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THARI

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TS'EPISO SERABELE
Maseru

Sexual offenses make up half of criminal cases

A prevailing trend in Lesotho reveals that a significant portion of sex offenders are youths, as evidenced by the demographic composition of inmates within the correctional services system.

This information was revealed in a stakeholder's workshop held by Ministry of Justice, Law and Parliamentary Affairs together with the European Union recently in Maseru.

On one hand, according to a Be In The Know 2022 report, Lesotho has one of the highest rates of rape and sexual violence in the world, 28% of men and 27% of women believe that women do not have the right to refuse sexual advances while the issue of sexual violence against women has been identified as one of the contributors to the AIDS crisis and HIV gender gap.

On the other hand, activists blame patriarchy for fuelling sexual offences despite the Sexual Offences Act (2003) and the Married Persons Act (2006) providing for equal rights for men and women in marriage, the Customary Law, however, subordinating women to men is still very much part of society in Lesotho.

In September 2020, the Legal Aid service providers under a financial agreement with the European Commission implemented a programme titled "Support for the Reform and Strengthening of Governance in Lesotho".

During the workshop, Wycliff Nyakundi Nyamao revealed alarming statistics of legal matters stating that "Sexual offenses rank the most common offense at 50% of crimes in Lesotho, most of people committing crime being young people."

In addition, he also pointed out that youth are said to be the least age group in getting access to services, of which is a great concern and called upon stakeholders and youth organisations to support its youth.

The second leading offense was revealed to be homicide at 29% and theft at nine percent.

Further research indicates that poverty remains the greatest challenge to access to justice standing at 41%. Most people being unable to afford legal representation, while the second most dominant chal-

- **Lesotho's justice system in scrutiny**
- **Poverty remains greatest challenge**



The Customary Law, however, subordinating women to men is still very much part of society in Lesotho

lenge is said to be distance.

"In Lesotho justice does not talk to the people. The system is for the rich and the connected individuals" these are some of the common bias perceptions people hold on the legal system of Lesotho.

Recently, a distressing case has come to light in Lesotho that highlights the prev-

alence of sexual assault and the shortcomings of the country's justice system, a Mosotho woman accused an Ethiopian man, who currently works Polihali Dam Construction of raping her. The accused reportedly offered M40 000 to settle the matter, but the victim, citing her lack of confidence in the Lesotho justice system, demanded a whopping M100 000.

This troubling incident has not only exposed the widespread issue of sexual violence in Lesotho but has also brought into question the effectiveness and fairness of the country's legal system.

Speaking at the event, Minister of Justice, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Richard Ramoetsi, stated that the government of Lesotho remains highly committed to improving access to justice for everyone in Lesotho.

"The Government is committed to ex-

panding the legal aid services, and efforts are being explored to improve the capability of Legal Aid Unit to reach more vulnerable people in Lesotho", he said, pointing out that the Legal Aid Clinics will be placed throughout the country. However, he said that will be done after the outdated laws such as the Legal Aid Act of 1978 have been reviewed.

Ramoetsi also indicated that it has been a long vision of the country to be able to afford Legal Aid Services sufficiently to those mostly in need and unable to afford Legal services, regardless of their location, religious beliefs, age and gender. "It has been a dream that Lesotho adopts the best international practices in the provision of legal aid. That is, legal aid should extend to legal education, mediation and awareness."





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LIJENG MORUTHANE

Maseru

Disability is a cross-cutting issue, which has implications for coordination to ensure that person's living with disabilities access assistive devices and attain educational as well as social inclusion.

Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD) Executive Director Advocate Nkhathi Sefuthi points out in an interview with the *Weekly Observer* that children with disability's learning needs are not being met.

According to Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy 2018, there are five Special Schools located in for Districts, namely Leribe, Maseru, Berea and Butha-Buthe and cater for Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN) depending on their various educational needs. "Special Schools are intended cater for LSEN with severe and profound conditions," wrote the Policy.

The policy also stipulates that it is important to gear education provision towards responding to the needs of previously marginalised members of society and foster an inclusive educational environment for learners with disabilities.

This, however, has not been the case as Sefuthi describes the government's lack of political will to implement regulations in line with the Policy; he alleges the Government does no reserve fund to implement the Policy through Ministry of Education and Training's (MoET) Special Education Unit.

"In practice, there is still a wide gap of meaningful inclusion for children with disabilities despite the existence of the policy; this deficiency is caused by the government's lack of enforcement, there are no measures taken to ensure the Policy's effective implementation," he said.

The Executive Director reported that as a result, Mainstream Schools still refuse admittance of children with disabilities with no consequences. "This recently happen at Butha-Buthe Primary in January when the Principal refused to admit a disabled learner," Sefuthi added that the Principal failed to provide significant reasoning.

Advocates bare flops in inclusive education policy

• Lack of implementation, support said to leave disabled children behind

In Mainstream Schools where children with disabilities have been lucky enough to gain admittance, he further points out that lack proper of infrastructure limits mobility and accessibility in said schools, while teachers are not capacitated enough to address the needs of LSEN.

"Teaching institutions do not have comprehensive Inclusive Education courses to capacitate teacher for an inclusive classroom setting," he continued.

Sefuthi extended that they do not encourage the Government to have a Special Curriculum for learners with disabilities as it is not standardised nor does it have an accredited certificate.

"Making these children special does not benefit them at all, instead, it further marginalises them in a society that already holds certain beliefs about person living with disabilities. They cannot further their studies as the Special Curriculum does not have a cer-

tificate like your LGCSE, its as if they never attended school as no one recognises their skills," he continued.

Furthermore, he revealed that the Special schools themselves do not have grades, all students are put in one classroom, many of them with varied learning needs. The division between persons living with disabilities in school inhibits LSEN from being comfortably incorporated into work and social space.

A recent Unicef report revealed that Centres accommodating children living with disabilities pointed out that the children struggle to with accepting themselves. "They can be brilliant and smart, but they are afraid to be out there and seen."

In addition, since children with disabilities learn slower than those without disabilities, they are often scared to ask for help from their teachers which leads to poor academic performance.

President of Lesotho Teachers Association Ntsibolane Letsatsi underscored that the concept of an inclusive learning environment is new to teachers, secondly, teacher training institutions do not offer Special Education capacitation to all teachers, as a result, unspecialised teachers that have not been oriented for learners with special needs fail to create inclusion in classrooms.

"The Policy is there, but teachers are not ready. They have not been capacitated enough by training institutions and approach LSEN with general knowledge of they think the learners need," he said.

The President further expressed that this approach is a great challenge to learners with disabilities as teaching and learning is not accommodative of their needs often leading to perceived discrimination by the learners.

For his part, MoET Principal Secretary (PS) replied that they conduct school, centre, district and regional workshops to capacitate on issues of inclusive education. However, a limited number of teachers are reached with information and training due to limited funds.

"Lesotho College of Education and the National University of Lesotho have special and Inclusive Education programs for pre-service student teachers," he said.

Majara maintained that his Ministry in collaboration with LNFOD, the Ministry of Social Development and development partners provide assistive technology for LSEN.

"Issues of special education are integrated into different sections of the Ministry, therefore, a budget for the Special Education Unit will not portray accurate figures of the Ministry's efforts to support learners with special educational needs," the PS concluded.



TS'OLOANE MOHLOMI

Maseru

Mineral Resources Minister Moleko was honored to inaugurate the corporate golf day tournament hosted by Lesotho's Mining Indaba Khotla, symbolizing the commencement of an eventful day. Esteemed participants from corporate entities such as First National Bank Lesotho, Engen Petroleum, the Nthane Foundation, and Letseng Diamond Mines, among others, graced the occasion with their presence.

The tournament, a blend of spirited rounds of golf and an awarding ceremony acknowledging veterans of the sport, epitomized camaraderie and shared passion for

Moleko leads golf day launch amidst inaugural Mining Indaba

the game. Beyond its recreational essence, the event served as a platform for fostering industry connections and synergies.

The Mining Indaba Khotla stands as an annual beacon within the mining landscape of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. Its overarching objective is to convene stakeholders from diverse backgrounds within the mining sphere, facilitating robust dialogues and knowledge exchanges. This initiative, spearheaded by Nodayimani Investment, led by the visionary

Tando Mandela, originated with the Eastern Cape Mining Indaba in South Africa's Eastern Cape Province.

Today, as Lesotho proudly hosts the third iteration of this transformative conference at the Manthabiseng Convention Centre, the spotlight is on bridging the mining discourse between Lesotho and South Africa. Acknowledging Lesotho's significant contribution to South Africa's mining workforce and its burgeoning prominence within the global mining arena, the conference endeavors to un-

lock the nation's untapped mining potential.

Moleko articulated the pivotal role of the Mining Indaba Khotla in attracting foreign investment and bolstering Lesotho's economic landscape. With the mining sector serving as a linchpin of the country's GDP and fiscal framework, he emphasized the profound impact that increased investment could yield, amplifying socioeconomic development and infrastructure enhancement.

Story continues on page 5

MEET OUR TEAM!

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Lijeng Moruthane
weeklyobserver.editor@gmail.com
+266 6917 0593

REPORTER

Kananelo Masilo

EDITOR

Khosi Pheko
weeklyobserver.editor@gmail.com
+266 5838 8074

REPORTER

Ts'anelo Sello

MARKETING MANAGER

Ts'episo Serabele
weeklyobserver.marketing@gmail.com
+266 5904 1569

REPORTER

Ts'oloane Mohlomi

Stakeholders advocate for Bail Bill reform amidst legal system trials

TS'EPISO SERABELE

Maseru

Honourable Richard Ramoetsi, Minister of Justice and Law, presided over a pre-legislative orientation session of the Public Cluster Portfolio Committee on the Bail Bill of 2024. The session

aimed to furnish the committee members with a comprehensive understanding of the Bail Bill in advance of its formal presentation to the National Assembly.

He emphasized the significance of knowledge within society, emphasizing that it is imperative for individuals to comprehend the concept of bail within legal contexts to gain a comprehensive understanding of this facet of the law. He underscored that in legal parlance, bail stands as a pivotal element enabling arrested individuals to secure their release, adhering to the fundamental principle that individuals are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

The Minister also pointed that some of the challenges faced by the court of laws remains high number of cases that they have to process while having limited resources. Therefore, the bill proposes that the Lesotho Mounted Police Services shall be taking over minor offenses, to help deal with bail cases.

In a parallel vein, Everest Ramakatsa, Chairperson of the Parliament's Law and Public Safety Committee, underscored Basotho citizens' apprehensions regarding the regulatory frameworks governing their lives. He emphasized the universal indispensability of laws, highlighting that the absence of justice often precipitates societal discord, loss of lives, and economic decline.

The Chairperson went on to say that people commit the most heinous crimes, such as murder, and that after a person is



Richard Ramoetsi

brought to court and granted bail, Basotho get hostile when they see such persons in their communities.

"Cases take a very long time in the court of laws, and that makes people taking laws into their own hands which is illegal," he said showing the importance of lifting much heavy work from the court of laws.

Similarly, regarding bail laws, Ramakatsa reminded that Lesotho has been operating with outdated laws such as far as Bail is concerned. Other people eventually brag of how they are untouchable even the courts

cannot do anything about it, pointing at the weaknesses of courts.

He said working on re-evaluating laws so that they are relevant to today's world is important. He went on to make an example of a recent case where police were working tirelessly to arrest a drug dealer who was selling drugs to minors, only to be released by bail worth M20.

Ramakatsa stated that there are fewer employees in the courts of law which is also a challenge. However, the review will help find solutions to the existing problems.

... continued from page 4

Furthermore, the Minister underscored the collaborative imperative among regional stakeholders to navigate and mitigate challenges inherent to the mining sector, safeguarding the welfare of affected communities.

"First of all I would humbly like to thank all people and companies who contributed towards this event. As you might be all aware the Mining Indaba Khotla is a conference geared towards helping resuscitate our mining industry.

With our four biggest mines in the country contributing more six percent towards the GDP, one can imagine how much more investment can do in adding towards the country's fiscus, either it being foreign or local investment. We can use the revenue to further improve our country and built schools, hospitals and other important infrastructure," he said.

As the mining Indaba Khotla commences on April 25, it sets the stage for meaningful discourse and actionable insights, poised to chart a transformative trajectory for the mining sector and beyond, culminating on April 26th.

Nucleus capacitates entrepreneurs through web development

TS'EPISO SERABELE

Maseru

In an effort to support local businesses and empower individuals with in-demand digital skills, Nucleus Pty Ltd has announced plans to offer a free learning program on web development.

The program aims to teach 30 selected participants how to build and deploy websites, giving them a valuable asset for growing their businesses in this tech dominated era.

"We believe in a community that grows exponentially," said Rets'epile Shao, Nucleus' Managing Director and Developer in an interview with the *Weekly Observer* recently.

"Our gift to this hardworking community is to empower people with skills on web development," he continued. The program aims to save participants thousands that would otherwise be spent on hiring web developers, allowing them to reinvest that money back into their businesses.

The Limkokwing University of Creative Technology graduate explained that the idea for the program was inspired by his

own personal experience of helping numerous individuals with web design for free. Realizing the potential of providing these services to a larger group of people, he decided to offer the classes in bulk.

"We want to capacitate individuals with the tools they need to grow their businesses and be successful," said Shao.

With the goal of offering this invaluable opportunity to 30 people, Nucleus has opened registration for the program, which will take place on April 27.

"We encourage anyone who is interested in learning web development to apply for this program, this is a fantastic opportunity to gain valuable skills and knowledge that will benefit you and your business," he continued.

The company hopes that the free learning program will not only empower individuals with the skills they need to succeed in today's digital world, but will also create a ripple effect of positive change within the community as a whole.

In addition to the obvious benefits of the free learning program, Shao emphasized the importance of fostering a spirit of community and collaboration.

"We believe that by helping others succeed, we can all benefit, when people have the knowledge and skills they need to succeed, they can contribute to their community in new and meaningful ways. This program is about more than just learning web development – it's about creating opportunities for growth and prosperity for everyone."

As the registration deadline approaches, Shao and his team are excited to see the interest and enthusiasm that the program has generated.

Nucleus is a an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Company that provides world-class ICT products and services to companies, individuals, organizations and institutions. It has professionals who are innovative and creative in providing these modern services in Lesotho and abroad.

Their team is built of skilled professionals leveraging on cutting-edge technology to provide world-class ICT solutions, tailored to the unique requirements of each client. Whether its for a business, organization or individual, Nucleus is committed to exceeding their clients expectations and

delivering the best possible service.

The company qualified for top 50 businesses in the Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion Project (CAFI), under the Ministry of Trade and small businesses last year, incubated at Limkokwing Entrepreneurship Acceleration Platform and is receiving funding to expand their operations, reach their full potential and now leveraging their success to support local businesses and individuals, underscoring their dedication to the community and their belief in the power of collaborative growth.



Rets'epile Shao



Lesotho National Development Corporation

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Tenders must be deposited in the tender box situated at 1st floor LNDC Development House Block A reception area and a soft copy of the tender document must be submitted on flash disk enclosed in the bid submission. The deadline for submissions is on or before **Friday 26th of April 2024 at 12:00pm**. Submissions received after the deadline will not be considered. Bids will be opened publicly immediately thereafter.

All bids must be accompanied by valid copies of traders' license, tax clearance, and proof of authorized signatory.

The LNDC reserves the right to cancel the tender, reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof. The corporation is not bound to accept the lowest or any bid.



KHOSI PHEKO

Maseru

Minister justifies Commission

The Minister of Law and Justice, Richard Ramoetsi, has provided justification for the establishment of the newly formed Commission of Inquiry, citing adherence to legal provisions.

He clarified that the selection process for the three commission members was conducted in accordance with the Public Inquiries Act of 1994, as stipulated in the constitution.

The Commission was formally established by Prime Minister Sam Matekane through gazette notification last Friday and commenced its operations on Monday.

It was formed following the shocking incidents of torture reported by inmates at Maseru Central Prison last December. The ill-treatment emerged after some prisoners attempted an escape but were nonetheless recovered while one passed on and this prodded the need to investigate such.

Ramoetsi did in December undertake to implement recommendations that will be made by the Inquiry so that similar events do not occur again.

Addressing the media at the Government Complex, Ramoetsi announced that according to the gazette, the Chairper-

son of the Commission is Justice Realebaha Mathaba who was appointed by Chief Justice Sakoane Sakoane.

He said the other member Advocate Kelebone Maope was selected due to his expertise as Human Rights Lawyer and lastly, Mojalefa Thulo who is also a specialist in the administration of Correctional Institutions as Former Commissioner of the Lesotho Correctional Service (LCS).

"The Commission will work on this matter for a period of two months with an option to extend with a further month if needed. I would like to inform the public

that the crew will investigate the incidents of 21 December 2023 and what led to a casualty of one inmate. This will also seek to help the correction officers on ways to improve and avoid such incidents.

Once investigations are complete, the Commission is expected to present recommendations that will be implemented by all relevant stakeholders including the government. You may note that the correctional services worldwide are used to gauge the status of human rights in all respective countries," the Minister said.




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UN urges gvt to support Albinism affected persons

TS'OANELO SELLO

Maseru

Albinism is a condition that affects thousands of people globally, yet it remains one of the most misunderstood and stigmatized in many societies.

These concerns were amplified by the United Nations (UN) Independent Expert on Albinism, Muluka-Anne Mitti-Drummond during her visit to Lesotho to conduct a study on people with the condition after realizing that in Lesotho, there are very few reports about people with Albinism and their needs in the country.

Determined to make a difference, she urged the government to take the time to understand the struggles faced by people with Albinism and to provide them with the support and protection they deserve.

During her visit, Mitti-Drummond found that there was a common belief among stakeholders in Lesotho that people with Albinism were treated well and were just like everyone else. While it is true that there have been no reported cases of ritual attacks or killings of people with Albinism in the country, the reality is far from equal.

She noted that many people with Albinism have shared devastating stories of discrimination and stigma they have experienced, often due to ignorance or false beliefs about their condition.

"I note that some children with Albinism have been abandoned and left to be cared for by grandparents or community members. In Leribe, a safe house for orphans provides shelter for a number of children with Albinism who have been abandoned by their parents and families.

When asked about adoption possibilities, I was told that it is harder for children with Albinism to find adoptive homes, most likely due



Muluka-Anne Mitti-Drummond

to their condition," she said adding that caring for children with the condition is costly due to their health needs requiring sunscreen, medical check-ups for their visual impairment, parents and family members often highlight the high costs of caring for children with Albinism in comparison to those without.

One of the biggest challenges facing people with Albinism in Lesotho is the high cost of essential items such as cosmetics and sunglasses. These items are crucial for protecting their skin and eyes from the blazing sun, but many families cannot afford them.

"The health challenges of persons with

Albinism were constantly raised as a priority area in need of support and solutions. The risk of skin cancer is extremely high for persons with albinism, and the lack of access to visual aids, can seriously limit their quality of life.

Skin cancer is in fact the primary cause of death for persons with Albinism in the region, rendering sunscreen an essential medicine – not a cosmetic product. I was informed however that the public health system does not provide sunscreen. Rather, the provision of sunscreen is mainly done via civil society organizations who partner with overseas non-government organizations.

Access to visual aid including spectacles is difficult due to costs and the lack of specialists. A cost of spectacles can range from M3 500 to M14 000 which is unaffordable for many," she continued.

According to Mitti-Drummond, access to education is extremely challenging for children with albinism, there is a great need for reasonable accommodation them, "Reasonable accommodation measures in school, including the provision of assistive devices, large print documents, placing of persons with Albinism at the front of the class, are fairly easy to implement but are still lacking in many cases, particularly in rural communities where teachers do not have an understanding of albinism."

The Independent Expert revealed that she is concerned at reports that teachers also discriminate against persons with albinism, along with other students while she met with many persons with Albinism whose educational prospects were hindered.

The government must do more to ensure that people with Albinism have access to these essential supplies.

"I encourage the Government to refer to national action plans on Albinism adopted by various countries in the region as a basis to address the needs of persons with Albinism in a holistic manner. Using the human rights-based approach to provide solutions for persons with Albinism can also be aided through reference to the African Union Plan of Action to end attacks and other human rights violations targeting persons with albinism," she concluded.

Albinism is still profoundly misunderstood, and the lack of knowledge about the condition has contributed to the myriad of challenges and struggles that many persons with Albinism experience.

Story continues on page 9

TS'OANELO SELLO

Maseru

Road Fund together with the Ministry of Education and Training rendered school uniform items as donations to the learners of Qoaling Primary School in Maseru on Tuesday.

This initiative is part of the Fund's ongoing efforts to support disadvantaged schools and students around the country as well as fostering for better education.

With the school accommodating at least

Road Fund donates to Primary School

1 500 pupils and 44 teachers, at least seven children per grade received items, which are said to assist in the learner's livelihood.

Road Fund Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Nkekeletsu Makara spoke at the event, em-

phasizing the importance of ensuring that all children have access to quality education and the necessary resources to succeed.

"We work closely with the Ministry of Education to identify schools that are in need of assistance, and last year we visited Motimposo Primary School to donate desks. This year, we chose Qoaling Primary School as they had identified a need for school uniforms among the students," he went on.

The principal of Qoaling Primary School, Mamohloli Letsie expressed her gratitude for the donation, highlighting the challenges that many of the students face.

"Some of the students, she explained, are orphaned and are raising themselves, while others are living in difficult circumstances with relatives who mistreat them which make many of them not to enjoy school, hence they skip classes and it's painful because some of this kids are very bright and one can see a very bright future if they find

such support from other people as well not only Road Fund," she said.

She stressed the importance of providing support and resources to these students, as education is crucial in breaking the cycle of poverty and disadvantage.

The school community was grateful for the generosity of Road Fund and the Ministry of Education, and they expressed hope for more assistance in the future. The principal called on the government to prioritize education and to provide additional support to schools and students in need.

As the event concluded, the students of Qoaling Primary School proudly donned their new uniforms, a symbol of hope and opportunity for a brighter future. Road Fund has pledged to continue their support for disadvantaged schools and students, and they plan to visit more schools in the coming months.



Road Fund handing out donations

Car spin broker donates to school

TS'OANELO SELLO

Maseru

In a heartwarming and generous gesture, Motimposo Primary School, a learning centre just a few kilometers within the vicinity of the main city Maseru were fortunate to have received shoes and toiletry items as donations last Thursday at the school's compound in Maseru.

This noble act was made by a famous car spin organizer, Tebello Mofarisi as a result of his preceded charity Car spin event he brokered about a month ago. The festival however, did not raise much needed funds to carry out the donations but that did not discourage Mofarisi to carry out his intentions.

The event saw at least 20 deserving pupils receive donations to meet their special necessities. Speaking on behalf of the Ministry of Education and Training at the ceremony, 'Makhopotso Mothobi underscored on this act stating it will boost the self-esteem of pupils.



Learners receiving donations

"To every child who received today's gifts, I say to you protect and take good care of those shoes and as for toiletries, go home and share with your siblings and I hope next time we could do a bigger donation which will help every kid in need in this school and we thank Mr. Mofarisi for this kind gesture he's done for the kids and we pray that many people be as kind-hearted and generous as him," she said.

The students, teachers, and staff of Motimposo Primary School also echoed gratitude towards the initiative. For her part, school Principal, Molefi Mofanti, expressed his heartfelt thanks to Mr. Mofarisi and the donors for their kindness and support.

"In January, the Ministry of Education came and gave donations to our kids, and now again it's happening which shows how indeed the school is in crisis and needs salvation. I thank Mofarisi and his partners for such a big help and I pray God to keep their pockets full all the times,"

explained the principle.

He emphasized the importance of giving back and helping those who are less fortunate, and he hopes that this donation will inspire others to do the same.

The event organizer, Tebello Mofarisi, was motivated by his desire to make a positive impact in the community and help children who may be struggling to access basic necessities. After realizing that the event did not generate the expected donations, Mofarisi and others decided to personally fund the purchase of school shoes and toiletries for 20 children from Motimposo Primary School.

"As a citizen here in Motimposo, I noticed that there are many things lacking from this school and that gave motivation to want to change this crisis I was seeing in this school.

I urge everyone to take part and interest in this sport of car spinning, it's very fun and interesting and we please with the government to supply us with grounds to play that sport also people interested in cars get the opportunity to know about most of the hidden things about cars," he explained.

His generosity and selflessness have not gone futile and his actions have inspired others to also give back to those in need.

The donation ceremony at the school was a heartwarming event with little entertainment from the school choir, with two children from each grade being chosen to receive the much-needed items.

The children were overjoyed to receive new school shoes, which will not only provide them with comfort but also boost their confidence and self-esteem. Additionally, the toiletries will help ensure that the children have the necessary hygiene products to stay clean and healthy.

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In an interview with the *Weekly Observer*, Amohelang Sello from Leqele High School, who is sidelined like many others, she has experienced firsthand the discrimination and illiteracy that often accompanies her condition.

"People at school won't say it out loud, but you can just see it in the way they look at you. It's like they are disgusted or afraid," she shared, the stigma attached to Albinism not only affects her self-esteem but also her interactions with her peers, making her feel isolated and different.

Person's living with Albinism in Lesotho say one of the most hurtful things is the derogatory term "Lesoele" that they are referred to with. This term, which translates to "white person" in Sesotho, reduces people with Albinism to mere objects rather than recognizing them as equal human beings. Amohelang and others like her find this label dehumanizing and degrading, further perpetuating the marginalization they already face.

Despite the challenges she encounters, Amohelang is grateful for the unwavering support of her family, who show her love and encouragement. However, she acknowledges that not everyone with the skin condition is as fortunate, with many lacking the necessary resources and emotional support to cope.

The efforts of Mitti-Drummond and other activists to raise awareness about the skin condition Lesotho are commendable, but more needs to be done to address the deep-rooted stigma and discrimination that persist.

As Amohelang continues to navigate the hardships of living with Albinism in Lesotho, she hopes for a future where individuals like her are treated with respect and dignity, free from the burden of stigma and prejudice. It is a vision that all of society should strive towards, to create a more inclusive and accepting community for everyone.

The annual commemoration of International Albinism Awareness Day is slated for June 13, it is to be staged at a national, provincial and community level and not just among Albinism communities, this will also help in eliminating misbeliefs

Millennium Challenge Compact II in full force

STAFF REPORTER

Maseru

The much awaited finalisation of the Millennium Challenge Compact II has finally been launched.

The million dollar deal between the government of Lesotho and the government of the United States which promises to overturn Lesotho's economic fortunes by financing businesses, particularly for women and youth.

This momentous occasion was held at Thaba-Bosiu, in Maseru and from the agreement Lesotho will have whopping USD\$322 million (about M6 billion) at her disposal to carry out various projects. The US government will inject USD\$300 million to Lesotho while the USD\$22million will be used to finance other projects such as the health and horticulture sectors.

The Compact II was initially sealed in 2022 but was only recently launched after the government of Lesotho successfully passed the three pending legislations which were prerequisite to of unlocking the much needed funds. These laws are, Labour Code Amendment Act 2024, Administration of Estates and inheritance Act 2024 and lastly the Occupational Safety and Health Act 2024.

Speaking at the event, MCC Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Chidi Blyden, said the health and horticulture project would invest in irrigation and agriculture in Lesotho to improve climate resilience, more especially for local farmers and to further improve the delivery of health services to the nation.

"These investments will address unique chal-

lenges and create greater prosperity for the people of Lesotho," she said.

Blyden added that Lesotho has been an abiding partner of MCC with the first partnership being in 2008. It had received USD\$362 million investment in Compact I which enhanced access to basic healthcare for Basotho by building and improving 183 clinics and trained 200 health practitioners on infection prevention and disease control.

Blyden said the maiden investment proved to be fundamental for improving health delivery in Lesotho and had served as a core for the US government's engagements with Lesotho and acknowledged the country's efforts to ensure that the Compact II's benefits would be inclusive and sustainable by passing all pending legislations which will promote the attainment of the objectives.

"The reform laws provide the opportunity for the Compact to advance economic growth and poverty reduction by equally benefiting men and women and by bringing Lesotho in line with international conventions on workers' rights, health, and safety.

These reforms are a tremendous accomplishment for every country to undertake. Lesotho has set the tone for the rest of the continent to follow," Blyden said.

For his part, Prime Minister Sam Matekane, said the Compact will be imperative to enhance better health for Basotho and sustainable private sector-led economic growth and job creation. He said it enabled the country to tap in its natural and economic advantages to turn them into pros-

perity for Basotho.

He said the launch of the Compact came a crucial time when the country's economy needed a boost to upscale productivity and job creation and vowed to ensure that every dollar invested in this compact would be used efficiently to optimise the impact of the investment in the country.

Matekane added that, the Compact was also a shot in the arm to the country's Economic Investment Programme and would brim confidence in investors. It is believed to revive young Basotho for seeking to make ends meet.

"We expect to experience more equitable distribution of wealth, access to services and opportunities and social transformation that embraces equality among people and striving to uplift the marginalised groups," he said.

He said the Compact presents plenty of opportunities and most of importantly for women, youth, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups.

Furthhermore, Minister of Finance and Development Planning Retselisitsoe Matlanyane, who is a responsible steward of the Compact's implementation body, Millennium Challenge Account-Lesotho II Authority (MCA), said the horticulture project was not just about irrigating 1500 hectares of land, but also about improving livelihoods of communities and landowners in selected areas.

She said, by empowering farmers with modern techniques, market linkages and sustainable practices, this project would turn fallow lands into thriving orchards and farms.

"The main focus is on gender equality and in-

clusion proves commitment to ensure that marginalised groups have equal opportunities. Possibly a year from now land registration will start to safeguard ownership and land rights, therefore paving a way for construction of irrigation infrastructure and dams," she said.

Matlanyane noted that under the health systems strengthening project, the country is planning to build a robust healthcare system and increase access to quality services that would improve health outcomes among the nation.

The Minister went on to add that the project also seeks to institutionalise health management information system (e-register) for use in primary health care services by the end of 2025.

"The project help the government of Lesotho to respond to care and support needs of survivors of Gender Based Violence (GBV), as well as to contribute to reducing the high incidence of GBV.

This includes the strengthening of referral pathway and coordination forum to implement relevant elements of the Counter Domestic Violence Law passed in 2022 in the community," she said.



Chidi Blyden

Numbers don't support Botswana's threat to send 30 000 elephants to Europe

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDANT

Botswana and Zimbabwe have long claimed that their elephant populations are exploding, making hunting a necessity to curtail 'unsustainable' growth, but a recent survey contradicts this narrative.

According to the most recent Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (Kaza) survey, elephant populations are stable with a statistically insignificant growth rate of only 1.2% growth per year – an enormous contradiction to Botswana's claim of 6% annual growth and Zimbabwe's claims of 5% to 8% annual growth.

However, Elephants Without Borders' (EWB) recently released a technical review of the Kaza elephant survey reveals that trends in some populations are indeed highly concerning, with poaching and hunting altering elephant distribution and threatening their safety across Africa's elephant stronghold.

The review notes that while "Kaza's elephant population appears to be relatively stable overall, the results for Zambia, Botswana and Angola show worrisome indications, including high carcass ratios, large declines, and evidence of recent poaching. These areas should have high priority for future monitoring."

The technical report contradicts claims of overpopulation by revealing the high carcass ratio found during the elephant surveys across the Kaza region. A carcass ratio of 8% or higher suggests a declining population in which deaths exceed birth rates. The carcass ratio has grown from 8% to 11%, potentially indicating unsustainable mortality rates.

Botswana has threatened to send 10,000 elephants to Hyde Park and now another 20,000 to Germany as UK and European countries continue to debate the import of hunting trophies. According to Botswana's President Mokgweetsi Masisi, Botswana is heavily overpopulated by elephants, which he believes requires trophy hunting to control.

The Kaza region remains a critical stronghold for Africa's savannah elephant population, with the latest survey data indicating about 228,000 elephants – just over half of Africa's savannah elephants.

Botswana

The EWB review notes that elephant numbers in Botswana have increased by 1.3% since the last survey, increasing in national parks and other protected areas, especially in the Okavango, but decreasing in pastoral and agricultural areas, "in contrast to the Botswana government's claim of 7.6% growth per year".

Crucially, "numbers of elephants decreased by 25% in areas that were open to hunting and increased by 28% in areas where hunting is not allowed".

Between October 2023 and February 2024, 56 poached carcasses were located in northern Botswana, which is likely to be an underrepresentation of the true number of poached elephants, highlighting fears that Botswana's northern regions are becoming a poaching hotspot. According to reports, the poachers are targeting elephants in Botswana before smuggling the tusks into Zambia.

According to Elephants Without Borders, 2022 saw the highest fresh carcass ratio in Botswana, further contradicting claims of a population explosion and no poaching. Just last month, 651 elephant tusks were seized in Maputo, Mozambique, and are likely to have been poached from elephants in neighbouring countries.

The technical review raises concerns that "Kaza contains only seven sites for the Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) pro-



gramme, which collects data on poaching from ranger patrols. Of the seven sites, four began operation in 2018 or later. This small sample is not sufficient for estimating poaching rates in an area of over 500,000km². More monitoring of poaching is badly needed in Kaza."

Zimbabwe

No significant changes were observed in Zimbabwe (see image below) Again, the technical report by Elephants Without Borders contradicts unsubstantiated claims by Zimbabwe at a conference to promote ivory trade that its population is growing unsustainably at 5% to 8% annually. Environmental authorities had previously considered a mass cull of up to 50,000 elephants in 2021, about half of its population.

Angola

There is considerable cause for concern regarding Angola's elephants, as shown in the figure below. The technical report indicates an even higher carcass ratio of 16% in Angola, with 71% of observed carcasses being those of poached elephants. Such a high carcass ratio is concerningly symptomatic of an "attractive population sink" – elephants are "lured to dangerous areas where mortality exceeds natality, contributing to wider population losses", according to report authors Scott Schlossberg and Mike Chase.

The authors posit that elephants are moving into Angola from the larger populations in Namibia and Botswana but are experiencing high mortality rates in Angola, possibly due to poaching.

This raises questions regarding Botswana's expressed intention to send 8,000 elephants to Angola in an attempt to reduce its own population. Even if this were physically possible, the elephants are still able to freely move across the region.

Namibia

In Namibia, between 2015 and 2022, the elephant population decreased slightly and non-significantly in the Kavango-Zambezi region and increased non-significantly in Khaudum Nyae-Nyae. Notably, numbers of elephants declined along the Angola and Zambia borders in Kavango-Zambezi. In March 2024, Namibia published a tender for a hunting concession inside the Khaudum National Park.

Botswana trophy hunting debate

Botswana's government continues to push

a strong trophy hunting agenda. In a confusing contradiction, Environment and Tourism Minister Dumezweni Mthimkhulu likened trophy hunting to culling, which was later countered by President Masisi who called culling "ethically abhorrent" and "indiscriminate".

Botswana reintroduced trophy hunting in 2019 following former president Ian Khama's ban on sports hunting. Since this reintroduction, survey data indicate that elephant populations are decreasing in ranching, farming and hunting areas and increasing in core conservation areas, most likely as a result of elephant herds moving away from heavily disturbed environments. Trophy hunting cannot be viewed as sustainable if the population is not growing and poaching remains high.

A declaration dated 15 March 2024 has now extended Botswana's open season on hunting elephants from 2 April 2024 until 31 January 2025. Typically, the hunting season would only last from mid-April to mid-September. The declaration has effectively added five additional months of hunting elephants.

Masisi cites high levels of human-elephant conflict due to burgeoning elephant populations as another reason to promote trophy hunting. However, this argument fails to hold up to scrutiny. Trophy-hunting mature bulls based on trophy-standard characteristics of maximum tusk size does not solve human-elephant conflict, according to the Environmental Investigation Agency's Mary Rice.

In fact, failure to properly identify and demarcate elephant corridors and allowing hunting in established corridors, such as NG13, risks undermining access routes across transnational boundaries and creating further opportunities for human-elephant conflict to occur. Elephants Without Borders notably states that urgent re-evaluation is required of the effects of trophy hunting in dispersal corridors which are "critical to the Kaza vision of a connected landscape".

If human-elephant conflict strategies have been implemented with success elsewhere and trophy hunting benefits for communities remain dubious, why push to promote trophy hunting in a country that has been lauded as a wildlife safe haven for so many years? There are claims in the media that this is an election strategy to distract attention from government failures.

To fuel concerns, Botswana has yet to publicly share the scientific basis for its trophy hunting quota of 414 elephants for 2024 despite asserting it as a necessary solution.

Several myths regarding elephant populations are taken as scientific fact in certain government and public spheres and require critical scrutiny. One oft-touted myth is carrying capacity, which has again been used to justify ramping up elephant trophy hunting. The notion of carrying capacity was based initially on an outdated policy that lacked scientific backing to manage Hwange's elephants.

However, researchers largely agree that the distribution of elephants in a landscape has far more relevance than the outdated concept of carrying capacity. The Kaza region offers opportunities for elephants to move across national boundaries, further making carrying capacity in a single country or sub-region irrelevant.

Trophy hunting, in any case, would not solve an overpopulation issue as it only targets the largest and most impressive specimens, effectively depleting the elephant population of its strongest genes. Selectively killing older bulls only serves to decimate genetic diversity. And if bulls beyond breeding age are trophy hunted, then this could never serve to control a supposed "overpopulation" of elephants.

As already demonstrated by the Elephants Without Borders report, trophy hunting and poaching have altered the distribution of elephants across the Kaza countries and even within Botswana's landscapes, with herds avoiding areas disturbed by a hunting presence.

When science is ignored in favour of rhetoric and misinformation, it is more critical than ever to scrutinise how policy is shaped and who it prioritises. Biodiversity at large is increasingly threatened by overexploitation and unsustainable use. Greenwashing narratives of sustainability and conservation employing misinformation will only serve to harm Kaza's critical elephant populations.

It is abundantly clear that further research is required to examine the impacts of trophy hunting on elephant populations, especially in light of high poaching statistics, and to better understand ways in which human-elephant conflict can be responsibly mitigated for people and wildlife. DM



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Practical Tips for Better Learning

For quite a while, a nagging voice within me kept suggesting that I might be bewitched because every time I attempted to study my schoolwork, I would fall asleep. I had always believed that other students had it easier academically.

I even embraced not studying for an extended period, favoring cramming over dedicating enough time to my studies. This approach seemed effective, as it helped me pass my Form E examinations. However, it was during university that I realized the importance of studying extends beyond passing exams.

The definition of study is “the activity of gaining knowledge from books,” indicating that studying leads to understanding the material in the books being studied.

I became aware that cramming only aided me in passing exams temporarily, without truly grasping the content. This approach is inadequate, especially in my field of study, History and Philosophy, where true understanding is crucial. How can I truly understand if I just “cram, pass, and forget”?

I gleaned some tips from inquiring about others’ study methods. It’s important to note that this article is not based on proven research. Additionally, studying doesn’t solely pertain to academic work; it encompasses anything one wants to learn, understand, and know thoroughly. So, if you’re not a student but have a keen interest in learning from books, I encourage you to consider employing some of the methods I’ll discuss.

Energy Cycles

This refers to understanding your personal energy levels throughout the day and scheduling tasks accordingly. By identifying periods of peak energy and focusing on demanding tasks during those times, you can maximize productivity and avoid burnout.

- Step 1: Track Your Energy Levels - Pay attention to when you feel most alert and focused throughout the day.

- Step 2: Identify Peak Energy Times - Note the times when you experience the highest levels of energy and mental clarity.

- Step 3: Schedule Tasks Accordingly - Plan to tackle your most demanding tasks during your peak energy times to maximize productivity.

- Step 4: Take Breaks - Recognize when your energy levels start to dip and schedule breaks or less demanding tasks during these periods to avoid burnout.

Parkinson’s Law

This principle states that work expands to fill the time available for its completion. By setting deadlines and allocating specific timeframes for tasks, you can increase productivity and prevent procrastination. This law emphasizes the importance of time management and setting realistic goals.

- Step 1: Set Clear Deadlines - Establish specific deadlines for each task or project you undertake.

- Step 2: Break Tasks into Smaller Goals

- Divide larger tasks into smaller, manageable goals with their own deadlines.

- Step 3: Allocate Timeframes - Assign realistic timeframes for completing each goal or task, considering the time available and the level of complexity.

- Step 4: Monitor Progress - Regularly review your progress and adjust your schedule or goals as needed to stay on track.

Space Repetition

This technique involves spacing out your study sessions over time to reinforce memory retention. By reviewing material at increasing intervals, such as days or weeks apart, you strengthen your long-term memory and avoid forgetting information quickly.

- Step 1: Learn New Material - Start by learning new information or concepts.

- Step 2: Review Regularly - Schedule regular review sessions spaced out over increasing intervals (e.g., hours, days, weeks) to reinforce memory retention.

- Step 3: Increase Intervals - Gradually increase the intervals between review sessions as you become more familiar with the material.

- Step 4: Maintain Consistency - Consistently review the material to prevent forgetting and strengthen long-term memory.

Blurring Method

In this approach, you attempt to recall information from memory without looking at your notes or textbooks. By forcing yourself to retrieve information without prompts, you strengthen your memory and identify gaps in your knowledge, which you can then focus on during subsequent study sessions.

- Step 1: Cover Material - Begin by covering the material you want to study or review.

- Step 2: Recall Information - Attempt to recall the information from memory without referring to your notes or textbooks.

- Step 3: Assess Recall - Evaluate your ability to recall the information accurately and identify areas of weakness or gaps in your knowledge.

- Step 4: Review and Repeat - Review the material again, focusing on the areas where you struggled to recall information, and repeat the process until you feel confident in your understanding.

Second Brain

This concept involves using tools like note-taking apps, digital organizers, or physical notebooks to offload and organize information outside of your mind. By creating external storage for your thoughts and ideas, you free up mental space and ensure that important information is readily accessible for later review.

- Step 1: Choose a Tool - Select a note-taking app, digital organizer, or physical notebook to serve as your “second brain.”

- Step 2: Organize Information - Use your chosen tool to store and organize important information, ideas, and notes from your studies.

- Step 3: Access and Review - Regularly

ly access and review the information stored in your second brain to reinforce learning and aid in recall.

- Step 4: Update and Expand - Continuously update and expand your second brain with new information and insights as you continue to learn and grow.

Feynman Technique

Named after physicist Richard Feynman, this method involves simplifying and teaching concepts as if you were explaining them to someone else. By breaking down complex topics into simpler terms and teaching them aloud, you enhance your understanding and identify areas where you need further clarity.

- Step 1: Choose a Concept - Select a concept or topic you want to understand better.

- Step 2: Explain Simply - Break down the concept into simple terms and explanations as if you were teaching it to someone unfamiliar with the topic. Explain as if you are explaining to a 5 year old.

- Step 3: Identify Gaps - Identify any areas where your understanding is unclear or incomplete.

- Step 4: Review and Simplify - Review the material again, simplifying further and addressing any gaps or areas of confusion until you can explain the concept clearly and confi-

dently.

In summary, effective study habits are integral to academic success and lifelong learning. Throughout this article, we’ve delved into various techniques designed to optimize study sessions and bolster comprehension and retention of material.

From understanding our energy cycles to implementing Parkinson’s Law for efficient time management, each method offers valuable insights into how we can approach learning more strategically.

Additionally, techniques like spaced repetition and utilizing a “second brain” underscore the importance of reinforcement and organization in the learning process. The Feynman Technique further emphasizes the significance of simplifying complex concepts to solidify understanding. It’s vital to recognize that studying transcends traditional academic contexts; it encompasses any pursuit aimed at acquiring knowledge and insight.

By integrating these strategies into our study routines, we not only enhance academic performance but also cultivate a deeper appreciation for learning in all facets of life. Ultimately, consistency and perseverance are paramount on the journey of continuous growth and discovery.

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T-Born spills the tea on new album

TS'OANELO SELLO

Maseru

Tumelo Seliane known by the stage name T-BORN, a Gospel Hip-Hop artist hailing from Morija, has just released a new album titled "Passion."

The album, inspired by the biblical concept of being born again, seeks to bring hope and inspiration to listeners through its message of redemption and restoration.

The artist, who received his stage name from the book of John 3:3 where Jesus speaks to a village man about the importance of being born again, explains that the name symbolizes his personal journey of faith and transformation.

"I received this name from the book of John 3:3 where Jesus was talking to a village man about being born again so I'm born again," T-BORN shares. "I want my music to reflect that same message of hope and renewal to others."

In an interview with the *Weekly Observer*, Seliane explained that the album delves into life's struggles, suffering and sacrifices. Through his music, he aims to connect with listeners who may be feeling lost, hopeless or in need of guidance.

"The message of the album is one of hope, reconciliation, and restoration," he explains. "It's about finding strength in the midst of adversity and holding onto faith even in the darkest of times."

The gospel artist went on to describe the pivotal moment in his life when he found solace in gospel music and rediscovered his faith in God.

"I started singing when I was young in Sunday School at church but when I was doing Standard 5 I started to chase gospel hip hop and I was inspired by Lecrae from USA," he explained.

The artist elaborated on his deep connection with gospel music, emphasizing how the powerful messages and spiritual themes resonated with his own experiences and struggles.

"I sing Gospel Hip-Hop because I come from the ghetto of Hip-Hop but as a Christian, I want to please Jesus with my gift not to do secular music as that won't be for the

glory of God," he continued.

As T BORN's musical journey evolved, he found a sense of purpose in sharing his faith and experiences through his music. "My music is not just about entertainment, it's about conveying a message of hope, redemption and faith to all who listen. It's my way of giving back and spreading positivity in a world that can often feel bleak," he shared.

With the release of his album, T-BORN continues to use his music as a vehicle for expressing his deep-rooted beliefs and sharing his story of transformation and renewal. Through his music, he hopes to inspire others to find strength in their faith and embrace the healing power of gospel music.

"I'm outstanding because I work hard to achieve my dreams and it's pretty hard as an independent artist but I ensure that I don't doubt my work so that I can achieve everything I dreamed of and having sharing the stage with Dumi Mkokstad, Ayanda Ntanzu, Omega Khonou, Takie Ndou and Teboho Molozi in Kroonstad on the 31st March this year I call it dreams come true," he said.

T-BORN shared the challenges he faced as a budding artist trying to break into the competitive music scene. "It was really challenging to do the kind of music I do because a lot of people are not familiar with it but now it's not a challenge anymore because I get bookings even overseas."

The biggest challenge in Lesotho as artist is lack of support from the government, artists are taken as clowns playing where you don't see the government landing a helping hand to uplift us, doing events that will pay artists I wish the government can see the art in the different way," T-BORN revealed.

In a final message to his fans and supporters, T-BORN expressed gratitude for their unwavering support and encouraged them to hold onto their faith in the face of adversity. "I am grateful for all the love and encouragement I have received on this journey. I hope that my music can serve as a source of inspiration and joy for all who listen," he concluded.

Khatala set for Hamburg Marathon

• As she persists her pursuit to qualify for the Paris Olympics

KHOSI PHEKO

Maseru

Lesotho's renowned marathon runner, Neheng Khatala is poised for a splendid performance at the upcoming Hamburg Marathon in Germany this coming Sunday.

This will also be Khatala's last throw of the dice as she hopes to secure a ticket at this year's Olympic games to be staged at Paris in France in August. This Marathon will also feature the continent's big names such as Cybrian Kotut of Kenya who will seek to defend her gold medal after clinching first position in last year's edition.

Khatala will also compete alongside Tirule Mesfin of Ethiopia, one of the most promising prospects on the field. While Mesfin is yet to register a marathon victory, her remarkable personal best of 2:18:47, achieved with a sixth-place finish in the Valencia Marathon in December 2022, is deemed a world class achievement.

Meanwhile Khatala also boasts a number of achievements which include her clocking 2:28:06 in the full marathon.

Victory at this highly anticipated race will ensure Khatala's qualification at the world's biggest games for

the second consecutive edition after participating at the Rio Olympic Games in 2021 where she secured 20th position in the women's marathon.

Speaking to the *Weekly Observer Sport* during the week, Khatala affirmed to leave everything on the running field to participate in the much-coveted games. She said the competitions that she participated in earlier this year in South Africa have given her much needed practice ahead of the Sunday marathon.

"As part of my preparation for the Olympic qualification, I have been participating in some races in South Africa. I secured first place in the Bhekizizwe Joseph Shabalala (BJS) Half Marathon on March 10, I am ready for a marathon scheduled for Sunday aiming for qualification into the Olympic games," she said.

This will be Khatala's major test ever since she sealed a sponsorship with Mining giant entity Kao Mine in November 2023. This partnership was forged after the runner was stripped off her Olympic Solidarity Scholarship by the Lesotho National Olympic Committee (LNOC), accusing her of bad behaviour.

Currently, Lesotho has two athletes who have qualified for the Paris Olym-

pic games namely Tebello Ramakongoana in the men's marathon and Mi-

chelle Tau in the Taekwondo Female Category.



'Neheng Khatala

Alliance, Hill Busters launch ultra-marathon

KANANELO MASILO

Maseru

Insurance giant, Alliance Insurance has forged a partnership with Hill Busters to fund the upcoming Last Long Ultra-marathon. This was disclosed in press conference held in Maseru on Tuesday.

The sponsorship of M100 000 has been inspired by the strides that Lesotho athletes have shown in athletics thus far. The amount will be used to cover all necessities and logistics for the race.

Hlomphang Nkalai, a representative of Hill Busters Club stated that they approached Alliance to plea for their support as they are preparing to commence training for the Comrades Ultra-Marathon which will be in Durban on June 9.

"We used to do everything on our own as a club but we decided to approach Alliance for support, also as we embark this training, we thought wise to invite the 25 candidates who qualified for the



Limakatso Mokobocho

Comrades Ultra-Marathon and everyone who is interested but preparing for next year's marathon," he said.

Nkalai said they will have a training session which will be on May 4, he added that this training session is open to everyone but, a person who joins should

be fit enough to maintain the value of preparations for the athletes who qualified for Comrades Ultra-Marathon.

Limakatso Mokobocho, Alliance Marketing Manager explained that, they are approached by most of the clubs such as Hill Busters but, they do not approve

the endorse the proposals without any evident efforts and growth in such clubs.

She emphasized that Hill Busters had approached them on multiple occasions, and after careful consideration, they have chosen to collaborate. Their decision stems from the observation that Basotho athletes are making significant strides in their athletic pursuits. Consequently, they felt compelled to extend a helping hand without hesitation.

"We thank Basotho for the trust they showed us from the past 30 years till to date, today we are launching 'Alliance Hill Busters Last Long Run Ultra-Marathon.'

We discovered in our observation that Basotho are doing very well in the Athletics so as Hill Busters approached us, we decided to give them a chance and now they will have a training session on the May 4 which will start from Masooe to Ha-Motloolela and it will be a 65km run," she said.

Weekly Observer Sport

**Khatala
set for
Hamburg
Marathon**

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Premier League title race heats up

• As top four giants go head-to-head this weekend



Matlama vs Bantu file picture

KHOSI PHEKO

Maseru

With just four matches left before the Vodacom Premier League (VPL) ends, football enthusiasts will once again be on the lookout for a tantalizing set fixtures this coming weekend.

The significance of this fixtures will be crucial for the VPL title race as all teams in the top four will face each other.

The spectacle will begin on Saturday when log toppers Lioli will welcome fourth place Linare in their own backyard in Teya-Teyaneng.

Lioli will come into this clash spirited to maintain their title charge af-

ter Matlama failed to make the most of their catch-up game against Linare last Sunday.

Victory against Linare would have elevated the capital based side to the top of the log and they would match Lioli on 60 points from their 57 prior to the one all draw against Linare which left them with 58 points.

However, Lioli will have to be at their utmost best to overcome a stubborn Linare, this, as to justify themselves as favourites to clinch the league come mid-May.

Linare will also look to maintain their form since the appointment of Head Coach Bob Mafoso who was tasked to guide the team into the top

four.

Mafoso is without a doubt enjoying the assignment as the green Buffalos (an affectionate name for Linare) are yet to lose a league match since assuming the rank.

They are currently with 47 points and victory against Lioli will see them hold on to fourth position at least for the moment.

On Sunday, the titanic battle between defending champions, Bantu and Matlama to take place at Bambatha Ts'ita Sports Arena in Maseru will once again dominate headlines.

Both teams will be hoping for nothing but a win to remain as contenders for the championship.

Bantu have not had a good season thus far according to their standards but they cannot be ruled out since they are only four points away from the first position.

They are on the third position with 56 points and victory against Matlama will reduce the gap between them and first position to just a point and this is if Linare does its part by defeating Lioli.

Tse Putsoa, as Matlama is popularly known, will also seek to move on from Sunday's draw against draw that prevented them from assuming first position.

A win will ensure that they are still very much alive in the title race.