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BY KOKETSO MOSWETSI

# “Chema Chema is not for people like me,” Karabo

The excitement surrounding the Government’s Chema Chema fund has swept across Botswana, promising financial relief to many in the informal sector. However, amidst the excitement, a stark reality emerges: the marginalized and forgotten remain excluded from its benefits.

At the Gaborone Bus Rank, a 44-year-old man living with a disability, Karabo Selelo, is a familiar face to all commuters. His life revolves around the bustling bus rank, where he ekes out a living. Despite struggling to walk, he does not solely rely on the goodwill of passersby; instead, he earns most of his income from selling recycled tins.

When asked about the Chema Chema program and whether he is interested in sourcing



funds to expand his business, Selelo initially expressed confusion, showing a sense of cluelessness about the program. “What is that?” he asked. After a lengthy explanation, he burst into laughter, displaying a sense of amusement at the idea.

“I have heard of that, but do you think someone like me can get funded?” Selelo questioned.

It soon became evident that while this

program is touted as a beacon of hope for many, a segment of society, including individuals like Selelo, were left behind, unsure of how to access it.

“I don’t think it is meant for people like me. As people with disabilities, we are always excluded from such programs, so this one would not be an exception,” Selelo lamented.

Selelo then shared how he would continue to make a living through

recycling tins. As he recounted his daily routine of searching for tins and receiving some from kind-hearted people, he reached into his small bag to show how much he had made, only to realize that he had lost the P200 he had earned that day after selling tins.

“It’s times like these that make me wish the government cared more about people like me. I really wish the government could designate recycling tins solely to people with disabilities so that we can make a living out of this,” Selelo said sadly.

He then expressed his desire to meet President Mokgweetsi Masisi, believing that a simple handshake from the president would make him the happiest person in the world.

“There are two people I want to meet, President Masisi and Letsile Tebogo. I

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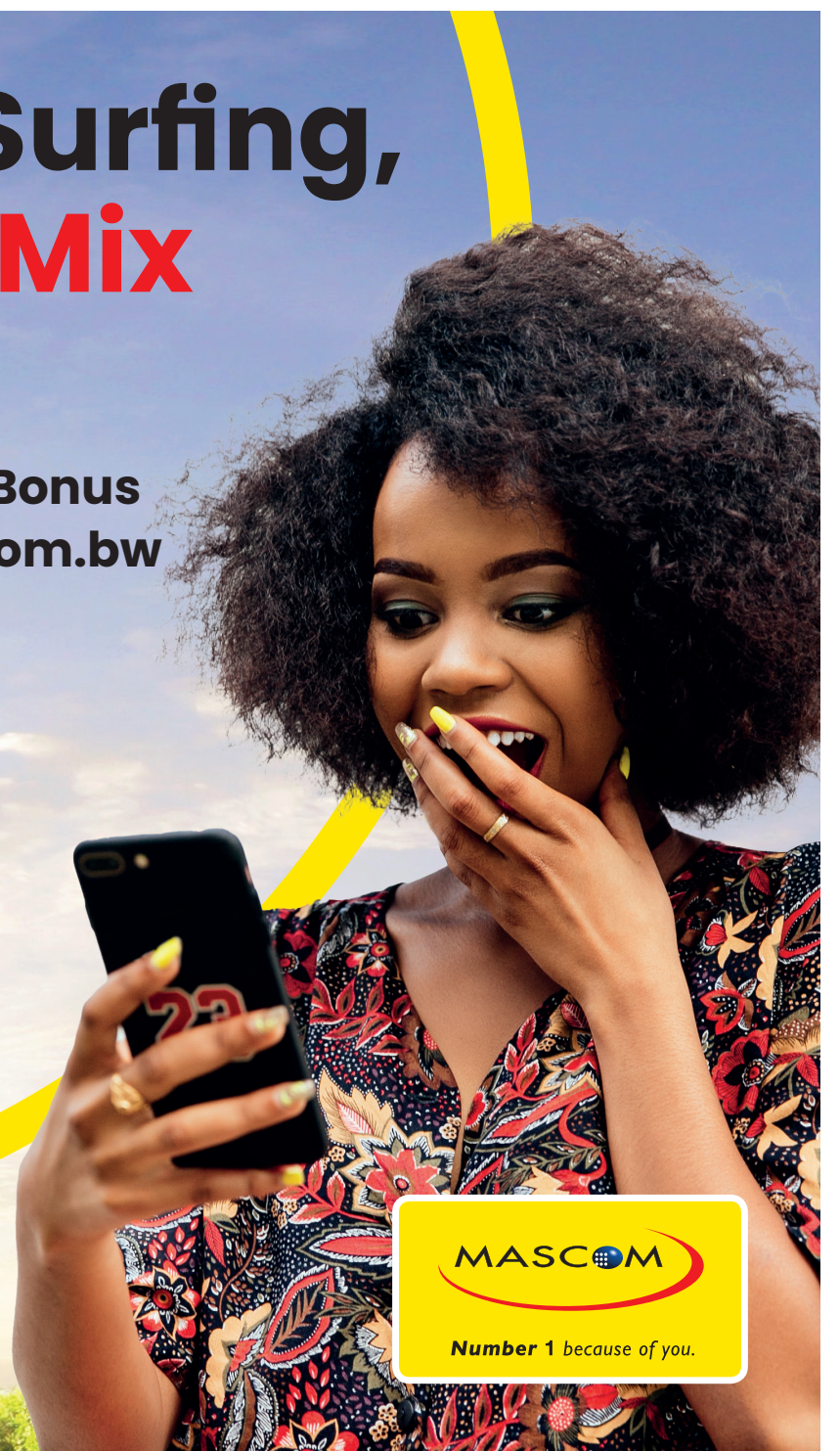
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# “I identify as they, them, their, not he or she” - Human Rights Activist, Gatsha

BY PARROT REPORTER

In a world slowly moving towards LGBTQ acceptance, Botswana appears to lag behind, with derogatory remarks often directed towards those who identify as gay. Human rights activists are stepping up efforts to educate the public on how to respectfully interact with the LGBTQ community without causing harm.

In an interview with this publication, Dumiso Gatsha, founder of Success Capital Organisation, sheds light on the importance of understanding non-binary identities. Gatsha, who prefers the pronouns they, them, and their, explains that addressing someone by their chosen pronouns is a sign of respect and gratitude.

Drawing parallels to cultural practices, Gatsha highlights how certain tribes in Botswana address elders in the plural form, suggesting a similar approach for individuals who prefer non-binary pronouns.



Growing up in a Catholic household, Gatsha says they struggled with the traditional binary gender roles, finding comfort in identifying as non-binary.

“Pronouns are important because they affirm our identity,” Gatsha explains. “By respecting my chosen pronouns, you acknowledge

who I am and reshape societal perceptions of gender and culture.”

Addressing misconceptions about non-binary identities, Gatsha emphasizes the need for education and understanding. They point out that queer terminology has historical roots in African cultures, such as the term “Matanyola”

in Botswana, which reflects the existence of queer individuals throughout history.

Discussing religion, Gatsha acknowledges the complexity of the discourse but stresses the importance of evidence-based dialogue. They advocate for a society that embraces diversity and intellectual growth, emphasizing the need for inclusivity in Botswana.

In response to whether Botswana is ready for non-binary pronouns, Gatsha believes that acknowledging individuals chosen identities enriches society intellectually and emotionally. They challenge the notion that embracing non-binary pronouns undermines Botswana’s capacity to learn and create a better future for all.

Looking ahead, Gatsha expresses their desire to have children someday, emphasizing the importance of creating a more inclusive and accepting society for future generations.

## Councilor Suspects Political Sabotage in Delayed Recognition of Mohembo West



BY PARROT REPORTER

Kauxwi-Xakao Councilor, Television France, who has expressed frustration since last year over the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development’s (MLGRD) continued delay in recognizing Mohembo East settlement as a village, has voiced his concerns about suspected political sabotage.

Mohembo East is adjacent to the iconic Mohembo River Bridge, the gateway to the eastern panhandle of

the Okavango Delta. According to the 2022 population and housing census, the settlement has around 785 residents, with 369 males and 416 females.

In an interview, the councilor indicated that since July last year, they have consistently received the same response from the Ministry, stating that they are still working on the process of recognizing the settlement. France lamented that during door-to-door campaigns, they encountered negative and mixed emotions from communities in the area, with most blaming councilors for their perceived failure despite the settlement being eligible for recognition.

He noted that it has been seven months since the Minister of Local Government, Kgotla Autwetse, assured them that the settlement would be recognized

in a short period, as the process was underway. “I believe this is a ploy to frustrate voters so that they do not vote for the incumbent councilor in the next general election,” France said.

During a Kgotla meeting at Mohembo East, France recounted that residents expressed their anger by chasing them away, citing the government’s deliberate ignorance in recognizing the settlement.

In an interview with this publication, the Ministry’s spokesperson, Masego Ramakgathi, acknowledged that the settlement meets all the criteria for recognition as per the Revised National Settlement Policy of 2004. However, he attributed the delay to the process of engaging with relevant stakeholders for coordinated government service delivery.

Ramakgathi further stated that the ministry is aware that

the delayed recognition deprives Mohembo West residents of their rights to access safe, clean water and utilize other government initiatives requiring land access. Despite this, he emphasized that residents receive necessary services and goods from the government, including provision of a water plant, Kgotla, Headman of Arbitration, and a primary school with two classroom blocks.

Regarding progress updates, Ramakgathi mentioned that Okavango District is continually informed, as the exercise involves key stakeholders. He added that the ministry plans to consult all concerned stakeholders before presenting the request to the cabinet for decision-making, with the district being informed of the outcome.

Ramakgathi concluded by stating that they anticipate completing the entire recognition process before the end of the 2024/25 financial year.

# Reatile's Charm Offensive at BCP?

BY KOKETSO MOSWETSI

**B**otswana Patriotic Front (BPF) president Mephato Reatile's recent involvement in Botswana Congress Party (BCP) activities has raised eyebrows among political commentators, who speculate that it may be a charm offensive to garner support from the BCP.

According to insiders, Reatile is facing internal opposition within the BPF, with some members of the National Executive Committee (NEC) pushing for his removal following his decision to withdraw the BPF from the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC).

Reatile's close association with the BCP, a party that has also withdrawn from the UDC, is seen as a strategic move to salvage his political career amidst growing discontent within the BPF.

Political analyst Frank Mogotsi believes that Reatile has taken a significant risk, and his chances of winning the parliamentary seat in



Jwaneng-Mabutsane constituency are slim, given the lack of BPF presence in the area.

"Reatile has made a grave mistake that could spell the end of his political career. Without the support of the UDC's Botswana National Front (BNF), which has a stronghold in the constituency, his prospects are bleak. He may look to the BCP to bolster his electoral

chances," Mogotsi remarked.

Regarding the possibility of Reatile returning to the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), Mogotsi noted that Reatile's allegiance lies with BPF's patron, Ian Khama, who played a pivotal role in Reatile's political ascent.

"Khama rescued Reatile's political career when he appointed him chairperson of the Southern

District Council after his defeat in the 2014 general elections. Reatile's discord with President Masisi led him to join Khama at BPF, where he was rewarded with the party presidency," explained Mogotsi.

Despite Reatile's decision to withdraw the BPF from the UDC, Mogotsi believes that BPF will strive to maintain its coalition with the UDC, despite Reatile's exercise of presidential powers to withdraw from direct UDC membership.



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# Price Hike is Business As Usual for DSTV

PICTURED:  
Thembile Legwaila,  
DSTV Spokesperson



BY KOKETSO MOSWETSI

**R**ecently, Multichoice Botswana increased their DSTV prices, eliciting mixed feelings among their subscribers. The African leading television entertainment company, which once dominated the television space, faced backlash from Batswana over their price increments.

One DSTV user, Tlotlo Rasesia, expressed frustration, stating, "DStv has lost it with their boring content." Rasesia, who used to be a

frequent DStv subscriber, has since stopped subscribing due to the repetitive and uninspiring content.

"Of late, my daughter has been asking me to subscribe. I almost considered it, but with the new hikes, that totally closed me out. I will never subscribe again. DStv is no longer entertaining anymore," Rasesia added.

DStv faces stiff competition from digital content producers like Netflix, YouTube, and social media, which offer entertaining content to most of DStv's clients.

A research article authored by Wes Davis and Alex Cranz of The Verge has shown a decline in television viewership. The latest report indicates a drop in broadcast and cable TV viewership, with streaming platforms gaining popularity.

Quizzed about the future of DStv considering the shift of people away from TV towards other platforms, DStv spokesperson Thembile Legwaila chose not to directly answer the question. Instead, Legwaila focused on explaining

how DStv remains relevant despite stiff competition.

"In terms of remaining ahead of the curve on technology, we recently launched the DStv Stream option, which allows subscribers to access DStv without the need for a decoder. Additionally, our satellite subscribers can access content on the DStv app anywhere, anytime. Furthermore, our DStv customers can add the Showmax streaming platform to their DStv bill at no extra cost," Legwaila stated.

Legwaila further justified their price increase, stating, "Our annual price adjustments are a necessary part of doing business, not only for MultiChoice. We carefully review the prices of each of our packages every year to keep the increase at the lowest possible point while ensuring sustainability and provision of quality services."

When pressed to provide statistics of their clients from the time they operated in Botswana until now, Legwaila cited confidentiality during closed periods and annual result periods as reasons for not disclosing subscriber numbers.

# ILES to Host Third Annual Conference

BY KOKETSO MOSWETSI

The Institute of Labour and Employment Studies (ILES) is gearing up to host its third annual conference, set to take place on the 20th and 21st of June at the Fairgrounds in Gaborone. Speaking at a press conference earlier this week, CEO Shandukani Hlabano highlighted the significance of this year's event, emphasizing its role as a platform for social dialogue and idea exchange within the labour market.

"Our conferences serve as social dialogue forums, providing partners with opportunities to share ideas and experiences of what obtains in the labour market," stated Hlabano.

Reflecting on the positive outcomes of past conferences, Hlabano noted the increased commitment to addressing issues within the informal sector, culminating in its mention for the first time in the national budget speech this year. This year's conference aims to build upon these successes and address key challenges facing the labour market.

With the theme "A Job-Rich Economy: Leveraging Technologies for Sustainable Decent Work," the

conference seeks to explore the intersection of technology and employment. Hlabano highlighted the importance of addressing the impact of technological advancements on labour market conditions, particularly in light of increased instances of



PICTURED: ILES CEO, Shandukani Hlabano

retrenchment in some sectors.

"We need to understand how organizations are managing this transition and ensure that it is just and equitable," emphasized Hlabano.

**THE CONFERENCE WILL FOCUS ON FOUR MAIN AREAS:**

- **The Role of Government,**

innovative solutions for job creation and improving conditions in the workplace will be explored.

- **Protecting the Informal Sector and Disadvantaged Groups:** Discussions will center on initiatives to safeguard the informal sector, disadvantaged groups,

**Employers, and Workers**

**Organizations:** Participants will examine the role of stakeholders in achieving a job-rich economy that leverages technological advancements.

- **Leveraging Technology for Job Creation:** Initiatives aimed at utilizing technology to create

and the environment from the impacts of emerging technologies, digitalization, and artificial intelligence.

- **Occupational Safety and Health Frameworks:** The conference will also delve into international and regional frameworks for addressing emerging occupational hazards. In addition to engaging with stakeholders from government, employers, and workers organizations, the conference will also involve tertiary institutions. Speakers from these institutions will be asked to address their role in preparing graduates for the workforce and ensuring alignment with the demands of the labour market.

"As our labour market continues to evolve, it is crucial that tertiary institutions adapt their training programs to meet the needs of the changing landscape," noted Hlabano.

The ILES conference promises to be a significant platform for fostering dialogue, sharing insights, and shaping policies to promote sustainable and decent work in Botswana's dynamic labour market.

## "Chema Chema is not for people like me," Karabo

FROM P2

love these people so much," Selelo added.

Despite attempts to convince him to apply, Selelo remained adamant that the program was not for people like him living with disabilities. For him, the government of Botswana cannot trust him with P50,000.00 and just give it to him. His reasoning emanates from the government not supporting them much as people living with disabilities.

Attempts to seek clarification from the Botswana Council for the Disabled were futile regarding whether they were consulted by the

government when the fund was being planned, as the person responsible for answering questionnaires was unavailable. However, an anonymous source within the council mentioned that the government had not consulted them, despite being an advocacy body for people living with disabilities. Members of the council had inquired if there were special provisions for them to access the Chema Chema program.

Efforts to reach CEDA were also unsuccessful, as their mouth piece, Neo Tumelo promised to call back after wrapping up a meeting but failed to do so.

## Man Sentenced to 10 Years Imprisonment for Sexual Assault

BY DIMPHO LEGORENG

In a recent court case at Broadhurst Magistrate Court, a 31-year-old man was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment today (Wednesday). The court emphasized that sentencing should always be based on objectivity and take into account the interests of the public.

Tebo Molefi, the accused, was reportedly a trusted individual by the victim at the time of the incident, indicating a breach of trust. The court noted that Molefi was a first-time offender and was young, being 25 years old at the time of the offense. Additionally, the court recognized that Molefi played a paternal role in the lives of his sisters and three minors.

Prior to the incident, Molefi was

still recovering from an accident that left him on crutches. The court acknowledged that alcohol consumption may have clouded his judgment on the day of the incident. However, this does not excuse the severity of the offense.

The court highlighted the injuries sustained by the victim, including bruises around the eyes, indicating a forceful encounter. The trauma experienced by the victim is expected to have long-lasting effects, underscoring the traumatic nature of the assault.

Molefi will have an opportunity to appeal the matter within 14 days of sentencing with the high courts. This case serves as a reminder of the importance of accountability and justice in cases of sexual assault.

# Mine Workers Union Lobbies for Khoemacau CEO Replacement

PICTURED: Khoemacau former CEO, Johan Ferreira



BY PARROT REPORTER

Following the recall of Khoemacau Copper Mine (KMC) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) John Ferreira after the mine was sold to multimillion mining company MMG Limited, the Botswana Mine Workers Union (BMWU) has lobbied for the company to replace the CEO.

MMG Limited recently announced

the finalization of the acquisition of 100% interest in Khoemacau mining in a deal valued at nearly \$1.88 billion. As part of the deal, MMG Limited will retain all Khoemacau employees. The mine is situated in Toteng village in the North West District.

On October 11 last year, the BMWU submitted a petition to the Ministry of Minerals and Energy regarding KMC's breach of its statutory obligations

under the Mines Quarries Works and Machinery. The petition indicated that a report from an inspection conducted by the Commissioner of Labour and Social Security at the mine uncovered legal and administrative lapses at the instance of KMC and its management.

According to the petition, the findings ranged from breaches of mine regulations, non-compliance with labour laws, racism and discrimination, victimization and intimidation of workers, 12-hour exemption, unfair overtime computation, probable tax evasion, unpleasant conditions of employment, and outsourcing/subcontracting of services to the detriment of workers.

In an interview, BMWU Secretary Mbiganyi Gaekgotswe indicated that their main reason for wishing MMG Limited to replace the current CEO was due to his alleged harassing behavior towards Botswana employees, from top to bottom.

Gaekgotswe stated that they have received reports of employees being subjected to the use of vulgar language by the CEO, disrespectful behaviors,

and threats. He indicated that the only solution was to remove the CEO, adding that they are banking on MMG Limited to ensure that mine workers are given the respect they need by hiring a new CEO who will value and respect employees.

He highlighted that their previous petition to the Ministry and the Commissioner of Labour and Social Security report provide sufficient evidence for the CEO to be dismissed.

"We recently had a meeting with MMG Limited executives following the finalization of the acquisition to introduce the union to the company and also establish a common understanding and vision towards mine workers' welfare," Gaekgotswe said.

During the meeting, Gaekgotswe noted that they addressed several concerns, including responsibilities for outstanding liabilities created by previous owners and those carried forward after the completion of the sale.

"Our main concern was focused on the condition of work safety and health standards and instances of harassment perpetrated by the current CEO Ferreira towards workers," Gaekgotswe added.

Efforts to contact Ferreira were unsuccessful.

# BTC Is Botswana's Least Favorite Network

BY KOKETSO MOSWETSI

Despite efforts to regain market share, BTC (Botswana Telecommunications Corporation) finds itself in a challenging position as Botswana persistently favor other mobile networks over it.

According to recent report by the Botswana Communications Regulatory Authority (BOCRA), Mascom retains its position as the market leader, although its share has seen a decline in recent years. As of March 2023, Mascom held 43% of all mobile subscribers, followed closely by Orange at 41%. In stark contrast, BTC lagged behind with only 16% of the market share, marking a 2% decrease from the previous year's 18%.

While Orange experienced a slight increase from 39% to 41%, Mascom's share remained constant at 43%. This shifting landscape highlights the influence of competitive dynamics and evolving consumer preferences, impacting the distribution of customers among telecom operators.

The regulatory landscape has played a pivotal role in fostering competition within the sector, driving operators to innovate and cater to consumer demands. Factors such as pricing strategies, the introduction of new services, promotional campaigns, and overall consumer demand have contributed significantly to the fluctuating market shares observed among the operators.

Furthermore, all three major mobile network operators, alongside Botswana Post, have

ventured into the mobile money market. In the previous fiscal year ending March 2022, Orange led the market with 59% of the share, trailed by Mascom with 36%, BTC with 9%, and Botswana Post with a marginal 2%.

However, in the year ending March 2023, Orange maintained its dominance with 49% of the market share, followed by Mascom at 38%. Once again, BTC found itself in a distant third position with only 11% of the market share, while Botswana Post remained

stagnant at 2%. The total value of Mobile Money transactions surged to P26,524,266,733.97 in March 2023, indicating a substantial 29% increase from the previous year's P20,486,446,714.

The data highlights the persistent challenges faced by BTC in reclaiming its position in the telecom market. As competition intensifies and consumer preferences continue to evolve it remains unclear whether BTC will find ways to strategize effectively to address the factors contributing to its declining market share and adapt to the changing landscape of the telecommunications industry in Botswana.

The public relations team did not respond to the questionnaire from this publication, which aimed to understand why the network is lagging behind and what sets it apart from its competitors. The only response received was an acknowledgment of receipt of the questionnaire. However, subsequent follow-up emails were left unanswered.



# NEWLY APPOINTED MoESD PERMANENT SECRETARY VISITS BQA

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PICTURED: The new Ministry of Education and Skills Development Permanent Secretary, Ms Bonolo Khumotaka addressing BQA Management



BQA CEO, Prof Botsalano Mosimakoko addressing the PS and her entourage

BY PARROT REPORTER

The newly appointed Permanent Secretary (PS) in the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD), Ms. Elizabeth Bonolo Khumotaka, paid a courtesy visit to Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA), on 11 April 2024, as part of her program to familiarize herself with the Ministry’s State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and other public institutions.

When welcoming the PS and her entourage, BQA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Prof. Botsalano Mosimakoko congratulated Ms. Khumotaka on her appointment. Prof Mosimakoko said the visit allows BQA Management to share the achievements of the Authority since its inception in 2013.

In her presentation, the BQA boss outlined the Authority’s mandate to provide for and maintain the National Credit and Qualifications Framework (NCQF), and coordinate the education, training, and skills development quality assurance system across three subsystems namely General Education (GE), Higher Education (HE) and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). According to the CEO, the Authority

offers several services to ensure quality education in the country. These include; Registration and Accreditation of Education and Training providers (ETPs), Registration and Accreditation of Awarding bodies, Assessors and Moderators, Registration of Qualification and Part Qualifications, Accreditation of Learning Programmes, Evaluation of Qualifications, and Monitoring

Ms. Khumotaka expressed her appreciation for the BQA update, emphasizing the importance of understanding BQA’s mandate, achievements, and challenges for effective decision-making.

and Auditing of Registered and Accredited Education and Training Providers.

To date, the Authority has registered and accredited 191 ETPs both in Higher Education

and Technical and Vocational Education and Training, and 22 Awarding bodies. BQA also registered 601 Consultancies, 927 Qualifications (which now sit on the NCQF), accredited 825 Learning Programmes, and has evaluated 6835 Qualifications.

She further said that to facilitate effective customer service, BQA has automated its key processes. These include Online submission of applications, Automated procurement processes, and Automated Decision letters.

Prof Mosimakoko also highlighted some challenges in Legislation, especially issues of no penalties for non-compliance to some regulations. She also stated that there are duplications of some provisions of the BQA Act and other Acts of SOEs. Prof Mosimakoko, however, stated that they have just reviewed the BQA Act and are awaiting feedback from the Ministry. She also noted a lack of integration of BQA and other systems citing the Department of Tertiary Education Financing (DTEF), as an example. The BQA CEO said that the Authority is banking on the new PS and her office to assist in addressing these challenges.



BQA Comms & PR Manager, Ms Lethogonolo Paulo facilitated proceedings

Ms. Khumotaka expressed her appreciation for the BQA update, emphasizing the importance of understanding BQA’s mandate, achievements, and challenges for effective decision-making. She highlighted the Ministry’s commitment to supporting BQA in its mission to enhance the quality of education and training in Botswana.

The PS and her team concluded their visit with a meet and greet session with the rest of the BQA staff members, where she emphasized how key they are in shaping Botswana’s economy.



The PS was accompanied by a delegation from the Ministry



BQA CEO, Prof Botsalano Mosimakoko handing over a gift to new MoESD Permanent Secretary

## RMB & Barloworld Forge a Path with Innovative Green Building Loan



“Sustainability is drenched in our DNA, it is within our strategy pillar, and a key part has been updating our governance framework to participate in various aspects of Environmental Social and Governance (ESG)”

achieved notable sustainability certifications, including EDGE Advanced Certification (Preliminary Certification), with impressive statistics such as 51% Energy Efficiency, 29% Water Savings, and 31% Less Embodied Energy in Materials.

Speaking at the ceremony held at BSE, RMB Acting Director, Ms Harriet Mlalazi stated, “Sustainability is drenched in our DNA, it is within our strategy pillar, and a key part has been updating our governance framework to participate in various aspects of Environmental Social and Governance (ESG). Equally upskilling our people to ensure that

we understand and are invested in providing bespoke sustainable finance solutions.”

Still as part of its sustainability journey, RMB recently acted as a Senior Lender, Hedging Bank, and Account Bank, providing 50% of the debt funding and BWP 405 million in facilities in a landmark Solar PV transaction to fund the development of a new 60MW plant in Mmadinare by Selebi-Phikwe Solar (Pty) Ltd, a 100% owned subsidiary of Scatec ASA. This significant transaction will see Scatec supplying 100% of the power produced by the project to Botswana Power Corporation (BPC) under a 25-year Power Purchase Agreement. The project represents a first-of-its-kind transaction in Botswana in terms of the implementation of a large-scale utility renewable energy project and aligns with the Government of Botswana’s commitments of

shifting our energy mix to 30% by 2030.

Facilitation of these projects underscores FNB Botswana’s commitment to sustainability, a position evidenced by its business practices and product offerings. The Bank plays a critical role in enabling corporates to achieve sustainability by ways of developing suitable financial solutions that not only focus on profitability but also encourage consideration of the environmental and social impact of business operations.

FNB Botswana remains relentless in its Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) drive which is taking center stage as a global theme for corporate financing, necessitating discussions on how corporates can contribute towards reducing the negative effects of climate change, fuelling sustainable and eco-friendly practices that accelerate the adoption of ESG.

### PARROT REPORTER

**F**irst National Bank Botswana (FNB Botswana) through its Corporate Investment Banking Division, Rand Merchant Bank (RMB) Botswana, hosted stakeholders on Thursday 11 April 2024, at the Botswana Stock Exchange (BSE) Bell Ringing Ceremony to celebrate a significant green and sustainable financing deal with Barloworld Equipment Botswana. Through this deal, RMB extended its strong solutionist capabilities to offer advisory and financing of a 5-year Green Building Loan for Barloworld as the Sole Arranger and Lender.

This ground-breaking deal is a first for the Botswana market, facilitating the construction of a new Head Office building in Phakalane and integrating cutting-edge sustainability features. The building project has



# JRK Training & Consulting, Visa Host Inaugural Botswana Annual Payments Summit

BY DIMPHO LEGORENG

**J**RK TRAINING & CONSULTING, VISA HOST INAUGURAL BOTSWANA ANNUAL PAYMENTS SUMMIT. The financial landscape in Botswana is about to undergo a transformative experience as the inaugural Botswana Annual Payments Summit prepares to convene on April 23-24, 2024, at the Royal Aria Hotel in Gaborone.

This highly anticipated two-day summit is poised to gather the personnel in regulation, banking, finance, telecommunications, technology, and fintechs from both local and regional spheres. With a focus on fostering collaboration, sharing knowledge, and addressing industry challenges, the event promises to be a catalyst for innovation and growth in Botswana's financial



ecosystem.

Organised by JRK Training and Consulting, in partnership with global payments technology leader VISA, the summit aims to provide a platform for industry leaders, policymakers, and regulators to engage in lively discussions, share insights, and explore opportunities for advancement in the payment sector.

With the payment industry

playing an indispensable role in any modern society, the summit will feature a diverse range of topics, including emerging trends, regulatory updates, best practices, and innovations shaping the future of payments.

**Key highlights of the event include:**

- Expert Insights: Gain valuable perspectives from industry experts and thought leaders

on the latest trends and developments in the payment landscape.

- Networking Opportunities: Connect with peers, potential partners, and industry influencers to forge strategic alliances crucial for driving business success.
- Interactive Sessions: Engage in dynamic discussions tailored to address the specific challenges and opportunities facing the payment sector, empowering participants with actionable strategies for success.
- Exploration of Innovations: Discover the latest innovations and trends showcased by leading companies and start-ups, offering practical insights to enhance operational efficiency and competitiveness.

As anticipation builds for this groundbreaking event, interested parties are encouraged to secure their delegate tickets before April 13, 2024, to ensure their participation in shaping the future of payments in Botswana and beyond.

## Botswana Oil Granted Import License: A Step Towards Energy Security

BY DIMPHO LEGORENG

**T**he Botswana Energy Regulatory Authority (BERA) has recently granted Botswana Oil Limited (BOL) an import license, marking a significant milestone in Botswana's energy strategy.

With this license, BOL will now be responsible for importing 90% of Botswana's oil, solidifying its role as the primary distribution channel to the wholesale market. This entails supplying products to International Oil Companies (IOCs) for distribution to filling stations and commercial customers. BOL may also procure petroleum products through IOCs when necessary.

At a recent event hosted by BOL, it was revealed that the company has been actively engaging stakeholders from both the private and public sectors. These efforts aim to ensure the successful implementation of the 90% import mandate while



accommodating citizen-owned regulated entities.

The 90% import mandate serves multiple purposes. Firstly, it enhances security of supply, ensuring that Botswana has a reliable source of petroleum products. Additionally, it facilitates effective regulation by BERA, promoting transparency and

accountability within the market.

One key aspect of the licensing agreement is the establishment of import volume percentages, providing a framework for BOL's operations. This measure aims to optimize the distribution of petroleum products while meeting the nation's energy needs.

Overall, the issuance of the import license to Botswana Oil Limited represents a significant step forward in Botswana's energy sector. By prioritizing local regulation and supply, Botswana is taking proactive measures to strengthen its energy resilience and support economic growth.

## Elite Young Entrepreneurs Return for the Forbes Summit



FROM LEFT: Omah Lay, Mpho Sebina



### PARROT REPORTER

In May 2024, the Under 30 Summit comes to Africa for its third and biggest iteration yet.

Across four days in Botswana's vibrant capital city, Forbes will convene the most successful, innovative, and impact-minded young entrepreneurs and leaders from around the continent and the globe.

The African continent is home to the world's youngest population and greatest growth market, ripe for catalyzing entrepreneurial capitalism at scale.

Event programming will focus on spotlighting Africa's greatest business stories and biggest opportunities, and on the investors and founders who are forging new paths forward.

As with every Under 30 Summit, the networking and cultural experiences promise to be unbeatable.

Featured speakers will include

government officials, venture capitalists, CEOs, and celebrities. Activities will include exploration around Gaborone, taking in the scenery, music, cuisine, and local staples of our host country.

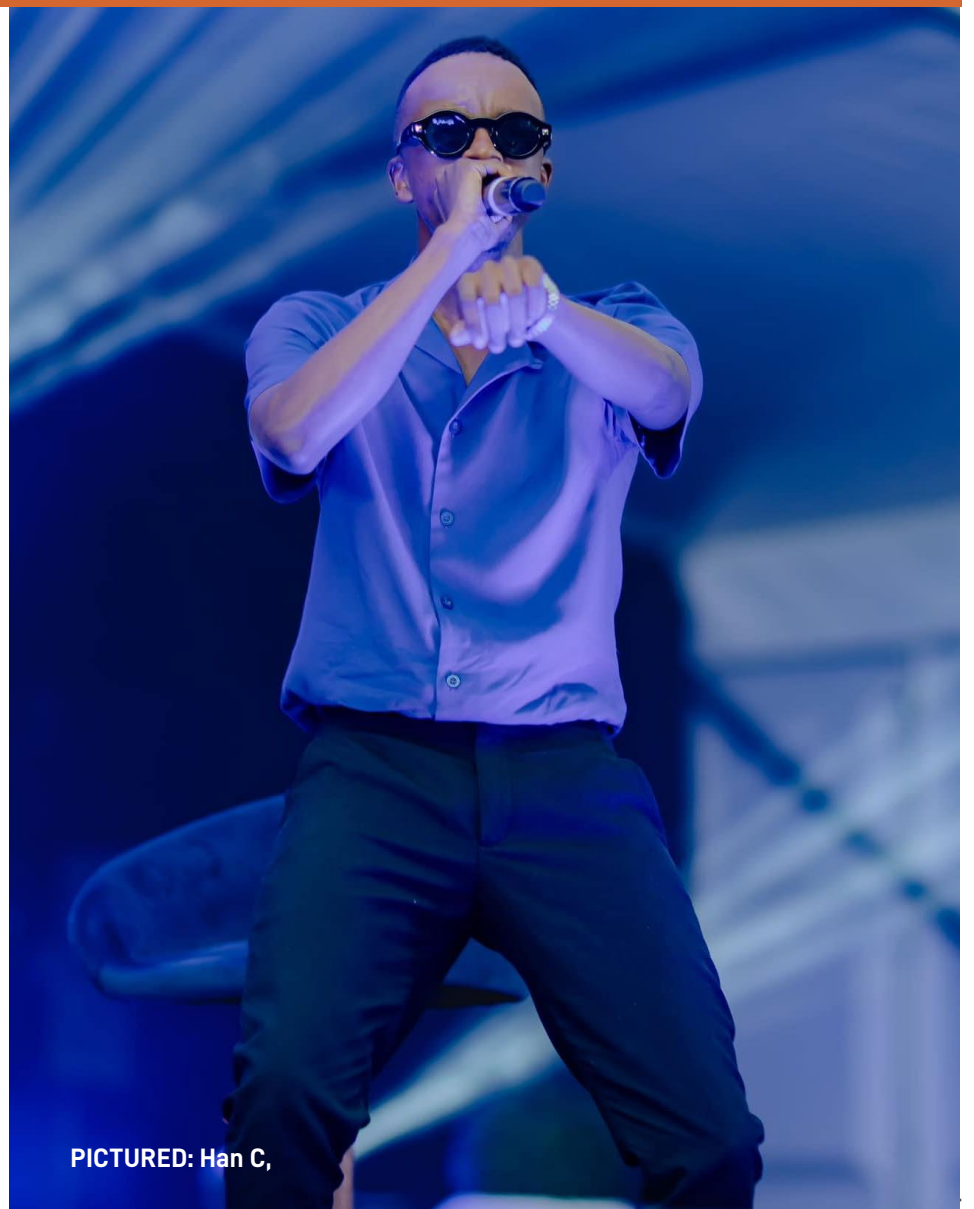
### SPEAKERS AT THE SUMMIT

With his darkly sparkling vocals, evocative storytelling, and contagious rhythms, Omah Lay is one of Nigeria's most talked-about innovators.

The 25-year-old singer and producer's brand of Afro-fusion effortlessly pulls from his deep personal history with West Africa's percussion-heavy highlife genre, as well as his enthusiasm for the popular sounds of his generation, from classic rap to the Afro-beats empire flourishing in his home base of Lagos.

TV & Radio host, comedian, actor, producer, rapper, writer, director, DJ, philanthropist, children's book

TO L2



PICTURED: Han C,

# Miss Botswana Wears the Akh-Ba-Ka Necklace

CORRESPONDENT

The reigning Miss Botswana, Anicia Gaothusi, was the star of the show last week at an evening of glitz and glamour, where President Dr. Mokgweetsi Masisi, Her Excellency Neo Masisi, and international partners gathered for a spectacular exhibition of jewelry designs.

The show marked the premiere of the Lucara Diamond Company's "Akh-Ba-Ka" Necklace tour, led by Andre Messika.

Gaothusi, crowned Miss Botswana last month, walked the runway alongside former Miss Botswana queens.

Pageantry superstars such as Miss Botswana 2024 1st Princess Halle Hirschfeld, 2nd Princess Sebaga Manyapetsa, and Miss Botswana 2019 Oweditse Phirinyane showcased the diamond-studded necklaces and accessories.

Interestingly, Miss Botswana 2022 Lesego Chombo wore the beautiful Akh-Ba-Ka necklace during the Miss World Pageant, where she took home the title of Miss World Africa. Other international models, including Naomi Campbell, have also had the opportunity to don the exquisite item.

The Messika Maison is writing a new chapter in its history with a remarkable 33-carat diamond,

- Made of more than 2400 diamonds
- Jewelry set inspired by ancient Egypt
- Reinterprets the mythical Egyptian-winged beetle



an extraordinary stone that illuminates the centerpiece of the 2022 High Jewelry collection.

Valérie Messika takes on an unexpected challenge by creating the Akh-Ba-Ka, a jewelry set inspired by ancient Egypt, adorned entirely with diamonds and white gold.

Made special by diamonds, 15 main gems come from the same 110-carat rough stone. Fifteen diamonds combined in one creative venture—a jewelry set that magnifies the renaissance of this incredible stone.

In ancient Egypt, the soul was said to be made up of two elements: The KA, representing the life force, and the BA, representing transformation and the journey into the afterlife. The union of these two forces creates a spark, the AKH, or the transfigured spirit heading towards the light. Akh-Ba-Ka is a transcendence, the journey of a rough diamond, but also a story of transmission, family, and unique expertise.

Inspired by the charm of ancient Egypt and the force of its legendary

TOL3

## Elite Young Entrepreneurs Return For The Forbes Summit

FROM L1

author, and activist, Nick Cannon, has entertained audiences for over 20 years.

Cannon is currently the executive producer and host of Fox's hit TV series *The Masked Singer*; creator, host, and executive producer of the sketch comedy show *Wild 'N Out*.

The show went on its fourth tour in June 2023, selling out arenas across the country.

He is the host and executive producer of *The Daily Cannon*, a morning show hosted live on Amazon platforms every Monday through Friday.

South African model, actress, humanitarian, brand ambassador, Nomzamo Mbatha, took Hollywood by storm last spring with her first-ever U.S. role in *Paramount/*

Amazon Studios' hugely successful film, *Coming 2 America*.

The sequel, to the hit 1988 comedy, *Coming To America*, premiered March 5, 2021, on Amazon Prime Video in over 240 countries worldwide and was the most viewed movie in the history of the streamer, making it the No.1 streaming service that opening weekend.

Nomzamo's breakout performance has been praised in the likes of *The Hollywood Reporter*, *W* magazine, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Allure*, among others.

Judy Dlamini is a medical doctor and a Doctor of Business Leadership, an entrepreneur, author, and philanthropist.

After practicing as a medical family practitioner for many years,

she specialized in Occupational Health and consulted for different companies.

Her MBA from Wits University enabled her to change careers.

Her doctoral thesis investigated the impact of the intersection of race, gender, and social class in women leaders' career progression and strategies for gender transformation, using grounded theory and life stories.

PERFORMING ARTISTS

Born Hanceford Phemo Magapatona, on the 18th December 1994, in Mahalapye. A multi-talented vocalist and songwriter with numerous awards under his name.

He has performed and collaborated with a number of

international artists, mostly from neighboring South Africa.

HanC has also performed at different high-profile corporate events such as those for Heads of States and other Dignitaries.

Mpho Sebina is a Botswana-born and bred melodist and songwriter who has spread her wings across the African music scene over the past years.

Her sound is Neo Soul and AfroIndie. She performs for small acoustic audiences to large festival stages. Mpho Sebina is a global music force with a voice that dances over melodic beats and production.

She debuted her first project in 2017, a six-track EP titled "Neo" featuring the hit song "No Evil" which encompasses all of the musical elements that make and influence her from Setswana Folk to RnB to Hip Hop.

# HIV internal Stigma remains a Challenge

- People living with HIV feel guilty
- Males feel more pressure than females
- HIV-related discrimination exists at different levels
- People fear contracting HIV by sharing utensils

## CORRESPONDENT

The People Living with HIV (PLHIV) Stigma Index 2.0 Study 2022 Report in Botswana indicates that internal stigma was a major issue reported by respondents.

About 14% of respondents reported feeling guilty because of their HIV status. Compared to the Botswana PLHIV Stigma Index 1.0 report, there was a slight decline of 4 percentage points, from 18% to 14%, in the proportion of respondents reporting feeling guilty because of their HIV status.

More males than females reported experiencing internalized stigma and discrimination. However, more females than males reported experiencing external stigma and discrimination, such as gossiping by family members or others outside the family. These gender differences are not fully understood.

Qualitative data revealed that internalized stigma often stems from self-stigmatization, suggesting that males might be more prone to self-stigmatize.

HIV-related stigma and

discrimination were found to exist at various levels, from the family to the community.

Some women respondents were accused of engaging in commercial sex work when family members discovered they were living with HIV, resulting in blame being placed on them for their condition.

Failure to accept oneself as a person living with HIV was cited as a major challenge, particularly regarding low self-esteem.

Women and girls, compared to men and boys, often bear the brunt of HIV and AIDS due to gender discrimination, high prevalence of gender-based violence, gender norms inhibiting women from negotiating safer sex, high levels of socio-economic dependence, and biological factors increasing susceptibility.

The Botswana PLHIV Stigma Index 2.0 study highlighted that single women faced challenges assisting children in accepting themselves as people living with HIV and providing care to such children.

Quantitative and qualitative data showed that respondents experienced stigma and



discrimination from family, friends, and the community. People living with HIV were sometimes avoided due to fears of transmission through utensils or contact.

Some respondents believed that the stigma they experienced was self-inflicted due to their own lack of self-acceptance as people living with HIV.

Avoidance of contact was also reported at healthcare facilities, as evidenced by qualitative data.

These findings align with previous research indicating that disclosing HIV status can lead to marginalization, isolation, and social exclusion.

A significant finding was that more than one in ten PLHIV reported experiencing external stigma, with

discriminatory remarks being the most common form.

Verbal or physical abuse was the next most common form of external stigma reported by respondents.

This finding is consistent with the Botswana Stigma Index 1.0 study, which reported similar forms of external stigma.

The slow pace of behavioral change and the ineffective implementation of interventions may explain the seemingly insignificant changes observed.

Involuntary disclosure of HIV status emerged as a problem from qualitative data, forcing PLHIV to face stigma they were unprepared to deal with.

Non-consensual disclosure was viewed unfavorably by respondents.

The Constitution of Botswana guarantees equality and non-discrimination, yet PLHIV still face discrimination based on their status. Legislative, programmatic, and policy interventions aimed at eliminating HIV-related stigma and discrimination have not fully succeeded.

Enforcement of developed interventions may be lacking, necessitating research to identify gaps in implementation and understand gender differences in stigma experiences.

Approximately one in five respondents reported being excluded from social gatherings and family activities, indicating social rejection. This social exclusion exacerbates the challenges faced by PLHIV in dealing with their condition and discrimination.

HIV-related stigma and discrimination hinder access to health services, reduce medication adherence, and impact physical and mental health negatively.

## Miss Botswana Wears the Akh-Ba-Ka Necklace

### FROM L2

queens, Valérie Messika has created a unique jewelry set composed of 4 pieces: a plastron necklace, a pair of earrings, and two architectural-style rings, each containing diamonds cut from this incredible 110-carat rough stone.

In 2022, Valérie Messika wanted to break new ground in High Jewelry and pursue her quest with a collection of exceptional stones.

“I wanted to obtain a legendary stone to showcase the High Jewelry expertise of our Parisian workshop, and to mirror my family’s trade of diamond merchants,” she explains.

Working closely with her brother

Ilan, specialized in diamond trade and cutting, Valérie Messika carefully followed the different stages of diamond making with this incredible 110-carat stone. After two years of analyzing, mapping, and cutting this exceptional gem, he then presented her with 15 magnificent diamonds, all from this rough stone, including one sparkling, 33-carat cushion-cut diamond, which prompted the designer Messika to make an unprecedented decision. She chose to purchase all 15 diamonds. A “bold” gesture and “a choice of the heart,” as she described it, as it is rare for a Maison to buy the entirety.

Consisting of more than 2,400

diamonds totaling 71.49 carats, the necklace is the masterpiece of the set. Its modern and visionary design reinterprets the mythical Egyptian-winged beetle through an ingenious combination of diamonds and faceted white gold. At the center of this fabulous necklace is the 33-carat diamond. A natural miracle produced billions of years ago, this gem also comprises extraordinary properties; it is classified as D for its noble color and Internally Flawless for its purity and lack of inclusions, giving it exceptional quality. Its incomparable glow and concentrated radiance make it almost incandescent.

# Hawks Soars over VTM



BY PHILLIP PRINCE ZHUNGULE

In a highly contested match played at the Special Support Group Arena (SSG), UB Hawks finally avenged themselves after agonizingly losing a spot to play in the Debswana First Division South two years ago at the hands of their Orange FA Cup opponents, VTM FC. They beat them 9-8 on penalties following a 1-1 draw at full-time to progress to the next stage on Saturday, April 13th, 2024.

The students, affectionately known as Hawks by their loyal supporters, made their intentions clear from the get-go when they won a free kick in a dangerous area as early as the 6th minute. However, right back Ishmael Metlhaleng sent his effort over the bar. Moments later, skillful Thabiso Fani became the first player to receive a yellow card from referee Joyce Tshepe for

a dangerous play, but VTM did not want the students to outdo them as Kabelo Thari also received a caution. In the 15th minute, captain Sfiso Myeni sent a venomous shot towards Kabo Ntshwaneng's goal, but the goalkeeper had an easy save. Hawks won another free kick three minutes later in a dangerous area, but the experienced left-back, Katlego Koobake, sent it straight into the keeper's hands. Metlhaleng had yet another chance to create an opportunity for his teammates in the 23rd minute with a beautiful curling free kick; however, Tshepe blew her whistle for the goalkeeper's infringement. On the stroke of halftime, Hawks had a glorious chance through Fani, but the youngster missed a sitter, sending both teams into the break following four additional minutes signaled by the fourth official.

After the break, the Premier

League side VTM tried to push back and get an early goal, but the students were resolute. Myeni broke through the defense in the 52nd minute, but his shot did not trouble Ntshwaneng. The tempo of the game gradually dropped with both teams struggling to break the deadlock. Second-half substitute Bogosi Nfila tested Ntshwaneng's gloves in the 70th minute. VTM could have sealed the match at the death but missed an open goal from a goal-mouth scramble. However, that miss spurred them on as Nfila scored an acrobatic goal in optional time. Just when VTM thought they were home and dry, Thatayaone Nkwapa broke everyone's hearts with a last-minute equalizer, sending Hawks fans into a frenzy and the game straight into a penalty shootout.

In his post-match interview,

Silent Kenneth, who walked away with the man of the match award, said he was happy they progressed to the next round and welcomed any challenger. He emphasized how they kept their heads in the game, especially after trailing, and pointed out their track record of winning games in this competition. Head coach Alex Basimanebotlhe Malete praised his team for showing resilience but bemoaned the lack of conversion upfront by his forwards. He admitted the game was not easy but was proud that their game plan came to fruition. "We did not come here to avenge ourselves of the promotional playoffs two years ago, but we came here to play a game and had to keep our emotions in check," concluded Malete. UB Hawks will face Police XI in the quarterfinals of the Orange FA Cup Season 5.

# Wolf Pack Top 4 Quest Remains Alive

BY PHILLIP PRINCE ZHUNGULE

Mazöttie Football Club's hopes of finishing fourth in the Gaborone City Region Football Association Women's League remain alive after they played to a 1-1 draw with Prisons XI on Sunday, April 14th, 2024. First-half goals from Prisons XI's Alima Mompoloki and a penalty from Gosaitse Alec were enough to ensure both teams

shared the spoils.

The Wolf Pack, in their maiden season, started the game slowly and paid a hefty price for it as early as the 10th minute when Prisons XI Ladies' Alima Mompoloki got the better of goalkeeper August Pelaelo and defender Kefilwe Sihamba, who agonizingly watched the ball roll into the back of the net. However, Eric's ladies redeemed themselves and picked up their game. They started playing their normal

passing game, which eventually paid off as they equalized through Gosaitse Alec from six yards out after a Prisons defender was adjudged to have handled the ball in the area.

Speaking to this publication, coach Eric Bolotsang said he was not impressed by his team's performance and believed the game was theirs for the taking. He thought his team underestimated their opponents since they had

played Prisons XI Ladies twice prior to today's encounter and had come out victorious on both occasions. "We chased the game even though we were not supposed to; we were not clinical enough," continued coach Bolotsang. He lamented that his aspirations were to finish in the top four of the league, as clinching the league title is farfetched. Securing a top-four spot would be a morale booster for his team.

# BONA VOTES OUT MEMBERS AMID LACK OF CONFIDENCE

BY PHILLIP PRINCE ZHUNGULE

The Botswana Netball Association (BONA) voted out some of its National Executive Committee (NEC) members, citing a lack of confidence, at their annual general meeting in Maruapula School Auditorium on Saturday, April 13th, 2024.

Following their last annual general meeting in 2023, held at Street of Gold Guest House in Block 10,

where Vice President Technical Mr. Onkabetse Keskang, Secretary General Mr. Thulaganyo Retshabile, and Treasurer Ms. Kgalalelo Botlhole were elected, the general members of BONA felt that some members were nonfunctional and leading to their removal. As per the constitution of BONA, Article 9.1.4 (a,c,d), members exercised this right, and elections were immediately held. Coming in were President Ms. Onkemetse Mpudi, Vice President Events Mr. Bakwadi

Nthwane, Public Relations Officer Mr. Stanley Modibedi, and Development Officer Ms. Flora Kedibonye, forming the new NEC of BONA until the next year, when elections will be held for a new committee.

The newly elected committee is expected to assume office immediately and oversee the day-to-day operations of BONA, especially with the Lucara North and South Zone leagues currently underway.



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# 8BALL PRO LAUNCHES



BY PHILLIP PRINCE ZHUNGULE

In a revolutionary style at Molapo Crossing Theatre (Showcase) on Wednesday, April 10th, 2024, 8ball Pro changed the landscape of sports by launching the first-ever snooker tournament.

Giving welcome remarks at the launch, President of the Botswana Entertainment Promoters Association, Mr. Gilbert Seagile, emphasized that sports and entertainment are interconnected, urging people to stop perceiving snooker playing as gambling. He explained how his association serves as an umbrella body for the

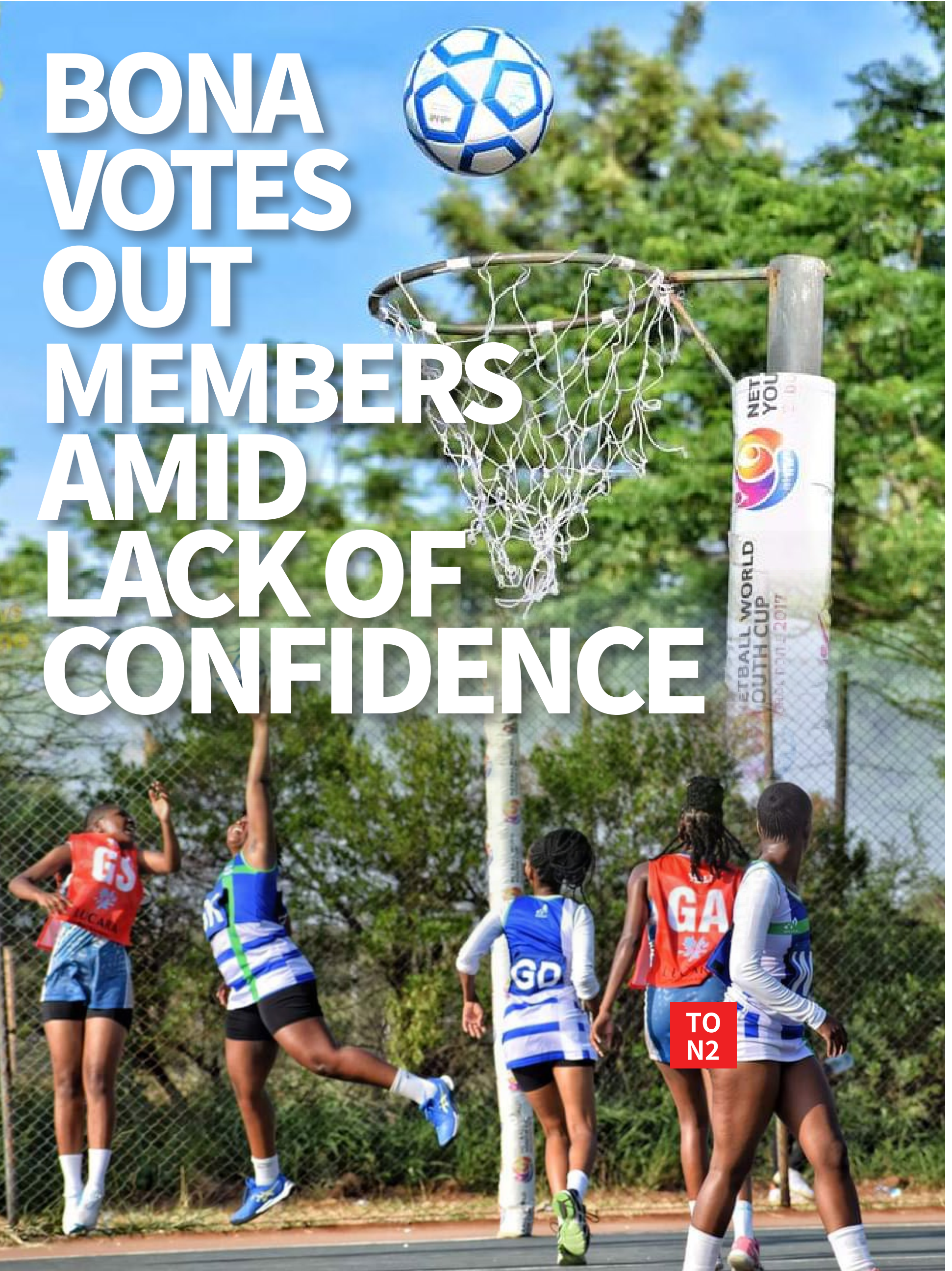
entire industry and expressed readiness to accommodate snooker playing. Seagile highlighted the association's goal of transitioning from the Informal Sector to the Formal Sector, citing their significant contribution to the Gross Domestic Product, currently at 5.46%, surpassing the agricultural sector. He mentioned plans to increase this contribution to 7.56% and announced collaboration with the Local Enterprise Authority to secure funding and commercialize 8ball Pro. Additionally, he mentioned a potential partnership with Khuduga TV to promote and

broadcast the sport.

Introducing 8ball Pro to the media and attendees, Mr. Bogosi Gabonnwe, the Managing Director of Vulnar, a software developing company, shared his journey of becoming interested in pool playing upon seeing snooker tables around Gaborone before the COVID-19 pandemic. He envisioned revolutionizing pool playing and emphasized the need for a structured ranking system, leading to the birth of 8ball Pro. Gabonnwe explained the platform's aim to formalize snooker playing and provide a systematic approach for organizing tournaments and scouting talent. He addressed

the misconception of snooker being associated with gambling and expressed his dream of seeing it recognized like any other sporting code. Gabonnwe highlighted the accessibility of 8ball Pro by making it available via WhatsApp, ensuring inclusivity for those without smartphones or internet access. He clarified that 8ball Pro facilitates both physical gameplay and online score tracking. In conclusion, he reiterated the platform's goal of formalizing the game for the benefit of players.

Councillor Khumo Sebereko, in the absence of the Mayor, attended the event.



# BONA VOTES OUT MEMBERS AMID LACK OF CONFIDENCE

**TO  
N2**