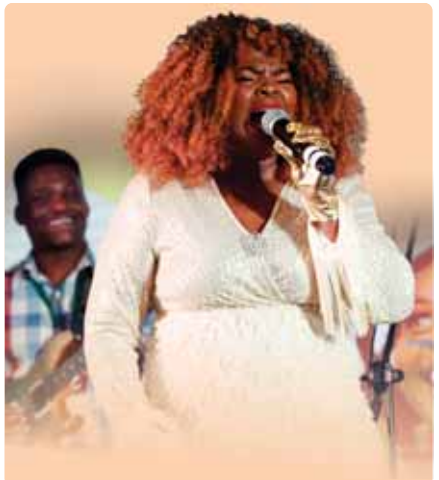
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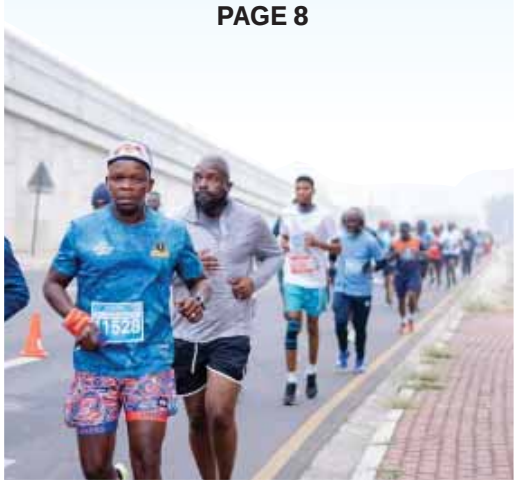


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Govt moots financing opportunities for youth



Vice President and Minister of Finance, Mr Ndaba Gaolathe (right) interacting with young people at the Youth Budget Pitso in Selebi Phikwe on Tuesday. He emphasised the need to use limited public resources strategically, while continuing to invest in initiatives that promoted youth development and economic participation. Photo: Baldwin Nyamande

STORY PAGE 3



Multitudes walk against GBV

Goweditswe Kome
ZWENSHAMBE

The streets of Zwenshambe echoed with a collective call for change on Friday morning as a multitude of advocates, survivors and community members gathered for a major walk against Gender Based Violence (GBV) that was organised by the North East District Justice Forum.

The demonstration aimed to raise awareness, honour victims and demand stricter legal protections and support systems for survivors of domestic and sexual abuse.

Dressed in vibrant purple and white, participants carried placards with powerful messages including, Buyani mose ti ghwise GBV (Come all, let's fight GBV), 'Break the Silence, and 'Let's stop GBV'.

The crowd marched a five-kilometre route from the local primary school to the landmark Mpanda tree.

Throughout the procession, the urgent gravity of the crisis was palpable. Marchers could be heard murmuring in agreement that GBV was a public crisis rather than a private family matter.

Many emphasised that every step taken represented a fierce commitment to tearing down the walls of silence, demanding that legal systems protect the vulnerable instead of shielding perpetrators.

The walk came at a critical time when horrific incidents of GBV ranging from men attacking women or children with axes, to women stabbing partners with knives were being reported daily.

Addressing the gathering, the chief walker, Mr Justin Hunyepa, stressed that while men were historically the primary culprits, violence cut both ways, noting instances where women have splashed men with boiling water.

He explained that the forum sought to use a relaxed approach to discuss the deep-seated social ills and correct where society had gone wrong.

"We are determined to do away with and stop the violence," Mr Hunyepa declared, warning that GBV stalled national development and deeply fractured homes, marriages and children.

He stated that because charity began at home, the fight must start within the family structure. He noted that many perpetrators simply replicated violent behaviours they witnessed from adults during their childhood.

"Teach a boy child and a girl child that they should respect each other, their parents and their peers," he urged, advising parents to lead by example by eliminating quarrelling, fighting and abusive language from the household.

He instead encouraged raising children with love, compassion and shared responsibilities.

Turning to economic factors, Mr Hunyepa advised unemployed individuals to stop over-relying on the working class for material benefits.

He noted that economic dependence directly promoted GBV, trapping victims in abusive relationships due to the fear of poverty.

"Even when a child was violated at home, the perpetrators are often not reported because they are the sole provider and families fear hunger," he observed.

To break this cycle, he called for women to be empowered through sustained education, school retention support and business opportunities.

Furthermore, he suggested that schools move beyond the standard syllabus to offer vocational and technical courses to foster self-employment.

He lauded the Ministry of Child Welfare and Basic Education for utilising movements like the Girl Guides, Scouts, 4B, and Scripture Union to teach discipline, character building and business skills.

He further called upon churches and dikgosi to actively assist parents in instilling discipline.

Echoing the call for a unified front, Magistrate II Ms Tshegofatso Bakgomogi described GBV as an escalating crisis that demands concerted efforts from all stakeholders.

She explained that the Justice Forum decided to bring services directly to the community to sensitise residents on the devastating effects of GBV and outline paths to justice.

According to Magistrate Bakgomogi, the initiative aimed to increase legal transparency by educating the public on the specific, interconnected roles of the judiciary, the police and social services.

She said the forum sought to combat serious crimes by directly addressing the alarming, rampant cases of defilement, rape, and incest currently plaguing the community.

Ms Bakgomogi said by breaking down legal barriers, the initiative successfully empowered victims, providing a safe, accessible platform for Zwenshambe residents to learn how to seek redress and secure full protection under the law.

As the crowd finally dispersed from the primary school, the underlying message of the day remained clear that the walk may have concluded, but the community's stride toward accountability, healing and systemic justice has only just begun. ***BOPA***



The community during a walk against Gender Based Violence organised by North East District Justice Forum in Zwenshambe recently. Chief walker, Assistant Minister of Child Welfare and Basic Education Mr Justin Hunyepa urged unemployed individuals to avoid over-reliance on the working class for financial support, noting that economic dependence could trap victims in abusive relationships due to fear of poverty.
Photo: Goweditswe Kome

Council secures P2m for clinic upgrade

Kelesitse Motshwanaesi
JWANENG

Jwaneng Town Council has secured over P2 million to complete maintenance works at Ditsweletse Clinic. In an interview, Deputy Town Clerk for development, Mr Khumo Manyathelo confirmed the development and that the maintenance works were expected to be complete in December.

He said the 10-week renovation project awarded to Just Construction, commenced in September. "The project has achieved approximately 40 per cent physical progress and remain on schedule," Mr Manyathelo stated. Mr Manyathelo said the primary scope of the works involved addressing roofing defects and improving the overall condition of the clinic infrastructure.

He said the repairs were focused on two major structures, the main clinic block, which included the dentistry section and the maternity wing.

Mr Manyathelo added that the maintenance efforts aimed at supporting and improving the delivery of local healthcare services by resolving safety issues caused by dilapidated roofing. "Jwaneng Town Council remain committed to maintaining public infrastructure and supporting the delivery of quality healthcare services to the community," Mr Manyathelo added.

Looking ahead, Mr Manyathelo said council was planning more infrastructure interventions.

The local authority, he said intended to explore new funding opportunities to address similar building deterioration and roof damage at Unit 7 Clinic, in order to secure a safe and conducive environment for both patients and healthcare personnel across the town. ***BOPA***

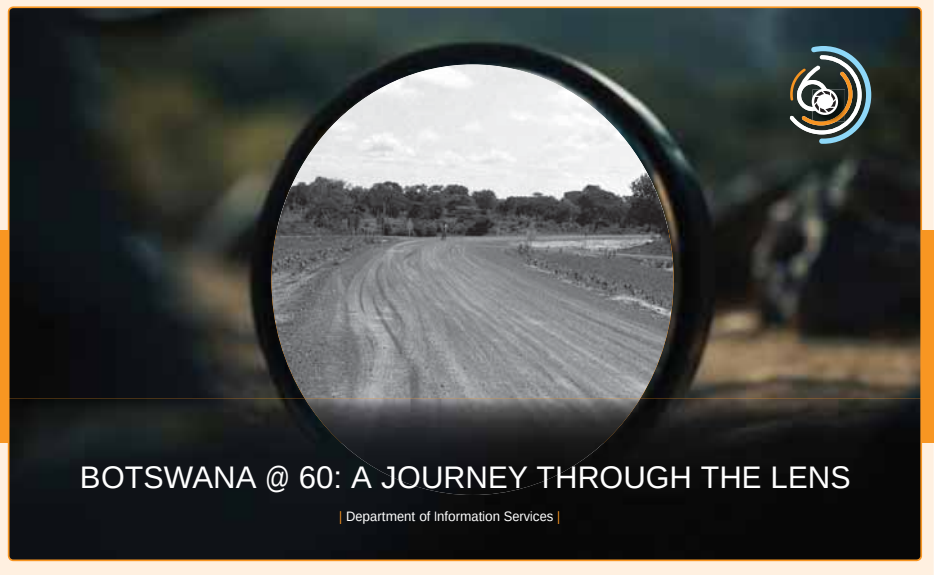
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Government moots financing opportunities for youth

Chendzimu Manyepedza
SELEBI PHIKWE

Remodelling the Youth Development Fund alongside the development of a National Fund of Funds will expand financing opportunities for young people, says Vice President Ndaba Gaolathe.

Speaking at the Youth Budget Pitso in Selebi Phikwe on Tuesday, Mr Gaolatlhe, also Minister of Finance, said the intention was to build sustainable youth-owned businesses that could grow, create employment and expand opportunities.

While he acknowledged the country's financial strain, he promised that government would use available resources to invest on initiatives that promoted youth development and economic participation.

"The demand does not mean that government's ambition for young people will diminish," he said, underscoring the importance of careful resource allocation.

On the creative industry, Mr Gaolatlhe said government recognised it as a legitimate sector capable of generating income and employment opportunities.

He said government was considering a proposal to establish a dedicated arts fund as part of the rationalisation of Special Funds.

Meanwhile, government has allocated P200 million to the National Creative Industry Expansion Programme for the 2026/27 financial year.

Mr Gaolatlhe said the investment was intended to translate government's commitment into tangible opportunities for artists, producers and other creative entrepreneurs.

He also highlighted government's approval of the National Youth Policy for 2026-2036 and its implementation plan, which would provide a framework for prioritising youth development, economic participation and meaningful representation in national agendas.

During the previous Youth Budget Pitso, he said the youth called for action on unemployment, skills development, entrepreneurship, access to finance and climate change.

He assured them that their concerns had been heard and would inform the development of sustainable solutions.

"One of the proposals we received from young Batswana was for the establishment of a coherent national climate governance framework with necessary coordination mechanisms to respond effectively to climate change and mobilise resources," he said.

He said government officials and relevant stakeholders had reviewed the proposal and found it worth implementing because it aligned with ongoing climate change governance initiatives.

Mr Gaolatlhe said government had also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the African Climate Foundation to support the establishment and operationalisation of Botswana's national climate strategy.

Meanwhile, the Youth Budget Pitso provided a platform for young people to engage government on the country's economic direction, development priorities and competing demands on public finances.

It also sought to deepen their understanding of macroeconomic challenges and how public resources were allocated to address development needs.

The engagement further enabled young people to contribute to national decision-making and had their perspectives considered in policy formulation. ***BOPA***



United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund Country Representative, Dr Kimanzi Muthengi at a high level workshop on the review of legislation related to children in Botswana on Tuesday. He called for comprehensive legislative reforms, emphasising that the country's laws must be clear, consistent and responsive to the evolving needs and realities of children. Photo: Phenyo Moalosi

UNICEF appeals for clear child protection laws

Baleseng Batlotleng
TLOKWENG

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) Country Representative, Dr Kimanzi Muthengi has called for comprehensive child protection legislative reforms.

He said the laws in Botswana must be clear, consistent and responsive to the evolving realities faced by children.

Speaking at a high-level workshop on the review of legislation related to children in Botswana in Tlokweng on Tuesday, Dr Muthengi outlined key priorities for legislative reform emphasising that effective laws must support families, enhance access to justice and address emerging risks facing young people.

He cited international examples, including Kenya's Children Act of 2022, which strengthened family-based alternative care and Brazil's 2025 Digital Statute, which established regulatory frameworks for digital service providers to protect children online.

Dr Muthengi highlighted that violence against children undermined national prosperity by damaging health, disrupting education, and weakening mental well-being throughout adulthood.

Referencing global estimates by UNICEF, Dr Muthengi revealed that approximately two in three children worldwide amounting to 1.6 billion experienced violent discipline at home including physical punishment and psychological aggression.

He further pointed to Botswana's national survey on violence against children, which revealed that 43 per cent of young men and 28 per cent of young women aged 18 to 24 experienced physical violence before reaching the age of 18.

To address these challenges, Dr Muthengi presented five priority areas for reform beginning with the need to establish a single, consistent legal framework under the principle of "one child, one law," which included an explicit prohibition of corporal punishment coupled with positive discipline support for families and schools.

Dr Muthengi noted that the proposed reforms align with Botswana's National Plan of Action, which aims to reduce violence against children by 50 per cent by 2030, as well as the continental commitments adopted by African Union ministers. ***BOPA***

Twantsho Botsotsi campaign steps up cybercrime fight

Mmoniemang Motsamai
MOCHUDI

In the wake of unprecedented cyber security threats worldwide, the government is stepping up efforts to respond to cyber-attacks.

Speaking during the launch of Twantsho Botsotsi Cybercrime Awareness Roadshow in Mochudi on Monday, Minister for State President, Defence and Security, Mr Moeti Mohwasa said government was accelerating and intensifying cyber security measures in response to a surge in cyber-attacks and ransom incidents.

In that regard, he said government was working on effective laws that would strengthen the cyber security framework, including the Cybercrime and Computer Related Crimes Act of 2018 and the Cybersecurity Act of 2025.

He said the measures formed part of efforts to improve cyber security and strengthen national capacity to respond to emerging threats.

Minister Mohwasa also said the response depended on the work of Botswana Police Service, cyber security professionals and institutions responsible for identifying threats and coordinating responses.

He said Botswana was also part of the United Nations Convention against Cybercrime, an important step toward strengthening international cooperation.

"Cybercrime does not respect national borders. An offence may affect a victim in Botswana, while a perpetrator, financial transactions or relevant electronic evidence are located elsewhere," he said.

In that regard, he stressed the importance of cooperation among countries for effective investigation and prosecution.

He therefore, called on parents and guardians to guide children in the digital environment by encouraging open conversations about online safety and ensure children sought for help when they encounter threats, harassment or exploitation.

Conversely, he implored young people to use digital platforms for exploiting opportunities for learning, entrepreneurship and social connection as well as to build their future, instead of harming one another.

He also condemned the use of social media to insult, harass or undermine other people, urging victims to report such incidents to the relevant authorities and allow the law to take its course.

Speaking at the campaign, Minister of Communications and Innovation, Mr David Tshere said the month of October provided an opportunity to raise public awareness of cyber security risks and the importance of responsible online behavior.

Speaking under the theme: Stay Safe Online, he urged the public to take personal responsibility for protecting their digital identities and sensitive information.

"Don't make it easy for them to access your data," he said.

He advised people to avoid weak passwords, urging them to update their passwords regularly and refrain from clicking on suspicious links or opening emails without verifying the sender's identity.

Mr Tshere warned that cybercriminals were becoming isophisticated, exploiting processes such as Know Your Customer verification to deceive individuals and gain access to their funds.

He urged the public to think carefully before sharing personal information and where practical, to visit organisations physically when seeking services rather than relying on unverified digital communication. ***BOPA***

DailyNews

Published by: Department of Information Services
37795 Wellie Seboni Drive
Private Bag BR 139 Gaborone
Printed by: Government Printing and Publishing Services
Online Edition: https://dailynews.gov.bw
email: *bopa@gov.bw* **email:** *dailynews@gov.bw*
Circulation 20 000 per day except Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays.

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Permanent Secretary to the President, Ms Matshidiso Bokole addressing the media on the country's readiness regarding the El Niño weather phenomenon recently. She reaffirmed government's commitment to strengthening preparedness measures to cushion Batswana against its effects. Director of Meteorological Services, Ms Chandapiwa Sebeela (right) cautioned that forecasts suggested an increased likelihood of drought, heat waves, reduced grazing land and lower crop yields during the 2026/2027 season. Photos: Phenyo Moalosi

Govt prepares for El Niño effects

Thato Mosinyi
GABORONE

As the nation braces for the harsh realities of the effects of the 2026/2027 El Niño, the Permanent Secretary to the President (PSP), Ms Matshidiso Bokole has reaffirmed government commitment to strengthening preparedness and cushion Batswana.

Addressing the media recently, Ms Bokole noted that current international and regional climate forecasts indicated that a strong to very strong El Niño was developing and expected to bring below-normal rainfall and above-normal temperatures across much of Southern Africa, including Botswana.

Ms Bokole cautioned that the effects of El Niño could have an impact on the already vulnerable country's food security owing to the outbreak of the Foot and Mouth Disease.

She indicated that the looping harsh weather condition could lead to declaration of an extreme agricultural drought year resulting in crop failures, livestock losses, water shortages and veldt fires.

Notwithstanding financial constraints, Ms Bokole noted that government had established drought-response mechanisms and developed disaster-management institutions to coordinate emergency responses.

"Some interventions could be implemented with limited resources, while others would be funded to an extent where possible," she said.

To further emphasise government's readiness, Ms Bokole said there were multi-sectoral approaches geared towards facilitating resources and response efforts.

She said lessons learned from previous droughts had also improved the country's ability to monitor climatic conditions and provide early warnings to communities and farmers.

Thus said, government was also keen to engage all stakeholders in strengthening and capacitating response teams.

The Director of Meteorological Services, Ms Chandapiwa Sebeela, cautioned that forecasts suggested an increased likelihood of drought, heat waves, reduced grazing land and lower crop yields during the 2026/2027 season.

Ms Sebeela highlighted that the country was currently under an El Niño Advisory Status, with the Department of Meteorological Services warning that the phenomenon could strengthen during the latter part of 2026 and potentially persist into early 2027.

"The 2026/27 regional outlook indicates an increased likelihood of below-normal rainfall and above-average temperatures across Botswana," she said.

She said water resources, livestock production and rural incomes could come under considerable pressure.

Furthermore, Ms Sebeela warned that effects of El Niño could extend across several sectors as reduced and delayed rainfall could affect crop production, with arable farming facing significant while reduced pasture and water availability could place pressure on cattle and other livestock.

She noted that higher temperatures increase evaporation while reduced rainfall could lower water levels, increasing pressure on households and businesses.

Ms Sebeela said the tourism and wildlife industry could reduce water availability and affect ecosystems, wildlife movements and tourism-dependent communities.

With regard to health effects, Director of Public Health, Dr Oratile Mfokeng-Selei cautioned that prolonged high temperatures could increase the risk of heat-related illness, particularly among vulnerable groups and outdoor workers. ***BOPA***

Mathoothe roots for collaboration

Portia Rapitsenyane
PALAPYE

The Assistant Minister of Trade and Entrepreneurship, Mr Baratiwa Mathoothe has called for stronger collaboration to build a sustainable ecosystem for small businesses and drive economic diversification beyond Botswana's major urban centres.

Mr Mathoothe was speaking on Friday at the Centric Expo 2026, an event which, brought together stakeholders to foster economic growth in Palapye and the wider central region.

He commended the expo organisers for recognising Palapye as a strategic hub for enterprise development and investment, emphasising that the central region must transition from a mere consumer of goods into a vibrant center of production, innovation and job creation.

Furthermore, he said economic development cannot be achieved by government alone or driven solely by a handful of large corporations, but rather required the collective participation of businesses of all sizes, innovative individuals, financial institutions, communities and development partners working together towards a common goal.

Acknowledging the persistent challenges faced by Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs), he stressed the need to move beyond simply encouraging people to start businesses.

Instead, he urged stakeholders to build a supportive ecosystem that helped these businesses survive and scale-up.

Mr Mathoothe noted that impactful innovation can be as simple as local production upgrades or the adoption of digital payments. He also called for stronger industry-academic ties to prepare graduates to be economic creators rather than mere job seekers.

Defining "shared prosperity" as creating an economy where opportunities are accessible to a wider section of society, he highlighted the need to support women-owned enterprises, youth-led businesses, and emerging entrepreneurs

Mr Mathoothe challenged established corporations to actively integrate these groups into their procurement and supplier development pipelines.

He also urged financial institutions to pair funding with robust advisory services to guide businesses through their various stages of growth.

Mr Mathoothe praised the event's commitment to social causes.

"Businesses operate within communities, employ people from those communities, and benefit from the environment around them," he said.

He urged exhibitors and visitors to look past the casual exchange of business cards and focus on establishing long-term, concrete business partnerships that will secure Palapye's economic future.

For her part, organising committee representative Ms Naledi Gaolaolwe said the expo does not seek to compete with established commercial hubs like Gaborone, but rather to complement them and expand the country's broader economic footprint. Ms Gaolaolwe said the Centric Expo is anchored on three actionable pillars: Connect, Collaborate and Create.

She urged investors, captains of the industry and visitors to engage deeply and invest in the local talent on display.

"Success will be measured by what happens after tomorrow-by whether the connections made over these two days translate into tangible corporate contracts, sustainable supply chains, and actual jobs in the weeks and months to come," she said. ***BOPA***



Assistant Minister of Trade and Entrepreneurship, Mr Baratiwa Mathoothe (left) and other dignitaries touring stalls during the Centric Expo 2026 in Palapye recently. The event brought together entrepreneurs, investors, financial institutions and development stakeholders to foster economic growth in Palapye and the wider central region. Photo: Portia Rapitsenyane

BUSINESS BRIEFS

World Potato Congress opens in Kenya

NAIROBI - The 13th World Potato Congress opened in Kenya's resort town of Naivasha on Monday, with more than 1 000 delegates from 67 countries reiterating the need to diversify and add value to the crop. The event, the first edition to be held in sub-Saharan Africa, runs from Monday to Friday under the theme "Global Potato Partnership for Enhanced Food Systems, Nutrition Security and Trade." Mutahi Kagwe, Kenya's cabinet secretary for agriculture and livestock development, said the congress provides an opportunity for senior policymakers, industry executives, researchers and farmers' organizations to explore new strategies for revitalising the potato subsector and ensure the crop thrives despite challenges such as climate change, pests and diseases. ***Xinhua***

Officials urge science-led innovation to boost agriculture

ADDIS ABABA - United Nations (UN) and African Union (AU) officials have called for wider adoption of science and agricultural innovations to boost agricultural productivity and food supply across Africa. The appeal was made Tuesday as the Africa Science and Innovation Forum opened in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, under the theme "Harnessing Science and Innovation for Agrifood Systems Transformation." Africa needs to widely adopt artificial intelligence and other innovations to increase crop yields by turning complex farm data into real-time and actionable decisions, said Abebe Haile-Gabriel, the Food and Agriculture Organization assistant director-general and regional representative for Africa, in his keynote address. ***Xinhua***

Uganda Airlines launches Entebbe-Accra flights

KAMPALA - Uganda Airlines, the country's national carrier, has launched scheduled flights between Entebbe and Accra, Ghana, establishing a new air link between East and West Africa to facilitate trade, tourism and investment. The service operates four times a week, offering passengers more convenient travel options and connections to destinations across the airline's international network. Uganda's Minister of Works and Transport Fred Byamukama said the new route would facilitate business engagement, promote tourism and strengthen ties between Uganda and Ghana. "The Entebbe-Accra service will offer travelers a direct connection between two important commercial centers, facilitate business engagement, support tourism and strengthen people-to-people relations," Byamukama said on Tuesday before flagging off the inaugural flight. ***Xinhua***

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Poko ga se mme mphe bogobe

Keetile Bontsibokae
MOLEPOLOLE

Mmoki go tswa Matsiloje, Rre Moanamise Machola, a re poko e mo mading a gagwe, ga se selo se a se rutilweng. Rre Machola, o tsene dithuto tsa bodiragatsi jwa serala le dibaesekopo kwa AFDA, kwa Gaborone

A re talente ya gagwe ya go boka, e sa le e itshupa a santse a fatlhoga, e le moithuti wa sekole se se botlana.

"Ke mmoki wa tlholego. Lorato lwame lwa puo ya setswana ke lone lo nkgogetseng mo pokong ka gore ka poko, ke gololesega go kgabisa ke bo ke thetha ka puo ya gaetsho," Rre Machola a tlhalosa.

Bothakga jwa gagwe a re o bo supa kwa meketeng ya selagae le mo medironggo ya go natetsha, ke dikhamphane le maphata a puso.

Rre Machola o ikaya e le segatlhamela masisi sa poko ka o kgona go lalediwa le diphitlho, go gomotsa ka poko.

Ka e le modiragatsi, o fitlhelwa gape mo setshwantshong sa thelebishini se se tshamekang mo BTV sa Botshelo, a tshameka karolo ya ga Mawila.

O tlhalosa fa kemonokeng ya batsadi ba gagwe le thotloetso ya Batswana di mo tiisitse moko go tshwara ka thata.

Batsadi ba ne ba sa nkgaupetse go dira se ke se ratang ebile, ke se dira ka bokgabane ka gore go le bone ba ne ba lemoga go tlola ditlhase game mo pokong, Rre Machola a supa.

A re o kgona gore a pele ga a ya go boka mme gongwe a thuthuntshe fela, go tswa mo goreng, tiro ke ya mofuta mang.

"O kgona go fitlhela e le gore o bolelelwa gone foo, a bo o betsega o ya go palama serala, o se na nako ya go ithulaganya. O ubuga fela fa o tsena kwa o leba batho a bo o ba tsatsanka, o ba sega metshetshe. Fa ke nnile le nako ke laleditswe go sa le nako, ke nna fatshe ke a tlhama ke bo ke kwala leboko le le kwenneng a bo ke ikatisa, segolo jang fa ke ya go boka kwa dintshong kana fa pele ga ga Tautona le matona a puso ka gore, e a bo e le tiro e e faphegileng thata," Rre Machola a tlhalosa.

Le fa go ntse jalo, a re poko e a berekwa.

A re fa mmoki a setse a le mo seraleng, tlhaloganyo e bereka phetelela, sepe se ditsebe di se utlwang, se matlho a se boning, se ka latlhelwa, e ka nna medumo ya sepe se se mo tikologong e mmoki a leng mo go yone ka nako eo kana dikgang tse di buiwang foo di le botlhokwa.

O kgona go fitlhela o buile lefoko lengwe a bo ke le dirisa go aga leboko ka lone, Rre Machola e supa.

"Go a kgamathiwa, gore o se ka wa tshokane o rile tu! mo gare ga serala kana wa tswa foo o idibaditswe ke letshogo. O a fufula, madi a pompa ka lebelo le kwa godimo e le letshogo, o rata le o sa rate mme lone letshogo le gape le botlhokwa ka gore ke lone le go thusang go tsepama mo segalong sa gago go fitlhelela o wetsa," Rre Machola a supa.

A re ga a wele mo isong ka poko e mo tlodisitse melapo mme mo go tsotlhe tse di mo diragaletseng, ga gona e e gaisang mpho ya kgomo e a neng a e belwa ke tautona wa pele, Sir Ketumile, a sena go mmoka motlha mongwe.

O supile fa go tsena sekole a ithutela bodiragatsi, go mo file motheo o o mashetla.

A re go tswa bogologolong, mmoki o ne a ntse a le botlhokwa, a rongwa ke morafe go isa molaetsa, matshwenyego le ditebogo kwa bagolwaneng.

" Le ka jeno go ntse jalo, re batlhanka ba setshaba, re romeng, ga re natefise fela re bowa re kgala le go gakolola fa go tlhokega, go le monate ka dinyao gore molaetsa o goroge kwa o tshwanetseng," Rre Machola a supa.

A re mo maitekong a puso go thusa bodiragatsi, o kopa gore bo lemogiwe go feta jaaka go ntse ka gore mebereko e ka bonala.

"Fa o mpha kemo-nokeng ka tsotlhe tse di ka nthusang go gola jaaka dithuso tsa madi, ke gone nka ntshang maduo mme ka kgona go itlhamela mmereko ke bo ke kgona go hira ba bangwe. A puso gape e rute Batswana gore ka bodiragatsi o ka ipaya thothi wa bo wa oba lebogo," Rre Machola a kgothatsa.

A re seriti sa baboki se santse se le teng mme a kgothatsa baboki ba sesha go ithuta mo batlapele.

"Re santse re ithuta, re gata ka matsetseleko mo ditlhakong tsa batlapele jaaka bo Rre Ponatshego Mokane. Baboki re santse re tsholegile sentle mo setshabeng. Poko e a tlotliwa, ke meletlo e se kae e o ka fitlhelang go sena mmoki. Seo ke sesupo sa gore poko e a ratiwa e seng mo Botswana fela le mafatshe a a mabapi, a a sa tlhaloganyeng puo ya setswana, o fitlhela ba rata ebile ba kgona go ntaletsa meletlo ya bone," Rre Macholaa supa.

A re se se mo tlhatswang pelo ke gore le fa Botswana a na le dingwaga di le masome a marataro a le mo pusong ya batho ka batho, babusi botlhe ba tlhomamisa gore puo le ngwao tsa Setswana ga di mediwe ke merero ya merafe e mengwe.

A re kapari mo pokong e tshwanetse ya nna sone sekao. "Kapari e go tomola fa gare ga matshwititshwiti mme e go supe gore yo mmoki. E go fa seriti gape e supa ngwao le ditso," Rre Machola a supa ka boitumelo.

O kaile gape gore mmoki fa a sena mogolokwane o a bo a tlhotsa, a sa felela, ka gore bobedi jo ke di ya thoteng mmogo.

A re go boka kwa losong, mogolokwane o kgadiepediwa fela ka nako ya segopotso sa moswi go nne e yaabo e le nako ya go ipelela botshelo jo moswi a bo tshedileng g le ba masika le ditsala mme a re poko e sa tlhokeng mogolokwane ke ya letsatsi la phitlho go nne ke nako e e masisi ya khutsafalo.

O kgothaditse banana go tsholetsa ditlhako fa ba ba batla go nwa mamepe a bodiragatsi ka gore bodiragatsi ga bo jese ditshwakga, ke dinatla fela tse di tlhaloganyang gore ga gona kgomo ya boroko.

"Ga se mme mphe bogobe. Fa o batla go semelela ga o na nako ya roba sogo, lwaya ka gotlhe ebile o itepatepantse le dinako," Rre Machola a gakolola.

A re o inaakantse le dinako ka go leka go tswakanya poko ya gagwe ka diletswa tsa segompieno.

Mo nngweng ya dipina tsa gagwe tse di rategang thata, e a e kopanetseng le Boineelo 'Dj Bino' Othusitse e e bidiwang Katarina,'o supa ka poko bosetlhogo jwa go rojwa pelo ke mme yo a neng a dumela gore ke lone legopo la gagwe.

"Ke a leka fela thata go itsenya mo bathong.

Gone jaana ke rulaganyetse maitiso ame a ke a biditseng ke re 'Still Becoming' a ka one ke biditseng badiragatsi jaaka Motlha Mompe, Diratsagae Captain Dira Mahupela le ba bangwe go tla go ja mmino le poko ka fa re sekaseka tsela ya botshelo.

A tlaabo a tshwaretswe mo Gaborone mme ke santse ke tabogile le go batla lefelo le a tlabong a tahwaretswe kwa go lone sentlesentle," a e garela. ***BOPA***



Mmoki go tswa kwa Matsiloje, Rre Moanamise Machola a re talente ya gagwe ya go boka, e sa le e itshupa a santse a fatlhoga.

Barolaganyi ba Bandleng Cultural Festival ba supa tatlhegelo



Mosimolodisi wa moletlo wa Bandleng Cultural Festival, Rre Poloko Boitshepho, yo o itsegeng ka leina la 'DJ Polyester' a re ba kopa ke-mo-nokeng le thotloetso mo bogoging jwa toropo ya Lobatse.

Grace Sebape
LOBATSE

Mosimolodisi wa moletlo wa Bandleng Cultural Festival Rre Poloko Boitshepho, yo o itsegeng ka leina la DJ Polyester a re ba kopa ke-mo-nokeng le thotloetso mo bogoging jwa toropo ya Lobatse.

Rre Boitshepho o buile se morago ga go itemogela tatlhegelo ya dipoelo kwa moletlong wa ngwao wa Bandleng Cultural Festival o ba neng ba o tshwere ka mafelo a beke kwa Lobatse Town Park. O boletse gore ga baa dira dipoelo dipe a tlatsa ka gore ba ne ba sena barotloetsi le go itemogela go sa nna le kemo nokeng go tswa kwa boeteleding pele jwa toropo.

O tsweletse a bolela gore moletlo oo, ga o a atlega jaaka ba ne ba solofetse a tlatsa ka gore le bone bagwebi ba ba neng ba rekile metlaagana ga baa dira dipoelo dipe. Rre Boitshepho a re o itemogetse gore ga ba a bapatsa moletlo oo thata, a supa gape gore kgwetlho e nngwe ke gore o tshwerwe kgwedi e ise e fele.

Mo go tse dingwe, Rre Boitshepho o boletse gore badiragatsi kwa Lobatse ba makgamu, ga baa tshwaragana, ga ba emane nokeng, a re keletso ke gore ba thusiwe ba gole.

O boletse gape gore dipoelo tse di potlana tse ba di boneng, ba ne ba tshwanelwa ke go di kgaoganya badiragatsi ba le bone baneng ba lemoga gore ga gona letseno, mme ba amogela seemo ka fa ba neng ba bona gontse ka teng. A re a mangwe ba ne ba tshwanelwa ke go duela dikoloto.

Rre Boitshepho a re ba ikaelela go kopana le botlhe ba tsaya karolo go akaretsa ba dikgwebo go buisana le bone gore ba seka ba kgobega marapo ka e ne e le moletlo wa ntlha, a solofetsa gore ngwaga o o tlang go tlaa nna le pharologano jaaka ba ikaelela go simolola go baakanyetsa moletlo oo wa ngwaga o o tlang.

Mongwe wa bagwebi,Mme Tshegofatso Balaodi yo o rekisang ice cream, o boletse fa a kgobegile marapo ka jaana e ne e le bone ba dikgwebo fela go sena bareki.

O tsweletse ka gore e re ntswa ba ne ba duelela go tla go bona badiragatsi bangwe, seo ga sea diaragala.

Mme Balaodi o boletse gape gore barulaganyi ga baa lekodisa batsena moletlo sepe, gore go simololwa leng le gore badiragatsi bangwe ga baa iponatsa.

Mme Kelebogile Baratang wa madirelo a Stich & Gab go tswa kwa Otse, ene a gweba ka go sega diaparo le ene o boletse gore ba latlhegetswe ka jaana ga baa bona bareki.

Mogwebi wa dijo, Mme Gladys Kowa, le ene o supile fa go ne go sena batho ba ba rekang, a re keletso ya gagwe ke gore barulaganyi ba ipaakanye mme ba dire sengwe gape se se ka fang bagwebi ba baneng ba duetse tshono ya go oba lebogo ntle le dituelo dipe. Mme Kowa a re one a solofetse go dira dipoelo tse dikwa godimo. ***BOPA***

Embrace learning and innovation to remain relevant

Mpho Mosojane
GABORONE,

Botho University has urged its Class of 2025 to embrace lifelong learning, innovation and ethical leadership to remain relevant in a rapidly changing world shaped by artificial intelligence and technological advancement. Speaking at the university's graduation ceremony at Ditshupo Hall at Fairgrounds, Gaborone, Vice Chancellor Dr Sheela Ram said academic qualifications should serve as a foundation for continuous learning and innovation rather than an end in themselves.

Dr Ram said graduates were entering a world increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence, requiring them to adapt to emerging technologies while maintaining strong ethical values.

"While I am proud to stand at such a historic threshold, you are graduating into a world that is redefining itself by the minute through artificial intelligence and automation, and it is easy to look at this accelerating pace with uncertainty.

Your relevance in this tech-evolving world will never be defined solely by your technical skills but by your adaptability and ethical leadership," she said.

Dr Ram also challenged graduates to strengthen connection between academia and industry by translating classroom knowledge into practical solutions that create economic value for Botswana and beyond. Delivering keynote address, Botswana Stock Exchange board chairperson and global finance expert, Ms Neo Mooki, encouraged graduates to move beyond conventional employment expectations and consider entrepreneurship and innovation as pathways to economic growth. "Become entrepreneurs, innovators and architects of the economy.

True courage is stepping into uncertainty without a safety net, trusting endurance forged through sleepless nights of study and sacrifice," she said. Drawing from her experience in international financial markets, Ms Mooki urged graduates to develop local solutions with the potential to make a global impact.

Valedictorian, Ms Fatema Bengali reflected on the perseverance and determination that had brought the graduating cohort to the milestone.

She said each graduate had a unique story of overcoming challenges, adding that success required consistency and resilience.

"Every face in this room represents a unique story of obstacles met and overcome. We didn't get here by accident but because we refused to stop walking through endurance, which is not a one-time burst of energy but showing up again and again when the path gets steep," she said.

Ms Bengali acknowledged sacrifices made by graduates, including late nights, self-doubt, and the economic and personal challenges they had faced throughout their academic journeys. The ceremony celebrated 632 graduates. ***BOPA***



Botho University graduates celebrating during a graduation ceremony in Gaborone on Friday. Vice chancellor Dr Sheela Raja Ram highlighted the importance of integrity, life long learning, adaptability and human connection in an increasingly digital world shaped by artificial intelligence. Photo: Washa Bofelwang



Botho University Valedictorian and Bachelor of Science (honours) in Health Information Management graduate, Ms Fatema Bengali in a jubilant mood during the graduation ceremony in Gaborone on Friday. Photo: Washa Bofelwang

Refer same-sex marriage issues to Parliament - Chilisa

Bonang Masolotate
GABORONE

The High Court has been urged not to strike down Section 10(2) of the Marriage Act in a bid to allow same-sex marriages, but instead refer the matter to Parliament for legislation.

Appearing before a full bench of the High Court on Friday, state attorney Mr Mboki Chilisa said striking down the provision would create a gap in the law without automatically legalising same-sex marriages.

The case was brought by Bonolo Selelo and Tsholofelo Kehumile, supported by the Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals of Botswana (LEGABIBO), who want the proviso declared unconstitutional.

The applicants argue that the Act infringed on their rights to freedom of association and dignity and discriminates against them.

He said the proposed remedy would leave a lacuna in the Act, which would be prejudicial to the public interest. Mr Chilisa submitted that the appropriate remedy would be to create a legal framework recognising the union of persons seeking to enter into same-sex marriages. "The appropriate remedy would be the creation of a right for the applicants to enter into a union that is also recognised by law," he said. He proposed that Parliament should address the issue through an amendment to the Marriage Act or the enactment of separate legislation.

"This court itself cannot legislate, and this cannot achieve the results of what the applicants seek," he added. Mr Chilisa said the court could convey to Parliament that the Marriage Act made no provision for same-sex unions and that legislative intervention was necessary to address the alleged unconstitutionality.

He further argued that the law did not criminalise the applicants for expressing their love for each other. On the question of privacy, he said there had been no constitutional breach, arguing that privacy concerned choices and activities undertaken within one's private space.

He added that the applicants were free to express affection in public or private. Regarding freedom of association, Mr Chilisa said the applicants were free to associate, but what they sought was legal recognition. "All the applicants need is to have legal status," he said, adding that such recognition would address their concerns about dignity.

Advocate Reginald Wills, representing the Evangelical Fellowship of Botswana, argued that redefining marriage would not be in the best interests of society.

"Our client holds a very deep belief of what marriage is supposed to be," he said, adding that marriage was an important pillar of the community. He argued that same-sex marriages were excluded from the Marriage Act and that the marriage officer was therefore correct to refuse to solemnise the union. Advocate Wills maintained that marriage was between one man and one woman and was centred on children. He further argued that marriage was rooted in traditional Christian beliefs and that his client expected the court to define and protect the institution.

Attorney Mr Kago Mokotedi, appearing as amicus curiae (friend of the court), argued that a marriage officer's refusal to register the applicants' marriage could not be justified merely by stating that it did not comply with the law.

"Decisions must come to conclusions and must have reasoning," he said. Mr Mokotedi said the Constitution guaranteed equality and that the applicants had a right to be different without being penalised because the majority preferred heterosexual marriages. "Plurality is a value of a liberal democracy," he said, adding that religious arguments should not influence court's decision because Botswana's Constitution was secular.

For LEGABIBO, attorney Mr Tshimo Rantao said it was not in dispute that the applicants had been refused permission to publish banns of marriage.

He said the first and second respondents had argued that the court should refrain from interpreting the provision in a manner that would permit same-sex marriages or striking it down. However, Mr Rantao maintained that the court had the power to determine the matter, including striking down the contested provision.

He said the application sought constitutional protection and enforcement of the applicants' rights.

Mr Rantao said the applicants contended that Section 10(2) of the Marriage Act did not exclude same-sex couples. However, if the court found that it prohibited such marriages, they argued that the provision violated their constitutional rights and should be struck down. Judgment in the matter is scheduled for April 2, 2027. *BOPA*

Francistown records 18 bilharzia cases

Thamani Shabani
FRANCISTOWN

Francistown's Montsamaisa Junior Secondary School t has recorded 18 cases of bilharzia, raising a concern as children continue to swim in stagnant water along the Tati River despite the outbreak.

Francistown Mayor, Mr Gaone Majere, said similar cases had also been reported at Goldmine Junior Secondary School, posing a health risk to students.

However, he said all the cases were manageable and no deaths had been reported.

He appealed to residents to discourage children from swimming or fishing in the stagnant waters, warning that such activities could expose them to the disease. Confirming the cases, Montsamaisa School head, Mr George Mbeha, said most of the affected students were in Forms 1 and 2.

Mr Mbeha said the students began complaining of pain Thursday (October 22) .

After being taken to Lapologang Clinic, they were found to have symptoms of bilharzia, including blood in their urine, particularly among boys.

He said the students later revealed that they had been swimming in stagnant water along the Tati River.

Some also admitted to regularly fishing in the river. Mr Mbeha said the number of cases could increase as more students continued to report similar symptoms.

He did not rule out the possibility that other schools had also been affected, noting that primary schools could be among those at risk. He also cited Goldmine Junior Secondary School, which is located close to Montsamaisa in Block 9, as another school where cases had been reported.

Although the cases did not appear severe at the time,

Mr Mbeha said students' conditions could change, adding that health authorities were closely monitoring developments.

Tati River, which flows through Francistown from Monarch in the north to the Blocks in the south, has stretches of stagnant water that pose risk of waterborne diseases. *BOPA*

Arts & Culture

Gospel Jazz show set for Molapo Piazza

Keetile Bontsibokae
MOLEPOLOLE

Celebrated Afro-Jazz musician Punah Gabasiane is set to unite gospel and jazz enthusiasts at the inaugural Gospel Meets Jazz Concert scheduled for Saturday at Molapo Piazza in Gaborone.

The concert, billed to start at 6pm, will bring together established gospel voices and celebrated jazz musicians in an evening designed to celebrate the shared rhythms, values and uplifting messages of the two genres.

For Punah, the initiative represents a return to her musical roots while celebrating the artistic journey that has established her as one of Botswana's recognised female jazz performers.

"My calling in music started to manifest publicly in 1999 with the gospel album Introducing Punah. Before going solo, I was a choral singer in my youth, mentored by the late Gomolemo Motswaledi," she said.

She later ventured into Afro-jazz, building a reputation through music and performances at corporate events, festivals and private functions.

Punah said the concert was inspired by the similarities between gospel and jazz, particularly their ability to communicate messages that encourage, unite and uplift society.

"The show will unite legendary gospel voices and renowned jazz icons in one electrifying evening," she said.

The gospel line-up features Dr Phempheretlhe Bafana Pheto, South African musician William Mthethwa and Queen of Gospel Gabo Thotobolo.

Jazz performers scheduled to take the stage include Shanti-Lo, Nono Seile, Nnunu Ramogotsi and Kearoma Rantao, with Punah herself expected to headline.

She explained that the selection of performers was deliberate, as she wanted to honour musicians who have influenced her development while demonstrating the common ground between the two genres.

Beyond entertainment, the concert reflects Punah's commitment to social responsibility. Over the years, she has supported causes relating to gender-based violence awareness, the protection of the girl child and the promotion of Botswana's cultural identity. She is also part of the female jazz trio Women in Jazz, alongside Ramogotsi and Seile.

Punah said a portion of the concert proceeds would be donated to an organisation dedicated to promoting the welfare of the girl child.

She said the concert was intended to celebrate the meeting of faith and artistry while using music to promote unity, hope, love and resilience, adding that the inaugural event marked the beginning of what she hoped would become an annual fixture on Botswana's entertainment calendar.

"Punah is a jazz musician, but she is also a gospel musician. When I am on stage, people can still see Sister Punah, who emerged as a gospel artist in 1999," she said.

The concert promises gospel and jazz enthusiasts an opportunity to experience two musical traditions on one stage while celebrating artists whose work continues to shape Botswana's music industry. ***BOPA***



Afro-Jazz musician Punah Gabasiane is set to unite gospel and jazz enthusiasts at the inaugural Gospel Meets Jazz Concert billed for Molapo Piazza on Saturday.



Event organiser Mooketsi Jimson said Majwe Matala Annual Music Festival was more than an entertainment, but a community development initiative.

Majwe Matala Festival to put Mosu on Botswana cultural map

Keetile Bontsibokae
MOLEPOLOLE

A vision to transform Mosu's cultural heritage and tourism potential into sustainable community benefits is driving the establishment of Majwe Matala Annual Music Festival.

The initiative seeks to place the village on Botswana's cultural entertainment map.

The inaugural festival, scheduled for New Year Eve at Debekuwe farms, is expected to bring together music lovers, artists and visitors for a celebration of traditional and contemporary music, while opening new economic opportunities for residents of Mosu and the wider Boteti area.

Founded by Tswana traditional artist Mooketsi Henson Jimson, popularly known as Matipane, the festival is anchored on the theme: Mosu Ko Makgadikgading, reflecting the organiser's ambition to connect the village's cultural identity with its distinctive natural landscape.

Jimson believes the festival can become more than an annual entertainment gathering, positioning it as a platform for cultural preservation, tourism promotion and community development.

"The Majwe Matala Annual Music Festival is more than an entertainment event; it is a community development initiative," said Jimson, highlighting the importance of ensuring that local residents benefit from the visitors drawn to the area.

Jimson explained that the village of Mosu, located in Boteti District, is surrounded by natural and cultural attractions, including water springs and the Makgadikgadi Salt Pans.

He said the natural attractions offered opportunities to strengthen domestic tourism and encourage visitors to explore the area beyond its established destinations.

However, the festival organisers believe that the economic benefits associated with tourism can be better retained within the community through coordinated entertainment, local enterprise and heritage experiences.

The event is therefore envisioned as a meeting point between music, tourism and entrepreneurship, allowing visitors to experience Mosu's cultural identity while creating business opportunities for residents.

The economic opportunities are expected to extend beyond the stage.

The festival will feature traditional music, contemporary performances, live bands, poetry and DJs.

"Guided tourism drives to local heritage attractions are also proposed, subject to the necessary arrangements and safety requirements," said Jimson.

Beyond entertainment, Jimson said the initiative places local talent at the centre of its vision.

His aim is to source 80 per cent of performers from Mosu and the wider Boteti East Constituency, giving emerging and established artists an opportunity to showcase their abilities before a broader audience.

"For local performers, the festival could provide a platform to build visibility, connect with audiences and contribute to the growth of Botswana's creative industry," he said.

He said residents could benefit through food and craft stalls, while local accommodation providers and other businesses may attract increased patronage during the festive period.

Jimson has also incorporated a social responsibility component into the festival's long-term vision, committing to allocate 10 per cent of gate takings from each edition toward agreed community-support initiatives.

For Jimson, the broader ambition is to grow the festival into a nationally recognised event and eventually seek its inclusion on the Botswana Tourism Organisation's calendar of events. ***BOPA***

DailySport

Lobatse hosts Trans-Kalahari Corridor Run challenge

Grace Sebape
LOBATSE

The first edition of the 21.1km Trans-Kalahari Corridor Run & Bootcamp is scheduled to be held on Saturday at Lobatse Sports Complex.

Speaking in an interview, event coordinator, Lefika Kedise said the main purpose of the marathon was to raise funds for supporting the Agricultural Urbanisation Project, through which the community is being encouraged to produce food anywhere possible and permissible to do so.

Kedise said the project would be similar to backyard gardening and would be targeted at encouraging self-reliance within the community.

He revealed that the route would start from and end at the Lobatse Sports Complex, pass through Ozone to Pioneer border gate for those in 5km and 10km marathon categories. Participants for the 21.1km marathon will start at the Lobatse Sports Complex and use Trans-Kalahari Corridor to the Lobatse-Kanye roundabout and then return to the finishing point.

He highlighted that there was no age restriction for registration and thus encouraged members of the community to take part in numbers. He noted that registration was done by link and the registration fee was P150 regardless of the age.

Additionally, he said companies were allowed to register their members to participate in groups of 10 at a fee of P1,000.

He thus urged companies to come forward to sponsor the event, revealing that for now they have Time Projects as their sponsor and still needed more to show up.

Their event partners include Bandleng Live for coverage, and Dischem Therapy to handle injuries during the marathon. *BOPA*



The first edition of the 21.1km Trans-Kalahari Corridor Run & Bootcamp is scheduled for Saturday at Lobatse Sports Complex.
Photo: Courtesy of Trans-Kalahari Corridor Fitness Club

Cycling competition learning experience for Botswana

Ketshepile More
GABORONE

Botswana Cycling Team's performance at the African Cycling Confederation (CAC) Road Cycling African Championships in Kisumu, Kenya has been described as a learning experience with positive highlights and shortcomings.

Team coach, David Lebalelo says despite encountering individual challenges, the cyclists showed commitment to the sport and the country.

However, Lebalelo said the highlight of the team was the exceptional performance by a youth athlete, Hope Mathiba as well as elite rider, Lobopo Kono.

"Mathiba's seventh place finish in the Youth Women's Road Race and Kono's top-10 finish in the time trial indicates promising talent in our development programme," Lebalelo said.

He added that overall, the championships offered a realistic view of the team's current standing and highlighting areas for improvement.

Lebalelo said Mathiba and Kono's performances highlighted the potential of young riders at the continental level; adding that Mathiba's results emphasised the necessity of investing in cycling development pathway, by ensuring young talents receive support, structured training and international exposure.

He also said their performances emphasised the importance of nurturing promising talent to facilitate their progression into elite categories.

Therefore, Lebalelo said to improve performance for the next major cycling tour, Botswana Cycling Association (BCA) as well as the coaching team should focus on key areas such as strengthening the development pathway by establishing a structured system for early identification and preparation of promising riders.

In light of the recent CAC road cycling performance, Lebalelo said the strategy should now shift from a competition-focused approach to long-term development.

"We have to identify promising riders early, assess their capabilities and place them on individual and collective training programmes that prepare them for the demands of continental and international competition," he said.

Meanwhile, Lebalelo said South Africa's victory in the elite category by Callum Ormiston offered important lessons for Botswana's cycling development, particularly as the national riders train and compete in South Africa regularly.

"South Africa's victory should encourage us to examine what they are doing effectively and identify lessons that can be adapted to Botswana's circumstances. We should study their preparation methods, competitive exposure, race strategies and development systems," he noted.

Lebalelo highlighted that following the outcome of CAC 2026 road cycling championships, the focus now would be on enhancing cycling development by forming a provisional national squad engaged in structured training and regular camps.

He said notable performances by Mathiba and Kono gave cycling sport in Botswana hope and confidence. *BOPA*