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'Respect us' - AP/BPP to BNF

- Protest BNF bullying, demand action from Boko
- AP MPs threaten to boycott UDC Parliamentary caucus

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TENSION IS MOUNTING within the coalition Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) administration with MPs from two of the three partners, the Alliance for Progressives (AP) and Botswana Peoples Party (BPP) demanding equal recognition in the partnership.

The two partners are accusing their comrades in the BNF of disrespect from Botswana National Front (BNF) MPs and Councillors, The Patriot on Sunday has learnt. The Patriot on Sunday has it in good authority that some of UDC's affiliated Councillors from BPP and AP plan to file a formal objection to President Duma Boko over the big brother mentality displayed by BNF MPs and councillors over them.

It is said some BNF MPs are intimidating their colleagues from BPP and AP, a move that is dividing opinion in the ruling UDC coalition. UDC defeated Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) during the 2024 general election garnering 36 majority in Parliamentary seats.

From the UDC seats, BNF attained 23 seats in Parliament, AP six (6), BPP four (4) and the coalition also have three (3) MPs under the direct membership dispensation. The three direct MPs are Onneetse Ramogapi (Palapye), David Tshere (Mahalapye West) and Prince Maele of Tswapong North. The three are currently cabinet ministers appointed by Boko.

According to impeccable sources close to the developments, tension rocked the UDC Parliamentary caucus's boardroom this week as BPP and AP MPs called BNF MPs to order. It said AP/BPP MPs raised complaint about humiliation from BNF MPs especially during caucus meetings on weekly basis.

BNF MPs are said to be always whispering to their other colleagues on how BNF is the real deal in the UDC government as a result of its majority. The UDC caucus are often chaired by vice president Gaolathe, Leader of the House Moeti Mohwasa and UDC Chief Whip in Parliament Sam Digwa.

"BNF MPs always belittle and undermine our contribution in Parliament especially when commenting on issues that are related to broader UDC government business. Even some ministers from BNF behave in a negative way to us. For example, some don't want to answer our questions," said one concerned AP MP.

Going forward, AP MPs are threatening to boycott UDC Parliamentary caucus meetings if the BNF MPs don't change their attitude.

Discipline

Contacted for a comment on Friday, UDC Chief Parliamentary Whip Digwa said if some of UDC members have concerns they must raise it to the UDC relevant structures including Parliamentary caucus.

Digwa cautioned the UDC members against rushing to the media while they have

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#JusticeForTshepi

Youth Outrage Erupts!

- Protesters intensify calls for justice for Tshepi
- Demand action against child sexual abuse case
- Gen Zs swear never to be silenced or ignored



Re a Bua Foundation founder(C) Kemmy Mpinang delivering the petition to Acting President Ndaba Gaolathe
PIC GORATAONE KGOSIMORE

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A WAVE OF GRIEF AND anger swept throughout the country on Thursday, April 9th, 2026, as hundreds of protesters took to the streets demanding justice for 13-year-old Retshepile 'Tshepi' Tshedu, whose death by alleged suicide, has sparked national outrage following revelations of prolonged sexual abuse confirmed by a post-mortem examination.

The Thursday afternoon

protest, organised by the Rea Bua Foundation, was briefly delayed after police blocked protesters from proceeding, citing failure to secure a permit. Protesters gathered at Notwane Grounds in Gaborone, where tensions simmered as mostly University of Botswana students and youth refused to give in. Some clashes occurred as police tried to use force to control the crowd.

Tensions were only diffused after acting President, Ndaba Gaolathe arrived at the scene and gave the protesters go-ahead to proceed to Parliament to deliver their petition. He was

joined by the Minister of Youth and Gender Affairs, Lesego Chombo and Minister of Health Dr Stephen Modise.

Not accepting silence

The Rea Bua Foundation's founder, Kemmy Mpinang called for the peaceful demonstration to raise awareness and demand accountability in the case of the young Tshepi. Mpinang urged the government to act swiftly, warning that delays could undermine public trust. "We are here to demand accountability. Tshepi deserves justice, and so do all victims of abuse," she said.

TO PAGE 2

'BDP exploited workers' - UDC

- Kept over 8 652 civil servants on temporary employment
- UDC govt vows to abolish multiple temporary contracts



Mohwasa

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THE RULING UMBRELLA for Democratic Change (UDC) administration has embarked on a massive clean-up process to rid civil service of temporary employment, accusing the ousted Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) of using the strategy to deceive citizens.

Minister for State President, Defence and Security, Moeti Mohwasa conceded in Parliament this week that temporary employment is a huge problem, that often leads to abuse and exploitation of workers. Botswana Congress Party (BCP) MP for Maun East, Goretsetse Kekgongile had asked the minister to brief the house on the ministry's interpretation of the Public Service Act (PSA), regarding the 12 months temporary employment moratorium.

Mohwasa said currently there are 8 562 temporary employees across the Public Service, which was introduced by the previous

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The dangers of digital policing

PHENYO MOKGOTHU
North-West University

Use of technology must follow the law

GOVERNMENTS ACROSS the world are turning to digital policing systems to improve crime detection, manage information and respond faster to security threats, but North-West University (NWU) legal expert Advocate Justice Khoza say the expansion of these technologies is raising new questions about privacy, accountability and constitutional rights.

Recent developments in countries such as Ethiopia, where authorities have introduced smart police stations that rely on digital reporting systems, surveillance tools and integrated data platforms, show how technology is becoming central to modern governance.

The systems are designed to speed up service delivery, improve coordination between law-enforcement units and strengthen state capacity to respond to crime.

Advocate Khoza from the Faculty of Law said the move toward digital policing reflects a global shift in how governments manage public safety but warned that technological innovation must remain subject to legal control. "Technological innovation in policing can strengthen state capacity, but in a constitutional democracy it must remain firmly anchored in the Bill of Rights, legal accountability and public trust," he said.

Advocate Khoza said countries experimenting with



Advocate Justice Khoza smart policing are showing how digital systems can support governance, but he noted that constitutional safeguards

become more important when technology is used to collect and store personal information. "Effective governance

increasingly depends on technological infrastructure capable of managing information and coordinating public services, but the use of these systems must comply with constitutional protections."

He said the South African Constitution provides clear limits on how policing technologies may be used, particularly through the right to privacy and the requirement that administrative action must be lawful and fair.

Advocate Khoza also pointed to the Protection of Personal Information Act, which regulates how personal data may be collected and processed, saying digital policing must operate within these rules.

Digital systems can help police track cases, analyse crime patterns and improve response

times; however, technology alone cannot solve deeper problems in law enforcement. "Technology can strengthen law enforcement capacity, but it cannot replace the foundations of effective policing, strong institutions, professional accountability and public trust," Advocate Khoza said.

He added that South Africa could adopt elements of smart policing, but any such move would need to comply with constitutional requirements and ensure that new systems do not undermine rights or create inequality in access to policing services. "The challenge is not simply adopting new policing technology but ensuring that it is implemented in a manner consistent with constitutional rights, legal accountability and democratic governance."

Limkokwing reaffirms stability

LIMKOKWING UNIVERSITY OF Creative Technology wishes to address recent public speculation regarding the status and operations of the institution. We would like to categorically assure students, parents, stakeholders, and the general public that Limkokwing University remains fully operational, stable, and committed to delivering quality education in Botswana.

For nearly two decades, Limkokwing University has played a pivotal role in shaping Botswana's creative, media, business, and entrepreneurial landscape. Our graduates continue to make meaningful contributions across industries, both locally and internationally, a testament to the strength and relevance of our academic model.

Like many private tertiary institutions, the university has experienced changes in student enrolment patterns following shifts in government sponsorship priorities toward public institutions. In response, Limkokwing has undertaken a strategic transformation process to ensure long-term sustainability and continued excellence.

This transformation has included operational adjustments and campus relocation, all aimed at aligning the institution with current realities while strengthening its future position. These changes should not be interpreted as a decline, but rather as a deliberate and responsible evolution. Limkokwing University remains uniquely positioned through its industry-driven approach to education producing graduates who are not only employable but also entrepreneurial, innovative, and ready to contribute meaningfully to the economy. As we enter a new phase of growth and renewal, the university is actively enhancing its academic offerings, student experience, and industry partnerships to ensure that it continues to deliver on its promise of producing future-ready graduates. We encourage prospective students and parents to engage directly with the university through our admissions office, campus visits, and official communication platforms for accurate and up-to-date information. Limkokwing University remains committed to realising the full potential of every student and contributing to Botswana's human capital development.

BIDPA, EConsult Botswana host Development Policy Seminar

THE BOTSWANA Institute for Development Policy Analysis (BIDPA), in partnership with EConsult Botswana, will host a Development Policy Seminar under the theme: "Natural Resources and the Middle-Income Trap: Lessons for Botswana's Second Transformation."

The seminar will provide a platform for high-level dialogue on Botswana's policy priorities, fiscal stance, and the implications of these factors for the country's economic transformation and long-term development aspirations.

This seminar takes place at a pivotal moment in Botswana's development trajectory. The contribution of diamonds to GDP has declined substantially—from over 50% in the late 1980s to approximately 10% by 2024—highlighting the urgency for the country to strengthen new productive capacities, support lagging sectors, and diversify revenue sources in the context of long-term fiscal pressures.

EConsult Botswana, together with Mr. Jourich Loubser, a PhD candidate at the London School of Economics, have authored a research paper titled: "Moving Beyond Manufacturing in East Asia to a New Natural Resource



Econsult Botswana MD, Keith Jefferis

Middle-Income Trap: Lessons from Botswana's Diamond-Led Transformation." The paper will be presented during the seminar. The session will also feature Professor James Robinson, Nobel Laureate in Economics 2024, as a key discussant.

The research underscores that Botswana's 2024 political transition presents an opportunity to advance a "second transformation," with a focus on building organizational competencies in production-oriented sectors alongside strengthening macroeconomic governance. The paper further

highlights the central challenge of whether national leadership can articulate and implement a compelling industrial transformation agenda before fiscal constraints become binding.

The seminar will be held on 22 April 2026 at Travel Lodge, from 14:00 to 17:00. Participants may attend in person or join virtually by registering through the link below: <https://tinyurl.com/2s35ey5s>

The proceedings will also be livestreamed via the BIDPA Facebook Page and participating media platforms.

Youth Outrage Erupts!

from page 1

"The Rea Bua Foundation is here to challenge the culture that keeps cases like this hidden in Botswana. We want our children to have a voice, and since Tshepi is no longer with us, we are speaking on her behalf."

She boldly gave the government two weeks to conduct an independent investigation by a neutral team, release a full audit of forensic samples, and suspend the mother, reportedly a police officer, who is alleged to have stalled the case, all outlined in the petition. "Failure to act will see us, together with other stakeholders, engage a private investigator," Mpinang warned.

Tshedu's case initially suggested she had taken her own life, only for post-mortem results to reveal evidence of sexual abuse, a revelation that shocked the nation. While the investigation is ongoing and police have not confirmed any suspect, the Rea Bua Foundation has raised concerns over possible individuals involved. The lack of progress has fueled public anger and intensified calls for justice, highlighting concerns about gender-based violence and child protection in Botswana.

Frustration boils over
Crowds booed and jeered as Gaolathe and Chombo arrived, demanding immediate



Hundreds of youth took to the streets to demand justice for Retshepile Tshedu
PIC GORATAONE KGOSIMORE

action. Placards demanding accountability highlighted that the mere presence of officials was not enough. Gaolathe would later receive the petition in front of Parliament Buildings and assured protesters that their concerns would be addressed. He told the protesters that they will act on the set timeline of two weeks and issue a response.

Chombo also spoke, affirming solidarity with the protesters. "This week, I will convene an inter-ministerial committee on gender-based violence, involving the Ministries of State President, Basic Education, Child Welfare, and Youth. We are already legislating the GBV Act to protect victims," she said.

Youth Call for Change
Young people, mostly

university students were at the forefront of the protest, refusing to give in despite threats from police. Such organized, persistent youth activism is not usual in Botswana, making their actions even more remarkable. Their determination has been evident last week when they staged a protest demanding higher allowances, successfully increasing them from P1,900 to P2,200 in response to the rising cost of living.

During the #JusticeforTshepi march, they amplified their voices through chants, banners, and social media campaigns, demonstrating a generation unwilling to stay silent in the face of injustice.

Several well-known public figures were also present,

including celebrated musician Dato Seiko, known for using her influence to champion social issues, and Miss Universe 2026, Dabulo Moses. Their presence added weight to the protest, showing solidarity with the youth and the Rea Bua Foundation's call for justice.

Statistics shows cases of gender-based violence and child abuse remain a serious concern in Botswana, with many incidents going unreported. Advocates stress the urgent need for stronger protective systems and public awareness.

The case has reignited debate around gender-based violence, with activists warning that a culture of silence continues to shield perpetrators and delay justice for victims.

'Respect us' - AP/BPP to BNF


from page 1

issues and normally, they don't present them to the leadership first. He said he is aware of one case under which BNF MP expressed dissatisfaction over how some minister from AP addressed him but that matter was resolved amicably. He added that no UDC member should feel bigger than any other, adding that UDC equally belongs to all.

"As a BNF member and Government Whip, I don't expect any member from BNF to be rude to other UDC MPs or Councillors. We must respect each other. AP and BPP belong to us. This is government for all the parties in UDC and most importantly is for the people," said Digwa in an interview on Friday.

Digwa also said UDC members must cease from attacking others on Social Media platforms, noting that comprises the credibility and paint a picture of disorder in the government.

During the BNF leadership forum in Francistown last month, Boko said it is important for BNF members to respect each other including members from other UDC parties. He said discipline and unity is important in the UDC government for it to succeed.



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Month-April 2026

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Call	0.00-1.00%	0.00-1.01%	1000
Savings	0.00-2.00%	0.00-2.02%	100
91-Days Fixed Deposit	1.25-1.25%	1.25-1.26%	500
6 months	1.50-1.50%	1.50-1.51%	500
12 months	3.25-4.00%	3.25-4.31%	500
24 months	4.00-4.75%	4.00-4.82%	500
Over 24 months	4.25-5.00%	4.25-5.08%	500
USD	(Lowest-Highest)	(Lowest-Highest)	(USD)
3 months Fixed Deposit	0.00-0.25%	0.00-0.26%	No Minimum Balance
6 months	0.00-0.50%	0.00-0.52%	5000
Over 12 months	0.00-0.75%	0.00-0.76%	5000
ZAR	(Lowest-Highest)	(Lowest-Highest)	(ZAR)
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Over 12 months	2.75-2.75%	2.75-2.78%	1 million

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'BDP exploited workers' - UDC

FROM PAGE 1

administration. On the other hand, the BDP has repeatedly dismissed the UDC accusations, saying they are failing to lead and have instead resorted to pointing fingers. The BDP said, those in power have to create jobs as they promised voters.

Mohwasa said the UDC government is currently undertaking a study to do away with the large number of temporary employment contracts in the Public Service. He said there is no 12 months temporary employment moratorium in the Public Service, explaining that Section 13 of the Public Service Act No. 30 of 2008, defines temporary

employment as an engagement limited to a single contract period not exceeding 12 months and not several 12 months contracts cumulatively. He said Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) therefore continue to appoint temporary employees for periods up to 12 months in compliance with the Act.

Mohwasa said a key challenge in the implementation of temporary employment is the decentralized nature of recruitment across government entities. This, he said, has resulted in instances where individuals accumulate multiple temporary appointments across

various MDAs, leading to cumulative service that exceeds 12 months.

"For example, certain temporary engagements are tied to the period of absence of the of the substantive position holder who is on long study leave. This has been addressed in the Public Service Bill which prohibits continuous engagements of employees on a temporary basis for a period in excess 12 months," said Mohwasa, adding that the Bill will be tabled before Parliament during the current sitting.

He explained that temporary appointments are intended to provide relief during the

temporary absence of the incumbent position holder not as a permanent feature.

Therefore, temporary employees cannot be converted to permanent employment as the positions they occupy remain substantively filled. "Temporary employees can only be absorbed when positions have been created which is why we are embracing insourcing and undertaking a comprehensive study to deal with this issue," said Mohwasa.

Exploitation
Meanwhile, Kekgonigile who is BCP shadow minister of Labour and Home Affairs said temporary employees in the

public service are subjected to exploitative labour practices. He said it is unfair for employees to be stuck on temporary employment while sometimes the positions that they are acting for could be advertised and different people are employed.

Kekgonigile said it is important for government to prioritise employment of temporary employees because already they have skills and understand the job better, adding that the ministry must ensure that Directorate of Public Service Management (DPSM) is doing its work as temporary employees often raise complaints about it.

Tertiary education allowances adjusted

THE MINISTRY OF Higher Education wishes to inform the public and the student community that the monthly Tertiary Education Student Allowance has been adjusted, effective end of April 2026. This is subsequent to the pronouncement made by the Minister of Higher Education, Honourable Prince Maele, when addressing tertiary education students on the 1st April 2026 regarding their request for an increase in living allowances.

The Ministry further

acknowledges the recent student protests and expresses its deep understanding of the financial pressures currently facing learners. The welfare and well-being of students remain central priorities in Government's human capital development agenda.

The Ministry confirms adjustment of student living allowances by 14.6% as follows: Off-Campus Allowance increases from P1,919.70 to P2,200.00; On-Campus (Self-Catering) Allowance increases from P1,550.50 to P1,776.90;

On-campus (Full Boarding) allowance increases from P296.30 to P339.60.

As previously indicated during the Committee of Supply presentation by the Honourable Minister, the Ministry was in the process of increasing the student living allowances this financial year i.e., 2026/2027. In his address to Parliament, Honourable Minister Prince Maele stated:

"Mr. Chairman, the Ministry had initially planned to increase students' allowances to P2,500.00 in April 2026. However, this has not been



Maele possible due to prevailing budgetary constraints. These fiscal limitations have

also affected the Ministry's ability to extend sponsorship for progression and re-sponsorships. Notwithstanding these challenges, the Ministry is working tirelessly to increase students' allowances this financial year as soon as funds are sourced" (page 10).

The current adjustment reflects Government's continued commitment to supporting students within the available resource envelope. The Ministry remains committed to exploring sustainable measures to further enhance student welfare as fiscal conditions improve.

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Saving Air Botswana

1. Two months in office, what are you seeing? What is the situation on the ground at Air Botswana?

A: From the inside, I can appreciate the situation with much more details now. From the outside, Botswana only see flight delays, and an unreliable airline which is why Air Botswana has lost a good percentage of the market to competitors (clientele). We may have enough aircrafts, but are enough to operate a profitable airline? We may have enough pilots, but they may not have sufficient flying hours to service a profitable airline.

The other issue was the Governance Structure at Air Botswana, where we had the General Manager sitting alone at the top, with no senior management. The next level of the structure being junior management. For a long time, the previous did not form a quorum and therefore was rendered ineffective. I am glad that a new Board of Directors is now in place, and I have been here for two months now. Senior management has been appointed, and are now hands-on, handling staff grievances, attending to client queries and monitoring any emerging challenges by being on the forefront.

Air Botswana has been hemorrhaging public coffers, forcing government to rescue the national airliner to sustain operations, receiving over a billion pula between 2019 and 2024, largely to maintain the airline's ageing fleet, cover operational shortfalls, and keep staff salaries afloat.

2. Why has this been the situation, is it impossible to reverse? What gives you the confidence that you can buck the trend?

A: (Face contorted, with emphasis) We are really at rock bottom, currently. We cannot afford to slip any further down. Below where we are now is just collapsing and closing shop.

Even as we are staring such calamity in the eye, we are hopeful to turn the situation around. We are focused on fixing major challenges before thinking about profitability. I am happy to report that there is light at the end of the tunnel. From February 2026, we have reduced delays drastically, we have had fewer cancellations, and are intentional about improving customer experience on our flights.

Over the years, Air Botswana has become synonymous with "hardly ever being on time, and arbitrarily

After many have come and gone, some shortly after arrival, Dr Bao Mosinyi took the reigns as Air Botswana General Manager two months ago. Notably, he brings an impressive Curriculum vitae / resume of a decorated man who has been in the aviation industry all his life. He sat down with **STAFF WRITER DITIRO MOTLHABANE.**

re-routing or cancelling flights at short notice often even without pre-warning passengers."

3. How do you plan to improve this situation for the better?

A: As above (answer in 2 above) Last year President Duma Boko singled out Air Botswana as one of the strategic state-owned enterprises that he decreed and declared will be profitable by the end of 2025.

4. In your assessment, where is Air Botswana in that journey to profitability? What strategy are you employing to achieve this? How long do you hope to take get there?

A: When Mr President announces a timeline, it means we have to deliver. We do not have the luxury of choice. As it is, expectations among Botswana are still high. The solution is two folds.

We are a highly inefficient entity, we are hardly ever on time, with too many cancellations. There is only one thing that we are doing, and that is "Improve operational efficiency".

Unfortunately, we have accumulated a lot of debt. To make money, we must ensure that every pilot eligible to fly can fly, every aircraft that can fly is in the airspace serving us one way or the other.

As recent as a month ago we had two active aircrafts, running a two aircraft schedule. Optimally, we need about four aircrafts to operate a profitable airline.

At Air Botswana, we currently have six (6) aircrafts. Contrary to allegations, we are not planning to sell any of our aircraft. Two of our aircrafts are currently leased to Namibia. We are working around the clock to cancel that deal, which was poorly crafted, and repatriate the two aircrafts back home from Namibia to bring them under our control. We will register them with CAAB and have Air Botswana pilots trained to fly the aircrafts. We hope to conclude that transaction by the end of the month.

We are looking to lease out one of the jets to make some money. Since around mid-2025, we have one aircraft grounded here at Sir Seretse Khama International Airport. We need about P50 million to service and repair it, to bring it back into operation.



If it were not for a plethora of challenges, a lot of things would have fallen into place by the middle of the year (2026). In the time I have been here (just two months), we have seen a lot of improvement in our operations. We are changing a lot if things and hope to be a decently efficient airline by the end of the year (2026).

No drastic changes, but a lot of little things that need to be fixed. This is our short-term strategy and focus.

In every conversation about Air Botswana, the issue of ticket prices always crops up. Some are saying "Let's not make flights somewhat a luxury service". Others are saying "AB exorbitant fares are the deterrent".

5. Your reaction to those observations. Do you agree that your prices are high/unaffordable? Are suggestions to reduce ticket prices even a feasible proposition?

A: That is just a misconception about the ticketing system. For example, let's look at the busiest route, the Gaborone - Johannesburg route which has three (3) carriers/operators, including AB, Airlink and SAA. We have the cheapest ticket you can get on that most popular route, even after one airline came into the space and offered cheaper rates.

With rising aviation fuel due to geopolitics, we have not

increased ticket prices yet, while our competitors have made huge adjustments.

The Load factor plays a major role as ticket prices fluctuate according to the numbers. The Gaborone - Maun and back, has been performing extremely well, alongside the Maun-Johannesburg. Lately, the Lusaka -Harare route has also been doing very well. If we get more people on the Gaborone-Francistown route, ticket prices will go down.

Pricing model. Elsewhere, some point to an odd dynamic in Botswana's aviation industry. There are calls for the regulator, CAAB to revise their fees, which are considered too high and make the bulk of the ticket cost.

6. Is this an accurate reflection of what obtains, regarding ticketing?

A: Regulator fees in Botswana are lower than any other country around the world. We are working with IATA to fix the categorization in the ticketing system to accurately reflect the costing. Even at CAAB when fees are increased, we conduct a survey in the global market.

In 2024 Air Botswana purchased three pre-owned aircrafts, one Embraer E175 jet with 88 seats, valued at USD9.5 million, and two Embraer ERJ145 jets with 50 seats, bought for USD4.65 million and USD4.35 million. However, reports

indicate that Air Botswana, has suspended three recently introduced regional routes after incurring losses amounting to approximately P44.5 million on the services, underscoring the deepening financial strain.

7. What happened? What is likely to happen going forward?

A: Trying to expand before cleaning up was a blunder by Air Botswana management. It shows impatience. The regional routes were rushed, without careful analysis. There was no adequate planning on the routes. Consequently, the short -cut backfired terribly!

The Air Botswana fleet currently consists of a 70-seater ATR 72; 88-seater Embraer 175; Two 50-seater Embraer 145 currently in Namibia; 70-seater Embraer parked at SSKIA.

We have two aircrafts registered in Namibia under a wet lease, an ACMI (aircraft, crew, maintenance and insurance) deal. We have to repatriate them back home. We will be making the last payment at the end of April 2026. Our Engineering and Flight operations division are working on the logistics to repatriate the aircrafts.

Around the world, there are ongoing conflicts which have brought disruption to supply chain systems globally, and threaten to cause escalation in jet fuel prices due to volatile geopolitics.

8. How is this likely to affect you? Are we likely to see price hikes in the near future as you layer in these costs?

A: Airlines are already putting fuel surcharges. We await an update from Puma Energy - our suppliers of aviation fuel. We have not increased any prices for now until advised further.

Technological advancement has taken the world by storm, disrupting every sector of the economy and industries across board. The aviation industry must be equally affected by these changes in the archaic 'brick and mortar' way of doing things

9. What changes are you bringing to Air Botswana and in which areas, technology-wise?

A: After struggling for so long, you start with the bare minimum. A lot needs to be done. As you can see (pointing to a pile of papers on a

huge desk) we are still doing a lot of manual paperwork. I found a similar situation at CAAB but the situation had improved significantly when I left, as we had automated some processes.

Just as an example, the regulator -CAAB has installed self-check in systems at the airport but we cannot incorporate it into our systems and process as we are still lagging behind. For now, we are doing the bare minimum to get to basic standard. Then we can upgrade from there.

We need to invests in digital technology to give customers a better experience.

10. Do you have the money for all that upgrade?

A: We should give government credit for coming to our aid. This airline would not be here if it was not for the intervention of Botswana government. When we become efficient, we will get our fair share of passengers back. That will affect the passengers' confidence locally, and prices will go down.

We are going into the good season for flying. We hope to place two aircrafts on an ACMI lease to generate some money, a significant revenue source. From that deal, we will not be awash with money but we will have enough to do the basics.

About Dr Bao Mosinyi

Kindly tells us a bit about who Dr Bao Mosinyi is. Where you were born, where you grew up, where you attended school - from elementary to university, and how you ended up at Air Botswana.

I am from Kalamare in the Central district, but I was born in Molepolole where my mother originates. I attended primary school in Kalamare before proceeding to boarding school at Molefi Secondary in Mochudi for five (form 1-5) years. Thereafter, I went for National Service (Tirelo Sechaba), and later did a Pre-Entry Science Course in 93 and BSc part 1 at the University of Botswana. Then I transferred to universities in the US for my Degree in Aerospace Engineering at Embre-Riddle Aeronautical University, in Florida.

With three (3) subjects left in my course, I took a year off school to work at ATA Airlines in Indiannapolis.

I graduated in December 1999, and in January 2000 started a Master's Degree in Aerospace Engineering, which I completed in December 2001. I worked as a Teaching Assistant while pursuing my Masters,

and won the Federal Aviation Administration Fellowship (FAA) for a PHD and moved to Atlantic City, New Jersey. I did academics at Drexel University in Philadelphia, while conducting research in Pennsylvania on fatigue and damage tolerance of aircraft structures. It is my area of specialty.

As I was close to completing the PHD, I attended an International Fatigue Conference in Atlanta, Georgia in 2006 where I met executives from Airbus, who recruited me. I joined Airbus in 2007. In 2014, I believed I had done enough for engineering and felt like I was growing grey hair.

I enrolled for an 18-month program in Duke University, pursuing an MBA. I left Airbus in January 2018 and moved to Hartford Connecticut where I worked for Prett & Whitney- manufacturers of aircraft engines.

In June 2021, I received an invitation from the then Minister of Technology, Thulagano Segokgo- to head the Civil Aviation Authority of Botswana (CAAB). The then President Mokgweetsi Masisi also personally intervened to get me here. Eventually, I agreed to come home in July, losing out on immense benefits in the US.

My wife and two kids (born 2012, 2014) remained in the US for a whole year while I settled in Botswana.

Later I was recruited by the current Minister of Transport, Noah Salakae to come and turnaround Air Botswana. President Duma Boko also intervened to convince me to come here. Their job was made easier by the fact that Vice President Ndaba Gaolathe and I go a long way back. In fact, he was the Best Man during my wedding in 2010.

What do you do in your spare time?

I used to play a lot of golf when I had a lot of time. I often play with my kids, who also love playing golf. Otherwise, I spend time at the farm, especially on weekends.

Book(s) you are currently reading?

A: 'Tyranny of the Bottom Line: Why Corporations Make Good People do Bad Things' by Ralph Estees.

I've owned the book for a long time but never read it. I'm currently reading it now when we desperately need to make money for the economy. Sometimes we are so focused on making money that we forget that the assets we manage were created for public good.

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Strengthening School Safety in Botswana



MASEGO LEKGOWE*
From Policy to Practice

BOTSWANA HAS LONG recognised education as a cornerstone of national development. Over the years, the country has invested significantly in expanding access to schools,

improving infrastructure, and strengthening curriculum delivery. These efforts have played an important role in improving educational outcomes and supporting national progress. As the education system continues to evolve, however, another critical dimension deserves greater attention: how school health and safety are governed and implemented in practice.

Botswana already has a policy framework designed to protect learners and educators. The Education Act provides the legal basis for regulating health and safety standards within schools, while the National School Health Policy outlines responsibilities related to safe learning environments, emergency preparedness, and the wellbeing of students and staff. These frameworks reflect an important national commitment to safeguarding school communities and ensuring that learning takes place in environments that

support both safety and wellbeing. The challenge, however, is not the absence of policy. The real challenge lies in ensuring consistent and effective implementation across the education system.

In many schools, safety procedures exist but are not always fully integrated into everyday management processes. Safety plans may be available, yet they may not always be regularly reviewed or used to guide operational decision-making. Routine risk assessments are not consistently embedded into school leadership cycles, and emergency preparedness procedures may exist without being tested through drills or regular evaluation. As a result, the level of safety management can vary significantly from one school to another.

This situation does not necessarily reflect a lack of commitment among school leaders or educators. Instead,

it highlights a broader systems challenge. When safety governance depends largely on individual initiative rather than structured oversight, implementation becomes uneven. Schools with leaders who prioritise safety may establish strong monitoring practices and clear procedures, while others may struggle to maintain similar standards in the absence of structured guidance and accountability.

Other sectors that operate in high-risk environments approach safety differently. In industries such as healthcare, aviation, and energy, safety is treated as a central governance function. Risks are monitored systematically, incident reporting systems are institutionalised, and leadership accountability is clearly defined. Continuous improvement is built into organisational processes through monitoring, review, and data-driven decision-making.

Education systems

operate in similarly complex environments and require comparable governance discipline. Schools manage large numbers of learners every day and serve as important social institutions where physical, psychological, and behavioural risks can intersect. Ensuring safe learning environments therefore requires more than compliance with regulations; it requires structured systems that anticipate risks and manage them proactively.

The risk landscape within schools today extends beyond infrastructure concerns. While safe buildings, sanitation, and fire safety remain essential, schools must also address psychosocial pressures affecting educators and learners, behavioural challenges, digital risks, and the need for effective emergency response capacity. These factors influence not only the safety of school environments but also broader public health outcomes.

For example, sustained

stress among educators can affect teaching quality, staff retention, and the stability of the education system. Similarly, emergency procedures that exist only on paper may not provide adequate protection if they are not regularly practiced or updated.

Without consistent monitoring and reliable data collection, early warning signs of emerging risks may remain unnoticed. Strengthening school safety in Botswana does not necessarily require new legislation. Rather, it requires strengthening the governance mechanisms that support existing frameworks.

This means clarifying safety accountability at both school and ministry levels so that responsibilities are clearly defined and consistently applied. It also involves embedding routine risk assessments into school management processes and integrating psychosocial wellbeing into broader safety

frameworks. Equally important is the development of structured monitoring and reporting systems that allow risks to be identified early and addressed proactively. Building leadership capacity in risk management and systems thinking can also help ensure that school leaders are equipped to manage safety as an ongoing governance responsibility rather than an occasional compliance requirement. As Botswana continues to pursue its development goals, the resilience of its education system becomes increasingly important. Schools are not only places of learning; they are environments that shape the health, safety, and wellbeing of future generations.

The conversation should therefore move beyond asking whether policies exist, and instead focus on whether governance systems are strong enough to implement, monitor, and continuously improve

them. Ultimately, the strength of an education system is measured not only by academic achievement, but also by the effectiveness of the systems that protect those who learn and work within it.

** Lekgowe is a research specialist in public health and education safety systems, focusing on risk management, occupational health, and health innovation to advance safer learning environments and a resilient workforce.*

She is a Motswana based in Ireland, Dublin, best described as an educator, speaker, author, and advocate whose work spans formal education, training, and systems that support safety and wellbeing. Her professional journey began in primary school classrooms, where she gained first-hand experience of the responsibility, resilience, and influence teachers hold at the foundation of society. She is the author of You Are Not Just a Teacher.

Tribute to Machana Ronald Shamukuni

TUMELO MODISE*

WAS ONLY LAST YEAR end of February that I travelled with Rre Machana Shamukuni to Namibia for the funeral of Namibia's 1st President Dr. Sam Nujoma. He was then the substantive Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) Deputy Secretary General (DSG), deputizing Ngaka Ngaka following Dr. Kwape's departure as Secretary General. So, he was the head of our delegation at Namibia at the time.

We were with the then MCC, Komkeik Setswalo. Before that, I had never really interacted with him around political or any circles except for the occasional 'hi's at monthly CC meetings. Actually, this is the only story I have of him.

What struck me about him ko Namibia was his humility above everything else! First, he was assigned to a different 5-star hotel while we were booked somewhere else at some 4-star lodge. He then politely declined with a smile and insisted that we cannot be separated, that he is responsible for us. So, we were then all taken to his

hotel, where all VVIP's were. Luckily, they squeezed us in because we were the smallest delegation. Our rooms were on the same floor with ANC, ZANU and Angola's MPLA top brass. MPLA was a delegation of 25! Fikile Mbalula & his bodyguards were so loud!

The following afternoon on a Thursday we attended the SWAPO memorial service at the stadium. Blue light cars came for him while the posh Fortuner that had picked us from the airport came for myself le Komkeit. Then he objected again saying, but the sedan assigned for him can take all 3 of us! At that point he reminded the protocol team gore "guys I am no longer a Minister in Botswana, our party is out of govt so I am now an ordinary citizen!" At that moment, our electoral loss was still fresh and we were still bleeding kana.

The ruling Namibian party SWAPO, a very good friend of the BDP, is still saddened about our loss to this day. It was at that point that I then stepped in and said "DSG please tsena moo tthe, re shapo we will be behind you re ya go goroga rothe." What I later realized is he felt

lonely and isolated and wanted company of familiar faces. I think he was also overwhelmed by the protocol, was something he never experienced here ele minister. He agreed, hopped in then we left.

At the memorial service, the scenario repeated itself. They had assigned him to the front seats because of his tag, second row behind Presidents, with political VVIP's, bo Mbalula and others. He declined the courtesy again, stood his ground then sat with us at 6th row. Now he was scheduled to give a message of solidarity on behalf of the BDP with other SG's. He was very nervous about that, I think part of the reason he wanted to sit with us was to calm his nerves. When his turn came close, he then asked me, if I could go read the speech instead, his reasoning that "gape ke wena o nkwaletse message wa teng you understand it better. Stage sele se dark, ga ke bone sente nakonyana tse". I then suggested to him that the three of us will all go up to the stage with him, stand behind him as he read it, and we did. He acted it. On Friday there was another State memorial service at another stadium, we drove



with him, we sat with him.

The following day Saturday, Day 3 of this hectic program ya lesa, it was now the burial day. That morning he got inside the Fortuner with us ka kgang. He had the funeral VVIP tag while we had the VIP. The blue lights had no option but to lead our Fortuner to the Heroes Acre, where Dr. Nujoma was to be interred. When we arrived there, our chauffer stopped ha VVIP tent to offload him, he tried to resist but quickly gave up seeing that we were part of a convoy and might be holding it. So Komkiet and I were then driven to the VIP tent. Only to later see him in our tent phitlho e fela. We don't know how and when he did that. He said one asa batle re timelana.

To conclude, then it was time for lunch, after the funeral. VVIP had to go for lunch at the State House while rona our lunch was at the SWAPO Headquarters. Yerr SWAPO built a Disney there! Shamukuni said no, (this time firmly) are Im not going for lunch at the Statehouse alone! SKI and Minister Butale were also at the funeral representing BW Govt, but that was not the reason he didn't want to join them for

lunch. Gape one a setse aba bone a ba dumedisitse. Truth is we were all very tired at that point, kana that funeral started at 9am and ended around 16:30, ele Day 3 of no rest! So, we were finished, tired beyond words with no appetite for food even!

We then hitchhiked back to the hotel with one Minister, a great friend of the BDP Cde Verna Sinimbo, now current Governor of Kavango West Region. We hitchhiked because exiting that place was chaos and our assigned vehicles were stuck somewhere. These two SWAPO heavyweights tell us they wept badly when the BDP lost.

Today they are now mourning Machana Shamukuni with us, it is too much. When we were with him, there wasn't any indication that he was unwell in any way, so learning about his death has shattered us all. I'm devastated. What an honest, selfless good man, what a human-being of impeccable character that everyone is attesting to!

Rest in peace & power democrat! Rest in peace son of the soil. May your family, friends le madomi be comforted.

*Facebook post

'We have lost a great man'

WYNTER MMOLOTSI

I STARTED WORKING WITH MACHANA more than fifteen years ago in the youth structure of the BDP. We belonged to the same faction which advocated for constitutionalism within the party. Shamukuni was the faction organizer in the chobe region and ensured that delegates who attended congresses were properly aligned to our faction. Fast forward to 2014, he won elections and joined me in parliament where he displayed the highest level of maturity in

handling national issues. I had the opportunity to travel multiple international trips with him and he was such a valuable colleague. In one of the trips, we were with the late Letlatisitwe and while there I bought a handbag for my wife. It was not an issue when I bought it but then when we got back Shamukuni, while on the floor of parliament said they experienced problems in the UK because Hon Mmolotsi was carrying a handbag which attracted attention from people of a different sexual orientation. This became a big issue and yet

it was not true that the handbag attracted any attention from anyone.

Shamukuni served as a country representative at the Southern Africa commonwealth parliamentary association for a long time before he joined cabinet. He joined cabinet as an Assistant Minister before the 2019 elections and was not considered after the 2019 elections. This pained him a lot and he confided in me. I then approached President Masisi when we were at the Kasane MP's orientation to have a chat

with him about Machana's frustrations. After the chat, President Masisi asked me to call Shamukuni and it turned out that some people had told the President untruths about Shamukuni. After this meeting, Machana was subsequently appointed to cabinet. Nako ya teng President Masisi o ne a nthheetsa thata ka gore o ne a tsaya gore since I was the only AP MP ke tla joina Domi. So o ne a nthibametse.

The nation has lost a great man in him
Rest well my man

Restoring Peace and Stability in Middle East: China, Pakistan Five-Point Initiative

STAFF WRITER
editors@thepatriot.co.bw

MEMBER OF THE Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China H.E. Mr. Wang Yi and Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar met in Beijing on 31 March 2026 to review the situation in the Gulf and Middle East Region.

The two sides put forward the following: I. Immediate Cessation of Hostilities: China and Pakistan call for immediate cessation of hostilities and utmost efforts to prevent the conflict from spreading. Humanitarian assistance must be allowed to all war-affected areas. II. Start of peace talks as soon as possible. Sovereignty, territorial integrity, national independence and security of Iran and the Gulf states should be safeguarded. Dialogue and diplomacy is the

only viable option to resolve conflicts. China and Pakistan support the relevant parties in initiating talks, with all parties committing to peaceful resolution of disputes, and refraining from the use or the threat of use of force during peace talks. III. Security of nonmilitary targets. The principle of protecting civilians in military conflict should be observed. China and Pakistan call on the parties to the conflict to immediately stop attacks on civilians and nonmilitary

targets, and fully adhere to International Humanitarian Law (IHL), and stop attacking important infrastructure, including energy, desalination and power facilities, and peaceful nuclear infrastructure, such as nuclear power plants. IV. Security of shipping lanes. The Strait of Hormuz, together with its adjacent waters, is an important global shipping route for goods and energy. China and Pakistan call on the parties to protect the security of ships and crew members stranded in the Strait of Hormuz, allow the

early and safe passage of civilian and commercial ships, and restore normal passage through the Strait as soon as possible. V. Primacy of the United Nations Charter. China and Pakistan call for efforts to practice true multilateralism, to jointly strengthen the primacy of the U.N., and to support the conclusion of an agreement for establishing a comprehensive peace framework and realizing lasting peace based on the purposes and principles of the U.N. Charter and international law.

Bank of Baroda (Botswana) Ltd.

Quarterly Disclosure on Actual Interest Rates for January 2026 to March 2026

Type of Deposit Account	January 2026 Interest Rates (%)	February 2026 Interest Rates (%)	March 2026 Interest Rates (%)	Range Interest Rates (%) during the quarter
BWP	(Lowest-Highest)	(Lowest-Highest)	(Lowest-Highest)	(Lowest-Highest)
Current	0.00-0.00%	0.00-0.00%	0.00-0.00%	0.00-0.00%
Call	0.00-1.01%	0.00-1.01%	0.00-1.01%	0.00-1.01%
Savings	0.00-2.02%	0.00-2.02%	0.00-2.02%	0.00-2.02%
91-Days Fixed Deposit	1.25-1.26%	1.25-1.26%	1.25-1.26%	1.25-1.26%
6 months	1.50-1.51%	1.50-1.51%	1.50-1.51%	1.50-1.51%
12 months	3.25-4.31%	3.25-4.31%	3.25-4.31%	3.25-4.31%
24 months	4.00-4.82%	4.00-4.82%	4.00-4.82%	4.00-4.82%
Over 24 months	4.25-5.08%	4.25-5.08%	4.25-5.08%	4.25-5.08%
USD	(Lowest-Highest)	(Lowest-Highest)	(Lowest-Highest)	(Lowest-Highest)
3 months Fixed Deposit	0.00-0.26%	0.00-0.26%	0.00-0.26%	0.00-0.26%
6 months	0.00-0.52%	0.00-0.52%	0.00-0.52%	0.00-0.52%
Over 12 months	0.00-0.76%	0.00-0.76%	0.00-0.76%	0.00-0.76%
ZAR	(Lowest-Highest)	(Lowest-Highest)	(Lowest-Highest)	(Lowest-Highest)
6 months	1.75-1.76%	1.75-1.76%	1.75-1.76%	1.75-1.76%
Over 12 months	2.75-2.78%	2.75-2.78%	2.75-2.78%	2.75-2.78%
Lending Rates	January 2026 Interest Rates (%)	February 2026 Interest Rates (%)	March 2026 Interest Rates (%)	Range Interest Rates (%) during the quarter
MoPR	1.90%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%
Baroda Prime Lending Rate	7.51%	7.51%	7.51%	7.51%
Mortgage Facility	7.51-13.00%	7.51-15.51%	7.51-15.51%	7.51-15.51%
Overdraft Facility (Revolving Credit Lines)	7.51-12.75%	7.51-15.01%	7.51-15.01%	7.51-15.01%
Credit Card	NA	NA	NA	NA
Lease Loans	NA	NA	NA	NA
Unsecured Personal Loans (excluding overdrafts, mortgages, and credit cards)	9.50-15.75%	9.51-17.26%	9.51-17.26%	9.51-17.26%
Other Long-Term Loans	7.51-12.75%	7.51-13.01%	7.51-13.01%	7.51-13.01%

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

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Palapye Branch: Madiba Complex, Palapye, Ph: 4920041, Email: palapye@bankofbaroda.com.



Lucara Botswana 2025 Full-Year Performance Highlights

Making Diamond History



Operational Performance

Ore Mined 1.9 million tonnes	Ore Processed 2.8 million tonnes	Carats Sold 353,302 carats
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Diamond Recoveries

Diamonds >1,000 carats - **3 Stones**
 Notable Recoveries - **2,036ct; 1,476ct; 1,015ct; 37.42ct Pink Type IIa**

Financial Performance

Total Revenue US\$159.7 million	(Dec 31, 2025) Cash Balance US\$31.9 million	Operating Margin 52%
Working Capital US\$33.6 million	Operating Cost per Tonne US\$27.15/t	

Karowe Underground Project

UGP Capital Spend (2025)
US\$75.8 million

UGP Total Investment to Date
US\$469.4 million

Production Shaft Depth 776 metres	Ventilation Shaft Depth 729 metres
Underground Production Target H1 2028	Mine Life Extension To 2038

Safety Performance

Lost Time Injury Free Days (UGP) 2,159 days	Total Recordable Injury Frequency Rate (UGP) 0.56
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Project Milestones

Lateral Development Contract
Awarded 1 Dec 2025 to Group R Mining & Exploration Botswana

Community Impact

Makgaba Investment Makgaba Primary School Construction.	Sports Awards P150,000.00	Creation Botswana P210,000.00	Botswana Sustainability Week P325,000.00 Co-Title Sponsor	Miss World Botswana Sponsorship P550,000
Institute of Risk Management P120,000.00 - Legacy Partner	Women in Mining Conference P200,000.00 - Diamond Sponsor			

CHOPPIES

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SUPER COMBO DEAL

...ALL FOR...

359⁹⁹

- D'LITE Cooking Oil
- + TASTIC Rice
- + SUPER A1/ CHOPPIES/ Maize Meal OR CHOPPIES Sorghum Meal
- + ALL GOLD Tomato Sauce
- + C&B Mayonnaise
- + LA LAGANE/ CHOPPIES



MEGA COMBO DEAL

...ALL FOR...

599⁹⁹

- CHOPPIES Sorghum Meal
- + EXCELLA/ CHOPPIES Rice
- + CHOPPIES OR SUPER A1 Maize Meal
- + CHOPPIES White Bread Flour
- + CHOPPIES White Sugar
- + ALL GOLD Tomato Sauce
- + C&B Mayonnaise
- + PAN Cooking Oil



CHOPPIES White Bread Flour

12.5kg

129⁹⁹



SUPER A1 Super Maize Meal

12.5kg

99⁹⁹

BONUS BUCKS



TASTIC Rice

10kg

123⁹⁹ EACH

BONUS BUCKS

BUY 3 OR MORE



OROS Squash Assorted each

2Ltr

32⁹⁹

BONUS BUCKS



250g

42⁹⁹

CHOPPIES Coffee each



10 PACK

42⁹⁹

KNORR Soup Assorted 10x50g/45g



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Opinions, Reviews & Analysis



ADAM PHETLHE
ON SUNDAY!

THE INCREASE IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT fares has become topical since the Ministry of Transport & Infrastructure somersaulted on the agreement it had with public transport operators. The fare increases were due to come into effect on 1 April, 2026. Shortly after the increase, University of Botswana students protested against rising cost of living, at the Office of the President. They argued that the bus/taxi fare increases were too steep and demanded that tertiary student allowances be increased to P 2500 as promised by the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) ahead of 2024 general election.

Government buckled under pressure from the students, and instantly increased

Modukanele was a scapegoat

the allowance from P1900 to P2200 by the end of April 2026. It is likely that had the students not protested, the exorbitant bus/ taxi fare increases would have stood. Fragmented as it were, it is not clear if the general public would have mounted any meaningful rejection of the bus/taxi fare increases. But all the same, the general public fully supported the students protests.

The fall guy

When administrators are caught pants down, subordinates are often made the sacrificial lambs to save face. Jako Hubona of the DCEC quickly comes to mind when he was thrown under the bus in the infamous P100 billion Bank of Botswana scandal. It is unthinkable that only Hubona could have created the story with such consequence when numerous court judgements implicated high profile public officers in the scandal.

In the bus/ taxi fares saga, the Director of Road Transport Services, Bokhutlo Modukanele became the first casualty when he was publicly fingered out as the sole creator of the conundrum. While I cannot vouch that Modukanele is clean in



Suspended Director of transport, Bokhutlo Modukanele

the matter, I cannot at the same time vouch that his principals, being the Minister of Transport and Infrastructure Noah Salakae and his Assistant Keoagile Atamelang are clean either.

At the heart of the fare increase matter is Government Gazette Notice No 307 of 2026 issued on 30 March 2026 the effect of which was inform the general public about the increases in public transport fares. It has since emerged a meeting was held between the ministry officials and the public transport representatives where the

fare increases were discussed and agreed upon. The public transport representatives who attended the meeting were taken aback when the President announced on national television that the fees were rescinded because they were not approved by cabinet. Consequently, Modukanele was suspended for having communicated the incorrect public transport fares published in the said Government Gazette No 307 of 2026 without authority.

It is more believable that government was represented in the negotiations by either

Salakae or his Assistant while Modukanele would have represented administrative side. Therefore, all those who represented government should all take responsibility or blame, not just the latter. Otherwise, the whole thing bears the hallmarks of a stage-managed public relations exercise to protect the political heads. There is no way the political leadership could be exonerated from any blameworthiness unless they never featured in any capacity in the discussions to increase public transport fares. It is simply implausible!

In serious democracies, the Minister of Transport and Infrastructure and his Assistant would have resigned when their ministry became embroiled in a similar scandal. Unfortunately, we are in democracies where the political leadership is always right and all that goes wrong is blamed on subordinates. An investigation on the public transport fare increase is said to be underway. It cannot be expected to yield a fair result when one party that is front and centre to the investigation is not suspended when the other is. I am not suggesting that Modukanele should not have been suspended but that everyone involved should have been.

When all is said and done, Modukanele was the scape goat. The whole thing is untidy in the name of fairness. It is an irremovable stain in a human rights government where everyone must be treated with utmost dignity and fairness.

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

Reforms in education welcome



GNATIO NJOBVU
HEART OF THE MATTER

AT THE CROSSROADS THAT WE FIND ourselves in, we need to think critically and assess the many opportunities that are at our disposal as a country. We are at a time when economic diversification is no longer an option but a must do. We are at a point in time when urgency and agility must take charge in all processes of economic revamping. At this point, it must come naturally that the little resources we have at individual level, family level and organizational level should be invested or channelled into economic revamping activities. As a matter of fact, we must have a national dialogue that will come up with resolutions to economic diversification. While at that, we must appreciate the social and



President Duma Boko

physical developments that diamonds have created and aided thus far, and seize the opportunities created to leverage self-sustainability through development of life skills.

While addressing the strategic workshop for the development of the Botswana Economic Transformation Program in July last year, the President of the republic of Botswana His Excellency Advocate Duma G. Boko stated categorically that the old ways will not take us into the new future. That there is an urgent need for a paradigm shift. His Excellency emphasised that the situation demanded for some creativity, innovation, adaptability and most of all there is need for collaboration. These sentiments are in alignment with the educational framework commonly known as STEAM. As a newly adopted pedagogy to learning that combines Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics, the framework emphasizes critical thinking, problem solving and creativity by connecting these disciplines. STEAM Education aims to prepare students for a rapidly changing world by fostering interdisciplinary understanding and practical application of knowledge.

As a country, we have positively adhered to many of the priorities of the Sustainable Development Goal number 4 (SDG-4). In Botswana, boys and girls have free access to primary and secondary school education. Our Literacy and numeracy scores are relatively high particularly for women. Gender disparities are almost none existent in education. The vulnerable groups that includes people with disabilities have access to education, and recently the Government has introduced early childhood development programs in primary schools. These and many other success stories have placed Botswana on high rankings in terms of achieving sustainable development goals in line with education.

We are on the verge of achieving a twelve (12) year basic education that is uninterrupted. Already, we pride ourselves of transitioning close to 100% of junior secondary school candidates into senior secondary school. We should be careful though that such a transition should not be characterised mainly through the academic pathway. It is crucial that skill development through vocational training must take

precedence. We must focus more on hands-on, industry-specific skills for immediate employability. By equipping students with 'how-to' knowledge for specific occupations, vocational paths facilitate a smoother school-to-work transition, significantly lowering youth unemployment rates. In my view, Government should consider stopping the expansion or building of more academic institutions especially senior secondary schools, and channel the resources to expanding and building more brigades and technical colleges. The Construction Industry Trust Fund (CITF) must also be funded more in order to enrol more learners. This is the path that our system must take in order to realize the 12-year basic education for all. For those learning institutions already in existence (academic institutions), Government must just prioritize their physical maintenance. As for quality improvement in those schools, I think we must be bold enough to understand that not all schools can have the same curriculum with a standard blueprint of a school timetable. It is time we empowered schools and regions. We must trust the schools to determine the number of subjects taught (as long as they are not below the threshold set by the assessment authority) and see how best they can play around with the amount of periods that they allocate per subject.

I must finally commend the establishment of the Botswana Teaching Professionals Council (BOTPEPCO) as a huge step in advancing education. It is undeniable that educational is not static. It is also a reality that education is about character development. This is what BOTPEPCO was established to ensure. To bring about confidence to stakeholders that the key drivers of education have the necessary qualifications, and that they are persons of integrity, trustworthy and virtuous. Critical to this idea is that a person that is trusted with imparting knowledge and skills to students must him or herself be continuously learning. This therefore means that as teachers, we must shift our mind-sets to understanding that we need to re-learn new ideas and skills so that we can help feed students with the right competencies for survival.

Stop unfairness in varsity admissions

IAM REACHING OUT TO REQUEST YOUR support in raising awareness about a critical issue affecting students across Botswana. Universities are currently applying BGCSE-based requirements and in the process disadvantaging grading to students examined under the BSSE, a different syllabus with limited resources.

This unfair approach is blocking many capable students from accessing higher education and compromising their futures. We have launched a petition urging the Ministry of Education and Skills Development to align admissions with the BSSE curriculum, eliminate unfair grading, introduce bridging programmes, and provide clear guidance to students.

Your coverage could help amplify the voices of students and ensure this urgent issue receives attention. The petition can be accessed here: [<https://c.org/hxfH8GrRFs>]. Thank you for your time and support.

Sincerely,
Lebopo Koogotsitse



Fear, Abductions and Dictatorship continue in Zimbabwe!

RECENT EVENTS IN ZIMBABWE ONCE again raise urgent and deeply troubling questions about the state of human rights and democratic governance in the country. Reports surrounding the alleged abduction of university student leader Dylan Cole, taken in broad daylight, are not only alarming but emblematic of a broader pattern of intimidation and silencing of dissenting voices. Even more concerning is the apparent lack of meaningful media coverage, which further compounds fears of a shrinking civic and press space. Such incidents do not occur in isolation.

They reflect a climate in which political opposition, student activism, and civil society are increasingly under threat. The ruling party, ZANU-PF, appears to be consolidating power in ways that many observers argue edge dangerously close to authoritarianism. When citizens cannot freely express themselves without fear of reprisal, the very foundation of democracy is undermined. The consequences extend far beyond national borders. Thousands of Zimbabweans continue to leave the country in search of safety, stability, and opportunity. This mass migration is not without impact. Host countries are experiencing growing economic and social pressures, from strained public services to challenges of integration. At the same time, Zimbabwe itself suffers a profound loss of



Abducted University student, Dylan Cole

talent, labour, and cultural continuity—further deepening its internal crisis. Zimbabweans deserve a nation where rights are protected, voices are heard, and leadership is accountable. The international community, regional bodies, and citizens alike must not turn a blind eye. Silence, whether from media or institutions, only enables further erosion of freedoms. It is time for meaningful change—change that

restores dignity, justice, and democratic principles for all Zimbabweans. The world cannot continue to stand and watch Zimbabweans suffer from the gripping hand of ZANU-PF.
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

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Open letter to Noah Salakae

DEAR MINISTER

WE WRITE WITH URGENCY, WITH conviction, and with the lived weight of a nation that moves on public transport. We represent the Society of Road Safety Ambassadors (SORSA), a youth-led movement committed to safer roads, fair mobility, and the dignity of every commuter. Today, that dignity is under strain.

The sudden fare adjustments announced for 1 April 2026 have been received and felt as a shock. Across Botswana, commuters are being asked to absorb increases that stretch beyond their capacity, with little warning and even less explanation. We acknowledge the rising cost of fuel. We understand the pressures on operators. But what we cannot accept is a process that appears to have consulted operators while leaving commuters the very backbone of the system on the margins. Consultation must not be symbolic. It must be real, deliberate, and inclusive.

A transport system cannot be designed in boardrooms alone; it must be shaped in the lived realities of bus ranks, taxi stops, rural routes, and informal settlements. Commuters are not passive recipients of policy, they are stakeholders with daily, direct experience of its consequences. Their voices are not optional; they are essential. We call for a structured, transparent, and community-rooted consultation process that actively includes passengers, commuter groups, student bodies, workers' unions, and civil society organisations.

NGOs, community-based organisations, and advocacy groups are not outsiders they are bridges between policy and people. They document hardship, organize dialogue, and amplify voices that would otherwise remain unheard.

To exclude them is to exclude truth. To include them is to build legitimacy, trust, and solutions that endure. Let consultations happen not only in offices, but in communities. Let them be accessible, public, and documented. Let commuters speak

not as statistics, but as citizens whose daily survival depends on the decisions made in their name. Only then can policy claim fairness. Only then can it command respect.

We also demand to know whether this steep increase will be matched by action to repair and maintain the roads on which these vehicles travel. Our roads are crying out for attention: potholes gape like open mouths along routes that mothers, nurses and students must use every day.

Vehicles are battered not only by time but by the very surfaces they are forced to traverse. Crashes have been reported; tyres, suspensions and chassis suffer accelerated wear; torn seats, broken windows and unserviced engines are the visible scars of a system under strain.

If commuters are to pay more, will the government ensure that the money buys safer journeys; that roads are fixed, that buses and taxis are regularly serviced, that inspections are enforced and that conductors and drivers are trained and held to standards of customer care? Commuters should not be charged more to sit on torn seats or to endure broken windows and unworking ventilation. If the government permits a fare increase, it must insist on measurable service improvements and publish the standards and inspection schedules that will be used to hold operators to account.

We do not oppose fair remuneration for transport workers. Drivers and conductors deserve livelihoods that reflect their costs and risks. Our objection is to the scale, speed and opacity of the increases, and to a process that excluded the voices of those who will bear the burden.

Balance is possible: protect operators' viability while shielding the most vulnerable. To that end we propose immediate, humane steps: publish the fare calculation and the assumptions used; pause the most severe increases pending an urgent, inclusive review of no more than two weeks that includes commuter representatives, student and worker unions, local councils, operator associations and



Salakae

civil society; introduce targeted protections for the most vulnerable, concessional fares for students and health workers, temporary vouchers for rural routes and emergency vouchers for low-income households; adopt a formal public consultation framework for future fare reviews that requires published impact assessments and independent verification of operator cost claims; and commission an independent audit of the fare increases and publish the findings.

As we press for these systemic remedies, we also speak directly to commuters. This is a moment that demands solidarity, creativity, and collective resilience. While we fight for fairness, we must also find ways to endure. Where it is safe and possible, we encourage walking and cycling for shorter distances, not because people should be

forced to, but because it offers temporary relief, promotes health, and reduces strain on already stretched budgets. We urge communities to come together, to share rides, to coordinate transport with neighbors and colleagues, to pool resources in ways that reduce individual costs and strengthen collective resilience.

Let us plan our journeys more deliberately, combining errands, reducing unnecessary trips, and stretching every pula with intention. We call on communities to organize where they can, forming cooperative transport solutions, informal shuttle arrangements, or community-led systems that distribute costs more fairly. But even in adaptation, safety must never be compromised. Avoid overcrowded and unregulated vehicles. If walking becomes

necessary, do so in groups, on known routes, and with vigilance. Survival must not come at the cost of safety. We also urge commuters to document this moment. Record the increases. Record the missed opportunities, the days of work lost, the classes unattended, the clinic visits delayed.

These are not just personal struggles; they are evidence. They are the foundation upon which we will build a stronger case for accountability, for reform, and for justice. But let us be clear, these are coping mechanisms, not solutions. They are a temporary shield against a policy shock that should never have been this abrupt. Walking and cycling may strengthen our bodies; sharing rides may strengthen our communities, but no citizen should ever be forced to choose between transport and

survival.

Honourable Minister, this is not a technical complaint alone. It is a human plea. A child missing school because a fare doubled overnight; a mother skipping a clinic visit because she cannot afford the bus; a worker losing a day's pay because transport costs swallowed their wage, these are the human costs that do not appear in spreadsheets but that break families and communities.

We ask the Government to be kind and thoughtful. Public transport is for the masses, for the poor, the students, and the community health workers, volunteers, the market vendors and it must be protected as a social good. If the government asks more from its people, let it also give more in return: safer roads, honest accounting, better vehicles, enforced standards and compassion for those who cannot absorb sudden shocks.

In conclusion, Honourable Minister, this is not just a transport issue. It is a question of equity, of dignity, and of leadership. The decisions made now will echo in classrooms, clinics, workplaces, and homes across this country.

We urge you to act, not defensively, but decisively. Not in isolation, but in partnership with the people. We stand ready to support a genuine, inclusive process.

We stand ready to convene communities, to gather evidence, and to contribute constructively.

But partnership requires openness, and urgency requires action. We ask you to listen, not just to operators, but to the people who fill their vehicles every day. We ask you to see, not just the numbers, but the lives behind them. And above all, we ask you to act with compassion, transparency, and courage.

Yours faithfully,
Maatla Otsoqile
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When Hormuz closes, Africa pays first



RONALD MLALAZI*

THE WAR INVOLVING IRAN HAS moved from a geopolitical story to a supply chain shock—and fast. At the centre of it all is the Strait of Hormuz. In normal times, roughly a quarter of global seaborne oil flows through that narrow channel. Today, it's partially blocked, militarised, and unpredictable. That matters more than most people realise, especially in Africa.

This is not just an oil story. Yes, oil is the headline. The International Energy Agency is already calling this the largest disruption in oil market history, with up to 30% of global oil flows affected. Prices are responding accordingly. Analysts are openly discussing \$150–\$200 per barrel scenarios if disruption persists into the next 4–8 weeks.

But if you stop at oil, you're missing the real risk. Because Hormuz doesn't just move fuel. It moves, fertiliser, petrochemicals, plastics inputs and liquefied natural gas. And that's where Africa gets hit hardest.

Across East and Southern Africa, dependence on Middle Eastern supply chains is structural, not optional. Countries like Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Zambia are already implementing emergency measures, including subsidies and reserve releases. In parts of East Africa, over 50% of fertiliser imports come via these routes and globally, up to one-third of fertiliser trade moves through Hormuz.

And prices are moving fast; Urea prices are already up by 50% since the conflict began and fertiliser shortages are expected to impact planting cycles within weeks. That translates directly into higher food prices, lower yields and increased inflation. In

economies where food already dominates household spend, that's not a marginal issue. It's systemic.

The Next 30 Days: What Actually Happens

Strip out the noise, and the next month looks like this:

Fuel price shock hits logistics immediately

Diesel is the bloodstream of African logistics. As oil spikes, transport costs rise almost instantly. We can expect higher road freight tariffs, airline and shipping surcharges and margin compression across FMCG and retail.

Shipping delays compound the problem
Major shipping lines have already rerouted vessels around the Cape of Good Hope, adding weeks to transit times. That means longer lead times, working capital pressure and more stockouts.

Fertiliser becomes the sleeper crisis

This is the one most executives will underestimate. Miss a planting window, and the impact shows up months later in food inflation, social pressure and currency weakness.

4. Secondary shortages begin to emerge and this is where it gets messy:

Plastics (packaging constraints), Chemicals (manufacturing inputs), Even pharmaceuticals.

The supply chain doesn't break in one place—it ripples. The brutal reality is that Africa is a price taker. Most African economies are net importers of fuel and fertiliser and are highly exposed to global shipping routes which means there is very little control, only response.

The difference between businesses that weather this disruption and those that don't

will not be found in strategy decks. It will be found in the decisions made over the next two to four weeks. Lock in supply now, even at uncomfortable prices, because in volatile markets availability will always beat price.

Selectively build buffer stock across fuel, critical imported inputs, and high-margin SKUs. Working capital will sting, but stockouts will cost more. If your suppliers are still assuming normal transit routes, you are already behind; reroute early, explore alternative ports, different origin countries, and split shipments before the options narrow.

Reset contractual expectations with both customers and suppliers without delay, because what was considered late last month is fast becoming the new normal. Run at least three disruption scenarios — two weeks, six weeks, three months — and tie each directly to pricing, inventory policy, and customer communications. Finally, watch fertiliser and food input prices closely; even if your business sits outside agriculture, your customers do not, and the ripple effects on patterns are coming regardless. The window to act is open. It will not stay that way.

This is not a distant war — it is a supply chain event with immediate commercial consequences. Should the Strait of Hormuz remain unstable for another month, Africa will not simply absorb higher prices; it will contend with slower trade, tighter margins, and rising food insecurity. The uncomfortable truth is that the businesses which act early will appear paranoid today — and exceptionally well-positioned in thirty days.

*President Africa Supply Chain Confederation (ASCON)

Khama criticizes Trump

SERETSE KHAMA IAN KHAMA

1.AFTER TEXTING PROFANITY AND threatening that a whole civilization will die by nightfall, Donald Trump confirms he has mental health issues and what is notable is that the only way to wipe out an entire civilization, never to rise again, is with the use of nuclear weapons.

2. It is therefore of great concern that such a deranged individual has authority over nuclear arsenals. However the combined might of two of the world's biggest military and nuclear powers failed to defeat Iran.

3. The aim to institute regime change failed dismally. They assassinated a few regime leaders only to be replaced by more resilient and defiant members. The aim was also to destroy their ability to fire missiles but they continued to rain down on the region throughout the conflict and up until the ceasefire.

4. Another aim was to wipe out their stockpile of enriched uranium. Another failure they could not achieve. So apart from bombing military infrastructure, schools, hospitals, residential buildings, killing civilians, what was it all about and what was achieved.

5. Trump claims success at having reopened the Strait of Hormuz as a result of the ceasefire, but it was already open and functioning before the war anyway, so what was achieved? However Trump lost a lot in his foolish war.

6. Apart from the number of servicemen and women killed, many injured, aircrafts destroyed, and costing more than one billion dollars a day, support for the Iranian regime in the country grew instead of diminishing.

7. Support also for Iran around the world also grew whilst that of the Trump circus fell in America and across the world. Condemnation for the war came from several very respected quarters including the Vatican by the Pope himself.

8. Gas and petroleum products rose substantially worldwide along with other commodities. The whole Middle East was destabilized and economies fractured as in other parts of the world and will remain so in the short to medium term.

9. Finally a lesson for Trump: he often boasts about the power of the US military, regurgitated by that puppet masquerading as the White House spokesperson. He may think "might is right!" especially after the overkill and extreme numbers of personnel and



Khama

equipment used in Venezuela, but the truth is the mentality of "might is right" becomes the law of the jungle and can never overcome the determination and success by nations to resist occupation by a foreign power no matter how powerful the invaders are.

10. Good examples of defeating military intervention by America and it's so called unparalleled Military might are Korea, Vietnam, Somalia, Afghanistan and now Iran. And in this last case having learnt a severe humiliation in each, is why they

have not put troops on the ground in Iran.

11. Their land grab ambitions with Canada, Greenland, Cuba the Gulf of Mexico and the Panama Canal will also fail. Etc

12. Apartheid Israel is the main source of instability and conflict in the region and will as usual, as they are doing, violate any ceasefire because spilling the blood of innocent people and engaging in wanton destruction is what they delight in doing, as well as committing crimes against humanity just like but worse than their fellow terrorists in the region

Business

FNBB rakes in P7.8 billion in Cash Plus

- Exceeds P5.5 billion generated in 2024
- 17.4 million eWallet transactions in 2025
- FNBB mobile money solutions driving inclusion



FNBB CEO, Steven Bogatsu

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FIRST NATIONAL BANK Botswana (FNBB) posted an impressive P7.8 billion revenue growth in 2025 from its mobile money Cash Plus solution with that asserting the bank's

influence in the mobile money space. FNBB revealed in its latest 2025 FNB Botswana Report to Society that the P7.8 billion Cash Plus revenue was higher than the P5.5 billion Cash Plus revenue made in 2024 reporting period. According to the biggest bank at the stock exchange by market

capitalisation, Cash Plus witnessed about 9.3 million CashPlus transactions in 2025, a significant growth compared to 6.7 million transactions in 2024. FNBB had 1794 CashPlus agents in 2025 against 1481 agents in 2024. The bank said CashPlus enables both FNB and non-FNB clients to conveniently

access essential financial services through a network of CashPlus agents. "Using only an active mobile phone number and a one-time PIN (OTP), clients can withdraw or deposit cash or eWallet funds, purchase electricity and airtime, and pay bills directly from their FNB accounts," said the Chief Executive

Officer (CEO) Steven Lefentse Bogatsu led commercial bank. FNBB said Cash Plus is an innovative solution that extends its reach beyond traditional banking channels, promoting financial inclusion and enhancing service accessibility. Furthermore, FNBB said the Cash@Till realised P101 million

cash withdrawal value in 2025 as compared to P80 million during the 2024 financial year. In terms of transactions, the platform had 285,032 transactions slightly higher than 2024 transactions that stood at 226,555. FNBB also reported that in 2025, there were 348 partner stores for Cash@Till

compared to 302 in 2024. On eWallet, FNBB recorded 17.4 million transactions in 2025 whereas in 2024 there were 14.4 million eWallet transactions. FNBB said the eWallet enables FNB clients to instantly send money to anyone with an active mobile phone number, even if the recipient does not have a bank account.

SUSTAINABLE FINANCING

Meanwhile, FNBB continues to offer sustainable finance solutions. Though the bank is yet to issue a green or social bond, over the past three years it has disbursed sustainable finance facilities. According to FNBB, these facilities were aligned to the FirstRand Sustainable Finance Framework, leveraging Group support and expertise. The FNBB's Sustainable Finance Framework was approved in January 2025 and provide a methodology for classifying and tracking sustainable investments, ensuring transparency and accountability in financing projects and activities that align with sustainability goals.

In 2023, the bank extended finance to Selebi Phikwe Citrus – the first material sustainable finance transaction since they started categorising transactions per the Sustainable Finance Framework.

"In 2024, we formalised our approach by setting a sustainable finance approval target of P520 million, which we exceeded by achieving P610 million in approved and disbursed finance," FNBB explained. In 2025, FNB Botswana set a bolder target of P1 billion in approvals.

In addition, the bank said it has achieved approvals of P997 million and disbursed P851.3 million across green and social finance transactions. The bank noted that the increase reflects growing demand for sustainable finance solutions and underscores their strategic alignment with ESG objective.

President Boko champions Botswana as a premier investment destination



President Boko with President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Jean-Michel Frédéric Macron

PRESIDENT ADVOCATE DUMA Gideon Boko, led a high-level working visit to France, positioning Botswana as a compelling and ready investment destination for global partners. At the centre of the visit was a France-Botswana Business Dialogue, convened alongside leading French corporations, investors, and development partners. The BITC CEO, Mr. Keletsoitse Olebile laid a foundation on Botswana's strategic intent to deepen economic cooperation with France and the broader European market. Speaking during the dialogue, President Boko delivered a clear and confident message: Botswana is open for business and ready for

investment. He highlighted the country's strong governance, political stability and investor-friendly environment as key pillars that continue to attract global confidence. Complementing the main dialogue, a series of Business-to-Business (B2B) meetings facilitated direct engagement between Botswana's delegation and leading French companies across sectors such as energy, infrastructure, finance, water and digital solutions. These engagements were further graced by the Minister of International Relations, Hon. Dr. Phenyo Butale, whose participation reinforced Botswana's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations and unlocking mutually beneficial partnerships. [BITC]

Botswana Minerals goes all out for copper

- Identifies copper as the new priority mineral for Botswana
- Botswana copper exports value at P944.9 million as at Dec 2025

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DUAL-LISTED MINERAL exploration and project development company Botswana Minerals PLC is accelerating its exploration efforts in Botswana with its focus on copper space, the company's Managing Director, James Campbell, has said. Speaking on Wednesday in Gaborone during 2026 Ideal Summit Botswana, Campbell said Copper is a new priority for Botswana. He said Botswana is highly prospective for copper, critical minerals and Rare Earth Elements (REEs).

Botswana Minerals is listed on London AIM and the Botswana Stock Exchange (BSE) has c.7,000km² of highly prospective ground in Ngamiland District. Campbell said the company raises over 95% of its funds in the United Kingdom (UK) and Ireland respectively. He also said Botswana Minerals has probably the second largest exploration database in the country and this is its core Intellectual Property (IP). In addition, Campbell said the company uses advanced AI-driven exploration system – using a "glass box" approach. This, he said, makes the process more efficient, quicker and cheaper. "60% of commercial mineral discoveries are made by



Botswana Minerals MD Campbell (L) with British High Commissioner to Botswana Giles Enticknap.

juniors. If the Junior is incubated, such as BIMN (part of the 162 Group), it stands a c.90% chance of success," he explained. He noted that the most notable

success of the group, with the same team, was African Diamonds plc, which developed the Karowe Mine before being bought out and gave over a 100x return to the original

investors. **COPPER SHINES** Meanwhile, Copper and Ore Concentrates were the leading commodities that Botswana has

exported in December 2025, excluding diamonds with copper exports valued P944.9 million; accounting for 58.3 percent of total non-diamonds exports.

The information is presented in the latest Statistics Botswana (SB) International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS) Monthly Digest-December 2025 report. The International Merchandise Trade Statistics records all goods which add to, or subtract from, the stock of material resources of a country by entering (as imports) or leaving (as exports) its economic territory.

According to the report, In December 2025, the country's top 50 exported commodities excluding diamonds accounted for 31.9 percent (P1, 480.8 million) of Botswana's total exports.

Among the top 50, Copper ores and concentrates were leading export commodities, accounting for 58.3 percent (P944.9 million) of total non-diamonds exports. The significant spike in copper exports value is bringing some hope for the economy, as diamond sales turbulence continues due to the weaker demand in the global market.

Diamonds remain Botswana's major source of exports, accounting for over 80%, and are the largest source of government revenue from the mineral's perspective. The decline in sales has prompted the country's leading diamond production company, Debswana, to scale down its production in the short to medium term.

BURS exceeds target

Collects P60.1 billion against a target of P59.8 billion

PHODISO VALASHIA
Acting Commissioner General

THE BOTSWANA UNIFIED REVENUE Service is pleased to announce that, as at 31 March 2026, it has exceeded its national revenue target for the 2025/2026 financial year. Against a target of P59.824 billion, total collections reached P60.124 billion. This milestone has been achieved under very difficult economic conditions, and for that reason, it stands not simply as a numerical outcome, but as a reflection of the resilience, discipline, and commitment of the people of Botswana.

This achievement belongs first and foremost to the people and businesses of this country. Across households, workplaces, and industries, many continued to meet their tax obligations despite real pressures on incomes and operations. In doing so, they demonstrated a clear understanding

that paying tax is not a burden imposed from outside, but a direct contribution to the functioning and future of the country. It is through these collective contributions that Botswana is able to fund schools, healthcare, roads, security, and the many services that sustain daily life and enable opportunity. At the same time, Parliament is currently debating four important pieces of legislation, being the Value Added Tax Bill, the Income Tax Bill, the Tax Administration Bill, and the Customs Bill, all of which are expected to be passed into law before the end of the current sitting. These reforms represent an important step in strengthening the country's ability to mobilise domestic resources in a fair, transparent, and modern way. They are designed not only to improve compliance, but to ensure that the system works better for everyone, making it clearer, more predictable, and more aligned with the realities of a changing economy.



BURS Acting Commissioner General, Phodiso Valashia

The combination of exceeding the revenue target and advancing these legislative reforms sends a clear message. Botswana is choosing a path of responsibility, self-reliance, and steady progress. At a time when the global and domestic economic environment remains uncertain, this collective effort provides a strong foundation for recovery and growth. It shows that when citizens and institutions act together, even difficult conditions can be overcome.

It is equally important to recognise that not all members of society experience the economy in the same way. For many, the current environment remains challenging.

It is precisely in such times that each contribution, however small, becomes even more meaningful. Paying one's fair share is not about perfection, but about participation in building something larger than any individual or business.

As Botswana enters the 2026/2027

financial year, the importance of domestic revenue mobilisation becomes even more pronounced. The national revenue target has been increased to P65 billion, reflecting both the scale of national priorities and the need to rely more on our own collective effort. This is not a task for the Revenue Service alone. It calls on every citizen, every worker, and every business to contribute fairly and consistently, within the framework of the law. This moment should be seen for what it is. It is a clear sign that Botswana has the capacity to shape its own economic future. It is a reminder that tax is not something to be feared or avoided, but a practical and necessary contribution to national development. When citizens contribute, the country moves forward. When the country moves forward, opportunities expand for all. Botswana has taken an important step. The task now is to build on this momentum, together.

Trade tensions rise

As Botswana, Mozambique, and Namibia restrict SA farm goods

South Africa faces growing pressure to respond to regional trade barriers affecting its agricultural exports. While dialogue remains the preferred path, concerns are mounting that continued restrictions could weaken SACU and disrupt trade flows



Regional trade tensions are rising as Namibia, Botswana, and Mozambique impose restrictions on South African agricultural exports

REGIONAL TRADE TENSIONS ARE rising as Namibia, Botswana, and Mozambique impose restrictions on South African agricultural exports. Photo: Supplied/Food For Mzansi

Namibia, Botswana, and Mozambique are among the few countries that have recently introduced restrictions on South African agricultural exports, said Agbiz chief agricultural economist Wandile Sihlobo.

Namibia and Botswana are South Africa's partners in the Southern African Customs Union (Sacu). Sihlobo said an important benefit of a customs union is the free movement of goods in the common customs area.

All the countries, including Mozambique, have committed to removing all trade barriers by 2030 as part of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

"Undoubtedly, trade restrictions undermine the spirit of trade integration. It also makes a mockery of commitments to liberalise trade on the African continent. Yet South Africa has been extremely restrained despite clear injury to its economic interests.

"It is worth highlighting some cases. Namibia, Botswana, and Mozambique have unjustifiably restricted imports of South African vegetables. There is no basis for import restrictions in the common customs area to advantage domestic sectors," he said.

Maintaining regional relations is key. According to Sihlobo, these actions risk unravelling Sacu, which has already fettered South Africa's ambition to negotiate bilateral trade deals globally to boost its export sectors and create jobs.

"We need to take a serious look at Sacu's utility for shared economic interests in the region, as well as, crucially, for our economic interests in a changing global environment.

"With food security a priority for many governments globally, the ambition to boost domestic agricultural production is understandable. Still, the approach to domestic policy, particularly in the regional perspective, should not create barriers that disadvantage producers in other countries, especially in a customs union," he said.

Sihlobo emphasised that it was important

to maintain a coordinated regional approach to boost production capabilities across Sacu countries and build regional value chains.

He said this would not be done through restrictive measures, but rather supply-side instruments that could be coordinated. Trade restrictions in Sacu risk straining relations and devaluing the customs union.

"Within the Sacu region, there is supposed to be free movement of agricultural goods, with a few exceptions, including national security and when there are crop and animal diseases. In the recent restrictions on vegetables, fruit, and some poultry products in December, there was no such fear of animal diseases.

"The restrictions were based mainly on national aspirations and on what countries intended to do to support their producers, with limited consideration of regional implications. While it may be tempting for the affected countries to seek a strong policy response to these inconsistencies, dialogue at a higher level to ease these frictions remains an ideal path.

"The region's agriculture and food sector is interlinked; thus, the path ahead is to understand each country's priorities and pursue them while minimising interruptions to trade flows," he said.

Export barriers threaten trade ties. Sihlobo added that from a South African perspective, the country should pick up dialogue with its partners but make it clear that it's exploring options to de-risk the future.

"This is important given our significant trade exposure to the region. For example, about 17% of South Africa's US\$15.1 billion in agricultural exports in 2025 went to the Sacu region. This is almost comparable to South Africa's 21% share of agricultural exports to the EU region.

"In essence, the immediate priority must be the speedy resolution of the current trade-restrictive measures through structured and high-level dialogue. The introduction of import restrictions on agricultural products within a customs union is inconsistent with both the legal architecture and the spirit of regional integration," he said. [foodformzansi.co.za]

"Thrive with Bomaid" App launched

FOLLOWING THIS MORNING'S official launch of the Thrive with Bomaid digital wellness platform at Virgin Active in Gaborone, the Botswana Medical Aid Society (Bomaid) is moving swiftly to take the technology to the rest of the country. A series of high-priority regional stakeholder engagements will commence this Wednesday in Palapye, followed by Francistown next week, to ensure customers across Botswana can access this new standard in proactive health management.

The App, powered by the AI-driven health intelligence of VivaScore*, is now available free to all Bomaid customers on iOS and Android. The platform transforms a smartphone into a sophisticated health tool, allowing users to track metrics such as blood pressure and stress levels using only their smartphone camera.

A National Wellness Movement

The Thrive with Bomaid App will be incorporated in the comprehensive calendar of activities aimed at empowering customers and building healthier communities: Regional Briefings (Palapye & Francistown): Customers and Providers sessions begin this Wednesday to unpack the product offering and its value for employers and individuals.

Bomaid Media Health Challenge: Designed to encourage active lifestyles among the media fraternity, registration is now open and will close on 13 April 2026.

Community Health Day: In partnership with the Dutch Reformed Church Botswana, Bomaid will host a community engagement on 18 April; HATAB annual conference in Maun on April 23rd; Diacore Marathon: The wellness journey culminates with a major presence at the Diacore event on 26 April.



Bomaid Chief Executive Officer, Moraki Mokgosana

Strategic Leadership and Technical Vision

Speaking at the launch this morning, CCXO Sego Maching emphasised that the Fund believes that medical aid should go beyond traditional coverage. "At Bomaid, we do not just cover you, we walk the wellness journey with you, thus your companion. This digital companion blends innovation and intelligence into everyday wellness, giving our customers the tools to understand their wellbeing and improve their habits."

Bomaid Chief Executive Officer, Moraki Mokgosana says, "Thrive with Bomaid represents a significant step forward in how we support our customers. We are moving

beyond traditional coverage to offer a digital wellness companion that meets people where they are, on their phones, in their daily routines. This is about making health understanding accessible, personal, and part of everyday life."

The partnership with VivaScore* ensures that these health insights are both accessible and scientifically grounded. "Bomaid shares our conviction that health intelligence belongs upstream, in the hands of the individual," said Simon Spurr, CEO of VivaScore. "Customers gain real visibility into their health, and the fund gains the population-level insights needed to drive better outcomes."

StanChart advises on sale



StanChart CEO, Mpho Masupe

SHAREHOLDERS ARE REFERRED TO THE Cautionary Announcement issued on 12 January 2026, wherein the Board of Directors of the Company informed the shareholders and the market that Standard Chartered PLC, the indirect majority shareholder of the Company, has decided to explore the sale of its entire interest in the Company. This decision reflects the strength of the Company, the attractiveness of the combined franchise and the complementary strength of the WRB and the corporate and investment banking (CIB) businesses. The proposed disposal of SC's Interest is at an early stage and any sale of such interest in the Company will be subject to, among other things, regulatory approvals and market conditions. Shareholders are cautioned that there is no certainty at this stage that any discussions will lead to a formal transaction. The Company will publish a comprehensive announcement if and when an agreement is reached for the sale of SC's Interest. Accordingly, shareholders and the rest of the investing community are urged to continue exercising caution and to consult their investment advisors when dealing in the Company's securities until a further announcement is made. [bse.co.bw]

[PIC: GORATAONE KGOSIMORE]

CLARIFICATION

In last week's edition, due to a technical fault, we erroneously published the picture of Minerals Development Company Botswana (Pty) Ltd Acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Modise Mokone in a story about Botswana Minerals (Pty) Ltd. Mokone has no relationship with the company - Botswana Minerals. We apologise unreservedly to Mr Mokone, MDCB and our readers for any inconvenience caused by the oversight.

Photo Editor

Halfway Toyota Ngami opens Maun showroom

HALFWAY TOYOTA NGAMI has officially unveiled its new state-of-the-art building in Maun, marking a major expansion of its long-standing operations in the region.

The grand opening ceremony was graced by Minister of State President, Moeti Mohwasa, alongside Minister of Labour and Home Affairs, Pius Mokgware, and Minister of Trade, Tiroeane Ntsima.

The company, which has been operating in Maun for several years, used the occasion to officially open its newly constructed facility, aimed at enhancing service delivery and customer experience.

The event attracted other dignitaries, business leaders, and community members, reflecting the significance of the investment in the local economy.

The new facility is expected to strengthen Halfway Toyota Ngami's presence in the North West District while contributing to job creation and improved access to vehicle sales and after-sales services in the area.



Orange, Paymentology launch Visa 3D Secure

▪ Strengthen Online payment security

ORANGE MONEY, in partnership with Paymentology, has introduced Visa 3D Secure (3DS), a new security feature designed to make online payments safer and more reliable for customers using Orange Money virtual cards in Botswana. The enhancement marks a significant step in strengthening digital payment security and enabling more confident e-commerce transactions.

As online shopping continues to grow, so does the need for stronger protection against fraud and unauthorized transactions. Strong customer authentication measures, such as 3D Secure, can reduce e-commerce fraud by up to 45% while also improving transaction approval rates. Visa 3D Secure adds an extra layer of authentication when customers make payments online, helping ensure that only the cardholder can approve and complete a transaction.

With this new functionality, customers may notice a secure approval prompt when paying online. This is part of the authentication process and is designed to protect their money. By confirming the prompt, customers can safely complete purchases, subscriptions, and other online payments using their Orange Money virtual cards.

Seabelo Pilane, Orange Money



Seabelo Pilane, Orange Money Chief Executive Officer (CEO) commented

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) commented: "Security and customer trust remain at the centre of everything we do. The introduction of Visa 3D Secure strengthens how we protect our customers when they shop online. It ensures that every transaction is authenticated, giving customers greater confidence and control over their digital payments."

Paymentology, the global issuer-processor supporting Orange Money's card infrastructure, played a key role in enabling the rollout of 3D Secure and supporting a seamless, secure payment experience for customers.

Kesheni Moodley, Regional Director for Africa added: "Secure digital payments are essential to building trust in e-commerce. We're

proud to partner with Orange Money to deliver Visa 3D Secure, helping to protect customers and support the continued growth of safe, accessible digital commerce."

The introduction of 3D Secure also supports the broader growth of e-commerce by helping reduce unauthorized transactions and improving approval rates for



Paymentology Regional Director for Africa, Kesheni Moodley

legitimate payments. Customers can continue to generate and use virtual cards directly from their Orange Money platform, without needing a physical card, and now benefit from an additional level of protection when transacting online.

Orange Money requires customers to complete authentication whenever prompted during an online payment, as this step is essential to finalising the transaction securely. This launch forms part of Orange Money and Paymentology's shared commitment

to delivering safe, accessible, and innovative digital financial services that empower customers to transact with confidence in an increasingly digital world.

Paratus launches Essential Access

▪ launched to empower critical services across Africa



Paratus Group CEO, Schalk Erasmus

PAN-AFRICAN TELCO, PARATUS Group announces that it has launched Paratus Essential Access to deliver priority connectivity to communities and emergency services across Africa. Essential services help communities thrive and flourish but without connectivity, they cannot operate. Paratus Group is addressing this challenge head-on with their launch of Paratus Essential Access, a solution designed by Paratus and powered by Starlink to deliver

priority satellite connectivity to organisations at the very heart of Africa's remote communities.

Ensuring that critical institutions that operate in remote and underserved areas remain vital, the Paratus Essential Access service provides reliable, high-speed, low-latency connectivity. The service is offered with preferential pricing and priority support for approved essential service organisations, such as law enforcement, hospitals and community health clinics,

schools, tertiary institutions, fire and emergency response, community centres, non-profit agriculture and food security initiatives.

The Paratus Essential Access service is backed by Paratus Group's in-country teams for both professional and certified installation and integration with other network services as required. With rapid deployment capabilities, organisations can be connected quickly, enabling continuity of essential services even in the most

challenging environments.

Schalk Erasmus, Paratus Group CEO says: "With Paratus Essential Access we are prioritising the organisations and communities people rely on most. This ensures that essential services in remote areas stay connected where traditional infrastructure cannot reach, allowing them to continue providing vital support to the communities they serve."

Built for frontline impact, Paratus Essential Access enables a wide range of critical applications, from emergency response coordination and secure communications to telemedicine, digital health systems and remote learning. It also supports smart agriculture and operational monitoring, strengthening food security and community sustainability.

Availability is subject to qualification, reinforcing the Paratus Group's focus on ensuring and directing this solution where it is most needed. Paratus Essential Access is already available in Botswana, Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Rwanda and Zambia. The service will be rolled out to other territories by Paratus in the upcoming months.

As a trusted connectivity partner across Africa, Paratus continues to invest in solutions that enable progress, resilience and inclusive growth across Africa.

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ELIGIBILITY:

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- **Professional qualification:** Certificate from any recognised Banking Institute.
- **Work Experience:** Minimum 15 years of experience working with a reputed Bank with international standards with at least 5 years as Branch Head.
- **Minimum Age** 35 years and maximum Age 50 years as of 31.03.2026.

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Gaborone Botswana, Contact- 3992700

Email- h.m.botswana@bankofbaroda.com
Ho.botswana@bankofbaroda.com

Note: Only shortlisted candidates will be responded

CONTACTS:

Head office: Old Nokia, G-west, Gaborone, Ph: 3992700, Email: ho.botswana@bankofbaroda.com.
Gaborone Branch: Main Mall, Gaborone, Ph: 3188878, email: gaborone@bankofbaroda.com.
G-West Branch: Kamoshungo Road, Gaborone, Ph: 3992705, Email: gwesbo@bankofbaroda.com.
Francistown Branch: Haskins Building, Francistown, Ph: 2413440, Email: francistown@bankofbaroda.com.
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FRIDAY ENGAGEMENT ALERT!



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Application Requirements and Procedures

- Applications should be done on-line through the University website at www.bou.ac.bw under Online Services.
- BEFORE** completing applications, applicants should carefully read the *Guidelines for Applications and Payment on the University website*.
- Applicants may use the computer rooms at the University Regional Campuses **OR** Internet Cafes to process their applications
- Certified copies of certificates, identification document and either results slips or transcripts should accompany the application following the online application guidelines Please make sure that you have scanned soft copies of these documents before you start the process of applying. Please note that online attachment of these documents is core as these are used to assess your eligibility for admission.
- Applicants are required to pay a non-refundable application fee of **P160.00** online. Application fees paid after closing date or without authorization by the University shall be forfeited.
- The fees structure for the programmes is available on the QR Code above and the BOU website



lifestyle

Stanbic Music & Lifestyle fiesta

GORATAONE KGOSIMORE
editors@thepatriot.co.bw

■ A fusion of music, art, fashion and lifestyle

THE STANBIC BANK BOTSWANA Music and Lifestyle Festival returns for its second edition on April 25, 2026, at Royal Aria Stadium, with organisers promising a bigger and more immersive experience. Held under the theme “Where Urban Culture Lives,” the festival is expected to deliver a vibrant blend of music, art, food and fashion, offering revellers a unique experience.

A star-studded line-up has also been confirmed, featuring international acts such as Mas Musiq, Oskido and Xduppy, alongside local stars including Ezra Neethings, Charma Gal and Dato Seiko.

Stanbic Bank Botswana Manager for Sponsorship and Events, Kesego Selepeng said the festival continues to position itself as a platform for authentic creative expression.

“This festival brings together music, art, fashion and lifestyle in a way that feels honest and current. It gives artists and creatives a space to express themselves and connect with audiences who understand them. It reflects the energy of urban Botswana today,” she said.

Selepeng said this year’s edition introduces several enhancements



aimed at elevating the overall experience. These include a new wine lounge designed for a more relaxed lifestyle setting within the festival, an upgraded main stage expected to deliver high-quality performances and brand showcases, and an

innovation lounge that will host partner activations incorporating technology.

She added that NFC wristbands will be introduced to improve access and navigation, while the number of vendors has increased from 19

to 25. The VIP experience has also been expanded, with tickets priced at P3,500.

“Guests will have access to a designated entry gate, an access tag, three curated food offerings and a bar limit of P1,500, with additional

beverages available thereafter. The experience also includes dedicated parking, a shuttle service, hostesses, Wi-Fi and enhanced security,” Selepeng explained.

She further noted that there will be corporate packages within the VIP lounge, offering organisations an opportunity for structured networking.

Meanwhile, Stanbic Bank Botswana Communications and PR Manager, Ratang Motladile, highlighted the festival’s growing economic impact.

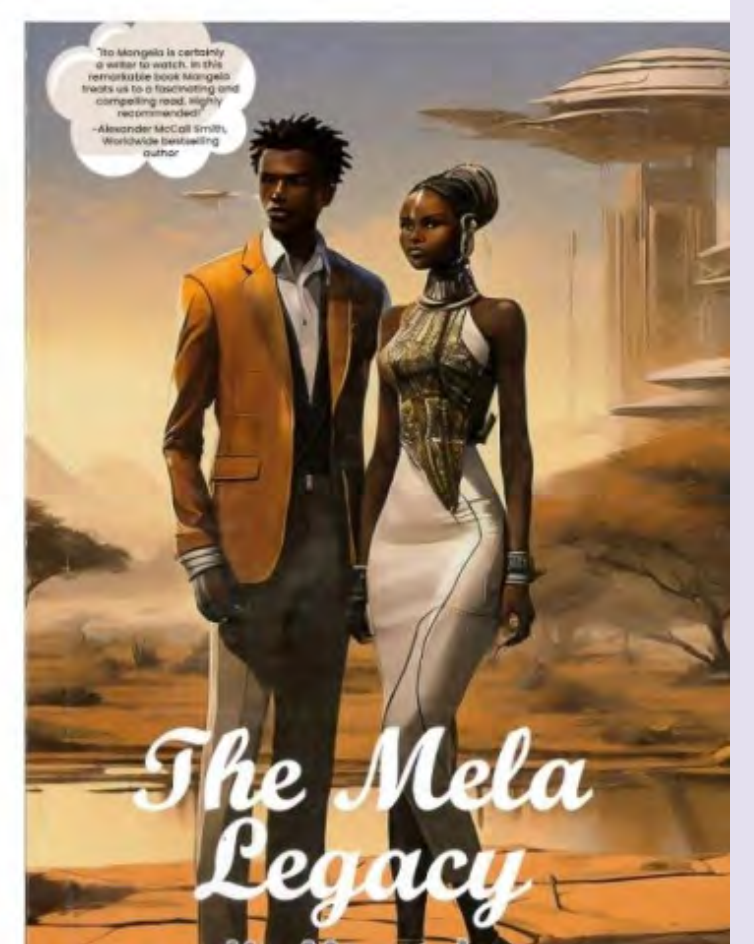
Motladile said last year’s event created significant employment opportunities, including 85 security personnel, 70 hostesses, six drivers and over 450 technical and production staff.

“This year, we are scaling up. We will increase security personnel, hostesses, drivers and the broader working team, translating to over 500 people directly engaged in a single event,” she said.

She added that the festival is also attracting regional interest, with tickets already purchased by attendees from South Africa, Lesotho and Zimbabwe, contributing to tourism and economic activity.

Tickets range from P250 to P3,500 and are available at multiple outlets across the country.

The Mela Legacy: Book 2 Launch



IN BOOK 2: ORIGINS, ITA Mangela (Motswana woman author) weaves a tapestry of Botswana’s cultural essence, blending heritage, spirituality, and futuristic imagination.

Inspired by her father’s reverence for ancestral wisdom, Mangela invites readers to travel back to the genesis of identity, exploring a time before written records and Western interpretations, when oral histories, di story tsa bo dimo, carried the soul of a people.

Through the eyes of Nala, the series’ perceptive narrator, the narrative pulses with emotional depth and vulnerability. Nala’s journey is one of courage, where embracing one’s own fragility becomes a superpower, inspiring openness and inner strength in others.

She navigates challenges with poise, showing that peace emerges not from avoidance but from confronting life’s storms with clarity and compassion.

The book’s brilliance lies in its seamless blending of African spirituality, science, and technology. Mangela honors concepts such as Modimo and badimo, anchoring her story in cultural authenticity,

while letting imagination soar through futuristic visions and technological threads. These elements coexist, reinforcing one another and illuminating the resilience and creativity of Botswana’s people.

More than entertainment, Origins is a meditation on memory, identity, and the imperative to reclaim lost knowledge. Mangela does not presume to educate; she reminds, provokes, and inspires. Each page urges readers to reconnect with their roots, embrace ancestral wisdom, and find strength in the stories that have shaped a nation.

As the Mela universe expands, the next instalment, Okavango, promises to delve deeper into myths, hidden histories, and ancestral mysteries, while exploring identity, unconscious bias, and the reflection of self in the world around us.

Origins is a luminous bridge between past and future, a celebration of heritage, and a call to rediscover the soul of Botswana.

Origins Book Launch will be held on 9th May 2026 on the Growth Well Podcast in Gaborone.

Tips for Young Women Aspiring to Build a Career in Medicine

MEDICINE DEMANDS resilience, compassion, and lifelong learning. For young women pursuing a medical career, success depends not only on academic excellence, but also on thoughtful planning, adaptability, and personal well-being.

This International Women’s Day 2026, we celebrate women physicians who are shaping the future of healthcare and mentoring the next generation. Drawing on insights from women graduates of St. George’s University (SGU) School of Medicine, here are four practical tips to help aspiring women doctors build meaningful, sustainable careers.

Adopt a practical approach to work-life balance

Achieving work-life balance requires clear goals, disciplined planning, and self-awareness. Following structured schedules supports daily productivity, while making time for personal interests helps maintain mental well-being. These small, consistent breaks play a key role in preventing burnout and sustaining long-term success.

Reflecting on her personal journey, Nanditha Guruvaiyah, MD ’23 shares, “Achieving the perfect work-life balance is something I’m still working on.

I would credit my academic success to the fact that I knew what my goals were very early on, and I created multiple plans to make sure my goals came to fruition.

I’m also a stickler for schedules and I try my best to complete my tasks for that day.

On the other hand, I try to devote at least one hour a day to something other than studying that will make me happy like watching a TV show, going for a walk, or listening to an audiobook.

This small but important habit goes a long way in avoiding burnout.”

Build a medical career that extends beyond clinical practice

While patient care remains central, many physicians find fulfillment by extending their impact beyond the clinic. Opportunities in public health, advocacy, research, and medical journalism allow doctors to address

broader healthcare challenges and empower underserved communities.

Geraldine Nabeta, MD ’23 reflects, “I aim to build a career focused on the health and human rights of underserved populations.

Naturally, I want to practice medicine and participate in academic medicine, but I would also love to empower the health of communities globally via medical journalism.”

Develop career navigation skills early

A successful medical career requires strong organisational and planning skills. From managing exams to navigating applications and professional networks, early preparation helps aspiring physicians stay competitive and focused on long-term goals.

Think strategically about your career path

Women doctors emphasize that planning strategically helps aspiring physicians position themselves for meaningful opportunities, while staying adaptable to evolving interests and emerging fields in medicine.

As we recognize the achievements of women in medicine this International Women’s Day, their experiences offer valuable guidance for aspiring physicians ready to shape the future of healthcare.



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Roses will bloom again

STAFF WRITER
editors@thepatriot.co.bw

SOME BOOKS ARE PRACTICAL and so relatable that upon reading them, you can literally picture yourself in that very moment of the book and its chapters. One such book is a 52-week devotional journal titled *Roses will Bloom Again*. *Roses will Bloom Again* is a transformative devotional journal which aims to help people navigate different seasons of life. The 175-paged read, published by Poetic Blood Publishers, was authored by first-time author Gothata Courtney Gopolang.

"Roses will Bloom Again is a book that will inspire, motivate and give people hope in dealing with the various challenges of life" highlighted the author.

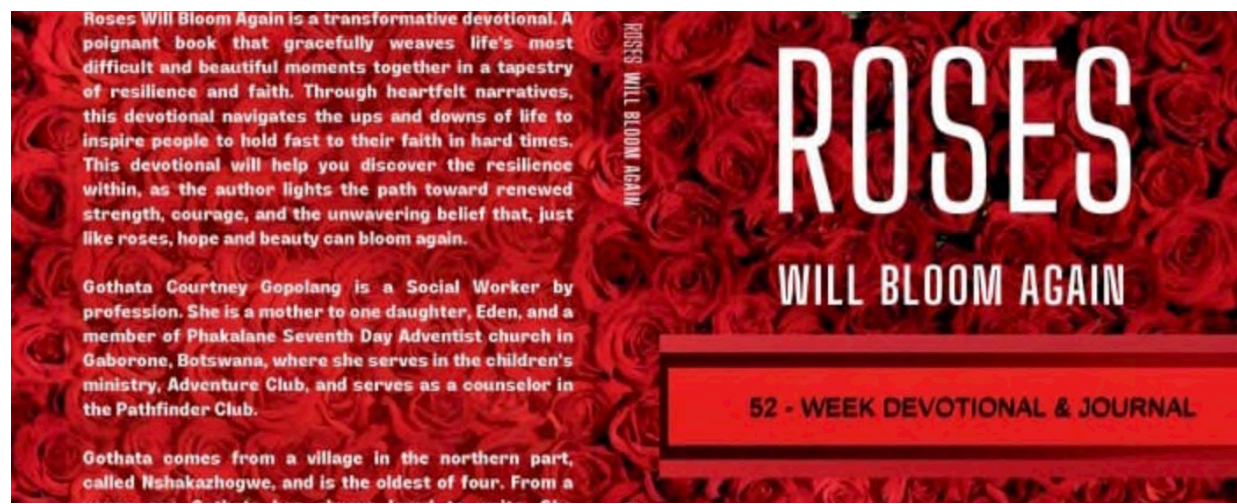
Through heartfelt narratives, this devotional navigates the ups and downs of life to inspire people to hold fast to their faith in hard times. This devotional will help you

discover the resilient within, as the author lights the path toward renewed strength, courage, and the unwavering belief that, just like roses, hope and beauty can bloom again.

"I love reading devotional books in the morning for my tie alone with God time, so I decided I had to start writing something that resonated with me and helped me in my Christian walk, and I wrote a devotional journal" said Gopolang in an interview with this publication. This shows the commitment and zeal that she had in wanting to share her experiences and put them onto paper. According to the author, the book title was inspired by the song *Roses will bloom again* by Jeff and Sherri Easter. The song is about a man who buried his wife for 40 years.

It is a song about hope and how Jesus Christ is the source of all answers, even at such a time of great loss and pain.

This song, the messaging and lyrics played a huge part in motivating the author to pen this interesting and



much needed book. From a young age Gopolang has always loved to write as she understands the power of words and for this reason, she has written *Roses will bloom again* as a way of sharing God with the world.

Gothata Courtney Gopolang is a Social Worker by profession. She is a mother to one daughter, Eden, and a member of Phakalane Seventh Day Adventist church in Gaborone, Botswana, where she serves in the children's ministry, Adventure Club, and serves as a counselor in the Pathfinder Club.

first-time author of her book titled *Roses will Bloom again* which is a transformative devotional book for teens and adults of all genders.

Her love for writing lead her to pen her own book and share with the world about her God and the power of prayer in the life of people. Her book was written to inspire faith, love, joy and hope in the different seasons of life.

The devotional is scheduled to be officially launched on the 23rd of April 2026 at Stanbic Bank Incubator Hub from 1800hrs.

Flood disaster renews debate on climate risk, preparedness



Prof. Dewald van Niekerk, head of the African Centre for Disaster Studies NWU

PHENYO MOKGOTHU
North-West University (NWU)

TORRENTIAL RAINS AND FLASH floods that have claimed dozens of lives in Kenya and displaced more than 30 000 people have renewed debate among scientists and disaster-risk experts about the growing impact of climate change and the need for stronger preparedness systems across Africa. Since the start of March, parts of Nairobi, Nyakach and surrounding regions have been hit by heavy rainfall that destroyed homes, swept away crops and forced families to flee low-lying areas, raising concerns about the region's vulnerability to recurring climate-related disasters. The latest crisis comes as East Africa continues to face alternating periods of drought and intense rainfall; a pattern experts say is becoming more frequent.

Prof. Dewald van Niekerk, head of the African Centre for Disaster Studies at the North-West University (NWU), said current scientific evidence suggests that climate change is increasing the likelihood of extreme rainfall events across the continent. "From a climate science perspective, it is reasonable to say that climate change is loading the dice toward heavier rainfall, more intense downpours and therefore greater flash-flood risk in Kenya and across East Africa," he said.

"The signal is not simply more rain or less rain, but greater instability, more extremes and rainfall arriving in damaging bursts."

He said recent international climate assessments indicate that the frequency and intensity of heavy precipitation events are projected to increase across most parts of Africa as global temperatures rise.

While climate change is seen as a major driver, Prof. van Niekerk said disasters of this scale are often the result of a combination of environmental and human factors.

"The disaster outcome is co-produced by climate pressures, development choices and governance gaps," he said, noting that rapid urban growth, settlement in flood-prone areas and weak infrastructure often turn heavy rain into a humanitarian crisis.

Climate justice The floods have also revived debate about climate justice, as African countries face severe losses despite contributing only a small share of global greenhouse-gas emissions. Prof. van Niekerk said the situation highlights the unequal burden carried by developing countries.

"Africa contributes only a small portion of global emissions, yet it experiences disproportionate losses from climate extremes," he said. "Countries that benefited most from carbon-intensive industrialisation carry a responsibility to support nations such as Kenya through adaptation finance, disaster support and faster emission reductions."

He added that international support should not be treated as charity but as part of global commitments under climate agreements, including funding for early-warning systems, resilient infrastructure and emergency response mechanisms.

The recurring floods in Kenya have also raised questions about long-term disaster planning, as seasonal flooding continues to affect the same communities each year.

According to Prof. van Niekerk, governments should move away from treating floods as unexpected emergencies and instead plan for them as predictable risks.

"The main lesson is that seasonal flooding should not be treated as an exceptional disaster when it is in fact a recurring risk pattern," he said. "Governments need anticipatory risk governance that includes better land-use planning, stronger drainage systems, early-warning networks and relocation plans for communities living in high-risk areas."

He said effective disaster management requires long-term investment in infrastructure, social protection and environmental management, rather than rebuilding after each crisis.

With heavy seasonal rains expected to continue across parts of East Africa, experts warn that without stronger climate adaptation and disaster-preparedness measures, similar emergencies are likely to occur more often, placing growing pressure on governments and humanitarian agencies.



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Sport

Oratile clocks 400m PB



Emerging athletics teenage star, Justice Oratile improved his 400m personal best once again on Thursday at the Hezekiel Sepeng Invitational, crossing the line in 44.61s. He outpaced Ammar Ismail Yahia Ibrahim (45.16s) and Joe Brier (45.93s) to secure the victory. His rapid progression continues after last weekend's 20.22s 200m performance.

Ralebala relishes Absa support

▪ Absa- Dinaledi Academy grooms 52 under-13 and under-15 players

ABSA BANK EXECUTIVES engaged with Dinaledi Football Academy leadership and players last week, following an intensive nationwide Dinaledi Soccer Talent Search conducted in 2025. Since the launch in September 2025, the Absa-Dinaledi Academy partnership is already demonstrating strong early impact. This is reflected in the first cohort of 52 under-13 and under-15 players, carefully selected through a rigorous national scouting process, who are now undergoing structured, high-performance training designed to unlock their full potential.

Dinaledi President, Aryl Ralebala said the programme is about more than just football, it is about changing lives. "We are planting a seed that will grow across Botswana, creating opportunities for many more young people. You have been chosen to represent something bigger than yourselves. Take this seriously, and write your own story," he motivated the young players.

For his comment, under-13 Elite coach, Wame Mokohe emphasised the quality and potential of the selected players adding, "these are raw, exceptional talents. With the right training, discipline, and support from partners like Absa, we are building a pipeline of players who can compete at the highest levels locally, regionally, and internationally."

The Academy is positioning itself as Botswana's first fully integrated high-performance football development programme. Players train five times a week, compete in the Gaborone City Regional Development League, and participate in national tournaments providing them with consistent, high-level competitive exposure.

The Academy's Operations Manager, Hassan Stoffel said their goal is to produce talent that can



Dinaledi Football Academy President, Aryl Ralebala

be exported to top clubs and elevate Botswana's presence in global football. Sharing their experience with the Academy since enrollment, participants, Leruo Maruping and Lefa Sechele expressed their determination to excel, highlighting how the academy is helping them sharpen their skills and pursue their dreams with renewed confidence.

Absa Bank Botswana's Head of Marketing and Communications,

Dennis Mambure, reinforced the bank's belief in the power of opportunity. "When I look at these boys, I see the future of African football. Talent is everywhere, but opportunity is not. This initiative is about closing that gap. We want to see these young players competing not just locally, but on the African continental teams and beyond," he said.

Athletics coaches in Kenya

THE BOTSWANA ATHLETICS Association has sent a delegation of four (two coaches and two athletes) to Nairobi, Kenya, to participate in the Youth Athletics Development Seminar taking place from 7-11 April 2026. The selected youth athletes are 17-year-olds Ms. Game Onneile of Tati Athletics Club and Mr. Sarona

Mokgwaosele of Jwaneng Athletics Club. Accompanying them are coaches Ms. Tshepiso Kashiwa of Werda Athletics Club and Mr. Keene Motukisi of The Isaac Makwala Athletics Academy. This initiative forms part of the Africa Youth Athlete Development Project, which aims to ensure that young athletes across the continent are adequately prepared for the 2026

IOC Youth Olympic Games (YOG) in Dakar, Senegal. The programme draws on World Athletics CECS coach education content, offering specialized guidance on coaching techniques tailored for youth athletes. It also incorporates comprehensive athlete education modules covering key areas such as safeguarding, anti-doping, nutrition, and personal brand development.

Through this holistic approach, both coaches and athletes will gain essential skills and knowledge needed to excel at the Youth Olympic Games and in their future sporting careers. Furthermore, the project seeks to broaden its impact by expanding access to training and educational opportunities for more young athletes preparing for their first international competitions.

Letsile in World Athletics Kids program

▪ to work alongside Melissa Jefferson-Wooden in the role

LETSILE TEBOGO AND MELISSA JEFFERSON-WOODEN HAVE BEEN NAMED in a major World Athletics initiative, taking on new ambassador roles. The announcement comes just one month before the annual Kids' Athletics Day on May 7. The two athletes will officially launch the latest campaign at the upcoming Debswana World Athletics Relays in Gaborone, which will also mark the fifth anniversary of Kids' Athletics Day. The Kids' Athletics initiative leverages the global appeal of athletics to encourage children worldwide to lead more active lives. Since its inception, the program's annual celebration has engaged 1.3 million children in schools, clubs, and communities. Each year features a new theme and creative ways to involve young people in fun and inclusive athletic activities. This year's theme focuses on celebration and connection. On May 7, member federations, schools, and families are encouraged to participate and honour the core values of the program: movement, learning, inclusion, sustainability, and community. The full campaign will run from May 1-30, kicking off at the World Relays in Botswana. There, Melissa Jefferson-Wooden and Letsile Tebogo will lead a special activation event with local children.



Botswana's star athlete Letsile Tebogo

Both athletes have become prominent role models in the sport. Jefferson-Wooden, representing the USA, secured a remarkable gold medal treble in the 100m, 200m, and 4x100m at the World Championships in Tokyo. Botswana's Tebogo is the reigning Olympic 200m champion. They aim to use their platforms to inspire the next generation to embrace athletics for fun, fitness, and personal development. Letsile Tebogo, who was already an ambassador in 2025, expressed his enthusiasm for continuing in a role he values deeply. "I am excited to partner with the Kids' Athletics programme again, to inspire even more kids to do sport and athletics,"

said the 22-year-old, who was named World Athlete of the Year in 2024. "Athletics helped me stay off the streets and out of trouble, and it has continued to give me so many opportunities. Being involved with Kids' Athletics is one of them and I hope to show young people why they should dream big and have fun doing this sport." Melissa Jefferson-Wooden, who has participated in numerous youth initiatives, is eager to take on this global role alongside Tebogo. "I'm truly excited to step into this role as a Kids' Athletics ambassador - an opportunity to inspire the next generation while continuing to learn from them as well," the 25-year-old

said. "Following the Tokyo World Championships, I had the chance to lead a development session in my hometown, which was incredibly meaningful. It brought me back to where my journey began, surrounded by my village, where I first understood the power of community and support." As Kids' Athletics Day celebrates its fifth anniversary in 2026, the campaign wants to reach a cumulative total of over 2 million participants over five years. With 1.3 million children having already taken part since 2022, the goal is to inspire at least 700,000 more to get active in 2026. More information is available at kidsathleticsday.org.



Mark your Calendar for 26th July 2026

Lethakane sets the stage for the Lucara Botswana GM's Cycling Challenge 2026

LUCARA BOTSWANA GM's CYCLING CHALLENGE 2026