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"You're So Used to Corruption," Moti Tells African Hero Critics



Moti tells off critics PIC: BW Presidency

By INNOCENT SELATLHWA

South African businessman Zunaid Moti has hit back at critics of the African Hero initiative, saying they are so used to corruption that they cannot accept a school and clinic could be built without government paying for their construction.

His response follows the opening of the Duma Boko School and Clinic in Gaborone's Block 7 on reently. The buildings are the first stage of a much larger plan, and it is that wider plan, rather than the existence of the new facilities, that has drawn calls for public scrutiny.

"We do not own the land, we never took transfer of the land, we never took a cent from the government," Moti said in response to questions about the project.

President Duma Boko has also said government paid nothing towards construction of the Block 7 facilities. He told the launch that the state would take responsibility for running them, including supplying teachers, health workers and medicines.

Moti said African Hero draws on businesses, donors and philanthropists to build schools and clinics without asking government to fund construction upfront. He argued that ordinary government projects can take longer because of procurement processes and said money can be lost along the way.

"When you think about building a school or a clinic, you think about a lot of money going into infrastructure," he said.

"But when you look at African Hero, there's a slight difference to this in that it does not pose any requirement on government to put money out there to build it and erect the school and the clinic."

Instead, he said, the initiative asks private supporters to back their promises with money.

"What it does, it puts a lot of pressure on industry, donors and entrepreneurs, corporate sponsors and philanthropists to be able to put their money where their mouth is and also where their hearts are," Moti said.

He then turned on those questioning the arrangement.

"The reason you don't understand this out there, opposition parties and other members, is because you are so used to corruption that has taken place in the past by previous regimes that you can't reconcile good work," he said.

"What is it that we've done wrong?"

The challenge from critics is more specific than whether African Hero paid to put up the Block 7 buildings. They want to know what, if anything, government has agreed to pay or provide as the initiative expands.

In a statement issued after the launch, the Botswana Congress Party (BCP) called for a parliamentary investigation and demanded publication of the agreements behind the proposed rollout. The party alleges that 100 schools could cost about P3.6 billion to build but leave taxpayers facing payments of more than P20 billion over 20 years. The party wants government to clarify whether the current initiative follows an earlier schools-and-clinics proposal that the Ministry of Finance said carried heavy financial implications.

Two unions have raised related questions without rejecting the prospect of new facilities. The Botswana Public Employees Union wants the financing, ownership, staffing and any future state obligations disclosed. It has asked whether government has undertaken guarantees, granted concessions or budgeted for the workers needed to operate the buildings.

The Botswana Teachers Union has welcomed the prospect of easing overcrowding, but wants to know how the partners were chosen and whether the schools and clinics are donations or carry later

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Manual Workers Hit Back at Moti

By INNOCENT SELATLHWA



Manual Workers Union needs answers

The Manual Workers Union has hit back at Zunaid Moti, saying he dismissed its questions about African Hero without answering them. In a rebuttal, the union stood by its concerns over the project's funding, approvals and Moti's role. It also challenged him to explain why, after saying government had contributed "zero pula", he spoke of payment coming later.

The union is of the view that his claim that government has paid nothing towards African Hero's school and clinic does not answer a more pressing question: who will pay later?

They challenged Moti to explain remarks they say he made at the September 5 launch of the Duma Boko School and Clinic in Gaborone.

"You assert on Facebook that the Botswana government has contributed 'zero pula' and that African Hero is purely corporate-funded," the union said. "Why, then, did you state on the record at the official ceremony ... that 'payment will come later'?"

Moti has rejected suggestions that public money funded the facilities. Responding to critics, he said: "We do not own the land, we never took transfer of the land, we never took a cent from the government." He has said African Hero brings together private businesses, donors and other supporters to deliver community projects.

But the union argues that no payment so far and no payment ever are different claims. Its question is whether anyone has agreed to pay for the facilities after they are delivered, and, if so, who.

African Hero describes its model as delivering facilities before payment arrangements begin. It says governments, donors and other partners can participate. That description does not establish that Botswana's government has agreed to pay for the Block 7 project, but it explains why the union wants the terms made clear.

The rebuttal, signed by secretary general by Robert Rabasimane, also rejects the language Moti has used against critics. The union says asking how a private initiative gained access to public land and a role in building schools and clinics is a legitimate public question.

> **If Mr Moti truly loves Botswana, he must understand that our national sovereignty, our land, and our laws are not a playground for un-vetted corporate experiments,**

The union wants the Ministry of Finance to clarify whether it has approved any financial arrangement or future obligation connected to the project. It also calls for answers on planning permission, environmental assessments, financial oversight and any security vetting undertaken.

On planning, the union claims its inquiries found no land-use or zoning applications filed with Gaborone City Council.

Rabasimane also questions Moti's formal role in New Delights, which the union identifies as the company operating African Hero in Botswana. The union says company records show he is not a shareholder and asks: "What is your exact legal or financial mandate within New Delights?"

The rebuttal further refers to the Moti Group's 2023 court case against South African investigative outlet amaBhungane. A South African court set aside an order the group had obtained without hearing the journalists' side and ordered punitive costs.



14 September 2026 | The Monday Chronicle
Verify. Then Amplify.

Traditional Farmers Lose 177,000 Cattle

Commercial cattle holdings increased from 1,301 to 1,461. Their average herd size rose from 295 to 312 animals.



Batswana used to home more cattle. PIC JS Beef

By INNOCENT SELATLHWA

Botswana's traditional farmers had 177,663 fewer cattle in 2025 than they did a decade earlier, according to preliminary census figures that reveal a striking divide in the country's livestock sector.

While cattle numbers on traditional holdings fell by 13.1 percent between the 2015 and 2025 agricultural censuses, commercial herds grew by 18.8 percent. The commercial gains were not enough to cover the losses. Botswana's national cattle population fell by 105,623 animals, from 1,744,166 to 1,638,543.

The figures, released by Statistics Botswana this month, show that the country's cattle decline was concentrated among traditional farmers, who still keep most of the national herd.

Traditional holdings had 1,360,467 cattle in 2015. By 2025, that number had dropped to 1,182,804. Commercial cattle numbers moved in the opposite direction, rising from 383,699 to 455,739 over the same period.

There were also fewer traditional cattle holdings. Their number fell from 37,753 to 35,327, while the average herd size declined from 36 to 33 cattle per holding.

Commercial cattle holdings increased from 1,301 to 1,461. Their average herd size rose from 295 to 312 animals. The figures show a sector in which commercial farms have expanded while traditional farmers, taken together, are keeping fewer cattle on fewer holdings.

The census also recorded fewer cattle births and more deaths than the previous census. Births fell by 14.3 percent, from 436,283 in 2015 to 373,807 in 2025. Deaths rose by 30.7 percent, from 109,453 to 143,076.

But Statistics Botswana warns against treating those figures as a complete explanation for the shrinking herd. Its brief says the data do not establish what caused the changes. The separate effects of drought, disease, exports and other factors cannot be measured from the information presented. Slaughter and imports must also be considered when assessing cattle numbers.

That leaves an important question for policymakers and farmers: what is behind the much steeper decline in traditional cattle farming, and what would it take to reverse it?

Agriculture has been named as a priority under the Botswana Economic Transformation Programme.

The census gives the government a new baseline against which to measure its plans, but the preliminary findings suggest that efforts to grow the cattle industry will have to pay close attention to traditional farmers.

The picture across the wider livestock sector is mixed. Botswana's goat population rose by 5.5 percent over the decade, from 1,205,238 to 1,271,407. Sheep numbers grew faster, increasing by 33.3 percent from 242,432 to 323,279.

Traditional holdings accounted for much of that growth. The number of goats they kept rose by 5.9 percent, while their sheep population increased by 34.9 percent. Unlike cattle, both species recorded an increase in the number of traditional holdings.

Deaths also rose among goats and sheep, however. Goat deaths increased by 27.7 percent between the two censuses, while sheep deaths rose by 65.8 percent. Despite those increases, the populations of both species grew.

Among the districts, Letlhakeng recorded the largest cattle population in 2025, with 134,395 animals. Mahalapye followed with 108,244 and Kgatleng with 83,247. Mahalapye had the highest number of cattle holdings, at 3,244, followed by Kweneng with 3,001 and Letlhakeng with 2,935.

Statistics Botswana conducted the census in 2025, using October 2024 to September 2025 as its reference period. It says the findings are provisional and may change when the full agricultural census report is released.

For now, the national total tells only part of the story. Botswana has lost more than 105,000 cattle in a decade, but traditional farmers have lost far more than that. Growth on commercial farms has partly hidden the scale of their decline.

P33Bn Audit: Special Unit To Follow The Money


PIC BW Presidency

Boko and Batswana want answers

By INNOCENT SELATLHWA

Government plans to establish a special investigation and asset recovery unit to pursue the most serious findings of the national forensic audit, which has flagged a preliminary P33 billion in possible losses.

The unit would investigate cases, preserve evidence and assess whether public money can be recovered, according to a statement by the Forensic Audit Implementation Steering Committee.

The move puts the focus on what happens next to 80 matters singled out for special investigation. They came from 26 of the 30 public bodies audited and concern contracts, payments and other spending with a combined gross value of about P160 billion.

Auditors estimate that the potential loss or damage connected to those referrals could be P33 billion. The committee stresses that this is a preliminary figure, subject to formal investigation, recovery assessment and legal determination. The P160 billion represents the value of spending examined in the referrals, not an amount said to have been lost.

More than 80 current and former senior office-holders are among those whose possible involvement requires investigation and due process. The roles of more than 150 contractors, suppliers and other parties, including international entities, also require further assessment.

No individual or company is named in the statement. The committee says no conclusion about guilt should be drawn before investigations and legal processes are complete.

The referral files contain financial and transaction records, signed procurement documents, approval records, correspondence, board and committee records, and witness accounts. They are intended to support further investigation, asset tracing and possible criminal, civil, disciplinary or regulatory action.

The statement signed by committee chairman Moses Pelaelo follows the publication of the audit's summary report, which was presented to President Duma Boko on 30 April. The detailed reports on individual institutions have not been published; the committee says this is to protect possible investigative and legal action.

Across the 30 audits, investigators recorded 814 findings. Of those, 585, or 72 per cent, were rated high or very high severity. Procurement accounted for 238 findings, including repeated use of non-competitive processes, poorly justified direct awards and weak contract enforcement. Governance accounted for another 215, involving problems such as ineffective boards and weak oversight.

The committee's account is blunt about what allowed the problems to persist. "Serious issues were not consistently translated into investigations, prosecutions, or recovery actions," the statement says.

The audit produced 686 recommendations, including 90 actions requiring urgent attention. They cover tighter procurement rules, stronger financial controls, better oversight of state-owned enterprises, improved prosecution capacity and protection for whistleblowers.

The proposed unit is the clearest step set out for pursuing the audit's most serious referrals. The statement does not give a date for its establishment or say how many referral files have already been passed to investigators. Those details will determine how quickly the audit's findings move from paper to cases and possible recoveries.

Roaming cattle worry vets as Kgatleng battles FMD

By BOIKANYO MATHONSI



Dr Segale MOLA Page

Cattle wandering along the A1 road and into built-up areas are making it harder to contain foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in Kgatleng, Director of Veterinary Services Dr Kobedi Segale has warned.

Segale told farmers that some animals were being left to roam at a time when veterinary officers needed to know where cattle were and prevent them from moving between areas.

"We have a problem with cattle not being taken care of properly. They are going all over, even in places that you know you aren't supposed to see cattle, you get to see one. You can even spot cattle roaming in the city and along the A1 road," he said.

His warning comes as veterinary teams begin vaccinating cattle in Kgatleng East. About 55,000 animals are targeted in the campaign, which started on September 9, according to Botswana Daily News.

Segale said farmers had to take responsibility for their animals. If cattle moved freely, he warned, the disease could spread into places where authorities had not expected to find it. That would complicate efforts to contain the outbreak.

He urged farmers to keep cattle under control, avoid unnecessary movements and bring their animals forward when veterinary officers called them for vaccination.

"Farmers should participate and help the government fight this disease. They should not refrain from bringing their livestock forward when they are asked to," he said.

The vaccination programme involves three rounds, with 28 days between each round. FMD coordinator Dr Odireleng Tholowane has said that teams were starting on the eastern side of the A1 and would work towards the Dibete veterinary checkpoint. Officers are also checking the western side to establish whether the disease has crossed over.

The A1 is therefore more than a landmark in Segale's warning. Veterinary officials are using it to organise their response, while cattle seen roaming near the road raise an obvious question: where have they come from, and where might they go next?

Segale said government could not fight FMD without farmers' help. He called on them to follow instructions from veterinary officers and make sure their cattle were available for each vaccination round.

The sight of cattle on the A1 or in town may be familiar to motorists and residents. During an FMD outbreak, Segale said, it is a warning that too many animals are still being allowed to go where they please.

Nearly half of Botswana's water goes unaccounted for

By INNOCENT SELATLHWA

Nearly half of the water entering Botswana's supply system was recorded as non-revenue water in 2023–24, according to a new Statistics Botswana report that also shows the country more than doubled its water imports the following year.

The national non-revenue water figure rose from 38% in 2020–21 to 50.4% in 2023–24. In Kanye and Lobatse, the figure averaged 62.9% over the four years covered by the report, the highest among the service centres.

Non-revenue water is water pumped into the system but not accounted for through sales. Statistics Botswana uses it as a measure of possible water losses, but cautions that billing and payment patterns can also affect the figure. It does not establish that all of the water was lost through leaks.

The figures nevertheless raise questions about the state of the supply network at a time when



WUC employees on Duty

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New US volunteers urged to listen to Batswana



Peace Corps Volunteers

Pic: Peace Corps FB Page

A new group of American Peace Corps volunteers has been urged to listen to Batswana and work with the communities they will serve instead of arriving with ready-made answers.

US Chargé d'Affaires Christopher Gunning gave the message as he swore in the latest group of Peace Corps health volunteers on Thursday. The ceremony also marked 60 years since the programme began working in Botswana in 1966.

"Your role is not to come with all the answers. Your role is to listen, learn, and work alongside Batswana to find solutions together," Gunning told them.

The volunteers, known as Bots 26, are expected to work across several districts in support of Botswana's efforts to strengthen primary healthcare.

Ministry of Health Permanent Secretary Dr Neo Tapela received the group on behalf of the government. She said their work would support wider efforts to revitalise primary healthcare and strengthen communities.

Peace Corps Botswana said it had welcomed nine health volunteers to the country in July. They spent the weeks before their swearing-in learning Setswana, preparing for life in their host communities and getting to know their host families.

Gunning said the work ahead would be a two-way exchange, with volunteers learning from Batswana as they shared their own skills.

"The Batswana you work with will teach you just as much as you teach them," he said.

He told the volunteers that, for some people, they might be among the few Americans they would ever know personally. The relationships they built could therefore matter as much as the projects they worked on.



"You're So Used to Corruption," Moti Tells African Hero Critics

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obligations. It has also asked who will own, maintain and control them.

Boko has presented African Hero as a way to deliver urgently needed infrastructure while public finances are tight. At the launch, he said the funding model relied on philanthropic partners and supporters, and identified businessman Naveen Jindal as the first to pledge support. He invited others to join.

Boko's involvement is also prominent on African Hero's own website which describes him as its founding chairman. The site presents the Block 7 school and clinic as a test of a model intended for use elsewhere in Botswana and across Africa. The school is designed for about 380 learners; the clinic's stated capacity of up to 288 consultations a day depends on staffing and other resources being in place.

Moti says the questions have produced "crazy speculation", though he says he welcomes criticism grounded in facts. He insists African Hero has used private and donor money on the Botswana project and intends to keep building.

"We take responsibility for doing good work, absolutely, and we'll continue doing that with a plan to erect 150 schools and clinics going forward," he said.



Nearly half of Botswana's water goes unaccounted for



From Page 6

Botswana has had to bring in substantially more water from South Africa.

Imports from Molatedi Dam and the Middlepits Transboundary Water Supply reached 8.7 million kilolitres in 2024–25, up from 4.19 million kilolitres in 2023–24. That is an increase of about 108%. September 2024 recorded the highest monthly import volume, at 987,283 kilolitres.

Statistics Botswana attributes the sharp rise to severe drought, which depleted domestic surface water reserves and required greater use of regional supply agreements.

But the report shows that the problem of water going unaccounted for predates that surge in imports. The national non-revenue water figure averaged 38% in 2020–21 and 38.6% in 2021–22, before climbing to 49.7% in 2022–23 and 50.4% in 2023–24.

After Kanye and Lobatse, Francistown and Selebi Phikwe recorded the next-highest four-year average, at 49.5%, followed by Tsabong at 49%. Gaborone's average was 37.2%.

The report does not put a monetary value on the unaccounted-for water or say how much can be attributed to leaking pipes, other physical losses or billing issues.

Water production across the corporation's management centres stood at 129.4 million kilolitres in 2024–25, slightly below the 132.1 million kilolitres recorded the previous year. The report also says most dams recovered strongly in 2025 after falling levels in 2023 and 2024.

The figures leave a pressing question for the water utility: as Botswana spends effort securing more water during dry periods, how much of the water already entering its network can it account for?



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Editorial Comment

A promise to our readers

Today, The Monday Chronicle publishes its first issue. We are asking you to give us your time and your trust. We know both must be earned. A first issue is a moment of excitement for any newspaper, but it also brings a responsibility. We are asking you to give us your time and your trust. We know both must be earned.

Our promise is simple: we will work hard to bring you news that is accurate, fair and worth reading. We will ask questions, check the answers and make room for people whose voices are too often lost in public debate. When we get something wrong, we will correct it openly.

Botswana has no shortage of stories. Decisions made in Parliament, council chambers, courts and boardrooms affect what happens in our homes, schools, clinics and workplaces. Some decisions deserve praise. Others demand close scrutiny. We will follow the facts wherever they lead, without treating powerful people as beyond question or ordinary people as too small to matter.

We also know that a newspaper should do more than report conflict. It should help readers understand change, celebrate achievement and see the full picture of the country they call home. That means covering business, sport, arts and culture alongside politics and public affairs. It means taking an interest in communities beyond the capital and listening before we write.

Our Monday issue will give readers a considered start to the week. Between editions, we will share news through our digital platforms as it happens. Speed matters, but getting the story right matters more. We will take care with names, figures and quotations. We will distinguish what we know from what is alleged, and give people a fair chance to respond to serious claims.

We will protect our independence. Advertisers help keep a publication going, and we welcome their support. That support will not buy favourable coverage or silence difficult questions. Readers must be able to tell the difference between journalism and paid promotion. We will make that difference clear.

We cannot promise that every reader will agree with every story or editorial we publish. A newspaper that never challenges anyone would have little value. We can promise to listen to criticism, explain our decisions where we can and remain open to views different from our own. Our pages and platforms should be places where ideas can meet without abuse or fear.

This is our first issue, and we are still building. We will learn from our readers and from the communities we cover. Tell us what we have missed. Point us towards the stories that need attention. Hold us to the standards we set here.

The Monday Chronicle belongs in the public conversation only if it adds something useful to it. Each week, we will try to do just that: bring you reporting with care, courage and a clear sense of duty to the public. That duty begins with respect for the people behind every story we choose to tell. Thank you for opening this first issue. We hope to give you good reason to open the next one.

Commercialise Botswana Government IP



Dr Keotshepile Motseonageng

THE BUSINESS OF INFLUENCE

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW

Botswana may be sitting on an intellectual property asset whose commercial value we have barely begun to exploit: the identity of Botswana itself.

Walk through markets, tourist centres and retail spaces and you will encounter the Botswana flag, national colours and representations associated with the country appearing on clothing, fabrics, hats, souvenirs and various forms of merchandise. Some products are locally produced; others originate beyond our borders.

The legal and economic question is simple: when Botswana's national identity generates commercial value, who captures that value?

This is where intellectual property policy must meet economics.

The Government of Botswana already recognises that its national symbols cannot simply be appropriated for unrestricted commercial use. Its official procedure requires companies, organisations and independent enterprises wishing to use the national Flag or Coat of Arms to make a formal application to the Office of the President and provide details of the proposed use. The Government has further described the Coat of Arms as its legal property and stated that its use requires written permission.

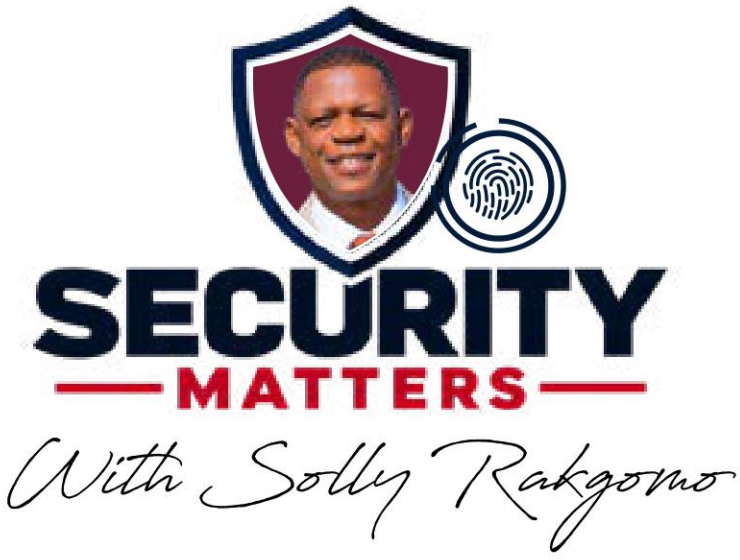
The international IP framework also recognises the special character of State symbols. Article 6ter of the Paris Convention provides protection against certain unauthorised registration and use of State flags, armorial bearings and other State emblems as trademarks. Importantly, however, Article 6ter does not itself create an ordinary trademark right in those symbols.

The conversation therefore needs to move beyond prohibition towards commercialisation.

Botswana should consider developing a comprehensive national-symbol licensing framework under which approved commercial users may obtain clearly defined licences for specified categories of merchandise, subject to quality-control requirements, territorial restrictions and appropriate licence fees or royalties.

Imagine an authorised "Official Botswana" merchandise programme.

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BOTSWANA NEEDS A ROBUST CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE SECURITY

In the modern day, there are dozens or possibly even hundreds of different interconnected assets, networks, and systems that we rely on every day for the normal functioning of society in Botswana. Without these various infrastructure components, we wouldn't be able to enjoy the benefits of living in the 21st century – small-scale disruptions to these components would result in the temporary loss of crucial capabilities. Critical infrastructure refers to the sectors and systems that are integral to national security, the economy, and society's functioning. These can include transportation (like rail, road, aviation networks), energy, water, telecommunications, financial services, healthcare, and government facilities. Protecting, maintaining, and upgrading this infrastructure is vital for a national security of a nation-state. In other words, it is fundamental to the safety and prosperity of a nation to provide reliable critical infrastructure security because these sectors make up the majority of any society's ability to function – and the disruption of even one of these infrastructure sectors can have disastrous results for the citizens of this country.

Critical infrastructure security involves identifying, prioritizing, and then providing plans to protect both physical and electronic infrastructures instrumental in the proper functioning of society. By using physical security, such as EMP Shields, and cybersecurity, critical infrastructure security ensures that Botswana as a country's government and financial markets can continue functioning unimpeded or with minimal disruption in the wake of either an intentional attack or a natural disaster.

It must also be borne in mind that Botswana is also vulnerable to the threat of transnational crime which can put an added pressure on our critical infrastructure security. The analysis of available sources of information indicates that transnational organized criminal groups can control a significant part of the shadow economy, introduce new illegal financial schemes related to the legalization (laundering) of proceeds from crime, including financing terrorist activities, evading international sanctions, etc. The activities of transnational organized criminal groups are characterized by a high level of organization and intelligence, qualified personnel, using the latest technologies to manipulate Botswana's critical infrastructure (such as the cyberspace) to undermine Botswana's national security in a very harmful way. On the other hand terrorist activities across the region impact on our critical infrastructure.

This then calls for Botswana to apply appropriate protective measures, like physical security measures (access controls, surveillance systems, barriers, and perimeter protection), can deter, detect, and respond to these threats, safeguarding national security.

It is important for our policy makers to understand that in order for Botswana to achieve its broader foreign policy goals (such as attracting meaningful foreign direct investment) national security should be embedded in Botswana's broader foreign policy goals and the protection of our critical infrastructure should be part of our national security strategy. It is very bad for our national security to normalize acts of security abnormality in a normal way such as acting with indifference whenever there is a network outage, frequent power cuts, water pipeline breakdowns, potholes within our highways etc. Such neglect of our critical infrastructure has serious socio-economic and national security implications.

As a parting shot, Batswana must understand that for the purposes of economic stability the functioning of the economy relies heavily on these critical infrastructure sectors. Disruptions can lead to significant economic losses, impacting both the private sector and public services. Regular maintenance and upgrading can ensure the continuous, efficient functioning of these sectors. In addition, critical sectors such as healthcare, water, and energy provide services that people's lives depend upon. Disruptions in these sectors can lead to crises, with serious implications for public health and safety. Hence, protection and proper maintenance of these sectors are paramount. In case of emergency planning and response such as the case of a disaster or emergency, well-maintained and upgraded infrastructure can ensure an effective response. Emergency response plans, business continuity plans, and incident management protocols specific to these sectors can help mitigate the effects of a disaster. In conclusion, identifying, protecting, and maintaining critical infrastructure is of utmost importance. This requires a strategic, coordinated approach, integrating physical security measures, emergency planning, and collaborative information sharing. By doing so, Botswana can ensure the safety of its citizens, maintain economic stability, provide essential services, and enhance their security and resilience in the face of both natural and man-made threats.

Health Unsensored

By Dr Tagadzikana Majuta

Does Social Media Fuel A Mental Health Crisis?

The algorithm trap

We re inmates in a global digital mental asylum and many are oblivious to that reality. This is not me ragebaiting you into indulging with this article but rather raising alarm on a phenomenon that has been proven to be destructive to our mental health owing to compulsive and excessive social media use.

In 2016, research demonstrated an alarming rise in depression among its users such that an article in Forbes remarked, “Recent research on social media usage has determined that the more time young adults use social media, the more likely they are to be depressed… exposure to social media can cause depression—which leads to more social media usage”. Ten years later, we are dealing with a silent pandemic that has gotten way worse than it was in 2016. Before we demonstrate the link to mental health lets survey the social media terrain.

In 2016, there was an estimated 2.46 billion active social media users world wide compared to a staggering 5 billion plus users today. There are now more social media users than those who do not use social media. Think about that for a minute. Furthermore, there has been a quantum sized structural transformation between 2016 and 2026, “revolutionizing from an era of chronological, text-and-photo feeds into an AI-driven, short-form video ecosystem that serves as the internet's primary discovery layer, NU Editorial Contributors. "Social Media Trends in 2026: What's Next." National University, 19 Mar. 2026. Add one more technological tool, the algorithm, and the stage is set for excessive social media indulgence. What followed was an addiction to social media use at dizzying levels. Then the covid-19 pandemic came followed by lockdowns, making social media the natural choice for entertainment and communication. We got hooked.

How it all leads to mental health deterioration

The average young adult averages 4 hours per day of social media use. During this time the brain is constantly stimulated through exciting contents. When one likes a content, the algorithm shifts to bring more contents of like nature to lure you in. This creates what is called a dopamine feedback loop. Dopamine is a feel-good chemical released in your brain as you get stimulated by content you like leading to infinite scrolling searching for the next ‘hit’, just like a drug addiction. Doomscrolling, ragebaiting, these are some of the strategies that social media companies are relying on to get us hooked infinitely to their platforms. The social media space is a multibillion-dollar business whose profit generating point is directly proportional to the amount of traffic or engagement that content generate. With this in mind, the algorithms are purposely designed to maximize that engagement, constantly feeding us content that invoke the most of our emotional response.

Here is the problem though, overtime the sustained stimulation leads to desensitization of your brain, brain fatigue and reduced concentration levels. This constant hyperstimulation ultimately leads to less enjoyment of everyday activities. This state of mind has been directly correlated to depression, anxiety, mental fatigue and irritability. The impact on children is the most devastating because their brain is still developing and early stimulation stunts their cognitive development. Research models predict that for children under 12 years of age, an explosion of mental health disorders is on the horizon due to early exposure and addiction to social media.

What can be done to lessen or reverse impact?

The first thing is to reduce screentime drastically. Research suggests less than three hours daily as impactful start. We must allow our brains to rest from constant data consumption. Taking walks and interacting physically with other human beings and nature will begin a welcome refreshing and resetting of our minds and body. Meal times and family times should be devoid of constant interaction with our phones. This will improve social interaction and reduce depression and isolation. The second thing is to train the mind to watch longer version videos at least 20 minutes long, this will improve concentration levels. The next thing to pay attention to is the kind of content we watch. Content must vary and a larger proportion of it should be educational and interactive. It can’t all be comedy. Take control of what you want to watch and search for the kind of content you need, this will expand your algorithm and bring variation. These three approaches will begin a mental reset that will ease the boredom, anxiety and mental fatigue.

For our children, this is a whole important matter on its own we shall give it its proper esteemed attention in the near future but advice for now, just keep social media and your phones from these precious souls!

Commercialise Botswana Government IP

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A textile manufacturer wishing to commercially exploit an approved national motif could enter into a licence. A foreign manufacturer producing Botswana-themed merchandise for commercial markets could similarly be required, where legally enforceable, to obtain the appropriate authorisation. Tourism merchandise could carry an official authentication mark distinguishing authorised products from unauthorised merchandise.

The objective would not be to prevent Batswana from celebrating their country.

Patriotism should remain accessible. Commercial exploitation is a different legal question.

A citizen waving the Botswana flag at an Independence celebration is not economically equivalent to an enterprise manufacturing thousands of products bearing protected national symbols for profit.

That distinction matters.

Government should therefore consider conducting a comprehensive IP audit of State-owned and State-controlled intangible assets: national symbols, official insignia, government-created artistic works, institutional brands, tourism identifiers and other commercially valuable assets.

Bokamoso Jwa Rona grows as youth-led HIV network

NNASARETHA KGAMANYANE



Bokamoso Jwa Rona

Bokamoso Jwa Rona Network of Young Persons Development (BJR) has grown to just over 300 members across Botswana. It describes itself as the country's first youth-led network of young people living with HIV.

BJR was co-founded in 2023 by five young peer leaders living with HIV who had been identified by Sentebale Botswana and were already using social media for HIV advocacy. The network was formally registered in April 2026.

Over the past three years, it has built a platform where young people can access information, challenge stigma and lead advocacy on HIV, sexual and reproductive health, and treatment literacy. From the start, the network received support from UNICEF, CDC and UNAIDS Botswana, in collaboration with Sentebale Botswana.

A major turning point came through the SYNC Initiative, which focuses on strengthening the capacity of youth-led networks under the UNITED! Movement for East and Southern Africa. Through SYNC, BJR worked with a Botswana-based consultant to develop its first organisational strategy and strengthen its internal systems.

BJR says the support has helped it move from a group driven largely by individual champions to a more structured network.

"SYNC has given us the tools to build BJR beyond passion. We now have governance systems, a clear strategy, and mechanisms that make us accountable to our members. For the first time, young people living with HIV in Botswana have a network that truly reflects our voices and priorities," said BJR chairperson Sekgabo Seselamarumo.

A key outcome of the SYNC process was BJR's 2026–2030 Strategic Plan. Informed by consultations and needs assessments with young people living with HIV and other stakeholders, the plan sets out the network's priorities and objectives for advancing their rights, health and wellbeing.

SYNC also supported BJR in strengthening its organisational systems and expanding its visibility. The network has developed communication and digital platforms to reach young people beyond its registered membership.

Since launching its social media platforms, BJR has gained just over 3,000 followers on TikTok in three weeks. It uses the platforms to share information on HIV, sexual and reproductive health and rights, treatment and cure literacy, and the experiences of young people living with HIV.

"This is not just about having an online presence. We are building a digital community where young people can find information, engage with advocacy, and see themselves represented in a youth-led movement," Seselamarumo said.

BJR says members are now more involved in decision-making, strategy development and setting priorities, helping to keep the network's work grounded in their experiences.

The UNITED! Movement says SYNC is intended to help youth-led networks develop sustainable leadership. BJR also acknowledged UNICEF, UNAIDS and UNFPA ESARO for providing a capacity assessment tool, training and 2gether 4 SRHR funding for its organisational development.

With its strategic plan in place, BJR is preparing community dialogues, peer support activities and advocacy campaigns. It hopes to use its growing membership and digital reach to challenge stigma and give young people living with HIV a stronger voice in Botswana's HIV response.

Business

○ ECONOMY. STOCK MARKETS. BUSINESS NEWS ○

One Notch From Junk

CHRONICLE REPORTER



Botswana has held on to its investment-grade credit rating

Botswana has held on to its investment-grade credit rating, but it remains only one step away from losing that status under S&P Global Ratings' latest assessment.

The agency affirmed Botswana's long-term sovereign rating at BBB- and its short-term rating at A-3 on Friday, 11 September. It kept the outlook negative, leaving open the possibility of a downgrade if the country's finances deteriorate.

BBB- is the lowest rung of S&P's investment-grade scale. A one-notch cut to BB+ would move Botswana into speculative grade, commonly called junk. No such cut has been made.

A credit rating is an assessment of the government's ability to meet its debt obligations. The negative outlook is S&P's warning about the direction the rating could take; it does not set a date for a cut. Whether Botswana stays where it is will depend partly on the budget and on what happens in diamond markets.

S&P says weak diamond demand continues to put pressure on economic growth, government revenue and the country's ability to earn foreign currency. "We could lower our ratings on Botswana if the country's fiscal and external performance proved materially weaker than we estimate," the agency says.

Diamonds have historically brought in about 70% of Botswana's export earnings and roughly a third of government revenue. Sales and prices have been under pressure since late 2023. S&P points to competition from laboratory-grown diamonds, weaker demand from China and changing consumer tastes. It says larger, more valuable stones are holding up better than smaller stones.

S&P believes the diamond market may have reached its lowest point, although it sees a divided recovery. Demand for high-value stones remains comparatively strong, while smaller stones face direct competition from laboratory-grown diamonds. According to the agency, Debswana raised its production target from 15 million to 18 million carats for 2026 and plans to produce around 20 million carats a year from 2027 to 2029. How much that yields for the country will still depend on sales and prices.

The budget figures add to the concern. S&P forecasts a deficit equal to 8.9% of gross domestic product in the financial year ending March 2027, followed by 6.7% the next year. It expects net government debt, after liquid assets are deducted, to reach 34.2% of GDP by 2029. In 2023, Botswana instead held net government assets equal to 6.3% of GDP.

The growing debt will take a larger share of public income to service. S&P expects interest payments to rise from 4.7% of government revenue in 2024 to 10.7% by 2029.

Botswana also relies heavily on customs receipts from the Southern African Customs Union. S&P says these receipts will account for 34.7% of the full-year 2026 budget. With mineral income historically providing about a third of government revenue, the state remains exposed to changes in both sources of income.

There has been some relief. Last financial year's deficit was smaller than originally budgeted, helped by higher-than-expected diamond revenue. But S&P says a substantial reduction in development spending also contributed to that result.

Foreign exchange reserves have recovered from their 2025 lows. The agency attributes the increase to customs receipts, some improvement in diamond sales, gains on investments and government borrowing abroad. It also expects Botswana's economy to grow by 3% this year after contracting in both 2024 and 2025.

The reserve recovery does not remove all the pressure on foreign earnings. S&P forecasts a current account surplus equal

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Saudi Oil Lifeline Shut After Drone Strikes

CHRONICLE REPORTER

Saudi Arabia has shut a pipeline carrying millions of barrels of oil to the Red Sea after drone strikes, leaving traders watching for a fresh shock to global fuel supplies when oil markets reopen.

The 1,200-kilometre East-West pipeline has become Saudi Arabia's main route around the Strait of Hormuz, where shipping has been severely disrupted by the war with Iran. It carries crude from the east of the country to the Red Sea port of Yanbu. About four million barrels a day have been moving through the route, according to Reuters.

Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Energy said the pipeline was shut as a precaution after multiple attacks in the Riyadh and Madinah regions. Several people were injured. Emergency teams were sent to secure the route and assess the damage, but the government has not said when pumping will resume.

That timetable now matters well beyond Saudi Arabia. Traders and buyers familiar with its exports told Reuters on Sunday that oil stored at Yanbu could maintain shipments for five to seven days. If the pipeline remains closed beyond that, supplies equivalent to as much as 4% of the world's daily oil consumption could be at risk. Saudi authorities have yet to give a full account of the damage.

The Saudi Foreign Ministry said the drones were launched from Iraq. Baghdad traced the attack to its Maysan province and launched an investigation. Iraqi authorities have since reported seizing a drone-launching platform linked to the strike. No group has publicly claimed responsibility.

Riyadh said it would hold off on retaliation for now, following a request from Iraq's prime minister to allow Baghdad to act against attacks launched from its territory. Saudi Arabia said it retained the right to protect its facilities.

There is concern at the other end of the route, too. Houthi forces in Yemen have captured Mayun Island in the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, near the southern entrance to the Red Sea. A Houthi spokesman said Saudi vessels were excluded from the group's assurance of safe passage. That adds a threat to shipping, though it does not establish that all Saudi oil tankers have been blocked.

Brent crude was already above $100 before the full effect of the pipeline closure could be assessed. It settled at $104.61 a barrel on Friday, falling on the day despite a sharp rise over the week. For Botswana, which imports petroleum products, a prolonged rise in international fuel costs could put pressure on the import bill. It is too early to say what this attack will mean for local pump prices.



The aftermath

One Notch From Junk

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to 1.8% of GDP in 2026. At the same time, it points to a merchandise trade deficit of 10.5% of GDP in the first half of the year as a risk to that forecast. The figures measure different things: the current account also includes income and transfers beyond trade in goods.

Those gains have helped Botswana retain its rating. S&P also credits the country's institutions, its net external asset position and government debt that remains comparatively low by international standards. It acknowledges efforts to diversify through the Botswana Economic Transformation Programme, although it expects the programme's contribution to growth and revenue to be modest at first.

The agency points to Botswana's peaceful change of government in 2024 as one example of the institutional strength supporting the rating. It says the economic transformation programme could have a greater effect over the medium to long term if implementation succeeds.

The Bank of Botswana, responding to the decision, stressed that the country's ratings remain within the investment-grade category. It said the negative outlook underscored the need to narrow budget deficits, diversify the economy faster and collect more revenue at home.

S&P says it could change the outlook to stable if the budget and external finances improve beyond its forecasts, including through sustained efforts to narrow deficits or a recovery in diamond markets. For now, Botswana keeps its rating and the warning that comes with it.

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T's & C's Apply

Engen takeover approved, but Ajantha must sell stake

By BOIKANYO MATHONSI



The Competition and Consumer Authority (CCA) has approved the sale of a 70% stake in Engen Botswana to a company linked to businessman Ramachandran Ottapathu, but the deal cannot go ahead until a related business sells its stake in the Reddy Group.

Fusionspark Proprietary Limited is buying the stake from Petroleum Investment Holdings Limited. Fusionspark is controlled by MMPG Limited, Surya Artha Holding Limited and Ottapathu. The purchase will give it majority control of Engen Botswana, a significant player in the country's fuel market.

The CCA found that the takeover would make little difference to the buyers' combined share of that market. Engen holds an estimated 15.9%, while Acer Petroleum Botswana, which is linked to Fusionspark, holds 0.2%. Together, they would account for 16.1%, below the 25% threshold the authority uses in assessing dominance.

That calculation, however, did not settle the matter. The authority identified a separate concern involving Fusionspark's ownership links with the Reddy Group, also known as Ajantha. It found that those links could give the new Engen owners an incentive to favour businesses connected to them over rival fuel dealers and wholesalers.

To address that concern, the CCA has ordered Ajantha to sell its 75% stake in the Reddy Group to citizens or citizen-owned companies before the Engen transaction is implemented. Ajantha must then have no association with the Reddy Group for three years.

The condition makes the approval more than a routine clearance. The CCA has accepted the change of control at Engen, but only if the parties first remove an ownership link it considers a risk to competition. Until that sale is completed, the takeover cannot be implemented under the authority's terms.

Independent dealers have also been given protection. The merged company must honour Engen's existing agreements with them, meaning the change in ownership cannot be used to set aside those arrangements. For dealers operating under the Engen name, the practical test will be whether those commitments continue to hold once the new owners take charge.

The CCA has placed conditions on employment as well. Engen staff must be retained on the same or better terms, and the merged company may not make citizen employees redundant or retrench them as a result of the merger for three years. The company must submit annual compliance reports to the authority over the same period.

The authority also sees scope for the transaction to create opportunities for citizen-owned logistics companies and local suppliers. Whether those opportunities materialise will become clearer after the takeover is implemented and the new owners begin doing business with suppliers.

The decision follows a public hearing held on July 28 as the authority assessed the proposed acquisition. The CCA has since published its merger decision, clearing a path for Fusionspark to acquire control of Engen Botswana, subject to the conditions it has imposed.



Arts&Lifestyle

ARTS, MUSIC, FOOD,LIFESTYLE

Eskimos, Vee Mampeezy give nostalgic vibes at FNB 35th anniversary show

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Eskimos, Vee Mampeezy give nostalgic vibes at FNB 35th anniversary show

CHRONICLE REPORTER



Vee Mampeezy and Eskimos

A collaboration between veteran group Eskimos and contemporary music heavyweight Vee Mampeezy emerged as one of the highlights of First National Bank Botswana's (FNB) 35th anniversary celebrations at the Main Mall on Friday.

The two acts shared the stage in a performance that brought together different generations of Botswana's music scene, sending the crowd into a frenzy as they revisited some of the country's much-loved hits.

Eskimos, known for their contribution to Botswana's music landscape, delivered a nostalgic set before being joined by Vee Mampeezy. The collaboration proved to be a meeting of musical generations, with the seasoned group's sound blending with Vee Mampeezy's energetic stage presence.

The crowd responded enthusiastically, singing along and dancing as the two acts performed together.

The collaboration was particularly significant because of the contrast in the artistes' musical eras. Eskimos have been associated with the older generation of Botswana's popular music, while Vee Mampeezy has established himself as one of the country's leading contemporary performers.

Their joint performance demonstrated the enduring appeal of Botswana's music catalogue, while showing how artistes from different generations can come together to create memorable moments.

The anniversary celebration, which attracted a sizeable crowd to the Main Mall, also featured performances from Scar and Mafitlhakgosi, among others.

Much of the evening was characterised by nostalgia, with artistes performing songs that have remained popular with audiences over the years.

The event also opened with a special performance in honour of the late ATI, who died last year. The tribute provided a poignant moment for the audience as Botswana's music fraternity remembered the musician and his contribution to the local entertainment industry.

However, it was the coming together of Eskimos and Vee Mampeezy that provided one of the evening's defining moments.

For many in the audience, the performance represented more than entertainment. It was a symbolic bridge between Botswana's musical past and present, with the older generation's sound meeting the energy of a younger musical movement.

As the night progressed, the Main Mall remained alive with music and dancing, with performers taking the audience through different eras of Botswana's music.



SCAR perfoming

Long queues mar Pigs on Fire feast



Meat Lovers were spoilt for choice

CHRONICLE REPORTER

What was billed as a chilled day of unlimited meat, entertainment and socialising turned into a test of patience for many revellers who attended the Pigs on Fire event at Fairgrounds Holdings on Saturday.

Long queues dominated the event, particularly after 5pm, with scores of patrons waiting for their turn to be served as braaimasters struggled to keep up with the sizeable crowd.

The event attracted patrons beyond Botswana borders, with revellers from neighbouring countries joining the local crowd for the meat extravaganza.

Organisers had also brought in braaimasters from South Africa and Lesotho, adding an international flavour to an event centred on the art of preparing meat over fire.

However, the turnout appeared to overwhelm the serving points, with different stations frequently running out of meat and patrons forced to wait for fresh supplies to be prepared.

The event was marketed as a bottomless feast, giving patrons the opportunity to indulge in a wide selection of meats prepared in different styles. For many, however, the experience was characterised less by leisurely eating and more by standing in queues and waiting for the grills to replenish.

At several points, patrons were met with empty trays and had to wait for another batch to come off the grill. The situation appeared to become more pronounced as the evening progressed and the crowds grew.

Despite the logistical frustrations, the variety of meat on offer was one of the event's major attractions.

Pork, chicken and braai beef featured prominently, while more adventurous patrons had the opportunity to sample crocodile tail. The meat was prepared in different ways, including smoked and braaied varieties, offering patrons an assortment of flavours.

The presence of braaimasters from South Africa and Lesotho added to the spectacle, showcasing different approaches to preparing meat and giving the event a distinctly regional character.

For those who managed to get served, the spread offered plenty to sample. But patrons arriving after 5pm generally faced longer waits as the sizeable crowd put pressure on the food stations.

The queues and intermittent shortages raised questions about whether preparations had adequately anticipated the scale of the turnout.

For an event built around a bottomless feast, continuous food supply and efficient service were central to the experience.

Still, the diverse crowd, international braaimasters and wide selection of meat helped maintain the event's appeal.



Kgaswane's two-goals steals the show

By BOIKANYO MATHONSI



Mpho Kgaswane ▲

Mpho 'Slyza Tsotsi' Kgaswane stole the show at GU Stadium on Friday night, scoring twice to guide Mochudi Centre Chiefs to a 2-0 win over Nico United and their first three points of the season.

Kgaswane opened the scoring in the 12th minute from the penalty spot after Centre Chiefs were awarded a spot-kick. The early goal put Magosi in front, but Baby Jombies pushed forward and created chances, only to struggle with the final finish.

Centre Chiefs went into half-time with a 1-0 lead. After the break, they pushed for a second and found it in the 65th minute. Da Costa played Kgaswane through, and the forward made no mistake, finishing the chance to complete his brace.

Kgaswane's two goals left Baby Jombies chasing the game as they searched for a way back. But Magosi kept their shape and protected their lead, securing a clean sheet and their first home win of the season.

Magosi's second assistant coach, Alex Malete, was pleased with the result and the way his players carried out parts of their game plan.

"We are happy for the first three points of the season. In terms of our game model, there were things we wanted to see from the players, and a lot of those aspects turned out well," he said.

Baby Jombies coach Vincent Kgaswane said his side competed for the full 90 minutes but could not turn their chances into goals.

"We played the game well. The problem is we couldn't convert our chances, and Magosi counted on our mistakes. We just need to be a little bit aggressive when attacking. We need to explore places that teams are leaving. For example, Centre Chiefs were leaving places on their wing-backs," he said.

He added that his team needed to move into those spaces quicker.

"We need to be getting behind the opposition defence as quickly as possible and try to get the balls in the net," he said.

The win moves Magosi to sixth with three points from two matches, while Baby Jombies remain eighth on three points from three games.



Letsile School-boy Tebogo

Tebogo takes second in Ultimate 200m

By BOIKANYO MATHONSI

Letsile Tebogo finished second in the men's 200m final at the inaugural World Athletics Ultimate Championship in Budapest, clocking a season's best 19.76 seconds.

American Kenneth Bednarek won in a world-leading 19.52 seconds, while his compatriot Courtney Lindsey finished third in 19.79. Bednarek had entered the final as the world's fastest 200m runner this season, with a previous best of 19.62.

Tebogo qualified for the final after finishing third in his semi-final in 19.96 seconds. Bednarek won the same heat in 19.86.

The result adds another chapter to Tebogo's strong record in Budapest. He first announced himself on the senior global stage in the city in 2023, winning silver in the 100m and bronze in the 200m at the World Championships.

He returned as the Olympic 200m champion, having won the event at the Paris 2024 Games in 19.46 seconds. His 2026 season has also included Diamond League victories in Oslo and Lausanne.

Tebogo's runner-up finish brings a substantial financial reward. He will earn US$75,000 for second place, while Bednarek receives US$150,000. Lindsey earns US$40,000 for third.

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Verify. Then Amplify.



GU Coach was assaulted

GU and Galaxy Exit CAF Competitions

By BOIKANYO MATHONSI

Gaborone United and Jwaneng Galaxy were both knocked out of CAF competitions on Saturday, ending Botswana's representation in the Champions League and Confederation Cup at the first preliminary round.

GU lost 2-1 to Tanzanian giants Young Africans in Dar es Salaam and went out 3-2 on aggregate. Galaxy suffered a 1-0 home defeat to AS Port Louis 2000, losing their tie 2-1 on aggregate.

GU travelled to Dar es Salaam after a 1-1 draw in the first leg in Gaborone. Footage posted on the club's official Facebook page showed the Botswana champions facing a hostile reception before kick-off.

Yanga started quickly and took the lead through Peter Shalulile in the seventh minute. The hosts remained in control for much of the opening half as GU struggled to keep possession.

GU coach Sean Conner admitted afterwards that his side had not handled the early pressure well.

"They came out of the blocks really, really quickly, and we probably just didn't deal with that," said Conner.

The Reds returned from the break with a different approach, adding an extra player in midfield. The change helped them keep the ball better and put Yanga under more pressure.

"I think the second half we were the far better team," Conner added.

Cheikh Touré scored in the 84th minute to double Yanga's lead. GU responded almost immediately through Lebogang Ditsele, but the late goal was not enough to keep the Botswana champions in the competition.

Yanga coach Manqoba Mngqithi was pleased with the result but unhappy with his players' finishing.

"In my opinion, I think if we just took our chances, the game could have easily finished with more than seven goals," he said.

Mngqithi said his side had created enough opportunities to put the tie beyond GU earlier.

"I think the boys controlled the game, and they worked very hard and they helped the team to go through," he said.

While GU's campaign ended in Tanzania, Galaxy suffered their own disappointment at the National Stadium.

Galaxy went into the second leg level at 1-1 after AS Port Louis had fought back to draw the opening match in Mauritius. But the visitors scored the only goal of the return leg to complete a 2-1 aggregate victory and end Galaxy's Confederation Cup campaign.

The Mauritian side had shown in the first leg that they were prepared to attack Galaxy. Coach Sarjoo Gowreesunkur had said before the return match that his team would play an open game and go for the win.

Galaxy could not find a reply, allowing AS Port Louis to claim a memorable victory on their return to continental football.



Kebinatshipi Makes African History at Ultimate Championship

By BOIKANYO MATHONSI



Kebinatshipi is unstoppable

Collen Kebinatshipi has added another historic chapter to his rapidly growing legacy, becoming the first African athlete to win gold at the inaugural World Athletics Ultimate Championship after producing a sensational 43.39-second victory in Budapest on Saturday night.

The 22-year-old world champion delivered on his billing as the favourite in the men's 400m, powering away from a field packed with global-class talent to claim the inaugural Ultimate Championship title.

Kebinatshipi's triumph placed him at the centre of the history of a competition designed by World Athletics as a new global showcase for the sport. The inaugural Ultimate Championship, staged in Budapest from 11 to 13 September, brings together the world's leading athletes in a high-stakes three-day competition.

His winning time of 43.39 seconds was not only a new Botswana national record but also propelled him to fifth place on the men's 400m all-time list, putting him among the fastest quarter-milers the world has ever seen.

The performance also strengthened his remarkable consistency at the highest level. He has now recorded six sub-44-second races in a single season, extending his own record for most such performances in one campaign.

Kebinatshipi's 43.39 puts him behind only a select group of legendary 400m runners on the all-time list, with South Africa's Wayde van Niekerk holding the world record at 43.03 seconds. The Botswana star's time also moves him beyond the 43.40 performances previously occupying the next positions on the all-time rankings.

The significance of the run is amplified by the fact that Kebinatshipi entered the season already as a world champion and has continued to lower the ceiling of what is possible in the 400m for Botswana.

His previous national record of 43.53 was set when he won the 400m world title in Tokyo last year. He has now taken another 0.14 seconds off that mark, underlining just how dramatically his progression has accelerated.

On Saturday, however, the focus was not on records but on winning. Kebinatshipi controlled the race before producing the decisive surge down the final straight, resisting the challenge of American star Rai Benjamin to crossthe line first in 43.39.

He told the media that he decided to change his usual approach to the one lap race.

> ***"I am usually always sitting back and kicking in the last metres, but today I wanted to feel what other athletes were feeling over their races," he said after the race.***

The change in tactics nearly paid off with an even bigger piece of history as Kebinatshipi briefly threatened Wayde van Niekerk's 43.03 world record before fading slightly in the closing stages.

"I was really tired over the last metres, but that was what I wanted to do and to feel," he said.

Benjamin finished second in 44.15, while Trinidad and Tobago's Jereem Richards took third in 44.23. The result gave Botswana another major international athletics moment and strengthened Kebinatshipi's credentials as one of the defining 400m runners of his generation.

The Budapest victory caps a season in which Kebinatshipi has repeatedly pushed himself into territory previously occupied by the sport's legends.

His progression from a 43.53 national record last year to 43.39 this season has been accompanied by an extraordinary consistency under pressure. More importantly, his latest run means Botswana now has an athlete sitting fifth on the all-time 400m list. For a country that has built a growing reputation as one of Africa's sprinting powers, Kebinatshipi's latest achievement represents another significant leap.

Kebinatshipi is no longer simply chasing Botswana's athletics history but increasingly rewriting it, while simultaneously inserting Botswana and Africa into the history of a competition that could become one of the sport's major global events.

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Sport

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Football

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