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'HIT HARDER'

- Mabeo says some UDC ministers, MPs secretly cheer him on
- 'Ke Blanchero, mfana waga Lord Jesus!'

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MP FOR GAMALETE, Boniface Mabeo, is not only attracting the wrath of political nemesis for his robust and rubble rousing debates – there are some in the ruling Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) who are secretly cheering him on; encouraging him to intensify pressure on the Executive.

He says the situation is dire. Some ministers are unhappy with the state of the country but are afraid to speak out for fear of victimization. Instead, they wait for Parliament to adjourn, to secretly offer praise and urge Mabeo to push harder, sometimes even providing him with insider information.

FULL STORY ON PAGE 4



Saleshando

Cracks in BCP

- Four BCP MPs break ranks with party leadership
- Factions re-align ahead of elective congress
- MPs target important Central Committee positions

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THE OPPOSITION Botswana Congress Party (BCP) is grappling with unfolding internal conflict in Parliament where at least four of their MPs feel sidelined and have started pulling in a different direction, ahead of the upcoming elective congress in July.

The Patriot on Sunday has gathered information that peace is eluding the lime movement in Parliament as some of the BCP MPs feel unwanted by the party as they have expressed

interest to contest for some central committee positions. Some MPs are said to be unhappy with how BCP leadership in Parliament pushes them against the wall, mainly being accused of not implementing their mandate or responsibilities assigned to them under the shadow cabinet arrangement.

BCP President, Dumelang Saleshando constituted a shadow cabinet to play strong and effective oversight role on the ruling Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC). At the time of unveiling the shadow cabinet, Saleshando said the practice was in line with the Westminster Foundation of Democracy which Botswana had adopted. "Such an oversight will result in Parliament serving Batswana much better," said

Saleshando.

One MP told The Patriot on Sunday that the relationship in the BCP parliamentary caucus is extremely toxic, adding that the four concerned legislators were not invited to some party caucus meetings, especially those convened under emergency. "We are targeted not because of questioning our commitment to the shadow cabinet roles but it is because some of us have shown interest to contest for central committee positions held by some MPs in the current BCP central committee," confided the MP, adding that tension is escalating.

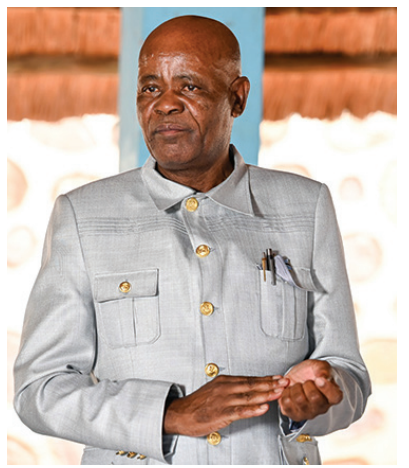
BCP is expected to hold its elective congress under the newly amended constitution following

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ZCC Limpopo bus tragedy

Families lose hope

- Hopelessly await SA indemnity for bus accident
- 'Govt only supported us with P1 700, samp and beef' – claim
- 'Still awaiting communication from SA officials following assessments' -Mokgware



Mokgware

exclusive interview, Tiny Balotlegi, whose mother was among those who died in the crash, said they received very little assistance from government after the tragedy.

NEARLY TWO YEARS AFTER the tragic Mmamatlakala bus tragedy that claimed the lives of 45 Zion Christian Church (ZCC) members from Molepolole on a pilgrimage to Limpopo, South Africa in 2024, families of the deceased are still waiting for compensation.

The accident left dozens of families in mourning and many children without caregivers. Now, relatives say the lack of financial support has only deepened their suffering. In an

Balotlegi revealed that they only received P1,700 from the government, as well as two 10kg bags of samp and a beef thigh during the early stages of the bereavement. "That is the only assistance we received from government after our loved ones died," she said.

She explained that after the funerals, which were held on March 28, 2024, representatives of the bereaved families were called to a meeting with the then Minister of

TO PAGE 5

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Botash donates to schools

AMANDA DAVID
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■ MP calls for equal distribution of resources in schools

BOTSWANA ASH (Botash) has donated printing and photocopying machines as well as notebooks to schools in the Nata-Gweta constituency of the Central district, where they operate.

Officiating at the handover in Sowa Town, Assistant Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education, Justin Hunyepa commended Botash for their commitment to education and community development, investing in the future of children and in the development of the nation.

“Government resources are under increasing pressure, and our schools often face constraints in infrastructure, equipment, and learning materials. One of the recurring operational challenges in many schools is access to reliable printing facilities. Initiatives such as this therefore play an important role in supporting teachers and ensuring that learners have access to equipment they need to succeed,” said Hunyepa.



BOTASH donated two multipurpose photocopying, printing machines, and notebooks to

Botash Acting Managing Director, Othusitse Seokamo had earlier reiterated their commitment to supporting self-sustaining community projects and working with other stakeholders to achieve long-term impact. This was evident from the donations they made in the past. In 2025, Botash invested over P14 million

in community development initiatives. In 2023, Botash focused their sponsorship on the education pillar, after identifying widespread printing challenges in schools that was negatively affecting both teaching and learning. “The demand for support in this area has continued. As part of

our 2025 CSR investment, we have expanded this initiative. Nxakato JSS is receiving a printing and photocopying machine after relying on support from Flamingo International School. Madawu JSS was chosen in recognition of the school’s consistent academic excellence and strong performance across the

region. Dukwi JSS is receiving notebooks for Form 1 and Form 2 students following shortages experienced in the past. The total value of this donation is approximately P760 000.00,” he said.

Inequality

For his part, area MP Lawrence Ookeditse called for fairness during distribution of resources to schools in the region, highlighting glaring disparities between schools. “There is a southern and south eastern part of the central district, and then there is the northern and north western part. There are many disparities between schools in those regions. This is common across government departments. We need to realize that the north part of the district is particularly disadvantaged and needs special attention,” he observed.

Ookeditse delivered his disappointment over extreme disparities to Hunyepa and other stakeholders, citing the example of food rationing in schools. He said some parts of the region were provided decent

meals for students while others in the same region are provided with bland food with no relish.

“In Manxotai or Tsokatshaa kids eat samp with just salt and water, while in the north eastern part of the same district they have gravy and meat. To get goods results we need justice and fairness to ensure that kids in poorer areas get a little more support,” he lamented.

Ookeditse also complained about heavy workloads for teachers, where one subject teacher is assigned to 12 classes, which does not happen anywhere else in the country. He applauded teachers in the district for continuing to be passionate and focused in ensuring students receive proper education despite the odds, such as lack of accommodation.

“One of the most demoralizing things for teachers is that, you judge them similar to teachers in urban areas. When we rank them in terms of performance, we rate them without weighting that caters for the disparities between them and schools in other places. Botash is trying really hard, but it is a hard job,” he added.

Pitso unlocks Tlokweng value



Tlokweng District Council Chairperson, Ontiretse Bogatsu

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THE BUSINESS PITSO roundtable held on Thursday organized by Tlokweng District Council is expected to unlock wealth and position Tlokweng as a commercial hub, Tlokweng District Council Chairperson Ontiretse Bogatsu has said.

The Pitso brought together stakeholders from community, council and businesses etc. Bogatsu said the objective is to establish Tlokweng as a commercial hub capable of sustaining its populace by capitalizing on its geographical advantages.

Bogatsu noted that the council is committed to maintaining a corruption-free environment that facilitates ease of doing business.

“We are ensuring a clean, safe, and attractive district is essential for investor confidence; we encourage your active participation in the National Clean-up Campaign. We advocate for a robust commercial agricultural sector and emphasize procurement from local suppliers,” she said, adding that the Local Consultative Council (LCC) was revitalized in June 2025 and now convenes quarterly, representing diverse business sectors.

The LCC, she said, it is very important forum for dialogue between the council and businesses on issues such as policy direction.

Bogatsu said going forward, they intend to have Business Pitso Roundtables at least once a year because

quarterly as initially intended seems to be challenging, to enhance dialogue among all stakeholders.

Meanwhile, Bogatsu said the current financial status facing the country has affected TDC cash flow, in response the Council was compelled to significantly reduce or suspend procurement activities and prioritizing critical, or emergency services and existing contractual obligations. Bogatsu said the council hope this situation will improve in future, adding that the ongoing engagement with taxi operators as they have been reluctant to move from temporary site, and they are working on facilitating relocation to the new taxi rank, balancing economic and planning considerations.

“Another challenge that we face as council is that, there is growing concern of several challenges affecting our community, including noise and disturbances from liquor outlets, illegal sale of liquor in residential areas, and unauthorized structures in public spaces,” said Bogatsu. Meanwhile, participants at the pitso encouraged relevant stakeholders such as Land board to accelerate allocation of land to the investors because at times the investors end up ditching Tlokweng and setup elsewhere as a result of delays in allocating them land.

Businesses also called on the council to consider reviewing its tariff rates more particularly that cash flow is a challenge due to reduced spending power by businesses including the council itself.

Dow Calls for Balanced Criminal Justice System

■ Push for action against perpetrators of sexual abuse of minors

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MEMBER OF Parliament for Kgatleng West and former High Court judge, Dr. Unity Dow has called for reforms to Botswana’s criminal justice system for a more balanced approach that

recognises both perpetrators and victims of crime.

Responding to the Ministry of Justice and Correctional Services 2026 Committee of Supply speech, Dow said the current system places disproportionate focus on offenders while neglecting the needs of victims.

Left Behind

She stressed that victims are rarely restored or adequately supported, raising concerns about whether they can truly have confidence in the justice system.

“Take the example of a 14-year-old girl who becomes pregnant. A crime has clearly been committed, and the focus turns to the perpetrator. But very little attention is



Dow

punishment, saying such a balance is essential to ensuring fairness and upholding human rights.

Stronger Protection

Commenting on a related issue, Minister of Labour and Home Affairs, Pius Mokgware expressed concern over the rising number of minors falling victim to sexual crimes.

He criticised the lack of commitment to protecting young girls, noting that in many cases, perpetrators, often older men are not prosecuted and continue their lives without consequence.

Mokgware further stated that rape has, in some instances, become normalised with some families accepting monetary compensation from perpetrators instead of pursuing justice.

He called for such cases to be treated with the seriousness they deserve and for stricter punishment to deter offenders, warning that these crimes have lasting and devastating effects on the futures of young victims.

given to justice for the girl or even her parents,” she said.

Dow emphasised that justice must be meaningful to those directly affected, warning that a system perceived as one-sided risks alienating the public. She further argued that this imbalance may be contributing to growing support for the death penalty, as many feel there is little visible justice for victims.

“Justice for the state or the public is not always justice for the individual,” she noted, calling for the introduction of restorative and reparative measures alongside

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Death Row: 19 await hanging

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NINETEEN (19) INMATES ARE currently in the death row and all eyes are on President Advocate Duma Boko to decide the fate, either to sign off their hanging or pardon them and reduce their punishment to jail terms, as the international community monitors the developments closely.

International human rights organizations have condemned Botswana for retaining capital punishment, one of the few remaining countries around the world that condemns murderers to die by hanging.

Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Nelson Ramaotwana on Thursday confirmed that 19 prisoners have been sentenced to death by the courts. He was answering a question in Parliament from Serowe South MP Leepetswe Lesedi, who wanted to know if the President or the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) government had imposed a moratorium on the death penalty. He also wanted to know the number of prisoners currently on death row and why no death warrants have been signed since October 2024 even for those found guilty of murder who have exhausted the legal process.

- Six await Boko's response to clemency application
- 'Govt has not changed position on death penalty'
- 799 prisoners are currently held for murder, manslaughter



Boko

Lesedi said it was important for the UDC government to make clear its position on death penalty, adding that it is unfair for 19 inmates to be on the death row without any action.

Ramaotwana said the position of government on capital punishment is that it is sanctioned by law and government acknowledges and respects it as provided for in the Penal Code. He said of the 19

prisoners on death row, six (6) have been through the Court of Appeal and four (4) of them were dismissed by the Court of Appeal before October 2024, while two (2) were dismissed in 2025.

Following dismissal of their appeals, Ramaotwana said the prisoners lodged applications for mercy from the President. "The President would then study the

records and representations by applicants to satisfy himself that all processes have been followed before exercising his executive authority. No decision has been made on any of the representations yet," said Ramaotwana.

Furthermore, he said there is critical point concerning three of the six (6) prisoners who have gone through the Court of Appeal. It has since emerged that their appeals were never heard by the Court of Appeal. Rather, the court dismissed their appeals because they had filed them out of time.

Ordinarily, Ramaotwana said the President would only take an executive decision when all judicial processes have been exhausted. He noted it is to be ascertained whether in these cases, the judicial process has been exhausted in relation to each of the three convicts. "Given that some of the prisoners have not had their appeals heard substantively, the matter is complex hence it has taken long to arrive at an executive decision on the applications for mercy," he explained.

Pressure has been mounting on Boko with calls being loud from the public demanding that he signs as matter of urgency the death warrants for convicts placed on the death row. However, while addressing a Botswana National Front (BNF)

leadership forum in Palapye recently, Boko said it is malicious that some people hold the view that he opposes death penalty.

He said his obligation as a lawyer, was to respect and implement the law, adding that the Clemency Committee had never recommended execution to him, rendering criticisms baseless. He reiterated that no personal feelings would influence death penalty but only the law will take course.

Murder Cases

Meanwhile, Ramaotwana murder/manslaughter cases have always been many in Botswana even before October 2024, indicating that his is a fact demonstrable by statistics. He said there are 799 prisoners held for murder/manslaughter either as convicted and sentenced or as remands awaiting trial. The convicted class comprise 382 inmates broken down as follows -19 are under death sentence; two under imprisonment for life and five are held at the Pleasure of the President.

Ramaotwana also said this is a class that was found guilty of the offence by courts but could not be given sentence or punishment because of their diminished legal responsibility for offence; and 356 are serving determinate terms of imprisonment.

'Con court long overdue' -Prof Balule

- Argues that constitutional court will safeguard human rights



Prof Balule
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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A constitutional court in Botswana is long overdue, especially due to the failure of the judiciary to promote local jurisprudence, enhance constitutional supremacy and strengthen the protection of human rights, Professor Tachilisa Balule has argued.

Presenting an academic paper analyzing the benefits and challenges associated with creating a constitutional court, Prof Balule - the Acting Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Botswana, criticized judges in local courts for failing the justice system by adopting a Constitutional Avoidance posture in their decisions. He observed that constitutional questions often raised by litigants often required expertise beyond the remit of general courts and that a dedicated body could provide greater clarity and uniformity in rulings.

Therefore, he argued that a constitutional court would serve as a specialized guardian of the Constitution to ensure consistency in constitutional interpretation and strengthening the protection of fundamental rights. "A Constitutional Court will act as a watchdog over the other arms of government, reinforcing constitutional supremacy," he said, emphasizing the role played by a constitutional court in deepening democracy and upholding the rule of law.

Prof Balule lamented that the current judicial framework had not always succeeded in adequately safeguarding certain rights, especially those of the minority or advancing constitutional development as reflected in a number of unsuccessful cases before the courts. He noted that constitutional litigation often placed the judiciary in direct contest with the legislature or the executive, an institutional tension that a specialised Constitutional Court could help to manage more effectively.

At the same time, he cautioned against overlooking possible drawbacks. Professor Balule warned of the risk of judicial overreach, where judges might be drawn into policymaking processes, potentially disrupting the balance of power among the branches of government. He also emphasised the importance of establishing an independent commission, separate from the Office of the President, to oversee appointments and safeguard the court's autonomy.

Furthermore, Professor Balule noted public concerns regarding the urgency of establishing a Constitutional Court ahead of the broader constitutional review process. He argued that while constitutional reform was necessary, it was often protracted and may not immediately yield substantive change. In contrast, the creation of a Constitutional Court could provide a more immediate institutional mechanism to strengthen the protection of human rights and promote constitutional supremacy.

Floods disrupt Okavango Delta tourism

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- Moremi game reserve closed, Khwai families evacuated

KHWAI VILLAGE IN THE Okavango Delta has been severely affected by flooding, forcing the evacuation of residents and disrupting tourism operations.

Rising water levels have submerged homes and cut off access roads, leaving some families stranded and in urgent need of assistance. Authorities, working with community members, have begun relocating affected residents to safer areas as conditions continue to deteriorate.

Councillor for Sankoyo, Khwai and Mababe, Tshabang Paul said the situation has not improved despite rainfall stopping in recent days. She said the local school remains closed, while several families have already been moved to safer areas.

Paul criticised government for delayed responses, saying the community is now facing serious challenges. She added that residents



Rising water levels have submerged homes and cut off access roads. (insert) Councillor for Sankoyo, Khwai and Mababe, Tshabang Paul

are struggling to travel to Maun to access essential services, as the Sankoyo-Khwai road is flooded and impassable.

The North West District Disaster

Management Committee has warned that the road linking Shorobe, Sankoyo, Mababe and Khwai is flooded and unsafe for travel. The committee said continuous heavy

rains have caused the flooding and advised motorists to avoid unnecessary travel along the route until conditions improve. Authorities said they are closely monitoring the situation and will provide updates as needed, emphasizing that public safety remains a top priority.

Families displaced

Meanwhile, the North West District Commissioner, Thabang Waloka said flooding in Khwai has affected 28 households. Six families have already been evacuated and provided with temporary shelter, while more evacuations are expected as water levels continue to rise. Most of the affected houses are traditional mud structures. Government has so far provided tents, but is appealing to the private sector to assist with food hampers, as many families have lost their supplies.

Meanwhile, road conditions in Moremi Game Reserve remain poor despite slight improvements. An aerial assessment conducted on the

12th of March found several routes, including Shorobe-Sankoyo and Khwai-South Gate, still difficult to navigate due to flooding.

Other key routes such as Xakanaxa to Third Bridge and Third Bridge to South Gate remain submerged, although gradual improvement has been noted in some areas. Authorities say if dry conditions persist, the reserve could reopen next week, but some sections, including Third Bridge, remain inaccessible.

Tourism losses

Operators in the tourism sector have decried the closure of Moremi Game Reserve, which has resulted in significant financial losses. HATAB Policy Advocacy and Membership Manager, Dichaba Molobe, said many mobile safari operators have been forced to cancel bookings. He also raised concern over government's handling of the closure, saying operators were not consulted despite being key stakeholders in the reserve.

Lion hunting to curb human-wildlife conflicts

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THE DEPARTMENT OF Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) has reintroduced lion hunting after more than a decade-long moratorium, citing increasing human-lion conflict and the need for sustainable conservation measures.

Although Botswana is home to an estimated 3,500 lions, conflict between humans and the species continues to rise, particularly in agricultural areas. DWNP records indicate that up to 3,466 lion-related conflict incidents occur annually, with retaliatory killings posing a growing threat to the species outside protected areas.

Acting DWNP Director, Dimakatso Ntshabe said the decision

to include lions in this year's hunting quota is part of an experimental, adaptive management strategy. He explained that revenue generated from hunting will be reinvested into programmes aimed at reducing conflict and supporting conservation efforts.

Nine lions have been allocated under the quota system to community trusts and the Hainaveld Farmers Association. Communities will be allowed to hunt one male lion, with expected revenue ranging between P300, 000 and P500, 000 per hunt. Ntshabe stressed the importance of developing a comprehensive Lion Management Strategy and Action Plan to ensure long-term sustainability, adding that the department remains committed to science-based and collaborative conservation.



Community representatives have welcomed the move, highlighting

both conservation and development benefits. Mochoni Kethuseng from

Itangoo Community Trust in New Xade said proceeds would fund conservation efforts and essential projects such as borehole drilling.

Meanwhile, Kealeboga Tudor said farmers in Hainaveld have long battled wildlife conflict, with lions and elephants frequently threatening livelihoods and safety. He believes the quota system will help manage problem animals while generating much-needed income.

Onosi Dithapo of Xwiskurusa Trust in Gantsi District added that community trusts play a crucial role in conservation, and that controlled wildlife utilisation can support both rural development and coexistence efforts.

Authorities say the move will be closely monitored to assess its impact on both lion populations and conflict reduction.

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'HIT HARDER'

■ MP Boniface Mabeo says some UDC ministers, MPs secretly cheer him on

KITSO RAMONO

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IT APPEARS MP FOR GAMALETE, Boniface Mabeo, is not only attracting the wreath of political nemesis for his robust and rubble rousing debates – there are some in the ruling Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) who are secretly cheering him on; encouraging him to intensify pressure on the Executive.

He says the situation is dire. Some ministers are also dissatisfied with the state of the country but are afraid to speak out for fear of victimisation. Instead, they wait for Parliament to adjourn, to secretly offer praise and urge him to push harder, sometimes even providing him with insider information.

By his own admission he has become enemy Number 1 to some ministers who are not taking kindly to his sharp and direct rebuke over their poor performance and failure to account. Some have stopped talking to him. While his presentations have taken social media by storm, making him to top the charts and dominate political conversations, it was when a leading South African podcast featured his sharp rebuke against the proposed introduction of Xhosa and Sotho languages in local school curriculum that his popularity reached another level.

"I was just in Pretoria yesterday and I am surprised by the level of attention I attract. This is unbelievable," he declares.

Ke Blanchero, mfanaga waga Lord Jesus!

With increased popularity, so is the increase in hostilities and risks of those whose toes ones steps on. "Ke Mfanaga wa Jesus. I am very safe and not scared of anyone. Even as you are here, I assure that there are angels in this room protecting you," he declares, confirming that he is staunch member of the Roman Catholic Church in Ramotswa where he often shares the Lord's Gospel. This assurance has not stopped some from sharing that they dream about his demise and hence constantly asking him to be careful. He appears more concerned also about the safety of his party President, Dumelang Saleshando.

He is not worried that one of these days, he will find himself unceremoniously thrown out of the chambers. "That is the least of my worries. People of GaMaletle did not send me to Parliament to be worried about such. I will say whatever I have to say without any fear in as far as it is the truth and helps our people one



Mabeo

way or the other," he declares.

Until recently, Mabeo has been just another MP; unnoticeable and not as loud. "I take my time to study the environment. Even when I arrived in Parliament the first day, I was uneasy. Now that I have settled, I am beginning to make my voice heard," he says. Switching on the microphone is one trigger but the biggest of them is the passion of voicing out concerns for his people. "I am passionate about raising issues for my people and as such I have to be as clear as possible when raising their issues," says Mabeo.

In one recent outburst in Parliament, he decried the poor and ugly plans of Botswana Housing Corporation (BHC) houses and likened them to the poor dressing sense of the responsible minister. When the minister turned up snazzy the next day, he was quick to praise him.

To another minister, he quizzes 'Ministera o kare o tsewa ke sididi! Why don't you ask that you be

reshuffled ha e le gore go a pala."

With a microphone at hand, Mabeo spells trouble for the frontbench; and as more people seek his intervention, tension on Parliament floor will reach new level. He promises he will never keep quiet.

Loved by many for his fearless questioning, and criticized by some for his aggressive style, he has carved a niche as a parliamentarian who refuses to let political decorum dilute accountability. But Mabeo's path to the parliamentary floor was anything but straightforward. His career began in the civil service, moving through Botswana Press Agency (BOPA), Botswana's Ministry of Youth Headquarters, the Ministry of Land and Housing, and later the Ministry of Land and Water. During this period, he gained exposure to national administration and the inner workings of government. Afterward, he spent a year with the United Nations in Botswana, working alongside the UN Development Programme (UNDP).

"It was an invaluable experience. I learned the importance of structure, communication, and understanding how large institutions operate," he recalls.

Political breakthrough

Despite this grounding, politics was not an immediate calling. Mabeo's first foray came in 2019, running under the Alliance for Progressive (AP). He lost that election, a setback he describes not as failure but as preparation. "I see it as a learning curve. It was just the beginning. I had to understand the political environment, the people, and the challenges that come with representing them," he says.

The personal sacrifices he made for that first campaign were immense. He had to sell almost everything he owned, including his cars, to finance the effort. "I took about P30,000 for the campaign. It was gone in the first week. Selling everything I had wasn't easy, but I was determined. I was unprepared in many ways, I was a blabbermouth at the time, but

that campaign taught me discipline, resilience, and the cost of public service," he recounts.

After a period of unemployment that tested his resolve, Mabeo joined ORASACOM, the Orange Simply Global Commission, South Africa, and Nigeria. He led communications for the Land and Water Transfer Project and later headed the entire ORASACOM communications office in St. Julian, South Africa. "That work taught me strategic communication. It shaped the way I handle messages, public perception, and leadership, skills that later proved essential in politics," he says.

Faith has also been a cornerstone of Mabeo's journey. Born to a single mother and introduced to politics by his grandmother, he recounts two vivid dreams that foretold his parliamentary journey. In one, he saw himself sitting in the very chambers where he would later serve. These visions, he says, gave him

confidence and clarity when he was approached to run for office.

When asked what motivated him to enter politics, Mabeo is unwavering. "I didn't go into politics for personal gain. I saw that the interests of ordinary people were often overlooked. Decisions were made for party benefit, personal agendas, or political convenience. I wanted to be a representative who spoke for the people, not for the party or self-interest," he explains.

His entry into the was rooted in family influence and historical loyalty. "My grandmother was a proud member. She would take me to political meetings, and from those early moments, I understood the importance of participation and commitment." His dedication to the party's ideals has shaped his approach to politics, giving him both direction and grounding," he recalls fondly. Mabeo's parliamentary presence is impossible to ignore. His style is characterised by passion, firmness, and a readiness

to challenge ministers directly. "I speak with passion. Sometimes, it comes across as shouting, but that's because I carry the cries and concerns of the people. I am their voice when they cannot speak," he says. Constituents regularly reach out to him, some in tears, seeking counsel or intervention. "I try to listen, to advise, and to act wherever I can. It's not about politics, it's about accountability and service," he says.

Even ministers, he notes, sometimes acknowledge his tenacity privately, though many remain wary of his approach. "Some hate me. They inherit credit for work or influence, and when I begin asking questions, they realise I am not intimidated. But I am not here for their comfort. I am here for truth, transparency, and the people I represent," he admits with a wry smile. Mabeo also emphasizes strategy and adaptation in his approach. "Politics is a stage. You have to read the room, command attention, and make sure your message is heard. There are moments when firmness is necessary, when passion must show, and when action speaks louder than words," he says.

He sees his role as a check on power, especially in matters of corruption, governance, and public welfare. He is candid about systemic issues, from health crises to audits of state institutions. "Accountability must be institutionalized. Whether big or small, corruption must be eliminated, and as opposition, it is our duty to ensure it is addressed," he insists. He has shown distrust to the ongoing forensic audit process, saying it was wrong for the president to have been the sole appointing authority for the company and overseeing structures. To him it could have worked had the process been overseen a Parliamentary Committee drawn from all parties.

Will serve 20 years

When it is put to him that his constituents have in recent years not been patient with their political representatives, he jumps to declare he will serve four terms. "I will return in 2029 and win further terms. I expect that we will take over government and hopefully serve as a minister. I see this UDC government as a one-term wonder. They are divided even among themselves and do not trust each other. We work with these people, they tell us," he says. He declines to answer a question on whether his political ambitions include being President of the country. "No no no, we can't have such questions," he says, laughing.

Cracks in BCP

FROM PAGE 1

the constitutional conference that was held last year in Francistown. The party indicated that constitutional review aims to adapt to the evolving political landscape and bolster the party's relevance in contemporary governance.

On Friday, BCP Publicity Secretary Gregory Kelebone said the party remains a solid and united, adding that they are not aware of any MPs who have complained that they feel victimised. He said if indeed there were any members who are victimised, they would have reported such victimisation to relevant structures within the party.

"However, we should accept that, as with any elective Congress, there will be lobby groups. That's the sign of a healthy democracy. Indeed, the party expects there will be such groups as soon as the Election Writ has been issued," said Kelebone. In addition, Kelebone said the party expects healthy, respectful competition among such lobby groups, adding that BCP also expects the groups to disband as soon as election results have been announced. He said BCP will hold its National Conference in July, during

which they shall have Executive leadership elections. He said the writ has not been issued yet, and the party will only know which of its members are vying and for which positions after it had been issued.

"As such, we do not expect any of our members to have started canvassing for votes. We shall hold the conference in Mogoditshane. We believe this will aid our efforts at bringing the party to the South," he explained.

Political equality

Retired University of Botswana (UB) political science lecturer Dr Adam Mfundisi said the BCP seems to be the most organized political party in Botswana, adding that competitive elections in any organization are vital for their transformation and performance. He said the BCP should open up its electoral processes and procedures to attract talent to its leadership dynamics. According to him, political equality and equity are fundamental in broadening the BCP's appeals across the length and breadth of Botswana.

"It must attract all politically

diverse population in order to make it competitive in BW. The congress of properly managed should galvanise and reinforce the party's appeal to the general populace," said Dr Mfundisi. Dr Mfundisi observed that the BCP could be entering a new phase ahead of looking for a potential of Saleshando as president possibly closing the chapter of the Saleshando dynasty. He said Saleshando currently as BCP leader offers hope and prosperity for the party, buttressing that His character and leadership have strengthened the party as reflective on its performance of the last polls.

He said Saleshando's organisational capacity, proficiency, political prowess, vision, cognitive skills, emotional intelligence and critical thinking capacity contribute to BCP appeals to diverse population. "In addition, his contributions in Parliament together with BCP MPs, reinforce the credibility and appeal of the party. The BCP presents itself as an effective alternative to the UDC government. Individually and collectively, they have contributed immensely to the quality of the debate in BW Parliament," he added.

BIUST, BIF launch NuCarbon solution

LETTICIA MAKUKU

editors@thepatriot.co.bw

THE BOTSWANA International University of Science and Technology (BIUST) in collaboration with Botswana Innovation Fund (BIF) officially launched the NuCarbon solution on Thursday at the university campus in Palapye.

Welcoming guests, Acting Vice Chancellor of BIUST -Professor Elisha Shemang said the Poultry Litter Pyrolysis Plant project began as a research concept and evolved into a tangible system capable of transforming poultry litter traditionally viewed as an agricultural waste product, into valuable outputs such as biochar oil and syngas. He said that is a powerful demonstration of how scientific research and engineering innovation can turn environmental challenges into economic opportunities.

"This project represents an executive example of the synergy that can exist between academia, industry and government. It illustrates how universities can serve as engines of practical innovation, developing

solutions that can respond directly to national challenges while simultaneously advancing scientific knowledge. Like many ambitions, research and engineering projects, it has required persistence, creativity and a strong commitment to seeing an idea through to completion. This project was driven by the innovative spirit and determination of one of our own researchers whose work exemplifies the quality of talent that BIUST continues to nurture," he said.

Prof Shemang noted that groundbreaking innovation does not occur in isolation, it thrives within a supportive academic environment, one that provides mentorship, intellectual guidance and collaborative engagement. He lauded Dr Daniel Botha's hands on leadership and technical ingenuity in translating the concept into a working system.

The founder and Chief Executive Officer of NuCarbon Technology (Pty) Ltd, Dr Daniel Botha gave insights on NuCarbon product development journey. He highlighted that was funded by Botswana Innovation Fund to the tune of P1.49 million. He said that the

goal was to take agricultural waste, specifically poultry litter, which Botswana chicken farmers produce in enormous quantities and largely regard it as a problem and convert it into something valuable. The technology is called pyrolysis, the thermo chemical conversion of organic material in the absence of oxygen, feed in biomass, get out bio-oil, combustible gas and biochar.

Botha noted that each of those outputs has value, the bio-oil can be used as fuel, the gas can power the plant itself and the biochar can be returned to the soil as a fertiliser amendment that improves water retention and crop yield for years. He applauded and expressed gratitude towards Botswana Innovation Fund and BDIH for investing in the project that will continue to pay off for decades.

In his keynote address, the Assistant Minister of Communications and Innovation, Shawn Ntshale said as Botswana's poultry sector continues to grow, the management of poultry litter and other agricultural waste becomes increasingly important. He said innovative solutions such

as pyrolysis technology provide an opportunity to convert waste into valuable outputs while reducing environmental impact.

"Around the world there is increasing emphasis on circular economies, systems in which waste materials are transformed into useful resources. Technologies like the one developed by NuCarbon contribute directly to this vision by converting poultry litter into valuable products," he said.

Accordsign to the Innovation Fund Coordinator at BIF, Sithembile Dingake funding matters because behind every project milestone there is a long journey of testing, learning, adjusting and continuing when progress is not visible. She noted that this project was affected by Covid-19 pandemic in terms of getting logistics done.

"Collaboration is not optional, it is necessary, one institution can bring technical knowledge and another party may bring funding and the real value lies in knowing that you don't have to do everything on your own. This project demonstrates what we can achieve when we work together," she said.

BPF crisis deepens

- 'Without Khama BPF is dead, UDC might shun them' -expert
- No signs of peace between Ookeditse, Galebotswe camps

BAKANG TIRO
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WITH THE PROTRACTED POWER struggle in Botswana Patriotic Front (BPF) not showing any signs of ease, political analysts have cautioned that BPF could find itself in a demise mode just like the once revered Botswana Movement for Democracy (BMD). BPF this week found itself in a new power battle twist between warring factions of Lawrence Ookeditse and Gaolathe Galebotswe after court nullified the 2025 Serowe elective congress. Ookeditse's faction swept key central committee positions, a development that irked the Galebotswe faction which dragged Ookeditse led central committee to court citing that the congress was ultra vires BPF constitution.

Lobatse High Court Judge William Moncho delivered a blow to Ookeditse ruling that his central committee is unconstitutional calling for the two warring parties to reconcile outside the court.

Commenting on BPF developments, retired University of Botswana (UB) political science lecturer Dr Adam Mfundisi said BPF is a party embroiled in turmoil

and its sitting on a death bed. He said critiques of the formation of the BPF have argued it was a factional outfit on the internal wars within the BDP, emanating from former president Ian Khama and Mokgweetsi Masisi debacle. He said the BPF in its inception, it grew massively in the Bamangwato heartland due to Khama influence as the indomitable chief of the area and beyond. Dr Mfundisi said without Khama, the party is in disarray due to dearth in strategic leadership.

"The BPF as a party lacks a visionary leader imbued with character, charisma, discipline, consensus builder, and organisational capacity. Political parties anchored on populism, Godfatherism, and/or personality are unsustainable in the long-term," said Dr Mfundisi.

UDC bromance

Another political commentator, Kitso Morekisi said the BPF should put its house in order before its tension could reach a breaking point. He said the party has suffered power struggle since its formation spanning from the presidency of its founding president Biggie Butale to date.

According to him, factionalism dominates BPF and that could also make it

difficult for the party to be appealing to the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC), a ruling coalition that BPF has strategic working relationship with.

He said if BPF is to survive in the future, it should join the UDC but joining UDC in its current shape would also be detrimental to the growth and strength of the UDC as it would be seeking reclaim power in 2029.

"It is all up to the party to save itself or bite the dust. The party is in a dangerous path and it could face potential demise more so that it is considered a regional party rooted in GaMmangwato. The party must be working on the gains it achieved such as winning five (5) seats in Parliament to fully build itself," he said.

Ookeditse buttressed that BPF will uphold its current relationship with UDC, adding that members of the party would also decide whether it joins UDC officially or continue relations under existing arrangement.

Fresh Congress

Meanwhile, embattled party leader Lawrence Ookeditse while addressing the

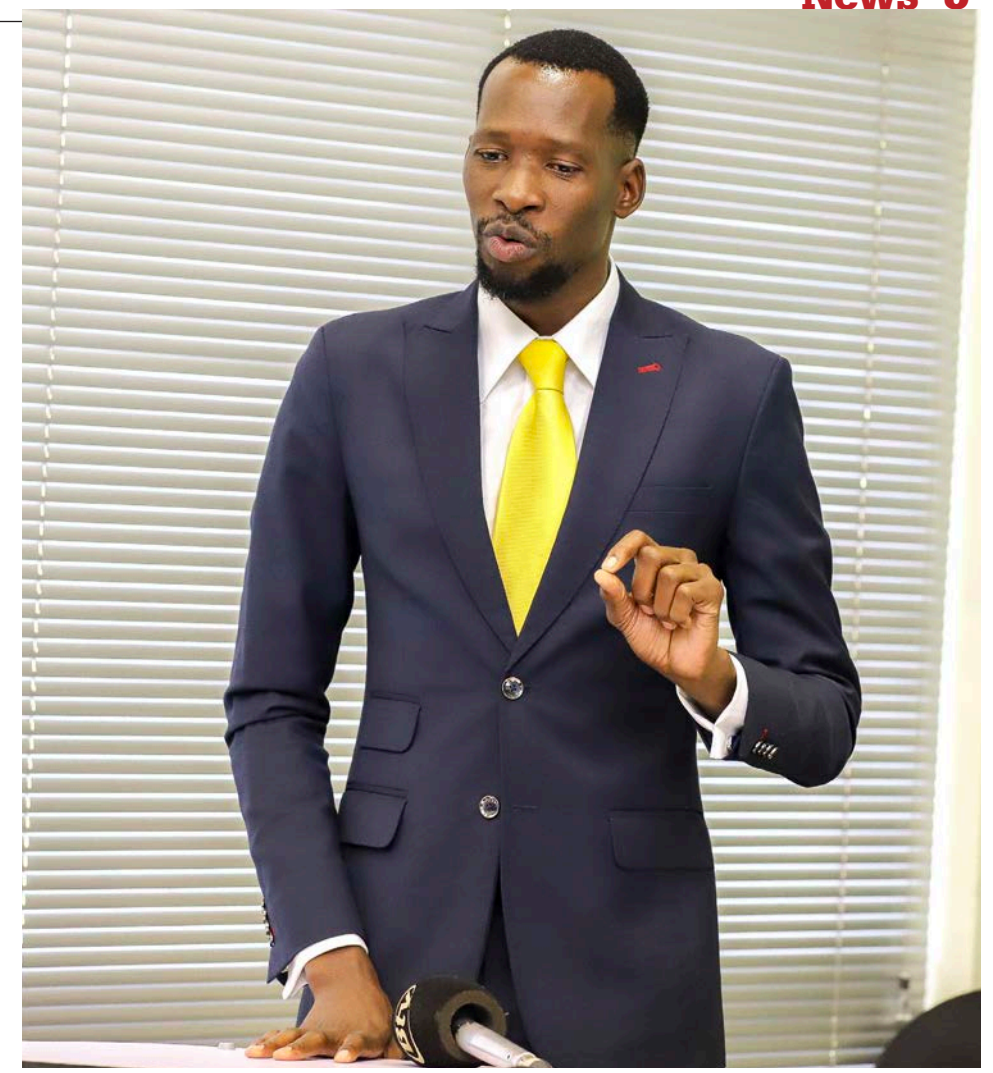
media on Wednesday said a new elective congress would be called to give members of the party to elect their desired leadership.

Ookeditse said the congress will be convened in three months but said he remains the duly elected president of the party and his central committee is liable to discharge functions of running the party.

"We are also going to engage the other party for reconciliation purposes. We are not concerned by whatever is happening because we believe that members would decide the future of their party. BPF remain strong and will emerge much stronger from the current political storm as some may put it," said Ookeditse calmly.

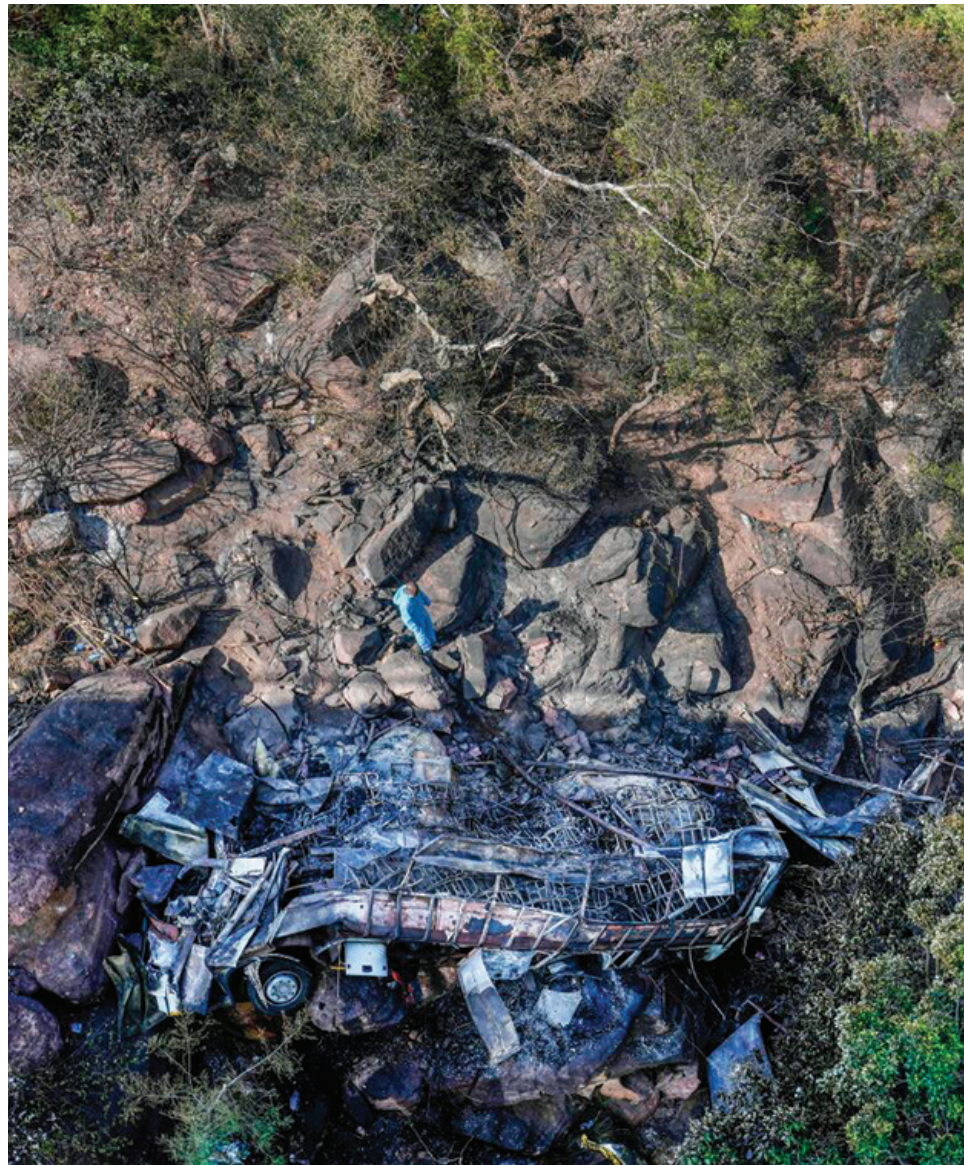
On the other hand, the spokesperson of Basirelets Ba Molao Motheo faction Modiri Lucas said the Ookeditse faction must accept that it has lost the case and therefore it must surrender leadership.

Lucas said Basirelets Ba Molao Motheo is in charge of the party with interim central committee that would in near future convene a congress in line with BPF constitution, urging BPF members to be calm.



Ookeditse

Families lose hope



Mmamatlakala Bridge accident that claimed lives of 45 Batswana pilgrims

FROM PAGE 1

State President, Kabo Morwaeng, alongside the Mothusa Kgosi in Molepolole. At the meeting, Morwaeng informed them that government had sourced lawyers who would assist families in securing compensation from South Africa's Road Accident Fund (RAF), since the accident involved cross-border processes.

However, Balotlegi said the proposal was met with resistance after families were told the lawyers would take 25 percent of the compensation. "We refused because we believed government would help facilitate the process without such deductions," she said.

According to Balotlegi, they were later called back and informed that the compensation would only cover beneficiaries who were children of the deceased and under the age of 18. She said families were then given evaluation forms authorising South African authorities to assess whether potential beneficiaries qualified to receive support from the RAF and whether they had been financially supported by the deceased.

Officials from South Africa reportedly visited some homes to conduct assessments, but Balotlegi claims not all affected households were evaluated. "Some yards were visited, but others were never assessed. Since then, we have not received any clear feedback," she said, adding that attempts to seek updates from local leadership hit a dead end, yielding nothing.

"Whenever we ask the council chairperson or council secretary for answers, they tell us there is nothing they can do and that we must be patient while waiting for the officials from South Africa to come back," she said.

She also criticised the eligibility criteria, arguing that many of the deceased had been caring for grandchildren rather than their own biological children. "A lot of the people who died were grandparents raising their grandchildren. If the rule says only children under 18 qualify, many families will get nothing," she cried.

Balotlegi shared that her mother had been the primary caregiver for her disabled child while she worked in the city.

Since her mother's death, she said she was forced to quit her job to take care of the child, who suffers from cerebral palsy. "I had to leave my job and return home to take care of my son because my mother was the one looking after him," she said.

She further expressed frustration that some local leaders have recently approached families about erecting a monument in honour of the deceased, while the issue of compensation remains unresolved.

"We are still struggling to get what we deserve, yet they want to talk about monuments. That reopens wounds for families who are still suffering," Balotlegi said, insisting that families want answers and support first before any memorial initiatives are considered.

The Minister of Labour and Home Affairs, Pius Mokgware said government has provided assistance to victims and their families where possible, including support during funerals and access to counselling services. Regarding compensation from South Africa's Road Accident Fund, Mokgware said they are unable to give timelines for disbursement of compensation funds, noting that Botswana is still awaiting communication from South African officials following earlier assessments of the victims.



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Opinions, Reviews & Analysis

Comment

Shift to viable agriculture enterprises

IN A RECENT INTERVIEW, THE QUESTION was put bluntly by a journalist. Can agriculture replace diamonds? No! was a prompt and curt response from an Economist - a former Deputy Governor of the central bank - Bank of Botswana.

For many years, agriculture policy often revolved around government programs designed to support, stimulate, and assist would-be farmers. And understandably so, many Batswana welcomed them. They created a bit of hope, access, and opportunity.

But over time, we must also admit a difficult truth, while other programs helped, many became expensive, inefficient, and in some cases unsustainable. Too often, farming survived on support rather than productivity and markets. Mind boggling statistics were recently shared showing how over the years government has been pouring billions of pula down the drain - an exercise in futility through such agriculture assistance programs.

In the 2026/27 Budget, the focus has clearly shifted to value chains, not isolated production; Food security linked to

markets; Export competitiveness; Value addition and agro-processing. The Budget highlights the turnaround of BMC, Foot and Mouth Disease as an economic emergency not just a veterinary issue, seed production and self-sufficiency through NARDI, the Botswana Mercantile Exchange to improve market access and price discovery.

With Agriculture not producing enough value to compete regionally or globally, this does not mean government is abandoning farmers. It means government is asking agriculture to stand on stronger economic legs. It is time to move from open-ended free for all assistance programs to targeted markets. If approached with structure and discipline, opportunities exist in components of the agriculture sector, among them hydroponics and protected farming, seed production and input supply, agro-processing and packaging, aggregation and cooperative models, export horticulture, cold chain and logistics and digital agriculture platforms.

The conversation is slowly shifting from "which assistance program can I apply for", to "how do I build a viable agricultural

enterprise?" Clearly, some Batswana who are used to FREE "manna from heaven" are either in disagreement or remain skeptical. But if Botswana is serious about competing in regional and global markets, this transition is not just necessary it is unavoidable.

Agro-industrial revolution

Without political will, agriculture transformation and revival will be dead on arrival. Political leaders must move from being gatekeepers of regressive policies, bye-laws and become architects of an enabling environment. We don't need more midnight breathalyzers, we need legislation that makes it easy to build a factory, run a workshop, and trade across borders.

Batswana have always been pastoral farmers. Cattle are our comparative advantage. Yet, we continue to truck that wealth away to abattoirs in Lobatse, Francistown and Maun. Consequently, profits and jobs follow the cattle away from farmers. By moving away from just selling live animals and raw crops, farmers can capture the high-value stages of the agricultural value chain.

Key industries and their entire value chains that could transform the agriculture sector include;

Meat processing plant

Establishing a modern facility that would move farmers beyond selling raw carcasses to producing high-value vacuum-packed prime cuts, biltong, and canned meats for the regional SADC market. A processing plant requiring an investment of roughly P50 million to P65 million could generate over P100 million in annual revenue and create at least 500 direct and indirect permanent jobs. Furthermore, local tanneries would ensure that waste hides are treated immediately, turning them into high-grade leather for footwear and mining PPE rather than letting them rot. This industrial base would create a massive ripple effect for our farmers at the cattle posts and lands.

Animal feed plant

Animal feed milling plant that processes locally grown yellow maize, sorghum, and lablab, will turn arable lands into green gold. Local farmers will stop being subsistence growers and become industrial

raw-material suppliers to the milling plant. An initial investment of P20 million to P25 million into such a mill would yield roughly P45 million in annual revenue and provide 50 direct manufacturing jobs. More importantly, it will create hundreds of indirect jobs in harvesting, baling, and transport, while lowering the cost of feed for our cattle farmers. This will create a circular economy where money circulates in the local economy.

Dairy production

Dairy production by building new or fully operationalizing existing milk collection and processing plants in different parts of the country. With government prioritizing the refurbishment of the Serowe plant for the 2026/2027 budget cycle with a dedicated P8 million allocation farmers can target P20 million in annual revenue from fresh milk, yoghurt and madila for the entire SADC region, backed by a local Cold-Chain Logistics Hub where our own youth own the refrigerated trucks moving produce directly to the readily available markets. This plant alone would provide 40 direct jobs and support dozens of

small-scale dairy farmers who currently have no market for their milk. The impact of this shift extends far beyond individual villages. Industrializing a single village can contribute directly to Botswana's goal of raising agriculture's GDP share from a measly 2% to 10%, reducing the national import bill and ensuring food security.

Political will

Politicians need to realise that the era of business as usual is over. Agro-industrial revolution cannot be compromised by outdated and barbaric pieces of legislation. Politicians should be innovative enough to craft enabling legislation that incentivizes manufacturing and eases the cost of doing business. If you provide the political will, the private sector and the people will provide the sweat and the capital. Let us stop mourning the past failures of the agriculture sector and start building the future— villages that manufacture, villages that employ their own, and villages that lead. All it takes to ensure that villages are not relics reeling under poverty is to embrace viable agriculture enterprises to drive agro-industrial revolution.



ADAM PHETLHE ON SUNDAY!

PERHAPS TO SAVE FACE, AFTER JUDGE Moncho resisted pleas to be confirmed as the legitimate President Botswana Patriotic Front (BPF), Nata/Gweta MP Lawrence Ookeditse says he will not struggle to defend his seat in 2029, whether as an independent candidate or under any political party.

Seeking to be declared the winner of the controversial BPF congress in Serowe in November 2025, Ookeditse claimed he was duly elected at the meeting. Judge Moncho rejected the claim, ruling that Ookeditse and company failed to establish prima facie right for the order sought.

Despite being rocked by instability since formation, BPF pulled off positive electoral results in 2019 and 2024. Founded shortly before

With BPF divided, Ookeditse is vulnerable

the 2019 general election, the BPF deserves applause for that achievement. That said, the Serowe congress deteriorated the trust deficit, mutual respect and collegiality between all BPF structures to new lows. This was abundantly evident during the ill-fated congress.

At the heart of disagreements was that the Ookeditse camp wanted to join the ruling Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) while the other camp led by Mephato Reatile objected vehemently. Reatile camp proposed a pact model where the BPF will retain its full identity and autonomy.

Given the contradictory stance, the factions could not amicably congregate under one roof to decide the fate of the party whatever the agenda. It was not surprising when the congress degenerated into utter chaos and confusion where the two camps nearly exchanged blows. The stakes were so high that nothing could be left to chance. The standoff will continue as long as the UDC question remains a topical issue at BPF.

Ookeditse vulnerabilities
Judge Moncho's ruling has dented Ookeditse's political future in many ways. It has nullified his claim to the leadership of the BPF and consequently, with no authority to lead and give



Ookeditse

BPF direction, Ookeditse's influence has been significantly eroded. He stands like an Emperor with no clothes on! That is the tragedy of politics when least expected. But given his political pedigree, he may have something up his sleeve to feed detractors a humble pie. Only time will tell!

Ookeditse is one of the two BPF MPs who are Assistant Ministers in the UDC cabinet. The other is Mathoothe. They are in the same camp and were appointed to cabinet because they support the proposition to join the UDC. Ookeditse won the Nata/Gweta parliamentary seat under the BPF ticket in the 2024 general election, garnering 6 205 votes while the UDC received a paltry 844. The holder - a BDP candidate, received 2289 votes followed by BCP's 1 934. Without a doubt, Ookeditse beat his opponents' hands down with over 3 000 votes. The UDC, which he desperately wants to join could not garner over a thousand votes.

BPF popularity
Clearly the BPF is currently the most popular political party in the constituency. Should the party go into 2029 elections with the current divisions, Ookeditse will fail to secure the same numbers, contrary to his convictions. The BPF faction opposing him will field their

own candidate to challenge him, in the process splitting the party vote.

The UDC does not hold impressive numbers in the Nata/Gweta constituency and may not help Ookeditse much in 2029. A divided BPF is certainly not good for Lawrence Ookeditse's re-election for the Nata/Gweta constituency and the other four MPs from the party in 2029. For the last two general elections the BPF is a party that has received growing number of votes bigger than any other, hence Ookeditse's landslide victory last year. The BPF has dominated the Central District in the last two general elections by dislodging the BDP from constituencies it dominated since the first elections in Botswana. It is in the interests of the UDC to ensure such constituencies are all retained in 2029 for the survival of the BPF. Such dominance in Gammangwato may not be guaranteed when the BPF is divided right down the middle. In the broader scheme of things, I argue that Ookeditse's chances will be diminished under a divided BPF in 2029. He must pull a political masterstroke of sorts for his political survival.

I am prepared to be persuaded otherwise as always. Judge for Yourself!
adamphetlhe08@gmail.com

A1 is a death trap

DRIVING ALONG THE A1 ON THE 18th of March 2025 around 1230hrs near Serule, I found what



looked like engineering minds on duty with traffic police officers.

I was shocked traveling to the North of the country when I saw some road works patching potholes with sand. I don't know what type of sand but on my return a day later the rains had washed away the patches

and couldn't help but wonder, what a waste of resources and time. This road needs to be completely redone not patching potholes.

Some of these potholes are so big that they attract livestock to the road to drink water that collects in them. As we're almost getting to Easter Holidays, I would like to advise

motorists using A1-road to avoid driving at

night. Transport department should encourage motorist to heed this advice to avoid damages to their vehicles.

Driving on the A1 at night is risking fatal accidents. It is dangerous and at your own risk to travel at night. I also expect traffic police to increase patrols and monitoring to nab reckless drivers, who drive at high speed in such terrible road conditions. Maybe we the road users, including big businesses, should consider contributing a little, say P50 for the reconstruction of the A1-road since Government has made it clear that public coffers are dry!

Edmond Mdluli
Jackals No1

IN THE MAGISTRATE COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN HELD AT LOBATSE		CASE NO: CCMLB-000483/25
In the matter between: KHUMO TSHEPO KGOPA		PLAINTIFF
And KEDUMETSE BAREKI		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: 30th March 2026		
VENUE: In Town opposite Shell Filling Station Old Mall, Lobatse Lobatse		
TIME: 10:30 AM		
PROPERTY TO BE SOLD: 1x1 Toyota Ipsum Registration Number B434BGJ (non runner), 1x2 KIC Fridges, 1x1 Gas Cylinder, 1x1 4 Burner Gas Stove, 1x3 Irons, 1x1 Sinter Television, 1x1 Mirror, 1x1 3 Piece Sofa, 1x1 Wooden Coffee Table, 1x1 Glass Table, 1x1 Floor Mat, 1x2 Beds, 1x1 Honda CRV Registration Number B905BWK.		
TERMS OF SALE: Cash or Electronic Fund Transfer.		
DEPUTY SHERIFF KEBONYEKGOSI NTEBELE		
P O BOX 774 ABG, SEBELE GABORONE		
Contact Mr. Ntebele @ 71694303		

IN THE INDUSTRIAL COURT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA HELD AT GABORONE		CASE NO: IC EX 231/25
In the matter between: JOHN K. RATSOMA & 3 OTHERS		APPLICANT
And GRANDFORT (PTY) LTD		RESPONDENT
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:	26 th March 2026	
VENUE:	at Lobatse Plantation, next to Engen Garage, along Lobatse-Gaborone road	
TIME:	14:00 PM	
PROPERTY TO BE SOLD:	1x1 Fuel Tank 23, 000 liters (above ground), 1x1 Fuel Dispenser Machine	
TERMS OF SALE:	Cash or Electronic Fund Transfer.	
DEPUTY SHERIFF KEBONYEKGOSI NTEBELE		
P O BOX 774 ABG GABORONE		
Contact Mr. Ntebele @ 71694303		

THE HIGH COURT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA HELD AT LOBATSE		MAPHAKHWANE J.
		CASE NO. MAHG8-000393-19
In the matter between; MALEBOGO MASHABANE		APPLICANT
And MOTSHWARI MASHABANE SUSANE MASHABANE BOITUMELO KEABILWE		1ST RESPONDENT 2ND RESPONDENT 3RD RESPONDENT
NOTICE OF SALE IN EXECUTION		
BE PLEASED TO TAKE NOTICE THAT pursuant to the Judgment granted by the Honourable Court the following immovable property of the Applicant will be sold by public auction by Deputy Sheriff Ditiro Priger Gabobakwe of Cell No. 71747342 to the highest bidder as follows:		
DATE OF SALE:	30 th April 2026	
TIME OF SALE:	10:00 am	
PLACE OF SALE:	Plot 935, Gaphatshwa ward Melsimothabe	
PROPERTY TO BE SOLD: A certain piece of land being Plot 935 at Gaphatshwa ward Melsimothabe, situated in the Kweneng District, measuring 1600 m2, made in favour of Malebogo Mashabane, with Developments thereon being 2 1/2 house, pit latrine toilet, tuckshop, fenced, water and Electricity.		
TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Cash or Bank Guaranteed cheque		
DATED AT GABORONE ON THE 13th DAY OF MARCH 2026		
THATA NOKE ATTORNEYS		
1st Respondent's Attorneys Plot 590, Botshabelo Road Off Zeerust Road Tlokweng P. O. Box 10073 GABORONE		

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Business

TAX DRIVE GAINS

BURS narrows Q3 shortfall

KITSO RAMONO

editors@thepatriot.co.bw

Sets P65.1 billion revenue target

BOTSWANA'S TAX AUTHORITY is beginning to claw back lost ground after trimming its revenue shortfall in the third quarter, as government sharpens its focus on domestic resource mobilisation amid waning mineral revenues.

Botswana Unified Revenue Service's (BURS) Acting Commissioner General Phodiso Valashia indicated that the revenue gap narrowed from P1.5 billion to P1.3 billion by the end of Q3, reflecting early gains from intensified collection efforts and improved compliance.

The improvement, while still leaving a sizeable gap, points to the impact of targeted enforcement and recovery measures implemented within a short period. The development comes as Botswana accelerates its transition from a mineral-led model to one increasingly anchored on domestic taxation.

Valashia stressed that the country's fiscal position now demands a collective approach, noting that revenue mobilisation can no longer be left to government alone but requires active participation from businesses and citizens alike. He acknowledged persistent challenges within the system, including inefficiencies, compliance gaps and lingering skepticism among taxpayers.

Despite the progress recorded in Q3, authorities estimate that Botswana continues to forgo a substantial share of potential revenue, with the tax gap standing at around 40 percent.

This shortfall, he suggested, translates directly into delayed services, deferred infrastructure projects and missed economic opportunities.



BURS Commissioner General, Phodiso Valashia

Looking ahead, BURS has been assigned a revenue target of P65.1 billion for the next financial year, a

figure expected to finance about 70 percent of government expenditure and account for roughly 80 percent of

total revenues. Valashia emphasised that government operations will increasingly depend on the level of

compliance, with collections closely tied to what taxpayers declare.

The renewed revenue push is

unfolding alongside sweeping tax reforms aimed at broadening the tax base and modernising

administration. These include the adoption of digital systems, the use of advanced data analytics and the rollout of real-time transaction monitoring to improve transparency and reduce leakages.

At the same forum, Acting President and Finance Minister Ndaba Gaolathe described the reforms as necessary in light of declining mineral revenues and growing pressure on public finances. He noted that Botswana's current tax-to-GDP ratio remains below its potential, reinforcing the need to strengthen domestic revenue mobilisation.

Gaolathe indicated that government is working toward a more efficient and coherent tax framework, including consolidating tax legislation and extending value-added tax (VAT) to cover digital and remote services. The reforms, he added, are also designed to ease compliance, particularly for small businesses, while ensuring fairness across the system.

Both officials underscored the importance of trust in the success of the reforms.

Valashia pointed out that weaknesses in governance, inconsistencies in processes and perceptions of complexity have historically undermined confidence in the tax system, adding that these issues must be addressed to improve compliance.

As Botswana pushes to build a more self-reliant economy, authorities are placing increasing emphasis on fostering a culture of tax compliance as a shared national responsibility.

The narrowing of the Q3 shortfall offers an early indication that enforcement efforts are gaining traction, but meeting the ambitious P65.1 billion target will depend on sustained reforms and broader participation across the economy.

Botswana courts Mauritius tech giants

KITSO RAMONO

editors@thepatriot.co.bw

BOTSWANA HAS INTENSIFIED its push to position itself as a regional digital hub, using Friday's Botswana-Mauritius Business Forum to attract investment, technology transfer and strategic partnerships in the ICT sector.

Hosted by the Botswana Investment and Trade Centre, the forum brought together government officials, industry leaders and a Mauritian delegation, in what was framed as a critical step in Botswana's economic diversification drive.

In welcoming delegates, BITC Chief Operations Officer Anthony Sefako described the engagement as a strategic platform aimed at unlocking investment opportunities and fostering collaboration, particularly in ICT and emerging technologies such as blockchain. He indicated that Botswana is positioning itself as a gateway into Africa's digital economy, leveraging access provided by the African Continental Free Trade Area.

The forum comes at a time when Botswana is seeking to reduce its dependence on diamond revenues and transition towards a knowledge-based economy. Sefako noted that digital transformation, business process outsourcing and ICT-driven industries present viable pathways for job creation, particularly for young people.

He pointed to Mauritius as a model for successful economic transformation, highlighting how the island nation has evolved from an agriculture-based economy into a service-led one anchored on ICT, financial services and outsourcing.



BITC Chief Operations Office, Anthony Sefako [PIC: GORATAONE KGOSIMORE]

Botswana, he suggested, is looking to draw lessons from that trajectory as it accelerates its own diversification efforts.

The engagement, held in partnership with the Economic Development Board of Mauritius, builds on a long-standing relationship between the two countries. Over the years, the institutions have collaborated through exchange programmes and policy benchmarking, with Botswana

adopting elements of Mauritius' approach in shaping its international financial services framework.

Sefako further outlined Botswana's investment appeal, citing its political stability, central location in Southern Africa, competitive tax environment and absence of exchange controls. He emphasised that these factors position the country as an attractive base for companies seeking to expand into the wider African market.

Mauritius, meanwhile, used the

platform to showcase its digital capabilities and deepen ties with African partners.

Addressing the forum virtually, Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation Dr Abhinash Malathopoul highlighted his country's long-standing digitalisation journey, which began in the late 1970s. He noted that Mauritius has since built strong e-government systems and a robust ICT ecosystem supported by widespread connectivity and a skilled workforce.

The minister indicated that Mauritius is positioning itself as a trusted digital partner for Africa, with ambitions to play a leading role in artificial intelligence and data-driven innovation.

He referenced ongoing efforts to implement a national AI strategy and governance frameworks aligned with international standards.

He further indicated the importance of stronger collaboration among countries of the Global South, noting that knowledge exchange and partnerships would be key to accelerating digital transformation across the continent.

The forum also created space for business-to-business engagements, allowing companies from both countries to explore joint ventures, partnerships and opportunities for skills transfer.

With the AfCFTA opening access to a market of over 1.3 billion people, both Botswana and Mauritius are seeking to leverage ICT as a driver of growth and competitiveness. Friday's engagement signalled a shared intent to deepen cooperation, with a focus on turning dialogue into tangible investment outcomes.

Botswana Minerals turns to AI in hunt for copper

KITSO RAMONO

editors@thepatriot.co.bw

BOTSWANA MINERALS PLC IS increasingly turning to artificial intelligence to guide its exploration strategy as it pivots towards copper and other critical minerals amid a prolonged downturn in the global diamond market.

The exploration company announced that it has been awarded eight copper prospecting licences in north-west Botswana, covering about 7,000 square kilometres, following an extensive artificial intelligence analysis of geological data.

The licences, which run until December 2028, mark a significant strategic shift for the company as it looks to position itself in the growing market for metals used in the global energy transition.

Chairman John Teeling said the licences are the first major outcome of the company's AI-driven exploration strategy.

Over the past two decades, Botswana Minerals has compiled a large geological database covering approximately 95,000 square kilometres of Botswana, including airborne geophysics surveys, soil sampling and drilling records. During the reporting period, the company applied advanced AI tools to analyse the data to identify potential mineral targets.

The analysis generated several high-priority copper prospects in the Damaran Belt in north-west Botswana, a region that is increasingly attracting exploration interest.

According to the company, the AI



Botswana Minerals PLC Chairman, John Teeling

work has also identified prospects for other minerals including nickel, zinc, lead, silver, platinum group metals and gold, highlighting the broader potential of the region.

Botswana Minerals said the next phase of work will involve detailed geophysical and geochemical surveys aimed at refining the AI-generated targets into drill-ready prospects. The company is also in discussions with potential joint venture partners to help finance exploration drilling programmes.

While the company has historically focused on diamond exploration, it acknowledged that the natural diamond sector has been under pressure due to weaker demand and growing competition from lab-grown diamonds.

As a result, the company has prioritised copper and other critical minerals where demand is expected to grow strongly, driven by global electrification, renewable energy expansion and infrastructure development.

Despite the strategic shift, Botswana Minerals says it will continue to

maintain its diamond assets, including the KX36 diamond resource in Botswana, which remains a key asset within its portfolio.

The company also noted that its Thorny River project in South Africa has reached an important milestone after receiving its first mining permit, moving the project closer to potential development once diamond market conditions improve.

Financially, the company remains in the exploration stage and reported an operating loss of £215,000 for the six months ending December 2025, slightly lower than the £225,000 loss recorded during the same period the previous year.

Botswana Minerals said it continues to operate with a lean cost structure while preserving cash and seeking partners to fund exploration work.

The board believes the company's strategy of combining technology-driven exploration with diversification into copper could create long-term value while retaining exposure to a potential recovery in the diamond market.

A new era for school infrastructure



CHANDADA MASENDU-KUSANE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER – EIMC

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE Education Infrastructure and Management Company (EIMC) marks a deliberate and necessary shift in how Botswana approaches one of the most critical foundations of its education system: school infrastructure.

For many years, the development and maintenance of public-school infrastructure have been characterised by fragmented responsibilities, reactive maintenance practices, and uneven service delivery. While significant investments have been made in expanding access to education, the systems responsible for managing the infrastructure itself have struggled to keep pace with growing demand, evolving

standards, and the need for long-term sustainability. Importantly, the formation of EIMC is not incidental, it is informed by previous studies, assessments, and national reflections on how best to respond to pressures within the education system, including infrastructure-related challenges and the sustainability of maintaining school facilities over time. These insights have consistently pointed to the need for a more coordinated, professional, and lifecycle-driven approach to infrastructure management. Botswana's approach also aligns with global best practice. Countries such as United Kingdom, through initiatives like Partnerships for Schools and its successor programmes, and South Africa, through the Development Bank of Southern Africa's role in delivering school infrastructure, have demonstrated the value of centralised, professionally managed models. These systems emphasise lifecycle management, standardisation, and strong oversight, principles that underpin EIMC's design. EIMC is therefore a Special Purpose Vehicle established to address these structural gaps; not as an incremental improvement, but as a fundamental transformation.

Responding to a Clear National Need

At its core, EIMC exists to meet a set of pressing and interrelated needs.

First is the need for consistency and reliability. Schools require environments that are safe, functional, and conducive to learning every day—not only when issues become urgent. Delays in maintenance, inconsistent standards, and uneven service delivery have too often disrupted teaching and learning. Second is the need for a lifecycle approach to infrastructure. Historically, the focus has leaned heavily toward construction, with insufficient attention to ongoing maintenance, refurbishment, and eventual upgrading. This has led to avoidable deterioration, higher long-term costs, and infrastructure that falls short of its intended lifespan. Third is the need for efficiency and value for money. Without a centralised, professional system, duplication of effort, weak coordination, and limited oversight have constrained the full impact of public investment in school infrastructure.

Fourth is the need for equity. Students in rural and remote areas must have access to the same quality of infrastructure as those in urban centres. A national education system cannot function effectively if its physical foundations are uneven.

Finally, there is a growing need for modernisation and digitalisation. Managing a national portfolio of school infrastructure in the 21st century requires data, technology, and systems that enable real-time oversight, predictive maintenance, and evidence-based planning.

EIMC is designed to meet all these needs, simultaneously and systematically.

What Sets EIMC Apart
What distinguishes EIMC is not only what it does, but how it does it.

Most importantly, EIMC introduces a single, dedicated institution responsible for the full lifecycle of school infrastructure, from planning and design to construction, maintenance, refurbishment, and long-term asset management. This integrated approach replaces fragmented mandates with clear accountability.

EIMC also shifts the system from reactive to preventive management. Rather than responding to infrastructure failures after they occur, EIMC will implement planned maintenance regimes, routine inspections, and early intervention systems. This not only reduces disruptions but also extends the life of infrastructure and lowers costs over time.

Another defining feature is its

commitment to professionalisation. EIMC brings specialised expertise in infrastructure planning, project management, asset management, and facilities operations under one roof. This ensures that decisions are driven by technical standards, performance metrics, and best practice—not ad hoc processes.

In addition, EIMC embeds digital systems at the core of its operations. Through comprehensive asset registers and digital monitoring platforms, every school facility can be tracked, assessed, and managed in real time. This level of visibility enables better planning, faster response times, and more transparent reporting.

Equally important is EIMC's focus on accountability and transparency. With clear service standards, performance indicators, and reporting mechanisms, stakeholders; from government to school communities will have greater visibility into how infrastructure is managed and how resources are utilised.

Finally, EIMC is built to deliver equitable service at a national scale. By standardising systems and centralising oversight, it ensures that no school is overlooked due to its location. Rural and remote schools are no longer peripheral; they are integral to a

unified national system.

A Foundation for the Future

EIMC represents more than an institutional reform. It is a strategic investment in the future of Botswana's education system.

Quality education does not exist in isolation from the physical environments in which it is delivered. Classrooms, sanitation facilities, utilities, and overall school environments shape not only the learning experience but also dignity, safety, and opportunity.

By establishing EIMC, Botswana is recognising that infrastructure must be managed with the same level of professionalism, foresight, and accountability as any other critical national asset, guided by evidence, informed by past lessons, and aligned with proven international models.

This is the shift, from building schools to sustaining them, from responding to problems to preventing them, and from fragmented efforts to a coherent, national system.

In doing so, EIMC lays the foundation for an education system that is not only accessible, but resilient, efficient, and fit for the future.

Know Your Corporate Leader

Full Name: Mr. Tumisang Solomon

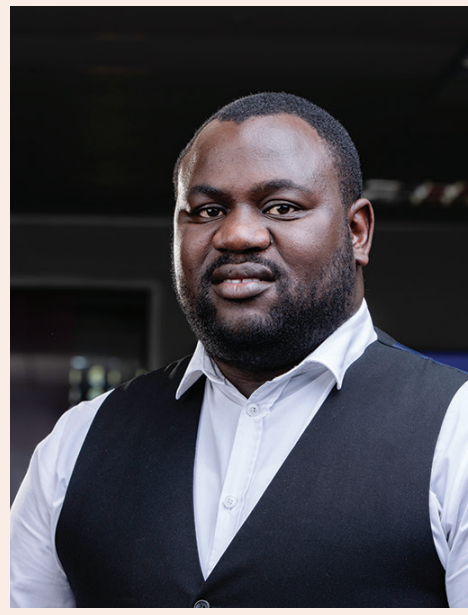
Position: Engineering Manager

Date Started: 08 January 2024

Institution: Technologies Botswana

Nature of business: Healthcare Technology.

Cavista's vision is to be the most innovative and respected technology solution provider in the market.



Vivo Energy expands retail network

VIVO ENERGY BOTSWANA HAS officially opened a new Shell service station in Jwaneng, bringing its total network to 83 service stations across the country and reinforcing its long-term commitment to investment in Botswana.

Strategically located along one of the country's key transit routes, the new site serves both domestic motorists and regional travellers, including those moving between Botswana and Namibia. The corridor plays an important role in supporting tourism, trade and broader economic activity, and the investment enhances infrastructure along this busy route.

Operating under the globally recognised Shell brand. The facility offers quality fuel and lubricants alongside an integrated convenience retail experience through partnerships with Pick n Pay Go and KFC.

The development has created employment opportunities during both the construction and operational phases, contributing to skills development and local economic participation.

Speaking at the launch, the Managing Director of Vivo Energy Botswana, Sesupo Wagamang said: "The opening of this service station in Jwaneng reflects our continued confidence in Botswana and our deliberate strategy to strengthen our national footprint. With 83 service stations now operating across the country, we are focused on improving accessibility, supporting mobility and contributing to economic activity along key growth corridors. This investment is about long-term partnership and responsible expansion."

The Member of Parliament for Jwaneng, Omphemetse Kwapa welcomed the development, noting its significance for the local economy:

"Investments of this nature contribute meaningfully to employment creation



Vivo Energy Botswana Expands Retail Network with New Shell Service Station in Jwaneng

and improved infrastructure within our constituency. The location of this service station along a major transit route enhances convenience for residents and visitors alike, while supporting the broader tourism and trade ecosystem."

Reinforcing the company's long-term outlook, Sesupo added: "Our expansion is intentional and sustainable. Each new service station strengthens our distribution network, supports local enterprise and improves service standards for our customers. As we continue to grow, our priority remains clear, to invest responsibly

and to ensure that our presence delivers measurable value to the communities we serve."

The Jwaneng opening follows the recent launch of another Shell service station in Village, forming part of Vivo Energy Botswana's sustained retail expansion programme.

As the company continues to grow its presence, it remains committed to operating responsibly, collaborating with stakeholders and ensuring that its investments deliver tangible value to communities across Botswana.

Botswana Minerals fundraises

THE BOARD OF BOTSWANA MINERALS is pleased to announce that it has undertaken a Company arranged fundraising consisting of a placing and subscription with existing and new investors to raise £1,150,000 via the issue of 460,000,000 new ordinary shares of 0.25p each in the capital of the company, which includes the cash subscription by certain directors as detailed below, at a placing price of 0.25p per Placing Share.

Each Placing Share has one share purchase warrant attached with the right to subscribe for one new Ordinary Share at 0.25p per Ordinary Share with an expiry date of one year from 20 March 2026, being the expected date of the Placing Warrants issue.

The Placing Shares will rank pari passu with the Company's existing Ordinary Shares. Application will be made for the Placing Shares to be admitted to trading on the AIM market of the London Stock Exchange and it is expected that such



Botswana Minerals Chairman, John Teeling

admission will become effective on or around 27 March 2026. Use of Proceeds The funds will be used primarily to further the Company's exploration programme on its copper-focused prospecting licences in North-West Botswana, as well as for working capital purposes. The exploration programme is designed to take the high-priority anomalies to drill targets.

Rory Harding has been appointed to the board of Botswana Minerals as Non-Executive Director with immediate effect. He is also currently the Chief Executive Officer of AIM-listed Arkle Resources Plc. Mr Harding is an emerging markets specialist with experience in energy, mining and investment banking and adviser to London merchant bank Strand Hanson. He is the co-founder and asset originator for multiple publicly listed mining companies, most recently Electrum Discovery. Mr Harding formerly worked in energy trading and has extensive operational experience in Africa. [bse.co.bw]

StanChart profit declines 25%

THE BOARD OF STANDARD Chartered Bank Botswana Limited wishes to advise shareholders and investors that the audited consolidated Profit Before Tax (PBT) for the year ended 31 December 2025 will be approximately between 25% to 35% (BWP 119 million to BWP 167 million) lower than the BWP 478 million reported for the year ended

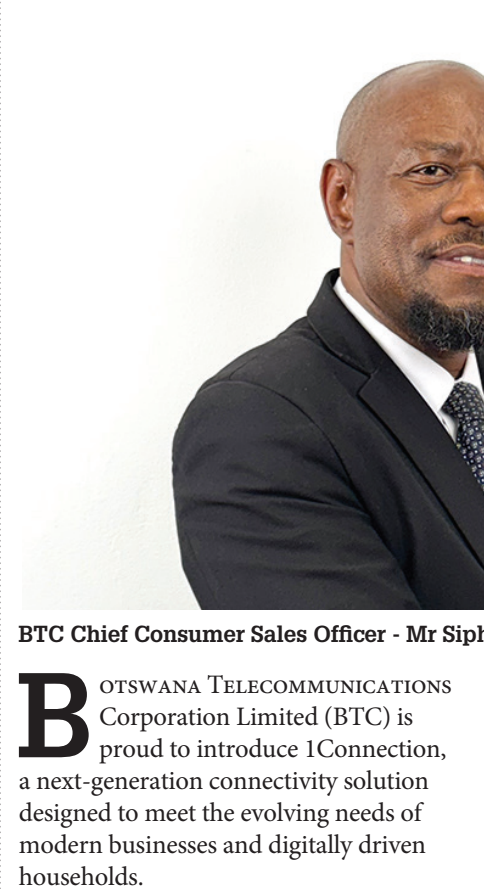
31 December 2024. The results of the year ended 31 December 2025 shall be published on or before 31 March 2026 and full details will be provided thereupon. The actual results may differ from those disclosed herein. Accordingly, Shareholders and Investors are advised to exercise caution when dealing in the Company's securities until a full announcement is made. [bse.co.bw]



StanChart Botswana CEO, Mpho Masupe

BTC introduces 1Connection

■ A Unified, Future-Ready Connectivity Solution for Businesses and Homes



BTC Chief Consumer Sales Officer - Mr Siphon Ntebang

BOTSWANA TELECOMMUNICATIONS Corporation Limited (BTC) is proud to introduce 1Connection, a next-generation connectivity solution designed to meet the evolving needs of modern businesses and digitally driven households.

As digital transformation accelerates across every sector, seamless, secure, and

dependable connectivity has become a fundamental requirement rather than a luxury. 1Connection brings together high-speed broadband, enterprise-grade voice, advanced Wi-Fi technology, and integrated security features, all within a single intelligent device engineered for simplicity and performance.

BTC Chief Consumer Sales Officer, Siphon Ntebang stated that 1Connection is purposely built for SMEs, professional consumers and small businesses who require reliable, secure, and scalable connectivity without the complexities of managing multiple devices. He further added that "connectivity is the backbone of productivity in today's digital-first environment, therefore by consolidating the functionality of internet, router, PBX, DECT base station and storage server into one integrated platform, 1Connection streamlines setup, reduces hardware costs, and simplifies day-to-day management", he said. "1Connection underscores our commitment to delivering unified digital infrastructure solutions that integrate telephony, internet/Wi-Fi, and the ability to integrate smart devices into a single subscription, therefore reducing the customers' bill", said Mr Ntebang. This convergence empowers businesses and households with a cost-effective platform that enhances productivity, improves operational efficiency, and supports long-term scalability. As cloud services, remote work, and digital collaboration tools become central to business continuity, 1Connection provides a robust, future-proof foundation built for growth, flexibility, and secure connectivity.

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To assist you with subscription process

Empty diamond trading hub mirrors pain for \$80 billion industry

FASHIONNETWORK.COM


THE SURAT DIAMOND BOURSE WAS billed as the future of an industry. Spanning more floor space than the Pentagon, the \$350 million complex in western India includes nine sleek towers with sloping facades and enough space to accommodate thousands of traders. It was built to showcase Surat's dominance in the global trade, where nine out of every ten diamonds are cut and polished before being shipped to markets from Dubai to Manhattan. The problem is it's empty. Since opening in 2023, only about 250 of the bourse's 4,700 offices are operational, according to a spokesperson. The vast central corridor, designed as a hub for traders to meet and strike deals, stands silent. Door after door is locked and on-site cafés remain unfinished concrete shells. Some merchants who purchased offices are already trying to sell. The \$80 billion diamond industry is in a deepening crisis. For more than a century, trade flowed in one direction — from volcanic deposits in Russia and Botswana to Antwerp's trading rooms, Surat's polishing floors and jewelry stores around the world. That supply chain minted fortunes at each rung of the ladder, sustaining entire economies along the way. At its center stood De Beers, the world's largest diamond miner, which practically invented the modern industry and has long kept a tight grip on supply and prices.

But those days are receding as a series of market shocks drags down the going rate for nearly every category of stone. Chinese luxury buyers, once the industry's main growth engine, are no longer snapping up gems. Sanctions on Russian supplies, which account for roughly a quarter of global output, have forced costly workarounds. Record-high gold prices are discouraging jewelry purchases in the world's largest consumer markets, as buyers favor bars and coins instead. Mounting geopolitical tensions are adding to the strain. The latest flashpoint — US-Israel strikes on Iran that have reverberated across parts of the Middle East — is disrupting trade flows and stoking inflation risks, which could further curb discretionary spending on luxury goods. De Beers lost almost \$1.5 million a day last year, weighed down by trade disruptions and the rapid rise of lab-grown diamonds. Chemically identical to mined stones but much cheaper, synthetics are cannibalizing large parts of the market, including in the US, where they were used in nearly half of engagement rings sold between January and August 2025, according to BriteCo data. De Beers' parent, Anglo American Plc, is scrambling to offload the business. The company has written down the unit three times in as many years, slashing its book value to \$2.3 billion from \$9.1 billion. De Beers cut prices in January for stones over three-quarters of a carat and pulled smaller stones from sale, though in recent weeks industry insiders have noted early signs of recovery as supplies tighten. "Natural diamonds cannot win in a situation where it's all about the cheapest price," said Paul Zimmisky, a New York-based independent analyst of the market. In India, a series of tariffs imposed last year by US President Donald Trump — at one point as high as 50% on exports — has proven to be the final blow. Traders still gather in the narrow lanes of Mahidharpura, a bustling bazaar about 20 kilometers from the Surat Diamond Bourse, but activity has slowed sharply. Export demand has fallen to a two-decade low, and the Hindi word for recession is on everyone's lips. The shockwaves are global. Botswana, one of Africa's richest countries thanks to diamonds, is seeking to diversify after two years of economic contraction. Mineral revenue is projected to fall to 10.3 billion pula (\$733 million) this fiscal year, less than half the historical average. In Antwerp, another industry capital, trade has dropped to about \$19 billion from a 2022 peak of \$41 billion. Across more than five decades, Dinesh Bhai D. Patel, a diamond broker in Surat, has worked through wars, economic downturns and the 2008 global financial crisis. After each dip, he said, the market recovered after a few months. "This time is different," he said. "I've never seen anything like this." Taken together, the industry's troubles appear so intractable that many call it the

deepest crisis in its modern history. In China, the collapse in luxury demand has been so severe that hundreds of millions of dollars worth of unsold diamonds flowed back to India's trading hub. De Beers has struggled to maintain control. Founded in 1888 by Cecil Rhodes, the former monopoly built its dominance on a tightly managed sales model. At the start of each year, the company agrees with customers on the categories and volumes of diamonds they will buy. Ten times annually, it holds highly choreographed sales known as "Sights," where selected buyers — Sightholders — purchase pre-allocated stones at company-set prices, with no negotiation. They can refuse, but risk losing future allocations. By early 2025, the system was under strain. De Beers' official prices stood well above those in the secondary market, where cutters and polishers trade among themselves. Reluctant to cut benchmark prices, the company began offering discreet side deals, granting favored customers discounts of up to 20% — a break from tradition. De Beers' strategy was controversial. People close to the company said it provided stability and funneled more goods to the strongest buyers, yet the opaque approach angered clients, with no transparency over who received discounts while others were expected to pay full price. Rough diamond prices have fallen by more than 40% since the pandemic peak, with polished stones also tumbling. As 2025 progressed, side deals accounted for as much as half of sales. Meanwhile, efforts by De Beers and its Russian rival Alrosa to curb supply were undercut by Angola, where output surged. The country's diamond sales jumped nearly 70% last year, overtaking Botswana as Africa's largest producer. Selling at prevailing market prices — well below De Beers' official rates — Angola further weakened attempts to revive business. Still, there are signs that prices have stabilized and a partial recovery is taking shape, especially as supplies start to run dry in corners of the market. At its February sale, De Beers raised prices for its largest stones, increasing them by more than 5% for diamonds above five carats. While modest given the scale of earlier declines, the move has been interpreted by some in the trade as renewed confidence that the long-standing glut of stones is finally easing. De Beers declined to comment. Yet despite hints of a rebound, in Surat and the surrounding villages, the pain remains nearly universal. At the diamond bourse, authorities have even brought in a priest to bless the vast complex in hopes of reviving momentum. Thakarshi Bhai Lodaliya spent 25 years building his diamond business, which once employed 35 people. But after Russia's invasion of Ukraine rattled the market in 2022, orders began to fall. Eventually, they stopped entirely, forcing him to shut the factory last year. "I spent my life's savings, and one day there was simply no money left to keep going," he said. In India, the wait for better days may never come for some manufacturers. Jewelry makers who once purchased in bulk now order only what they need, when they need it, unwilling to hold inventory as prices keep falling. No one is sure where the floor is. "They don't want to keep stock," said Manoj Borda, a second-generation diamond business owner. "If they do, they will incur a loss." Today, many factories across Surat are also adding lab-grown production lines. For most of the industry's history, the value of diamonds rested on the idea that gems are scarce — that no technology could replicate what the Earth spent billions of years creating. But laboratories from Surat to Shenzhen can now produce the same stone in about six weeks, upending a supply chain that employs roughly a million people in India. Borda oversees two natural diamond manufacturing operations and a three-year-old lab-grown unit from an office lined with CCTV screens. The screech of polishing machines echoes down nearly every street. "If you were here two years ago, this entire room was packed," he said, gesturing toward empty desks in a tightly arranged workspace for polishers. Around 800 workers have left the floor, he said, leaving about 5,000 employees. "I'd be surprised if things recover," Borda said. [fashionnetwork.com]



De Beers CEO, Al Cook



CAA BOTSWANA
CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF BOTSWANA

TENDER NOTICES

Civil Aviation Authority of Botswana (CAAB) is a statutory body established as a State-Owned Enterprise (SOE) to promote safe, regular, secure and efficient use and development of Civil Aviation in Botswana; to regulate and develop air transport, by providing air navigation services, managing airports and advising the Botswana Government on all aspects of civil aviation.

Tender Reference No. CAAB 11/25-26/SUPL

Tender Title: SUPPLY, DELIVERY AND COMMISSIONING OF AIRPORT PERMIT HUMAN INTERFACE DEVICE (HID) PRINTERS (4.No) AND CONSUMABLES AT CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF BOTSWANA.

- Sealed Tender offers are invited for the **SUPPLY, DELIVERY AND COMMISSIONING OF AIRPORT PERMIT HUMAN INTERFACE DEVICE (HID) PRINTERS (4.No) AND CONSUMABLES AT CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF BOTSWANA.**
- The Procuring Entity is: Civil Aviation Authority of Botswana
- Procurement Method is: Open Domestic Bidding
- Tenderers who are domiciled in Botswana must, in order to be considered for the award of the contract, be registered with the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority in the following categories:
 - i. **Code 203:** Electrical, Electronic, Mechanical and ICT supplies
 - Sub code 01:** Electrical and Electronic Equipment, Spares and Accessories (includes ICT, photographic equipment and others)
- The tender is reserved for Local Contractors as stated under Section 53 of the Public Procurement Act 2021.
- Preference margins will be applied to qualifying bidders in line with the relevant and valid Economic Diversification Drive (EDD)
- The physical address for collection of tender documents is: Procurement Office Sir Seretse Khama International Airport, plot no 17401, 1st Floor, Office 1001, Gaborone, Botswana
- Documents may be collected during working hours between **0900 hours and 1530 hours** as of **23 March 2026. Offices are closed for lunch from 1245 to 1345 hours.**
- Non- refundable deposit of **P150.00** or **P75.00** for youth registered companies upon production of identity cards and company documents of Shareholders, payable in cash or Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), made out in favour of the Civil Aviation Authority of Botswana is required on collection of the tender documents.
- Queries or clarifications relating to the issuance of these documents may be addressed in writing not later than **27 March 2026** before the tender closing date, Tel No. 3688200, Email: tenders@caab.co.bw
- The closing date and time for receipt of sealed tender offers is **1000 hours on 08 April 2026**
- Late tender offers will not be accepted.
- The Bid Submission Method is: **One (1) Envelope Submission Method** in which a tenderer's financial and technical offers are submitted together in one sealed envelope.
- Submit one (1) original tender document marked "**ORIGINAL**" and 2 duplicate copies of the original document marked "**COPY**" in one sealed envelope marked: **SUPPLY, DELIVERY AND COMMISSIONING OF AIRPORT PERMIT HUMAN INTERFACE DEVICE (HID) PRINTERS (4.No) AND CONSUMABLES AT CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF BOTSWANA**, shall be delivered to Procurement Office, Sir Seretse Khama International Airport, PLOT No 17401, 1st Floor, Office 1001, Gaborone, Botswana.
- The name and address of the bidder should be clearly marked on the back of the envelope.

The Public Procurement Regulatory Authority Standardised Conditions of Tender for Supplies shall apply to this procurement, for which all the applicable Tender Data is contained in the tender document.

{Notwithstanding anything in the foregoing, the Civil Aviation Authority of Botswana is not bound to accept the lowest or any tender offer.}

Tender Reference No. CAAB 16/25-26/GEN

Tender Title: PROCUREMENT OF CORRECTIVE MAINTENANCE OF CCTV SYSTEM AT SIR SERETSE KHAMA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (SSKIA).

- Sealed Tender offers are invited for the **PROCUREMENT OF CORRECTIVE MAINTENANCE OF CCTV SYSTEM AT SIR SERETSE KHAMA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (SSKIA).**
- The Procuring Entity is: Civil Aviation Authority of Botswana
- Procurement Method is: Open Domestic Bidding
- Tenderers who are domiciled in Botswana must, in order to be considered for the award of the contract, be registered with the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority in the following categories:
 - Code: 02 Electrical Engineering Works and Maintenance**
 - Sub code(s): 07 Security systems installations (CCTV, Access Control, Alarms, etc.)**
- The tender is reserved for Local Owned Contractors in line with Section 53 of the Public Procurement Act, 2021.
- Preference margins will be applied to qualifying bidders in line with the relevant and valid Economic Diversification Drive (EDD)
- The physical address for collection of tender documents is: Procurement Office Sir Seretse Khama International Airport, plot no 17401, 1st Floor, Office 1001, First Floor, Private Bag SK9, Gaborone, Botswana, Tel: 3688200, email tenders@caab.co.bw
- Documents may be collected during working hours between **0900 hours and 1530 hours** as of **23 March 2026. Offices are closed for lunch from 1245 to 1345 hours.**
- Non- refundable deposit of **P150.00** or **P75.00** for youth registered companies upon production of identity cards and company documents of Shareholders, payable in cash or Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), made out in favour of the Civil Aviation Authority of Botswana is required on collection of the tender documents.
- Queries or clarifications relating to this document may be addressed in writing to the Chief Procurement Officer, emailed to tenders@caab.co.bw and must be received on or before **31 March 2026**. Any such enquiry/query must be clearly marked either "Enquiry or Query: **Tender No: CAAB 16/25-26/GEN**"
- A Compulsory site visit and pre-tender meeting with representatives of the Procuring Entity will take place at Sir Seretse Khama International Airport on the **26 March 2026** starting at **0900hrs**.
- **All bidders are requested to bring their Identity documents (Omang/Passport-noncitizens) and their Personal Protective Clothing being: Reflective vests**
- The closing date and time for receipt of sealed tender offers is **1000 hours on 14 April 2026.**
- Late tender offers will not be accepted.
- The Bid Submission Method is: **One (1) Envelope Submission Method** in which a tenderer's financial and technical offers are submitted together in one sealed envelope.
- Submit one (1) original tender document marked "**ORIGINAL**" and 2 duplicate copies of the original document marked "**COPY**" in one sealed envelope marked: **PROCUREMENT OF CORRECTIVE MAINTENANCE OF CCTV SYSTEM AT SIR SERETSE KHAMA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (SSKIA)**, shall be delivered to Procurement Office, Sir Seretse Khama International Airport, PLOT No 17401, 1st Floor, Office 1001, Gaborone, Botswana.
- The name and address of the bidder should be clearly marked on the back of the envelope.

The Public Procurement Regulatory Authority Standardized Conditions of Tender for Supplies shall apply to this procurement, for which all the applicable Tender Data is contained in the tender document.

{Notwithstanding anything in the foregoing, the Civil Aviation Authority of Botswana is not bound to accept the lowest or any tender offer.}

Vision:
A transformative, agile, high performance Civil Aviation Authority

Mission:
To regulate the aviation industry and sustainably provide airport and airspace services

Values:
Customer First | One Team | Innovation | Integrity | Passion



Global copper demand outstrips supply, threatening industrial growth

DEMAND FOR COPPER IS SURGING because of demand from new technologies, but suppliers are struggling to keep up, and they are likely to fall further behind in the coming years, resulting in shortfalls globally. Even though copper prices are at historically high levels, the financial risk involved in mining means that prices will need to go much higher before mining companies see profit in addressing the supply shortage.

Copper is an essential material that is used in generating and distributing electrical power; cables, wires, motor windings, transformers and cooling equipment in data centers; and advanced manufacturing of consumer and defense products.

It's so important that in 2025, the U.S. Geological Survey designated copper as a mineral "vital to the U.S. economy and national security."

Copper is abundant in the ground, but there's not enough being extracted to be able to meet the demand. That's because investors want higher and more reliable returns than copper mines currently offer, and the industry faces complex permitting processes and can't find enough workers. Our analysis found that for new technologies to continue to develop, and for the global economy to continue to grow, even higher prices are ahead.

Few options other than mining. In the United States, the increased effort to build data centers for artificial intelligence systems has created a massive need for copper. Car manufacturers require some copper for internal combustion vehicles and four to five times more for the batteries and other parts of electric vehicles. In addition, as global temperatures increase, demand for power-hungry air conditioning in many emerging and developing economies has been growing, too, requiring copper inside the equipment and more wiring to power them.

Recycling existing copper could help reduce the amount needed from new mines, but it would not be enough to meet the rising demand. Even under generous assumptions, we found that recycling might provide 35% of the global copper supply by 2050, with mining producing the remaining 65%.

Substituting another material for copper won't really work either – at least in the short-to-medium term. Copper has an unmatched combination of physical properties such as electrical conductivity, durability and flexibility – which is why it became popular for so many purposes in the first place.

Aluminum could replace it in some cases, but not all – and that would amount to only about 2% of total copper use.

Fiber optics can also replace copper at times. Their glass fibers can carry more data more quickly than copper wires, but they can't also carry power. New copper substitutes, like ultra-conductive aluminum, carbon nanotubes, and niobium phosphide, are promising but still in their infancy.

Complicated circumstances
The only other way to get more copper is to mine more of it. But building a new mine can take 20 to 30 years – a period during which investors are spending money but not yet getting returns, and a time when costs can rise significantly from preliminary estimates.

If industrial and economic growth is to stay on track in the 2030s, new mines would need to be in the financing and permitting processes right now. But they aren't.

Even Resolution Copper, which started decades ago trying to develop a mine in Arizona outside Phoenix, has more work to do before being able to start mining. Since 1995, the project's developers have spent several billion dollars on planning, permitting and legal cases.

Once in place, it could meet as much as 25% of U.S. copper demand from a high-concentration body of ore located near existing truck and rail lines.

Evaluating the environmental and community effects of proposed mining projects is essential, but in many countries there are overlapping levels of review that

have different, and variable, timelines. And many parts of the process can be appealed to courts by opponents or supporters. That increases costs and imposes time delays for mine developers – and means consumers will have to wait longer, and pay more, for copper-intensive products and services.

Yet even though copper prices are near historic highs – over US\$13,000 per ton on the London Metals Exchange – the profit margins are still too low and price swings are too volatile for companies to forecast reliable returns on the risky investment of building new mines.

Metal structures on the site of Resolution Copper's proposed underground copper mine in Arizona, in a place that has been sacred to Native American people for thousands of years. Jim West/UCG/Universal Images Group via Getty Images

Global inequalities
Copper is produced in a handful of countries but used widely around the world. That leaves copper vulnerable to national policies about imports and exports, leading to trade disruptions and price shocks.

Countries with low and middle per-capita income are likely to require substantial amounts of copper to grow their economies. Right now, wealthy countries like the U.S. and members of the European Union have about 440 pounds (200 kilograms) per person in existing physical infrastructure – electrical wiring, plumbing systems, architectural elements and transportation. But that figure is 20 pounds (9 kilograms) per person in Africa and less than 2 pounds (1 kilogram) per capita in India.

A copper mine in Miami, Ariz. Jim West/UCG/Universal Images Group via Getty Images

Shortages are likely
To get a picture of what might be possible if there were a significant global effort to increase copper availability, we evaluated several optimistic scenarios. We looked at faster permitting for new mines, higher recycling rates and smoother mining processes than those currently in place. But even then, economic development drove demand to grow far faster than the available supply.

Existing mines will have decreasing amounts of ore available and will produce less copper in 2050 than they do in 2025. Yet even if all known copper deposits with known mine-opening dates go into production as scheduled copper supplies will not keep up with demand.

Our best-case scenario has global mine production at about 30 million metric tons of copper a year by 2050. But to keep pace with global economic development, the world will need 37 million metric tons of mined copper a year by then.

To meet that additional need, more mines will need to be opened, and extra production developed – including extracting residual copper from old mine debris that was previously viewed as having too little copper to be worth processing.

The open-pit Cobre Panama copper mine in Donoso, Panama. AP Photo/Matias Delacroix

A role for government
We found that more copper could be made available more quickly if permitting were streamlined in ways that preserve environmental standards but offer companies proposing new mines some predictability for regulatory approval.

If society wants more copper, faster, then people must accept that higher, more stable prices are part of the solution. Speculative trading contributes to price volatility, which complicates financial projections that are central to deal-making and makes it more expensive to invest in the large, long-term and irreversible expenses that new mines require.

Higher copper prices will ripple through the economy, raising costs for construction, energy and technology. But pretending those costs can be avoided doesn't make them disappear. Underinvestment across the supply chain from mines to processing today shows up as bottlenecks tomorrow, including delayed grid upgrades and constrained digital growth.

[theconversation.com]

Driving an Agile Future: PPRA's National Public Procurement Pitso Successfully Sets the Stage for Digital Reform



Vice President of the Republic of Botswana and Minister of Finance
Mr. Ndaba Nkosinathi Gaolithe



Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance
Dr. Tshokologe Alex Kgantsano



Accountant General, Ministry of Finance
Ms. Teboggo Tomango



PPRA Board Chairperson
Ms. Motshidi Moremi - Motshewa



Gaborone Deputy District Commissioner
Mr. Ronald Masole



Gaborone City Deputy Mayor, Honourable
Mankie Sekete



PPRA Chief Executive Officer,
Ms. Tumelo Motsumi

Gaborone, Botswana – The Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) successfully hosted the National Public Procurement Pitso on March 17-18, 2026, at the Gaborone International Convention Centre (GICC).

Held under the theme "Driving an Agile and Transformative Public Procurement System," the two-day event convened key stakeholders to deliberate on procurement's central role in national development, economic diversification, and citizen empowerment.

The Pitso highlighted the country's strategic shift towards a modern, digitally enabled, and accountable procurement system. Key discussions focused on:

- **Accelerating Digital Transformation:** The planned rollout of a national e-procurement system to enhance transparency and efficiency.
- **Strengthening Governance:** A renewed focus on accountability, ethical frameworks, and the review of the Public Procurement Act of 2021.
- **Inclusive Growth:** Strategies for promoting local innovation and ensuring greater participation of SMMEs (Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises) in procurement opportunities.

The event underscored that modern procurement systems must be supported by professional integrity, institutional capacity, and a culture of transparency. The shared message was clear: procurement is a strategic driver that lies at the heart of state credibility and public trust.



Thank you to all who participated in this critical national dialogue.



Special Thanks to Our Esteemed Sponsors

The success of the 2026 National Public Procurement Pitso would not have been possible without the generous support of our sponsors. We extend our sincere gratitude to:





Sustainable Water Irrigation and Farming Technologies (SWIFT) PTY Limited

Job Title:	Assistant Accountant	Posting Expires:	March 20, 2026
Location:	Gaborone, Botswana	Travel Required:	Yes
Level/Salary Range:	Senior Officer Salary Range	Position Type:	Full-time
HR Contact:	info@swift.mw	Date posted:	March 20, 2026
External posting URL:	Click here to enter text.		
Internal posting URL:	Click here to enter text.		

Applications Accepted By:	
E-MAIL: ulaya.mwale@swift.mw Subject Line: Assistant Accountant Attention: Chief Financial Officer	ADDRESS: The Chief Executive Officer SWIFT PTY Limited P.O. Box 403034, Broadhurst Unit 10, Plot 6143, Noko Road, Broadhurst Industrial, Gaborone

Job Description

Company Introduction

Sustainable Water Irrigation and Farming Technologies (SWIFT) is a multinational engineering and technology company specializing in Water Supply, Renewable Energy Production, and Agriculture. SWIFT strives to contribute towards the development and promotion of modern and sustainable engineering and technological solutions in Botswana and beyond, through the provision of high-quality services in these three sectors.

SWIFT's long-term aspiration is to become a flag carrier in the promotion of sustainable engineering and technological solutions for both local and international markets.

Job Summary

We are seeking a dedicated Assistant Accountant to join our finance team. Reporting directly to the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), the successful candidate will play a key role in managing payables, receivables, reconciliations, compliance, reporting, and supporting budgeting processes. This position requires proficiency in QuickBooks Online and a strong understanding of Botswana's tax laws.

Key Responsibilities

Accounts Payable

- Process supplier invoices and ensure timely, accurate payments.
- Verify supporting documents and approvals before disbursement.
- Monitor outstanding payables and maintain vendor account reconciliations.
- Negotiate payment terms and maintain good supplier relationships.
- Track and report on aged payables to support cash flow management.

Accounts Receivable

- Generate and issue customer invoices promptly.
- Record receipts and allocate payments accurately in QuickBooks Online.
- Monitor outstanding receivables and follow up on overdue accounts.
- Prepare debtor aging reports and escalate collection issues when necessary.
- Support credit control processes to minimize bad debts.
- Maintain accurate customer account records and reconcile balances.

Cash & Bank Reconciliation

- Perform daily cash reconciliations to ensure accuracy of balances.
- Conduct weekly and monthly bank reconciliations.
- Investigate and resolve discrepancies between bank statements and company records.
- Provide timely reconciled reports to management.

Reporting

- Prepare and share daily, weekly, and monthly financial reports with the CFO.
- Assist in preparing management reports for decision-making.
- Support budget preparation and monitor budgetary control.
- Provide variance analysis and highlight key financial trends.

Tax Compliance & Internal Controls

- Ensure compliance with Botswana tax laws and regulations.
- Prepare and file tax returns accurately and on time.

- Assist in strengthening internal controls and adherence to company policies.
- Support audits and provide necessary documentation.

Record Maintenance

- Maintain proper and up-to-date accounting records.
- Ensure accuracy, completeness, and confidentiality of financial data.
- Support digital record-keeping and system updates in QuickBooks Online.

Required Skills & Competencies

- Proficiency in QuickBooks Online.
- Strong knowledge of Botswana's tax laws and compliance requirements.
- Excellent organizational and analytical skills.
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively within a team.
- High attention to detail and commitment to accuracy.

Qualifications:

- Degree in Finance, Accounting, Business Administration, or a related field. Relevant professional certifications are a plus.
- Proven experience in a finance or accounting role, preferably as a finance assistant or in a similar position.
- Strong understanding of basic accounting principles and financial practices.
- Proficiency in QUICKBOOKS accounting software.
- Excellent attention to detail and organizational skills, with the ability to manage multiple tasks effectively.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to work collaboratively in a team environment.
- A proactive attitude and willingness to learn and grow within the finance function.

How to Apply

Interested candidates should submit their CV and cover letter to:

Ulaya.mwale@swift.mw

Deadline for applications: Friday, 27th March 2026

Reviewed By:	Robert Ngwira	Date:	March 20, 2026
Approved By:	Ulaya Mwale	Date:	March 20, 2026
Last Updated By:	Robert Ngwira	Date/Time:	March 20, 2026

lifestyle

BIGGER, BOLDER

Stanbic Music 'N' Lifestyle returns

KITSO RAMONO
editors@thepatriot.co.bw

THE STANBIC MUSIC 'N' Lifestyle Festival is back on April 25, and this time organisers promise more than a good time. The event, set for Royal Aria Stadium, is steadily growing into one of the country's most anticipated lifestyle experiences, blending music, food, fashion and art into one space.

Stanbic Bank Botswana Head of Brand and Marketing, Stephanie Sandridge says the idea from the beginning was to create something that gives local creatives and small businesses a real chance to make money and grow. She notes that while Botswana has no shortage of talent, there has been a gap when it comes to platforms that properly connect entertainment with business.

Last year's edition showed that the idea works. The festival pulled in just over 2,100 people, created jobs for more than 600 individuals on the day, and gave local vendors a chance to sell and promote their brands. Many walked away profitable, while artists gained exposure in a well-organised setting.

That success has pushed organisers to think bigger for 2026. This year's theme, "Where Urban



Culture Lives," points to a more immersive experience. The event will be divided into different zones, including the main stage, a Lifestyle Village for vendors, and new spaces like an Innovation Lounge.

The Lifestyle Village is expanding, meaning more local food stalls, fashion brands and artists will be part of the experience. There are also plans for curated showcases that mix fashion, music and art, along with interactive brand activations.

Organisers are also introducing new technology, including wristbands that will allow people to make cashless payments and move more easily around the venue.

While the headline acts have not yet been revealed, the focus remains on balancing big-name appeal with strong local talent. Emerging artists, DJs and small businesses are expected to play a central role once again.

Attendance is expected to grow to between 3,000 and 4,000 people, with improved VIP experiences aimed at attracting corporate groups and premium guests.

At its core, the festival is slowly building a reputation as more than just entertainment, but as a space where creativity, culture and business meet.

Pianist hails power of music

- Dr Filenko keen on Botswana music partnerships
- Excited about Gaborone concert with serenading performance

working with local artists and music groups.

Dr Filenko during his visit in Botswana recently told this publication in an interview that Botswana is a powerful nation and should take advantage of its cultural diversity to become a force to reckon with in the global music stage. He said ever since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022; he has been using the power of music through the strength of Ukraine to the global world.

According to him, Ukrainians amongst others are united by their unique cultural identities hence the country's resilience amidst the continuous aggression by Russia.

Dr Filenko said he has been regularly visiting Africa and have studied the music of countries such as Ghana, adding that Botswana has also been on his studying list. "Botswana is a unique country and it is known as beacon of peace and stability in Africa and the whole world. I had an opportunity to interact with local musicians in



Dr Taras Filenko

Botswana and I enjoyed Marimba. It is such a good musical item. Botswana are very kind people from all levels and that's unique cultural identity of the people. It is powerful," he said.

During his stay in Botswana Dr Filenko showcased his masterpiece art and was, joined on stage by the Gaborone Community Orchestra, during United by Music Concert that brought a wealth of emotion and reflection to the audience.

The concert, through such a unique collaboration, was dedicated to honouring the strong spirit of the Ukrainian people and remembering innocent lives taken in Russia's war.

Dr Filenko, through picturesque storytelling, immersed the audience in the world of prominent Ukrainian composers, and through his brilliant performance, he offered guests an encounter with their timeless pieces.

Gaborone Community Orchestra delivered breathtaking compositions with a sense of undeniable unity, while wearing elements of blue and yellow, just as the flag of Ukraine.

BAKANG TIRO
editors@thepatriot.co.bw

RENOWNED UKRAINIAN pianist Dr Taras Filenko said Botswana music industry has the potential to dominate at the global stage and he is keen on

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Sport

WAR26 litmus test

▪ Lefika Relays to test Africa's dream, Gaborone 26 readiness ▪ Lack of sponsorship/ funding limit growth of athletics in Africa

KITSO RAMONO
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THE LEFIKA INTERNATIONAL Relays, set for March 28 at the National Stadium, are emerging not just as a qualifier for the World Athletics Relays Gaborone 2026, but as a revealing snapshot of Africa's struggle to fully assert itself on the global relay stage.

While Botswana prepares to host the world in 2026, concerns are already surfacing about the continent's limited representation in relay events, despite athletics being one of Africa's strongest sporting disciplines. Officials within the local organising structures have acknowledged that participation levels from African nations have not met expectations.

There had been hope that the Lefika Relays, alongside other local competitions, would open the door for more countries to qualify. However, early indications suggest only a handful of nations have secured spots so far, raising questions about depth and preparedness across the continent.

World Relays local executive, Moses Bantsi has pointed out that Botswana's hosting status guarantees its presence, but the broader ambition was to see a stronger



World Relays local executive, Moses Bantsi

African footprint at the global event. The concern is that without increased qualification, the relays

risk being dominated by traditional powerhouses from outside the continent.

The Lefika International Relays, organised by Lefika Athletics Club, were deliberately structured to help

close that gap, offering African teams a competitive platform on home soil. The inclusion of countries such

[PIC: GORATAONE KGOSIMORE]

as Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa shows intent, but also highlights the reliance on a few established athletics nations.

At the same time, the event exposes another challenge, funding. Organisers have openly struggled to secure adequate sponsorship, a factor that continues to limit the growth of athletics competitions across the region and throughout the continent. Without strong financial backing, efforts to expand participation and improve performance standards may remain constrained.

Botswana Athletics Association (BAA) President, Oabona Theetso has emphasised the need for collective effort in building successful events, a sentiment that reflects the broader reality facing athletics development in Africa, where collaboration, investment and long-term planning remain critical.

Confirmed teams
The Lefika International Relays meet in Botswana has confirmed the nations set to participate on March 28 among them Botswana, South Africa, Poland, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Zambia, and Lesotho. Meet organizers have confirmed that South Africa will field teams in the Women's 4x100m and the 4x100m Mixed Relay.

Diamond League off the blocks



Letsile Tebogo will face the likes of Kishane Thompson and Akane Simbine men's 100m - Xiamen Diamond League on May 29th

BOTSWANA'S SPRINT sensation, Letsile Tebogo has been confirmed for the men's 100m - Xiamen Diamond League on May 29th. Other entries include Kishane Thompson of Jamaica, alongside three Americans - Christian Coleman, Kenny Bednarek and Trayvon Bromell, and two South Africans - Akani Simbine and Gift Leotlela

Botswana Golden Grand Prix

ONLY 36 DAYS TO GO!



The FNB Botswana Golden Grand Prix returns on 26th April 2026 at the National Stadium

DON'T BE LEFT WATCHING FROM home. International stars. Local heroes. One unforgettable day. Be in the stands! The biggest athletics event of the year is just around the corner. The FNB Botswana Golden Grand Prix returns on Sunday, 26th April 2026 at the National Stadium in Gaborone.

Tickets are ON SALE NOW at all Web tickets outlets nationwide.

Athletics collaborations
World Athletics Relays Local

Organizing Committee is building a collaboration framework for athletics events leading to the World Relays on 2-3 May 2026 in Gaborone. A statement issued by athletics bodies reads: "Over the past three weeks, we have initiated engagements with key athletics events, including the Golden Grand Prix with the intention of establishing Memorandums of Understanding across all major competitions taking place in Botswana. This is not by coincidence it is by

design. All athletics events leading up to the World Relays are part of a larger, unified journey. They are not stand-alone initiatives. Each one contributes to building momentum, shaping athlete experience, and influencing how the world will ultimately perceive Botswana as a host nation. As the coordinating leadership, we believe strongly that we cannot afford to operate in silos. We must move as one.

Botswana Athletics, as the custodian of the sport, carries the responsibility to ensure that every event, especially those leading to the World Relays meets world-class standards. This includes officiating, athlete welfare, ticketing, marketing, and overall event delivery. Because the truth is simple: If one event falls short, it impacts the credibility of all.

The framework we have begun implementing with the Golden Grand Prix is the same model we are extending to other events, including upcoming competitions. This includes integrated and shared marketing platforms, harmonized ticketing systems, standardized athlete welfare protocols, and coordinated stakeholder and partner engagement.

We are already seeing alignment in key areas such as ticketing, where leadership is deliberately structured to ensure consistency across events. Our intention is to lead by example. We want the world to experience Botswana not as fragmented events, but as a unified, professional, and world-class athletics destination.

This moment is historic. For the first time, the World Relays will be hosted on African soil. This places a responsibility on us not only for Botswana, but for the entire continent to deliver excellence and set a new global benchmark. Our vision from the beginning has been clear. To bring Africa together, and to connect Africa with the rest of the world through sport. And that vision can only be realised if we collaborate, align, and execute with intention. In the end, it is not just about hosting an event it is about delivering a legacy.

Ticket sales are as follows VIP- P500, PREMIUM-P 200, GOLD- P150, GENERAL -P50

For online buying kindly contact: <http://tickito.thevoicebw.com> where customers are advised to follow prompts, alternatively BAA office. Media Accreditation also on the 26th of March 2026.

Young golfers tee off



The Botswana national Under-19 team will compete at the African Junior Golf Championships in Kenya

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BONA LIFE ON FRIDAY HANDED over golf bags to the Botswana national Under-19 team in a show of support ahead of their departure to Kenya for the African Junior Golf Championships.

The handover, organised together with the Botswana Golf Union, doubled as a send-off ceremony for the young

team, with officials, parents and sponsors rallying behind the golfers as they prepare to represent the country on the continental stage.

Team captain, Thobo Mokgatle said wearing national colours was both an honour and a responsibility, noting that the players were not only competing for themselves but for Botswana and everyone who believes in them. He pledged that the team would give it all, remain disciplined and support one

another throughout the competition. Officials expressed confidence in the squad, describing it as a talented group with some players already part of the senior national setup. They highlighted that the tournament in Kenya will expose the golfers to international scouts and could open doors to elite development programmes such as the Africa High Performance Project.

Bona Life Business Development Manager, Gaone Waitse said the sponsorship goes beyond equipment, emphasizing its commitment to youth development and community upliftment through sport. The company noted that initiatives like these create opportunities for young people, both on and off the course. The Botswana Golf Union also used the occasion to outline its long-term vision of growing the sport, including junior development programmes, partnerships and pathways that can lead to professional careers in golf or related industries. Parents were applauded for their continued support, with speakers acknowledging the role they play in nurturing young talent.

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