

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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Botswana Summary 10 May 2021

President Mokgweetsi Masisi (2018-present) reshuffles his cabinet. His dismissal of finance minister Thapelo Matsheka receives broad criticism and sees division within the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP). Botswana has secured enough Covid-19 vaccine doses to inoculate its adult population against the coronavirus, hoping the vaccination campaign will create herd immunity and revitalise the domestic economy while relieving pressure on the healthcare system. The administration of United States President Joseph Biden (2021-present) backs Botswana's and Namibia's plans to develop a 5,000-megawatt solar energy project. Debswana Diamond Company, the 50:50 joint venture between the Botswana government and United Kingdom-headquartered diamond mining and training corporation De Beers, is set to construct the world's largest underground diamond mine at Jwaneng, with a P65 billion (\$6 billion) investment. A Southern African Development Community (SADC) technical team, led by Botswana, recommends the deployment of a 3,000-strong regional rapid response team to northern Mozambique to neutralise the Islamic State insurgents and recapture territory they seized.

Masisi dismisses finance minister in cabinet reshuffle ...

President **Mokgweetsi Masisi's** (2018-present) recent cabinet reshuffle has attracted broad criticism and may create division within the ruling **Botswana Democratic Party (BDP)**. Masisi moved finance minister **Thapelo Matsheka** to the ministry of infrastructure and housing development with immediate effect on 16 April, replacing him with **Peggy Serame**.¹ **Mmusi Kgafela** replaces Serame as minister of investment, trade and industry. Local newspaper **The Monitor** questioned the wisdom of removing the finance minister from the treasury, which is at the forefront of the fight against **Covid-19**, poverty and unemployment, noting it as a clear sign of disagreement on issues of fiscal discipline and the country's trajectory.

Disgruntled BDP senior members and councillors, supported by a committee of elders in **Lobatse**, are demanding answers from Masisi over his removal of Lobatse member of parliament (MP) Matsheka as finance minister.² Constituency counsellors said they planned to summon Masisi to express their displeasure, seeking reconciliation between Masisi and Matsheka before differences deepen further and throw the party into disarray.³ Speaking anonymously to **The Patriot on Sunday**, a senior influential BDP member described Matsheka's removal from the key finance ministry as "suicidal" and Masisi's "worst mistake ever".⁴ The member, a former senior cabinet minister, said Masisi should not take lightly cabinet displeasure at Matsheka's demotion:

*"Matsheka was leading a very important ministry in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic and removing him was a bad idea. Whether he had differences with the President doesn't matter because disagreements also exist in cabinet."*⁵

Opposition party **Botswana Patriotic Front (BPF)** president **Biggie Ganda Butale** similarly voiced concern at Masisi's actions:

¹ Office of the President Press Release OPC 5/57/13 I, 16 Apr 2021

² The Patriot on Sunday, 29 Apr 2021

³ The Patriot on Sunday, 29 Apr 2021

⁴ The Patriot on Sunday, 29 Apr 2021

⁵ The Patriot on Sunday, 29 Apr 2021

“Our country is in a state of auto-pilot. Never before have we seen this much uncertainty and upheaval. Permanent secretaries are moved willy-nilly, a cabinet reshuffle has already been staged and the Minister of Finance has been removed at a time when we need stability at the fiscus the most. All these movements are on the basis of who blindly supports the looting the most... Batswana, stay vigilant and let’s reclaim our country from Masisi and his corrupt cartel.”⁶

Masisi’s reshuffle and ensuing criticism have brought background tension within the cabinet and ruling BDP into the public sphere.⁷ BDP secretary general **Mpho Balopi** has reportedly now joined forces with Matsheka in a bid to dislodge Botswana’s vice-president, **Slumber Tsogwane**, from his position as BDP chairman, pitting the two against Masisi.⁸ Lack of unity during the current pandemic may hinder the government’s response to the health and economic challenges the country is facing.⁹

Botswana secures enough vaccine doses to inoculate entire adult population...

In a further sign of disgruntlement at President Masisi’s recent actions, cabinet ministers reportedly say they are “powerless”, as the **Presidential Covid-19 Task Team** diverts large sums of government funding to Botswana’s Covid-19 response without consulting them.¹⁰ Ministers claim this is stalling other key projects and shifting government priorities.

Botswana launched its vaccination campaign in March (see *ARC Briefing Botswana March 2021*). Deputy task team coordinator **Mosepele Mosepele** announced on 26 April that Botswana has secured enough vaccines to inoculate its adult population against the coronavirus.¹¹ The vaccines are expected to push Botswana towards herd immunity and revitalise the domestic economy while relieving the pressure of Covid-19 on the healthcare system.¹² Botswana has agreed deals with vaccine producers to inoculate 1.9 million of its 2.4 million inhabitants.¹³ Those eligible for the inoculations, or above 18 years, number 1.6 million. The **Office of the President** has released a list of vaccines for which Botswana has made purchase agreements and/or payment:¹⁴

COVID19 Vaccine Procurement: 26 April 2021			
Product	Design	Age eligible	People Covered
*Pfizer	mRNA vaccine	>16 years	TBC
Moderna	mRNA vaccine	>18 years	250,000
Astrazeneca	ADV vector	>18 years	54,000
Johnson&Johnson	ADV vector	>18 years	1,100,000
Sputnik	ADV vector	>18 years	150,000
Covishield	ADV vector	>18 years	115,000
Sinovac	Virus particle	>18 years	200,000
Covaxin (Bharat)	Virus particle	>18 years	50,000
			~1,900,000

* Not included in the 1,9M doses total pre-purchased. Product quantities may change depending on availability, Botswana COVID19 effectiveness assessment

⁶ The Sunday Standard, 17 Apr 2021

⁷ Source, Botswana analyst

⁸ Sunday Standard, 5 May 2021

⁹ Source, Botswana analyst

¹⁰ Mmegi, 26 Apr 2021

¹¹ Bloomberg, 27 Apr 2021

¹² Daily News, 9 Feb 2021

¹³ Bloomberg, 27 Apr 2021

¹⁴ Botswana Office of the President, 26 Apr 2021

Botswana's Covid-19 vaccination basket includes vaccine purchases from several manufacturers and countries. These include doses to vaccinate 1.1 million people from **United States (US)** manufacturer **Johnson & Johnson** and 250,000 from US-based **Moderna Inc.** Others include vaccines from US manufacturer **Pfizer**, **British-Swedish** multinational **AstraZeneca**, the **Russia**-manufactured **Sputnik**, **India**-manufactured **Covishield** and **Covaxin (Bharat)**, and **China's Sinovac**. The planned procurements, which exclude arrangements made through the **World Health Organization (WHO)**'s **Covax** facility, are subject to change during implementation.¹⁵ As of 30 April, the health ministry had vaccinated 49,882 people with doses donated by India and China or received through Covax.¹⁶

However, not all of Botswana's vaccine purchases have arrived. India's Covid-19 surge has slowed vaccine shipments from that country.¹⁷ President Masisi noted in an interview with global media broadcaster **CNN** that it was "only natural" for India to look to its own first:

*"Fortunately because of the multilateral world that we live in, there are other places that produce vaccines. After satisfying what they have, [they will] accept that the problem is not over in their own countries until the whole world is vaccinated. So we look to these suppliers to supply to the best of their ability."*¹⁸

Masisi said Botswana would not have been able to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic without the benefit of its history and experience combating the **HIV/AIDS** epidemic:

*"I couldn't imagine us having to do it without the benefit of such infrastructure. We developed this capacity by mobilizing the population to enrol emotionally into this and the structures we put in place, to distribute, to provide psychosocial support and counselling. It is multi-layered – at the community level, family level, sub district level, and at national level."*¹⁹

In its 5 May report, **CNN** noted other factors working to Botswana's advantage in the fight against the coronavirus. The country's adult population of almost two million is relatively small, and Botswana is one of **Africa's** richest nations.²⁰ The country has invested heavily in public health education after its long battle with HIV and AIDS.

According to the latest Covid-19 case report of 10 May, the health ministry has recorded 48,417 confirmed cases, of which 46,226 have recovered and 734 died, with 1,457 cases still active.

Biden administration backs plan to develop 5,000-megawatt solar energy project...

Botswana's renewable energy sector is getting a welcome boost. During a virtual summit hosted by US President **Joseph Biden** (2021-present) on 22-23 April to catalyse global action to address the global climate crisis, the Biden administration selected **Power Africa's Mega Solar** project as a deliverable flowing from the summit.²¹ Mega Solar is a collaboration between the governments of **Namibia** and **Botswana**, the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank)**, the **International Finance Corporation (IFC)**, and the **African Development Bank (AfDB)**, to support development of **Southern Africa's** largest solar-generation project, which is estimated to result in 2–5 gigawatts of solar power.²² A memorandum of intent towards the development of the 5,000 megawatt solar power project was signed between all partners in April.

The Mega Solar project is part of the **US Agency for International Development's (USAID) Power Africa Initiative**, launched by former US president **Barack Obama** (2009-2017) in 2013. The initiative is committed to assisting Southern Africa transform from reliance on fossil fuels to clean

¹⁵ Bloomberg, 27 Apr 2021

¹⁶ Bloomberg, 27 Apr 2021

¹⁷ CNN, 5 May 2021

¹⁸ CNN, 5 May 2021

¹⁹ CNN, 5 May 2021

²⁰ CNN, 5 May 2021

²¹ Power Africa, 22 Apr 2021

²² Power Africa, 22 Apr 2021

energy, and enabling a path to decarbonisation.²³ Once fully operational by 2030, Mega Solar is expected to generate thousands of jobs both directly and indirectly while averting 6.5 million tons of carbon dioxide annually, the equivalent of taking almost 1.5 million cars off the road.²⁴ US ambassador to Namibia **Lisa Johnson** said the Mega Solar project could transform Namibia and Botswana into two of the world's most significant producers of solar power, enough to begin exporting renewable energy to the rest of the Southern Africa region.²⁵ Power Africa coordinator **Mark Carrato** said the "milestone" agreement, with Botswana and Namibia demonstrating "unprecedented leadership and collaboration", moves Mega Solar from the concept phase to the action phase:

*"Unlocked by this partnership is the extraordinary development potential for life and globe changing clean energy, emanating from Southern Africa on a pioneering scale of massive productive use."*²⁶

... as Debswana plans to build world's largest underground mine in Botswana

In further good news for Botswana's economy, **Debswana Diamond Company**, the 50:50 joint venture between the Botswana government and **United Kingdom**-headquartered diamond mining and training corporation **De Beers**, is set to construct the world's largest underground diamond mine at **Jwaneng**, with a P65 billion (\$6 billion) investment.²⁷ Debswana technical services head **Len Dimbungu** noted that the board has yet to make a final decision with regard to financing the project. However, Debswana is expected to account for the bulk of the budget revenue, as well as foreign exchange receipts.²⁸

The new mine will involve the development of more than 360 kilometres of tunnel and is expected to ensure Debswana's existence until at least 2054.²⁹ Debswana's head of transformation and innovation, **Thabo Balopi**, said at a briefing on 23 April that full production at the mine is expected by 2034 with annual production capacity of as much as nine million carats (Mct) – expanding Jwaneng's lifespan by 20 years.³⁰ Balopi said the mine will have an early access decline by 2023.

In its production report for the first quarter of 2021, De Beers announced that the Jwaneng mine produced 3.2Mct in the first three months of the year.³¹ The mine accounts for nearly half of the carats produced by De Beers, and in 2020 produced 7.5Mct of the group's total output of 25.2Mct.³² In November, Debswana announced plans to close its **Damtshaa** diamond mine in 2021 for a period of three years due to weaker demand for the stones and trading disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, which had made mining of lower value diamonds unviable.³³

Mineral resources minister **Lefoko Moagi** said in April that the government was noting a recovery in the diamond sector after the Covid-19-related slump in 2020 (see *ARC Briefing Botswana April 2021*). **Statistics Botswana** figures released on 26 March showed that diamond exports measured P8 billion (\$734m) in January compared to P5.5 billion (\$505m) in December.³⁴

Botswana-led SADC team recommends deployment of regional force in Mozambique

President Masisi has been at the forefront of regional efforts to address growing security concerns in **Mozambique**. The **Southern African Development Community (SADC)** held a summit on 6 April to discuss security solutions to the violent insurgency in Mozambique's northern **Cabo Delgado**

²³ United States Embassy in Namibia, 26 Apr 2021

²⁴ Power Africa, 22 Apr 2021

²⁵ United States Embassy in Namibia, 26 Apr 2021

²⁶ Power Africa, 22 Apr 2021

²⁷ Mining Technology, 26 Apr 2021

²⁸ Mining Technology, 26 Apr 2021

²⁹ Mmegi, 3 May 2021

³⁰ Bloomberg, 23 Apr 2021

³¹ Mining Technology, 26 Apr 2021

³² Mining Technology, 26 Apr 2021

³³ Mining Technology, 26 Apr 2021

³⁴ Mmegi, 2 Apr 2021

Province, home to Mozambique's potentially lucrative liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects. A SADC technical and security team, led by Botswana, has recommended the deployment of an almost 3,000-strong regional rapid response team into Cabo Delgado province.³⁵ The forces are expected to neutralise the **Islamic State** insurgents and recapture territory that they seized.³⁶ The three leaders of the SADC security troika – President Masisi, **South Africa's** President **Cyril Ramaphosa** (2018-present) and **Zimbabwe's** President **Emmerson Mnangagwa** (2017-present) – and Mozambique's President **Filipe Nyusi** (2019-present) will decide whether to accept or reject the recommendation of a SADC military intervention force.³⁷ Masisi, who is chair of SADC's organ on politics, defence and security, said regional intervention is necessary in the conflict:

*"The countries of SADC are pledging support to Mozambique; material, emotional, psycho-social support and of course, including defense logistics and military support. from the countries of SADC consistent with the (defense) pact."*³⁸

While Masisi did not clarify whether military support will include technical support or troops on the ground, he emphasised that SADC leaders cannot stand by and watch the brutality in Cabo Delgado escalate. However, President Nyusi is reportedly reluctant to agree to forceful intervention and is said to favour a secondary option, which a technical assessment mission to Mozambique is expected to put on the table, for SADC to provide only training and logical support.³⁹

Planner

Mar-Dec 2021 (**Botswana**) Timeline for Botswana's **Covid-19** vaccination campaign;
 30 Jun 2021 (**Botswana**) Date by which **State Bank of India** will exit Botswana;
 1 Jun 2021 (Botswana) Date for increase in tariffs by the **Water Utilities Corporation (WUC)**;
 1 Jul 2021 (**Botswana**) Withholding tax increases from 7.5% to 10%;
 2021 **Morupule (Botswana)** Expected commissioning of **Morupule Coal Mine** expanded mine;
 Mar 2022 (**Botswana**) Target date to establish 2,400 new businesses, including 32 manufacturing companies;
 Mar 2023 (**Botswana**) End date of **National Development Plan 11 (NDP11)**;
 2024 (**Botswana**) Presidential elections

Chronology

10 May 2021 **Kazungula (Zambia) Mmegi**. Five presidents, **Mokgweetsi Masisi**, **Edgar Lungu** from **Zambia**, **Emmerson Mnangagwa** from **Zimbabwe**, **Filipe Nyusi** from **Mozambique**, and **Felix Tshisekedi** from the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, meet at **Kazungula** for the official opening of the **Kazungula Bridge**; Also present **Namibia's** vice president, **Nangola Mbumba**, and **Themba Masuku**, **Eswatini's** acting prime minister;

5 May 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana) CNN**. President **Mokgweetsi Masisi** says Botswana will "never allow fracking";

5 May 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana) Mmegi**. President **Mokgweetsi Masisi** reiterates his government's promise to resuscitate the **Public Service Bargaining Council (PSBC)** amid union accusations that he has not kept his word;

4 May 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana) Mmegi**. Newly created alcohol industry advocacy body **Botswana Beverage Association** says it aims to help resuscitate the struggling sector, which

³⁵ The Daily Maverick, 27Apr 2021

³⁶ The Daily Maverick, 27Apr 2021

³⁷ The Daily Maverick, 27Apr 2021

³⁸ Voice of America, 9 Apr 2021

³⁹ The Daily Maverick, 27Apr 2021

has been hard hit by the **Covid-19** pandemic, tight regulation and other economic factors;

4 May 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *BusinessWeek*. **Botswana Stock Exchange (BSE)**-listed **BancABC Botswana** says over time it will give citizens and local investors more opportunity to own its shares;

4 May 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. The local economy could soon be hit with a one pula (P1) (\$0,093) increase in fuel pump prices, the third increase of the year and one that would follow the P1 across-the-board rise effected on 31 March;

3 May 2021 **Jwaneng (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. State-owned producer **Debswana** says its aim to exist until at least 2054 is based on a P65 billion (\$6 billion) plan to build the world's largest underground diamond at **Jwaneng** mine;

3 May 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. A **Southern African Development Community (SADC)** technical team, led by Botswana and its senior military officials, recommends the deployment of a 3,000-strong regional force to fight the terrorist insurgency in northern **Mozambique**, where nearly 800 civilians have been killed since 2017;

3 May 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. Lawyers representing opposition leader **Dumelang Saleshando** say his suspension from the national assembly by speaker **Phandu Skelemani** last year was unwarranted and infringed on his constitutional rights;

2 May 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *The Monitor*. Labour unions have issued a strong warning to 'self-serving' politicians as they plot 'revenge' against targeted individuals, particularly members of parliament, in the 2024 general election;

30 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Daily News*. The **Daily News** reports that the acquisition of **BancABC Botswana** by **Access Bank** is set to position the bank to deliver a more complete set of banking solutions to its clients in the **Southern African Development Community (SADC)** region;

30 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Daily News*. A large proportion of **Botswana Building Society (BBS) Limited**'s shareholders gather at **Avani Hotel** for a general meeting to elect a new board, following three weeks of a bitter boardroom battle;

30 Apr 2021 **Boteti (Botswana)** *Daily News*. Public health specialist **Orapeleng Phuswane-Katse** says two deaths reported shortly after **Covid-19** vaccination began in **Boteti** were not associated with the vaccine;

29 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. **Standard Chartered Bank Botswana (SCBB)** says its cautious approach adopted after a shock P189m (\$17.5m) loss three years ago helped it ride the **Covid-19** impact on the local banking sector, minimising credit losses and providing room for growth;

29 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Daily News*. Addressing a virtual high-level dialogue on food security issues in **Africa**, President **Mokgweetsi Masisi** says the government is keen to attract investment into climate-smart agriculture, and is reviewing most policies and programmes to make them relevant to today's demands;

29 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Daily News*. Botswana launches a revised **African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)** strategy that is expected to provide a comprehensive plan to spur exports to the **United States**;

29 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Sunday Standard*. Former **Botswana Meat Commission (BMC)** acting chief executive officer **Boitumelo Mogome-Maseko** reportedly fleeced the cash-strapped parastatal of hundreds of thousands in undue housing and car allowances;

29 Apr 2021 **Dukwi (Botswana)** *Sunday Standard*. The **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** has expressed concern over Botswana's recent repatriation of

Zimbabwean political refugees from **Dukwi** refugee camp;

28 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. The extraordinary summit of the **Southern African Development Community (SADC)** organ on politics, defence and security announces it has postponed the meeting scheduled for 29 April in **Maputo (Mozambique)** as a result of the unavailability of SADC chair President **Mokgweetsi Masisi** and incoming chair President **Cyril Ramaphosa** of South Africa who is appearing before the **Zondo Commission of Inquiry**;

28 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Sunday Standard*. Opposition **Botswana Congress Party (BCP)** vice president **Kesitegile Gobotswana** denies fears of “*bad blood*” between his party and minor opposition **Botswana People’s Party (BPP)**;

28 Apr 2021 **Sehithwa (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. **Sehithwa** police raise concern over the alarming rate of illegal fishermen in **Lake Ngami** despite the fishing ban imposed by the **Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP)**;

27 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Daily News*. Botswana and **Zambia** sign a one-stop border post bilateral agreement ahead of commissioning of the **Kazungula Bridge** in May; the \$173m three-phase project comprise the bridge and one-stop facilities on either side of the Botswana/Zambia border;

27 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Daily News*. Government informs stakeholders and members of the public that there no plans to cut public servants’ salaries, contrary to a newspaper article appearing on the front page of **The Patriot** on 25 April under the heading “*Civil servants face salary cuts*”;

27 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. Presidential press secretary **Bathhalefi Leagajang** announces that President **Mokgweetsi Masisi** is in self-quarantine due to cases of **Covid-19** amongst his staff members;

27 Apr 2021 **Kalahari (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. Finalisation of the **North West Transmission Grid Connection** project has boosted the unlocking of millions of tonnes of copper and silver resources in the sands of the 1,000-kilometre **Kalahari Copperbelt**;

26 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mining Technology*. **United States** President **Joseph Biden** administration throws its weight behind Botswana and **Namibia**’s plan to develop a 5,000-megawatt solar energy project to feed both countries and also for sale in the region;

26 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Daily News*. A total of 47,160 people have received vaccination against **Covid-19** in Botswana.;

26 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. The ministry of agricultural development and food security has partnered with the **United Nations’ Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO)** to support beekeeping and fishery projects in the country;

26 Apr 2021 **Lobatse (Botswana)** *Sunday Standard*. **Greater Lobatse** regional health coordinator **Motlalepula Pone** says some healthcare workers are reluctant to get vaccinated fearing that blood clots may cause them to have a stroke or die;

26 Apr 2021 **Lobatse (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. The **Lobatse High Court** has granted transport and communications ministry permission to proceed and conclude contracts of the selective tender for the supply of fuel to **Central Transport Organisation (CTO)** fuel depots for three months from May to July;

26 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. Cabinet ministers claim they are “*powerless*”, as the **Presidential Task Team** diverts large sums of government funding to the **Covid-19** response without consultation, which is stalling other key projects and shifting government priorities;

25 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Sunday Standard*. 200,000 doses of the **Sinovac** vaccine donated by the **Chinese** government arrive at **Sir Seretse Khama International Airport**;

25 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Sunday Standard*. The **Water Utilities Corporation (WUC)** is set to increase tariffs from 1 June;

24 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. The **State Bank of India (SBI) Botswana** announces the decision to voluntarily close operations in the country by June;

23 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. The **Botswana Building Society (BBS)** board suspends its managing director, **Pius Molefe** and company secretary, **Sipho Showa**, until further notice, a decision the pair describes as “invalid”;

22 Apr 2021 **Okavango (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. Despite heavy rains in the **Okavango Delta**, the 2020/2021 annual flood from the catchment in **Angola** is one of the worst in recent years;

21 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Sunday Standard*. Opposition **Botswana Congress Party (BCP)** secretary general **Phillip Monowe** resigns from his position;

20 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Sunday Standard*. President **Mokgweetsi Masisi** approves Judge **Michael Letsogile Mothobi**'s request to take early retirement on medical grounds;

19 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. **Cresta Hotels** expands its regional footprint through the opening of a four-star hotel in **Cape Town (South Africa)**;

19 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Sunday Standard*. President **Mokgweetsi Masisi** accepts the resignation of **Financial Intelligence Agency (FIA)** director general **Abraham Sethibe**, with effect from 30 April;

19 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Sunday Standard*. Major **Nigerian** financier **Access Bank** is set to become **BancABC Botswana**'s major shareholder, after moving to acquire the 78% equity held by **ABC Holdings**;

19 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. Government reserves, which the finance ministry traditionally dips into during times of crisis, were measured at P3.4 billion (\$315m) in December 2020, a significant drop compared to P18.3 billion (\$1.6 billion) in December 2019, reflecting the pressure on local budget funds;

19 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. The **African Development Bank (AfDB)** and two **World Bank** agencies have joined Botswana and **Namibia** in signing a memorandum of intent towards the development of a 5,000 megawatt solar power project;

19 Apr 2021 **Lobatse (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. Regional financier **Norsad Finance** files a suit at the **Lobatse High Court** seeking the provisional liquidation of **ABC Holdings**, parent company of **BancABC Botswana**, over a \$10m debt;

17 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Sunday Standard*. **Mmetla Masire** takes over as managing director of the **Okavango Diamond Company**;

16 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. Acting permanent secretary to the president **Emma Peloetletse** is appointed acting permanent secretary to the president and secretary to cabinet;

16 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. Former cabinet secretary and permanent secretary to the president **Elias Magosi** becomes “Acting Ambassador at Large”, reporting to the ministry of international affairs and cooperation;

16 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Sunday Standard*. President **Mokgweetsi Masisi** reshuffles his cabinet, moving minister **Thapelo Matsheka** from finance and economic development to infrastructure and housing development, while **Peggy Serame** becomes finance minister and **Mmusi Kgafela** takes over as investment, trade and industry minister;

16 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Sunday Standard*. Government spokesperson **Andrew Sesinyi** announces that President **Mokgweetsi Masisi** will lead cabinet into a working retreat

from 17 to 18 April, under the theme “Reset: Reclaiming the Government and Implementing our Change Mandate”;

15 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Sunday Standard*. The **Botswana Stock Exchange (BSE)** lifts the eight-day suspension from trade it had imposed on the **Botswana Building Society (BBS) Limited**’s shares and bonds;

15 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Sunday Standard*. Minerals ministry permanent secretary **Mmetla Masire** vacates his post and health ministry permanent secretary **Kabelo Ebineng** is transferred to the Office of the President;

14 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. The finance and economic development ministry says it is closely monitoring developments at **Botswana Building Society (BBS) Limited** and the **Bank of Botswana (BoB)** (central bank) will institute any necessary 'response measures';

13 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. The **Botswana Investment and Trade Centre (BITC)** is partnering with the **Botswana Informal Sector Association (BOISA)** to assist and facilitate awareness, growth and impact on the informal sector;

13 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. The **Bank of Botswana (BoB)** (central bank) says while it has widened investment guidelines for foreign reserves, it has no plans to consider investing in cryptocurrencies, which it describes as “*speculative assets without the backing of any underlying economic activity*”;

12 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *Mmegi*. President **Mokgweetsi Masisi** announces that curfew hours are back to the 10pm to 4am period;

12 Apr 2021 **Gaborone (Botswana)** *The Monitor*. Health ministry health services director **Malebogo Kebabonye** says two elderly people reportedly died around the time they were inoculated with the **Covishield Covid-19** vaccine in the **Greater Palapye** and **Greater Gaborone (Kweneng area)** zones and the ministry has referred the matter to the **Botswana Medicines Regulatory Authority (BoMRA)** for immediate investigation.

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