deputy Council Chairperson, Obakeng Malome said the project showed what could be achieved when local authorities work with the private sector. He said the development would improve access to essential services, create employment and generate income for the Sese VDC. "This is development brought closer to the people," Malome said. VDC Chairperson Toba Rabasimane thanked FAR Property for making the project possible and also acknowledged the Land Board for making land acquisition easier. For his part the Council Secretary, Lentswe

Lesenyegile urged the community to support the project, saying its success depended on local ownership. "This is your project. Without the community, it cannot succeed," he said. The commercial centre is expected to become a key service hub for Sese Village, Jwaneng Township and neighbouring villages in the district, once completed.



Lifestyle

Ezra's One-Man Concert

■ Promises world-class experience of live music

GORATAONE KGOSIMORE
editors@thepatriot.co.bw

CHART-TOPPING VOCALIST, Ezra Neethings has announced that come April 18th, he will take his blossoming music career to the next level, hosting a One-Man Live Show at the University of Botswana (UB) Indoor Arena in Gaborone.

With a catalogue of close to 50 songs, Neethings - who recently dropped his latest hit Tselo Ye, is set to treat fans to a one-of-a-kind experience. He currently boasts over 200 million streams, cementing his status as one of the country's most influential musical talents. Every time he takes to the stage, crowds buzz with excitement as his powerful vocals and captivating performances continue to impress both locally and beyond the country's borders.

Themed "Big Things You Go Do in My Life", a line from one of his popular songs, the concert marks a milestone in the singer's career. Neethings said the idea has been in discussion for the past three years and now feels like the right time to execute it, guided by his faith and personal growth.

He explained that hosting a one-man live band concert is a significant marker of growth for any artist, highlighting that his team is committed to delivering a world-class experience for fans. The performance will feature a mix of his old and new releases, including fan-favourite hits like 'Danko' and newly released 'Tselo Ye'.

Speaking on preparations,



Ezra Neethings

Neethings highlighted challenges faced by local artists when organising concerts, like securing venues which are often inaccessible due to high costs and limited availability. He pointed that institutions such as the National Arts Council should invest in state-of-the-art facilities to ease the burden on artists and support the growth of the creative industry.

His management team revealed that some details such as supporting acts are still at an early stage and will be announced as preparations

progress. Tickets are already on sale on his website ezraneethings.com, ranging from P100 for early bird to P600 for VIP.

Rise to Stardom

Before his breakthrough in music, Neethings worked as a police officer. However, his passion for music led him to leave and pursue his artistic calling full-time, a decision he says he does not regret. His leap of faith has paid off. In the past year alone, Neethings has amassed over

200 million streams across digital platforms, with nearly every release becoming a hit.

Botswana Entertainment Promoters Association (BEPA) President, Goaba Mojakgomo described Neethings as a steadily growing brand driven by determination and discipline, qualities he says have positioned him among the best musicians in Botswana and beyond.

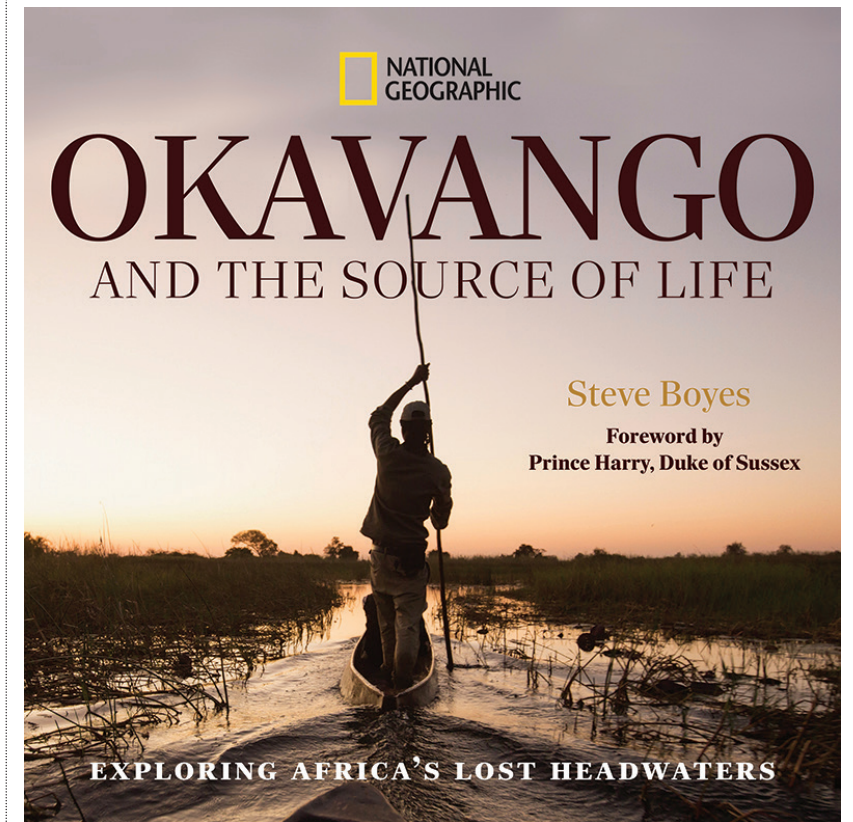
"His presence on our stages and at our events has become synonymous

with quality, excellence and authenticity. And it does not stop at our borders," Mojakgomo said.

He noted that Neethings has earned cross-border recognition, particularly in South Africa, where he has performed before audiences exceeding 80,000 people at the FNB National Stadium. He added that BEPA takes pride in witnessing Neethings' evolution and will continue to support his journey as his craft continues to break boundaries.

'A place to escape'

Prince Harry gushes over Botswana as his 'second home' in new book



PRINCE HARRY HAS GUSHED about his "second home" of Botswana, Africa, in a foreword for a new book. The 41-year-old Duke of Sussex wrote the foreword for *Okavango and the Source of Life: Exploring Africa's Lost Headwaters*, a new book by National Geographic explorer Steve Boyes.

Set to hit shelves on March 3, the book follows Boyes as he leads the Okavango Wilderness Project through remote regions of Africa. "There are some places on Earth that are so vast, beautiful and alive, they truly open your eyes and mind," Harry wrote in the foreword, shared by People.

"The Okavango Delta is one of those places, an enigmatic wetland that disappears into the Kalahari Desert and is home to the world's largest remaining elephant population - wilderness beyond comparison. This paradise has been my second home for more than 25 years, a place to escape and be enveloped by nature's sheer magnificence."

Harry has long spoken about his love for Africa, first travelling to the continent in 1997, shortly after the death of his mother, Princess Diana. "I first came in 1997, straight after my mum died. My dad [Prince Charles] told my brother [Prince William] and me to pack our bags - we were going to Africa to get away from it all," Harry revealed to Town

and Country in 2019. "My brother and I were brought up outdoors. We appreciate nature and everything about it. But it became more... This is where I feel more like myself than anywhere else in the world."

Harry added that he wished he could spend "more time in Africa" and that being there feels like "being plugged into the earth". "You leave this place with a real appreciation of what it means to be alive," he said. Over the past two decades, Harry has returned to Africa numerous times, forging both a personal sanctuary and a base for his charitable and conservation work across Lesotho, Botswana, Angola and South Africa.

In 2006, he founded the charity Sentebale to support children affected by HIV/AIDS, and has long worked alongside conservation group African Parks.

Harry has also shared his love for Africa with his wife, Meghan Markle. The couple travelled to Botswana early in their relationship in 2016, returned to celebrate Meghan's 36th birthday there in 2017, and later visited the continent on a royal tour with their son, Prince Archie, in 2019.

"Africa's in my heart, and Africa's in my soul," Prince Harry said at an April 2024 event focused on strategies for distributing capital to support the next generation in southern Africa.

Soul Dialogues*

Part 6: When Love Steeped Slowly
SOLOMON KGOSI.

THE LAST PIECE OF THIS SERIES is a love letter to hot water and a small measure of leaves.

- Tea is medicine
- Tea is comfort
- Tea is ritual
- Tea is a harbour
- Tea is a reason.

During my time in China I was privileged to visit the Fujian Tulou, incredible round, multi-story buildings simultaneously reminiscent of the rounddevals of old Botswana and the riads of Marrakesh.

Sitting in a 4-storey earth (mud) building; a building which had stood for more than a century, surrounded by green mountains, we drank tea in two sip cups. Time seemed simultaneously suspended and equally without end. And so, as I took one deep breath after another, I daydreamed just a little.



When Love Steeped Slowly...

There's a small teahouse in Gulang Yu Island, tucked behind a row of old banyan trees, where love began, not suddenly, but slowly, like tea steeping in hot water.

They met there by accident or maybe by quiet destiny. He was a young Chinese artist who often came to the teahouse to paint the patterns

of steam rising from teacups. She was a traveler from afar, curious about the culture, drawn in by the fragrance that drifted through the narrow streets.

That day, there was only one empty table. It had two chairs. She asked, shyly, if she could sit. He nodded. And just like that, two strangers shared a table, a silence, and

eventually, a story.

He ordered Longjing tea, known to the world outside as Dragon Well — a tea of honor and grace. When the pot arrived, he poured the first cup carefully, explaining that the first pour was never drunk; it was a greeting to the leaves, a sign of respect. She watched, fascinated by how his hands moved; precise yet fluid.

"Tea," he said, "is more than drink. It's a way of listening." She smiled, and he smiled back.

Then came the second pour, the one meant to be shared. They drank, and the world seemed to soften. The taste was pure and calm, almost like the beginning of trust.

With each sip, conversation began to bloom about art, about home, about dreams. She spoke of the desert that had raised her; he told her of the mountains that raised him. The teahouse, with its soft music and slow rhythm, wrapped them in warmth. Outside, tourists sped by on bicycles, carts, and boats. Not inside, inside, time forgot to hurry.

By the third cup, something unspoken settled between them. It wasn't loud or obvious, but it was there like the quiet strength of the tea itself. She told him she had always

rushed through life, always chasing what was next. He laughed gently and said, "Tea teaches us to wait. The flavor comes only when you let it rest."

They met again the next day. And the day after. Each time at the same table, with the same pot, sharing stories, laughter, and silence. The teahouse owner began to look forward to their visit; a connection sustained by tea.

Weeks passed, and when she finally had to leave, he poured her one last cup. "In China," he said softly, "we say tea is like life, bitter first, then sweet. But if you share it, both become beautiful."

She took the cup, hands trembling slightly, and drank. The warmth lingered long after. They said goodbye without promises, only a look that said, this isn't the end.

They still write to each other... sometimes sending tea leaves across oceans. As the water boils and another cup of tea sits brewing, each in turn remembers that day in Gulang Yu, when two hearts met not in haste, but in patience when love was not declared, but poured.

Because sometimes, love doesn't arrive like thunder. It brews like tea... slowly, gently, until steeped just so.

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

Bio- Solomon Kgosi

Solomon Kgosi is the pen name of two African women who are wonderers among you. They travel to remember to use their voice. They travel so they can use all the words they were born with. They travel to escape the creeping vine that is culture. They travel to meet new flowers, old dreams and to laugh at the impermanence of it all.

These words are the pictures they have taken on their travels.

IN THE MAGISTRATE COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF GABORONE HELD AT EXTENSION TWO
CASE NO: CCMEK-000417/24

In the matter between:
MOTLALEPULA MOAGIEMANG PLAINTIFF

And
TIBAPI MAZONGO DEFENDANT

NOTICE OF SALE IN EXECUTION

BE PLEASED TO TAKE NOTICE that pursuant to judgment of the above honorable Court the following property of the above - mentioned Respondent/Defendant will be sold by public Auction by **Deputy Sheriff Kebonyekgosi Ntebele** to the highest bidder as follows;
DATE OF SALE : 11th February 2026
VENUE : In front of Shell Mongala Mall, Kanye
TIME : 11:00 AM
PROPERTY TO BE SOLD : 1x1 Defy Fridge, 1x1 Lifestyle Living Microwave, 1x2 4 Burner Gas Stove, 1x1 Gas Cylinder, 1x1 Kitchen Unit Set, 1x1 Cereal Dispenser, 1x1 Hisense Washing Machine, 1x1 Skyworth TV, 1x1 LG Stereo Set, 1x1 TV Stand, 1x1 Wardrobe, 1x1 Chest Of Drawers, 1x1 fan, 1x1 Wall Mirror, 1x1 Hisense TV, 1x2 Decoders, BMW B190BLG.
TERMS OF SALE : Cash or Electronic Fund Transfer.

DEPUTY SHERIFF KEBONYEKGOSI NTEBELE
GABORONE
Contact Mr. Ntebele @ 71694303

INNOVATION: bio-inspired robot fish

RESearchers in the United Kingdom have developed a bio-inspired robot fish designed to swim through the ocean and collect microplastics that are difficult to remove using conventional cleanup methods.

The project was developed by scientists at the University of Surrey, where engineers focused on mimicking natural fish movements to reduce energy use and allow smooth navigation through marine environments.

Unlike traditional ocean-cleaning devices, this robot does not rely on batteries or external

charging. It uses a synthetic stomach system that breaks down plastic waste and converts it into usable energy.

This approach turns pollution into fuel, meaning the more plastic the robot encounters, the longer it can continue operating autonomously without human intervention.

Innovations like this highlight how robotics and environmental science are merging to address ocean pollution in scalable and sustainable ways, especially as microplastic contamination continues to rise globally.

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SUPER COMBO DEAL

700ml D'LITE Cooking Oil	2Ltr TASTIC Rice	10kg CHOPPIES/SUPER A1 Maize Meal	10kg OR CHOPPIES Sorghum Meal	10kg ALL GOLD Tomato Sauce	2kg C&B OR EXCELLA Mayonnaise	2kg CHOPPIES/LA LAGANE Macaroni
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...ALL FOR... 309⁹⁹

SUPER COMBO DEAL

750g EXCELLA TANGY MAYO	2Ltr D'LITE Cooking Oil	10kg EXCELLA/CHOPPIES Super Rice	10kg CHOPPIES Super Maize Meal	10kg CHOPPIES OR EXCELLA Mayonnaise	700ml WELLINGTON'S OR MAMAS Tomato Sauce	2x500g LA LAGANE OR BANETTI Macaroni
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BONUS SUCKS

CHOPPIES WHITE FLOUR

12,5 kg

130⁹⁹

CHOPPIES White Bread Flour

YARONA SUKIRI

White Sugar

5 kg

12.5kg

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YARONA White Sugar

QUALITY GUARANTEED SUPER A1

Food of the Nation PHALECHE YA RONA

10 kg Net

10kg

87⁹⁹

SUPER A1 Maize Meal

SUNBLEST MACARONI

3 kg

3kg

47⁹⁹

SUNBLEST Macaroni

BUY 2 FOR

DLITE COOKING OIL

2x2Ltr

92⁹⁹

DLITE Cooking Oil

AVAILABLE AT: Choppies Super Store Gantsi | Choppies Superstore - Loja Mall | Choppies Hyper - Station | Choppies Super Store Old Lobatse Road | Choppies Super store Bobonong | Choppies Superstore Kanye | Choppies Super stores Serowe | Choppies Super Stores Phikwe mall | Choppies Superstore Mogadishane Centre Mall | Choppies Super store-Borogo Junction | Choppies Super Stores Maun3 - Boseja | Choppies Superstore Pilane | Choppies Superstore Tsabong | Choppies Superstore Shakawe | Choppies Super Store Zeerust Road Lobatse | Choppies Superstore Moruti Mall Molepolole | Choppies Superstore Tlokeng 1 | Choppies Superstore Dumela | Choppies Super Store Ramotswa Eastgate | Choppies Super Store Bodibja Mall | Choppies Letlhakane II | Choppies Molepolole

While stocks last we reserve the right to limit quantities. Prices vat include unless otherwise stated. E & O.E. All prices are per item only unless otherwise stated. All Prices are in PULA.

Sport

Fans divided

WAR 2026 Ticket Prices

TICKET SALES WILL BE solely Online and will open on February 23.

- **Premium Stand** (Southern Stand at the finishing line): Day 1 – \$170 (approximately P2251) Day 2 onwards – \$200 (approximately P2468)
- **Gold Stand** (Grandstand North with a clear view of the final lap of the 100m): Day 1 – \$120 (approximately P1598) Day 2 onwards – \$150 (approximately P1986)
- **General Stand:** Day 1 – \$25 (approximately P331) Day 2 onwards – \$35 (approximately P463)
- **Children under 13 years** (Preferential): \$15 (approximately P198) (price remains unchanged for both days)

KITSO RAMONO
editors@thepatriot.co.bw

AFTER WEEKS OF anticipation, fans can finally breathe a sigh of relief as tickets for the World Athletics Relays Gaborone 2026 were officially released on Thursday.

The delay, which had left many eager spectators anxious, was explained by organisers as a necessary step to ensure a world-class and fair ticketing experience.

Speaking to the media, World Athletics Relays Gaborone 26 CEO Moses Bantsi said the extra time was spent finalising a secure digital ticketing system capable of handling the expected high demand from both local and international fans.

“We wanted to make sure every fan has a seamless experience when purchasing tickets.

The delay was not to frustrate anyone, it was to ensure that every seat is sold fairly and that fans can select their preferred spots without technical issues,” Bantsi said.

Bantsi also stressed that the organisers aimed to make tickets accessible to as many people as possible. Eighty percent of the stadium has been reserved for the most affordable ticket category, ensuring that local fans are not priced out of the historic event.

Special arrangements have also been made for children and persons with disabilities.

In addition to accessibility, the delay allowed organisers to

Complaints over WAR 2026 ticket prices



WAR Gaborone 26 CEO, Moses Bantsi

[PIC: GORATAONE KOGOSIMORE]

implement a fully digital ticketing system, with no printed tickets. Tickets will be delivered via email, SMS, or smartphone, each carrying

a unique QR code to prevent duplication or fraud. Fans will also be able to choose their own seats from a digital seating map, a feature designed to make the purchasing process smoother and more transparent.

Naledi Lemogang, the ticketing chairperson, said the extra time also allowed for preparations to manage crowd flow at the stadium, including zoned seating, gate scanning systems, and park-and-ride arrangements. Staff have been trained and systems fully tested to avoid congestion on event days.

Fans who want access to tickets can take part in an exclusive presale from 16 to 22 February by registering on the official World Athletics Relays Gaborone 26 website. General ticket sales open on 23 February.

Ticket prices start at \$25 for general seating, with premium seats opposite the finish line costing \$170 for Day 1 and \$200 for Day 2. Tickets for children under 13 are priced at \$15 per day.

With months to go before the event, organisers emphasised that the delay, though frustrating for fans, was necessary to ensure fairness, security, and a world-class experience for all spectators.

“Botswana is about to host one of the world’s top relay events. We want to see a full stadium and an atmosphere that matches the excitement of the competition,” Bantsi said.

Badminton All Africa Senior Champs 2026

STARTING TOMORROW, 9TH TO 15th February 2026, all roads lead to Royal Aria stadium in Tlokweng for the 2026 Badminton All Africa Senior Championships.

After the successful hosting of the Botswana International 2025, the Botswana Badminton Association is raising the bar once again! Botswana is proud to host the All Africa Senior Badminton Championships. Entrance is absolutely free!



Soccer talent search bears fruit

DENNIS MAMBURE*

THE FIRST PHASE OF THE ABSA Soccer Talent Search was held at Dinaledi Football Academy grounds in Oodi, Matebeleng in December 2025. The Absa Talent Search is a national initiative that recognises the transformative role of sport in youth development, inclusion, and long-term national progress.

Anchored in Absa bank’s brand promise, Your Story Matters, the programme seeks to create meaningful pathways for young talent, especially in communities that are often overlooked.

After the successful launch, the talent search extended scouting beyond traditional centres and into the heart of communities across Botswana. From Palapye to Francistown, Maun to Molepolole, Lobatse to Gaborone, football fields became arenas of possibility. Hundreds of youngsters,

many who had never before been scouted for professional football, turned up not only to showcase their technical ability but also to be evaluated on their attitude, discipline, and hunger for opportunity.

The programme looked beyond technical skill. While ball control, tactical awareness, and athletic ability were important, equal weight was placed on values such as teamwork, coachability, discipline, and commitment to education. This holistic model reflects Absa’s belief that sports development must go hand in hand with personal growth and academic progress.

From this nationwide process, more than 200 promising players emerged, and ultimately 52 exceptional young footballers advanced as finalists, 25 in the under 13 category and 27 in the under 15 group. The finals weekend brought together talent from across the country creating a rare space of

diversity, competition, and unity. For many of the young players, it was their first experience in a high-performance environment, one that mirrors what professional pathways demand.

All 52 finalists were absorbed into the Dinaledi Football Academy development programme, where they will benefit from structured training, mentorship, life skills development, and academic support. When properly structured, sport can be a powerful engine for development. It can build careers on and off the field, creating players, coaches, administrators, physiotherapists, analysts, and entrepreneurs. It can open doors to scholarships, professional clubs, and international opportunities. Most importantly, it builds discipline, confidence, and a sense of belonging in young people navigating an increasingly complex world.

*Head of Marketing and Corporate Affairs, Absa Bank Botswana



52 finalists were absorbed into the Dinaledi Football Academy development programme



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