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Railway collapse sends food prices soaring

Staff Reporter

Lesotho's deteriorating railway infrastructure has worsened an already dire food insecurity crisis, driving up costs for staple foods.

Disruptions to rail freight services, which have left Lesotho Flour Mills (LFM)—the country's major milling company—scrambling to cover increased transport costs, come at a time when Lesotho is facing one of its worst food crises in years.

LFM, along with companies such as Afri-sam (for shipping grain and cement respectively), are the primary users of rail transport in the country.

However, since late 2023, the operators of the rail transport in Lesotho ceased deliveries to LFM due to the badly deteriorated rail line, fearing possible derailment, which would be costly. The train's daily deliveries to other clients in Lesotho apart from LFM continue to be made.

The 2.5-kilometer railway track, linking Maseru Border Gate to Maseru Station, is the country's only railway link, which was established in 1905. The aging infrastructure has become a significant challenge, especially as the railway failure coincides with Prime Minister Samuel Matekane's announcement that the country is grappling with serious food insecurity issues.

He warned that a growing number of Basotho households were struggling to access basic nutrition. According to the Prime Minister, over 700,000 people would be food insecure for the next eight months, and an estimated M1.2 billion in aid would be needed to address the food crisis.

LFM told Newsday this week that it had since switched from the cost-effective rail transport to more expensive road transport, significantly increasing the cost of importing raw materials.

While he would not divulge the detailed



economic impacts of the railway failure on their business operations, LFM's Chief Executive Officer, Fourie Du Plessis, said that the shift to road transport had negatively affected the pricing of their products.

"We are currently working together with the Ministry (of Public Works and Transport) on the rail breakdown maintenance. It is true that this has significantly impacted our commodity prices," Du Plessis said.

"So for us as Lesotho Flour Mills, it is critical for the issue to be resolved as soon as possible for the benefit of our business, which is struggling due to increased operating costs. Road transport is quite expensive compared to rail transport."

The rising cost of maize meal and flour, essential staples in Basotho diets, is especially hitting vulnerable households the hardest.

On their part, the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, the custodian of railway transport infrastructure, has faced criticism for delays in addressing the issue, thereby contributing to the rise in food prices.

In a statement to Newsday this week, the

Ministry said it encountered challenges, such as a lack of expertise and financial contracts, which have hindered efforts to quickly attend to the broken railway line.

The ministry said it has earmarked a M10 million budget for the repair of the railway in their 2025/26 fiscal year plans.

"This matter is at the stage where the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, together with Lesotho Flour Mills, has recently carried out a deep assessment of the railway line through a South African company called Flint in preparation to make a thorough rehabilitation of the railway line," the Ministry said.

"We are currently waiting for this assessment report from Flint. Roads Directorate has started developing an RFP document in preparation for a tender for this project but is waiting for the release of the assessment report."

The Ministry acknowledged that it does not have in-house engineers capable of assessing the full scope of the damage.

"As a Ministry, we do not have engineers

who could assess the situation and give a clear cost of repair, hence we are working with LFM. The railway has been assessed and we are currently waiting for the report from LFM, which will also indicate the cost as well as estimated time to do the repair."

In the last financial year, the Ministry did not have funds to carry out the repairs, but this new financial year, funds are available, and the Roads Directorate will lead the repair process.

The Ministry has allocated M10 million for rail infrastructure maintenance, with repairs set to begin in the 2025/26 financial year.

While the government has promised rail repairs, the timeline remains a major concern. With construction only expected to begin in 2025/26, businesses and consumers face at least another year of high costs before rail services resume.

As Lesotho's market leader, LFM sets the pricing trend for other millers and food processors. With each price hike implemented by LFM, other millers and retailers adjust their prices accordingly, leading to a widespread increase in food prices.

This domino effect is particularly concerning given Lesotho's ongoing food insecurity crisis. Households that already struggle to afford food are now facing even higher costs, making it more difficult for vulnerable communities to access essential nutrition.

Lesotho has long suffered from an underdeveloped and unreliable rail system. The 2.5-kilometer railway track, which links Maseru Border Gate to the station, is the country's only railway link, originally established in 1905.

In 1963, passenger rail services were suspended, before resuming five years later. By the 1970s, road transport had overtaken rail as the preferred travel method, and by 1989, all passenger rail services had ceased. Freight trains continued to run, carrying goods such as cement, maize, fuel, and other bulk imports.

The rail infrastructure in Maseru includes a container handling facility and a bulk grain depot, both of which are owned by the government and leased to Transnet, a South African rail company.

Section 2 condemns controversial army bill

Staff Reporter

The Advocates for the Supremacy of the Constitution (Section 2) have strongly condemned the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) (Amendment) Bill, 2025, arguing that it violates constitutional rights and threatens national security.

The bill, which was tabled by Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Limpho Tau before the National Assembly on Monday this week, seeks to alter the retirement age structure within the LDF.

Tau later told journalists that the bill was intended to ensure development of the army through retention of critical skills and capabilities in alignment with global standards.

However, Section 2 has labeled the bill discriminatory and unjust, imploring the government to suspend its approval pending an open,

inclusive consultation with legal scholars, civil society, members of the public, and LDF members of all ranks, among others.

The civil society organisation asserts that the bill contradicts Sections 18 and 19 of the Constitution, which prohibit discrimination and guarantee equality before the law. The organisation warns that the legislation could divide the military and destabilise the nation.

The bill essentially increases the retirement ages of some of the top ranking officers within the army, while decreasing other lower ranking officers' retirement ages.

"The government touts this bill as a step toward professionalism and global alignment, yet its provisions reek of arbitrary and unjust discrimination that disproportionately punishes lower-ranked soldiers.

"Consider the following: junior soldiers face forced retirement as early as 48 years, while officers enjoy contract extensions up to 62 years, a glaring disparity with no rational basis. Special exemptions coddle medical officers, lawyers, and chaplains, permitting service until 60 years, while other personnel are cast aside earlier without operational justification," statement reads.

"This institutionalised bias, which disproportionately burdens soldiers often hailing from marginalised communities, constitutes discrimination devoid of military necessity, a direct assault on Section 18."

Violation of equality before the law

The organisation also argues that the Bill undermines Section 19 of the Constitution by creating an unfair hierarchy within the LDF.

"Why are officers deemed fit to serve past 60 while soldiers are discarded far earlier, despite serving the same force? No explanation is offered," Section 2 questioned.

The Bill's early retirement mandate could result in economic instability for lower-ranked soldiers, leaving them without reintegration support or career alternatives.

Section 2 has warned that the bill could divide the LDF into privileged officers and disenfranchised soldiers, leading to unrest.

"By favouring officers with extended service while casting soldiers aside, it sows seeds of resentment that could split the army into two hostile camps: one of empowered officers and another of alienated, low-ranked soldiers," Section 2 cautioned.

The organisation further warns that disillusioned soldiers could be radicalised due to their perceived abandonment by the system they served.

Section 2 challenged the government's justification for the bill, arguing that it lacks a logical basis, and has warned that it would take legal action if the bill passes.

"We pledge to seek redress before the High Court should this Bill pass unchanged, safeguarding the rights of all Basotho against this affront to justice," Section 2 said.

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Parliament demands revocation of 75 cannabis licences

Ntsoaki Motaung

The parliamentary Social Cluster Portfolio Committee, tasked with investigating the issuance of cannabis licenses by the Ministry of Health, has called for the immediate revocation of 75 licenses issued between 2017 and 2024.

The committee cited widespread irregularities and suspected corruption in the licensing process. During a heated session, the committee uncovered a system riddled with missing records, unpaid fees, and allegations of licenses being granted without adherence to due process.

At the core of the controversy is a list of 75 companies that reportedly received licenses without paying the required fees.

Committee Chairperson Mokhothu Makhwanyane expressed outrage at the Ministry's failure to produce crucial financial documents, including accounts related to cannabis revenue, a financial analysis report, and receipts from 24 operating companies.

"We want to know who were the lucky persons who were awarded licenses worth M500,000 free of charge while other people had to sell their properties or take loans to get the licenses," Makhwanyane stated.

'Masello Sello, the Ministry's Director Legal, claimed that the list had been provided in a previous meeting but admitted that it could not be located during the current session. However,

she suggested that the information might exist in Parliament's records.

Germina Mphoso, the Director of Pharmaceuticals, revealed a shocking lack of record-keeping, admitting that the ministry did not maintain a comprehensive list of license recipients or payments.

"Literally, the record to say who were they, it was never kept," she said, further noting that Post Bank statements were insufficient to trace payments.

Committee member 'Machabana Lemphane Letsie questioned the application process and discovered that not all applicants had paid the required M15,000 application fee. Letsie also highlighted that some companies were issued licenses without paying the full license fee.

The situation escalated when Mphoso claimed she had received directives from the legal director to issue licenses to individuals who had not made payments.

"She indicated that in some cases she would get a directive from the director legal to say Germina should issue licenses, especially those that were not paid for," Makhwanyane relayed to the committee.

Adding to the controversy, Letsie called for the immediate cancellation of all cannabis licenses issued between 2018 and 2024 until their legality is verified.

"They should not only be canceled locally but globally because there are others used in other countries where their holders are searching for investors saying they have licenses while they did not even pay for them," Letsie emphasised.

Letsie further accused Mphoso and



Germina Mphoso, Director of Pharmaceuticals

Sello of deliberately withholding information.

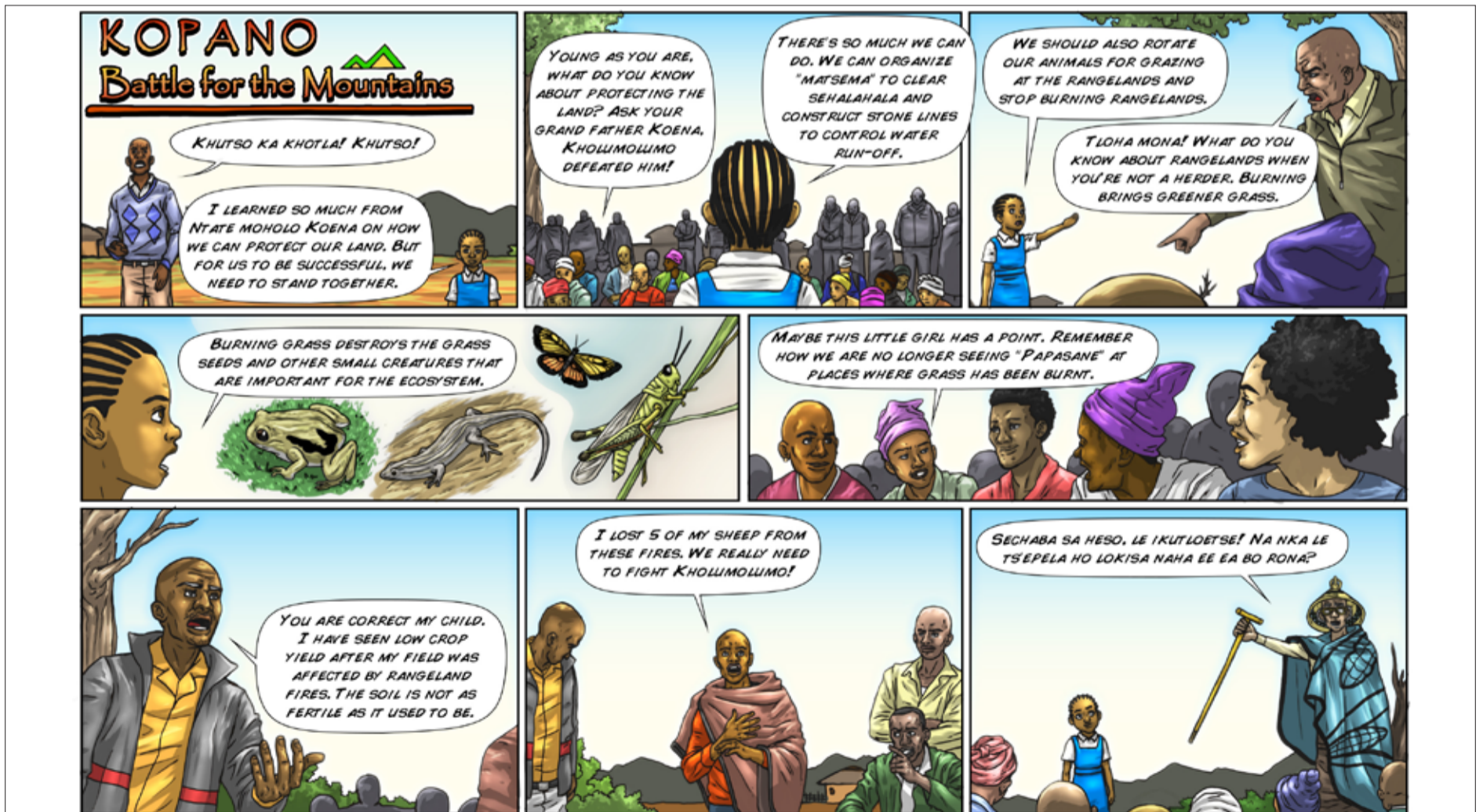
"The way I see it, we are going in vicious circles. Germinah and 'Masello know all about the issues, but they are deliberately not going to tell us about these issues."

The committee has demanded that the Principal Secretary (PS) take immediate action against the implicated officials, invoking Sections 46, 47, and 48 of the Public Financial Management Act, which deal with the recovery of government funds. Makhalan-

yane has given the PS seven days to implement these measures.

Furthermore, the committee has called for an amendment to the law to address the ministry's apparent dysfunction.

"I want us to amend the law immediately so that if the ministry is unable to work because Germina refuses to work, let's remove her from the position as well as the legal officer because they are not being useful; they are holding this ministry at ransom," Letsie asserted.



Illustrated by Sekantši Mokhohlane, a locally based Mosotho artist whose work has reached the international stage.

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Lephema condemns women's role in rising crime, GBV



Minister of Local Government, Chieftainship and Police Lebona Lephema and Members of the Parliament Women's Caucus during the press conference

Ntsoaki Motaung

In a concerning development, the Minister of Local Government, Chieftainship, and Police, Lebona Lephema, has expressed alarm over the increasing involvement of women in various criminal activities, including gender-based violence (GBV).

His remarks shed light on a troubling trend that is complicating law enforcement efforts in Lesotho.

Lephema made these statements during recent a press conference hosted by the Parliament Women's Caucus, where he addressed the need for heightened vigilance and respon-

sibility in combating crime.

While acknowledging positive strides in legislative frameworks, such as the Counter Domestic Violence Bill and the Children's Protection and Welfare Act, Lephema stressed the importance of women not only respecting themselves but also respecting others.

He pointedly condemned women who partake in perpetuating GBV, especially in cases involving young girls and the facilitation of child marriages.

"Child marriage is condoned by women. They should refrain from such behaviors," Lephema stated, recounting a disturbing incident at a clinic in Bobete, where he witnessed

young girls giving birth.

He further criticised the role of women in enabling such practices, which have a profound negative impact on the country's young population.

The Minister also raised alarming concerns about women being involved in human trafficking, alleging that some women are deceiving others with false promises of employment opportunities in South Africa.

Furthermore, Lephema highlighted women's involvement in violent crimes, including homicides, which he linked to complicated relationships involving multiple partners.

"In most of our cases, women are involved

in a way that they had multiple partners, and these partners find out and end up killing each other. I take it in that case women no longer have respect for themselves," he asserted.

Lephema also expressed concern about women providing shelter to undocumented foreign nationals, who he claimed are contributing to the drug trade and other illicit activities in the country.

"In their rented places, women keep foreigners who are in the country illegally. The Ministry of Home Affairs is troubled by finding these people because they are hiding in your places," he said, urging women to cooperate with law enforcement by reporting any suspicious individuals.

The Minister underscored the negative effects of drug abuse, facilitated by foreign nationals, on the youth. He noted how this has led to violent confrontations between parents and children. He called upon women to take proactive steps in addressing drug abuse within their families and helping to apprehend those responsible for trafficking drugs.

To tackle the growing drug problem, the police announced plans to establish a dog squad department to assist in drug detection. Lephema also mentioned the disturbing presence of drug distribution within school environments, which adds a new layer of concern regarding the impact of drugs on youth.

In his closing remarks, Lephema emphasised the critical need for a collaborative effort from all stakeholders to address the rising crime rates. He stressed that fostering a safer environment would not only enhance public safety but also promote investment and contribute to the national development of Lesotho.

20-year-old arrested for terminating pregnancy

Relebohile Makhetha

A 20-year-old woman from Ha-Mahlekefane, Botha Bothe district, is currently in police custody following an alleged abortion on March 24.

According to reports, the woman, who was four months pregnant, purchased Cytotec pills from an individual she claims to have met on Facebook.

She travelled from Maseru to Hlotse on March 22, where she used the pills to terminate her pregnancy.

On March 25, members of the community noticed that her pregnancy had been terminated and alerted the police. Subsequently, the foetus was discovered in a nearby forest. The woman is expected to appear in court once the investigation is complete.

In another case from Mohale's Hoek, Bokang Semakale, a 46-year-old man from Maqhena, appeared before the Mohale's Hoek Magistrate Court on March 26, charged with the murder of his girlfriend. The deceased, Lillo Posholi, 39, also from Maqhena, was found dead at her residence on March 24, in the early hours of the morning.

According to police reports, the deceased and the accused were in a romantic relationship. Investigations revealed that on the night of March 23, they were at a local tavern and left together after 10 PM. Upon returning to her home, the accused allegedly assaulted her, causing severe injuries.

When Semakale noticed she was unwell, he went to a neighbour to borrow money for medical assistance. Alarmed by her condition, the neighbour accompanied him to check on her and discovered that she was deceased. The



body was found in bed with multiple injuries, including an open wound above her right eye. A suspected weapon was recovered at the scene. Semakale remains in custody and is scheduled to reappear in court on April 9.

In a separate incident from Mohale's Hoek, Kotelo 'Ngoae, a 26-year-old man from Mpha-

rane, Ha-Sekunyane, appeared in the High Court on March 17, charged with the murder of two women. The report indicates that Nthabiseng Mohale, 25, from Qalakheng 1, and Mphaphathi Potsane, 23, from Maphutseng Ha-Monehela, were both stabbed to death on November 3, 2017.

Following the incident, 'Ngoae surrendered to the Mohale's Hoek police on the same day. He was found guilty and sentenced to 40 years for each count, with the sentences to run concurrently. Reports indicate that the motive behind the murders was a dispute over money the accused had given to one of the deceased, which he later demanded back, accusing them of spending it.

Reports from Maseru urban indicate that a 34-year-old Mosotho woman from Pitseng London, Leribe district, filed a fraud case at the Maseru Central Police Station on March 24. The report states that she had obtained a loan of M70, 000 from a bank in August 2020 to purchase a car. She entrusted the money to her boyfriend for the purchase, but later discovered that the vehicle had been registered in his name. Police investigations are ongoing.

In another case from Maseru urban, a 42-year-old Lesotho Mounted Police Service officer stationed in Hlotse, Leribe, and a 32-year-old temporary employee from the Ministry of Home Affairs in Leribe are assisting with police investigations regarding allegations of accepting bribes on March 28.

According to reports, a Lesotho national residing in South Africa visited the Ministry of Home Affairs to change her surname after marriage and was instructed to obtain a police clearance. She completed the necessary procedures at the police station, paying the required M150 fee, and was told the clearance would be ready in two weeks.

Subsequently, a police officer allegedly offered to expedite the process for M3, 500. After negotiating, the individual agreed to pay M2, 000, and a meeting was arranged.

A police sting operation led to the arrest of the Ministry of Home Affairs employee. Investigations are ongoing, and the individuals involved are expected to appear in court once the investigation is concluded.



Newsday Courts & Police Reports

Setback for accused soldiers in Tang murder trial

Relebohile Makhetha

Chief Justice Sakoane Sakoane has ruled that Corporal Tjekane Sebolai and Private Selone Ratšiu must stand trial for the murder of Lisebo Tang, the attempted murder of Tšepo Jane, and malicious damage to property.

The ruling comes after the accused sought to have the charges dismissed, arguing that crucial forensic evidence was flawed.

The defense, led by Advocate Sello Tšabeha, had petitioned the court to drop the charges, citing issues with the ballistic evidence.

They highlighted that a bullet fragment found in Tang's body was never tested and that a ballistic report failed to match bullets from the crime scene with the rifles examined. The defense further argued that an external expert report confirming these discrepancies was never submitted to the court.

Despite these objections, Justice Sakoane found the evidence sufficient for the case to proceed. The accused soldiers are alleged



to have opened fire on May 9, 2014, in Ha Leqele, near the residence of former Army Commander Tlali Kamoli, resulting in Tang's death and Jane's injury.

Prosecutor advocate Motene Rafoneke asserted that the state had presented a prima facie case, meaning the accused must respond to the charges. He warned that if they

remained silent, the court could convict them based solely on the available evidence.

Eyewitness Account and Forensic Evidence

Jane, the sole surviving victim, also took the stand. He recounted how he and Tang were fired upon by soldiers after he stopped near Kamoli's home. Jane survived and was

treated at Makoanyane Military Hospital, where the army covered his medical costs. He later learned of Tang's death due to multiple gunshot wounds.

Other key witnesses included Lehloholo Lesale, the owner of the rented vehicle damaged in the shooting, and Detective Lance Sergeant Liau Seeko, a crime scene officer. The court reviewed several exhibits, including two AK-47 rifles, a postmortem report, a medical report, and a statement of facts.

The postmortem report, conducted on May 14, 2014, confirmed that Tang died from multiple gunshot wounds that caused severe internal organ damage.

The case was initially handled by Justice Kabelo Lebotse, a foreign judge appointed to oversee high-profile cases. In 2020, he acquitted one of the original three accused, Private Kopano Matsoso, citing insufficient evidence. However, before ruling on Sebolai and Ratšiu, Lebotse resigned, leading to the reassignment of the case.

Upon taking over, Chief Justice Sakoane ordered a retrial in 2023, leading to the current proceedings. The accused soldiers now face full trial on charges of murder, attempted murder, and malicious damage to property.

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Newsday Business

Belo factories rocked by vandalism



Ha Belo Industrial Estate Lesotho

Seabata Mahao

The Ha-Belo Industrial Estate, a multi-million Maloti project in the Botha-Bothe district, has unfortunately become the target of escalating criminal activities, including frequent vandalism and cable theft.

The estate, which was originally envisioned to employ up to 14,500 people once fully operational, is currently grappling with the impact of these disruptions. The property remains largely un-

used due to the lack of power and water supply.

Recently handed over to the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) for management, the estate has faced a growing number of theft incidents, particularly targeting electrical infrastructure.

Rethabile Mdee, the LNDC's General Manager of Development and Building Operations, disclosed that another case of electricity cable theft occurred at the estate just the previous night.

"Electricity cable theft has become an in-

creasingly frequent problem, and though the damage isn't major, we fear it will escalate if not addressed promptly," Mdee explained. "If we do not prevent it now, it could cause more harm in the future."

Mdee revealed that the LNDC is currently in discussions with the Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) to explore a temporary connection. This would not only secure the estate but also provide essential lighting to improve security.

"The temporary connection will assist us in lighting up the estate at night, which will help security personnel perform their duties more effectively," Mdee said.

The corporation has also partnered with the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) to bolster security efforts. Some theft cases have already led to prosecutions, but Mdee emphasized the need for more permanent measures. He disclosed that the LNDC is working on establishing a dedicated police station within the estate by allocating one of the buildings to the LMPS.

"We are addressing these challenges through a comprehensive approach that combines robust security strategies, community engagement, and the strict enforcement of laws," he said.

Despite these challenges, progress continues on the construction of the industrial estate, which began in January 2018 at a cost of M900 million. Upon completion, the estate is expected to house 51 factory shells designed for industries such as textiles and agri-business. When fully operational, the estate is projected to create over 40,000 jobs, including an estimated 14,250 permanent positions. Additionally, the development will generate approximately 3,000 non-permanent jobs during construction.

In line with this industrial progress, the LNDC

recently held an environmental initiative at Ha-Belo, planting 1,000 trees as part of its commitment to environmental conservation.

The event, which took place on Friday, was praised by the Chief of Ha-Belo, Morena Nene Maseru, who commended the initiative for its potential to enhance the local environment and provide various ecological benefits.

"This act is of great importance as trees bring clean air, create shade, and provide numerous other benefits," said Maseru. "I am grateful to the LNDC for this gift to our community."

Thabang Busa, an LNDC representative, emphasized the importance of collective responsibility in protecting the environment.

"Everyone has a duty to safeguard the environment. A place as beautiful as this must be preserved and cared for," Busa remarked.

The initiative, which began in Ha-Tikoe last year, is viewed as a step toward creating a legacy of sustainability.

Lehlohonolo Qhobela, the Environmental and Forestry Officer for Butha-Buthe, praised the project for its potential to enhance local ecosystems.

"Planting 1,000 aspen trees here is a major initiative. These trees are fast-growing and resilient to various weather conditions," Qhobela noted.

The LNDC also reaffirmed its commitment to environmental stewardship.

"Our 2025 slogan, 'We dress the land,' reflects our dedication to improving the nation and creating a better space for future generations," said Mpsi Nkotsi, Environmental, Health, and Safety Officer at the LNDC.

Mdee concluded by underscoring the significance of the tree-planting event as a symbol of the LNDC's commitment to sustainable development and creating a healthy environment.

"We thank everyone who contributed to this project. It's an effort we must all continue together," Mdee said.

RSL demonstrates resilience despite economic challenges



The Commissioner General of the Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL) addressing the media during the revenue report

Seabata Mahao

In exceeding its revenue collection target for the 2024/2025 financial year by three percent, the Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL) has demonstrated strong resilience amid Lesotho's ailing fiscal landscape.

The RSL has certainly come a long way since the 2023/24 financial year, where it missed its revenue target of M9.78 billion, managing to remit only M8.87 billion.

'Mathabo Mokoko, the RSL's Commissioner General, announced at a media briefing held on April 1, that the organisation remitted M9.74 billion to the government, surpassing the set target of M9.48 billion by M261.19 million, marking a three percent positive variance.

The performance also represents an 11 percent increase compared to the previous year.

The overall tax collection comprised Income

Tax, Value Added Tax (VAT), Tobacco & Alcohol Products Levy, and Gaming Levy. Customs duties were excluded as they form part of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) pool.

Income Tax had an annual target of M4.93 billion, with actual remittances standing at M5.25 billion, exceeding the target by M325.89 million, representing a 6.6 percent increase. Value Added Tax (VAT) was targeted at M4.35 billion, but actual remittances stood at M4.3 billion, falling short by M49.64 million (1.1 percent).

The Tobacco & Alcohol Products Levy had a target of M168.45 million, with collections amounting to M160.80 million, reflecting a shortfall of M7.65 million (4.5 percent). The Gaming Levy, however, exceeded expectations, with a target of M7.13 million but actual remittances at M16.40 million, surpassing the target by M9.27 million, marking an impressive 130 percent increase.

Additionally, RSL processed refunds totaling M1.05 billion, with VAT refunds at M914.60 million and Income Tax refunds at M134.34 million, representing a 25 percent increase.

Despite this commendable performance, Mokoko highlighted ongoing economic challenges. Global economic growth remains stagnant, with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) projecting GDP growth of 3.3 percent in 2025 and 2026, still below the pre-pandemic average of 3.7 percent. Regionally, Sub-Saharan Africa is expected to grow at 4.2 percent in 2025 and 2026, while South Africa's GDP is forecasted at 1.5 percent in 2025 and 1.6 percent in 2026. Lesotho's economy remains stable at a 2.5 percent growth rate, though with decreasing momentum.

Inflation has impacted purchasing power, shifting consumer spending to lower-taxed goods and services. Additionally, taxable imports declined by 3 percent, while non-taxable imports increased by a similar percentage, negatively affecting VAT collections.

Despite these challenges, the tax-to-GDP ratio increased from 22.5 percent to 23.5 percent, with

an annual remittance growth of 10 percent. Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies recorded a 51.5 percent increase, while the education sector grew by 28.9 percent. Information services saw a 22.5 percent rise, and water supply registered an 18.8 percent increase.

Mokoko emphasised the importance of compliance, noting that while there is growing adherence among taxpayers, issues such as tax evasion, under-declaration of income, and non-adherence to payment arrangements persist.

She stated, "Non-compliance robs our country of its ability to provide for its citizens. It defeats the very purpose of taxation, which is to ensure proper redistribution of income."

To address these challenges, RSL is implementing strategic interventions under its three-year strategy, LESOKOANA, focusing on employee well-being and motivation while enhancing operational efficiency through data and technology.

Initiatives include the auto-issuance of tax clearance certificates, integration with various institutions to streamline tax payments, and the development of data science models to enhance client understanding and decision-making.

Mokoko expressed optimism about pending tax bills in parliament, stating, "We remain highly optimistic that the pending tax bills in parliament will be enacted soon. These Bills, once legislated, will enhance revenue collection and further enable our capability to modernize our tax administration."

ESTATE NOTICE

ESTATE LATE MOETI TANKI EF/57/2025

Notice is hereby given in terms of SECTION 37 of the Administration of Estate and Inheritance Act No. 2 of 2024 calling upon all heirs, legatees and creditors of the deceased to attend a meeting before the Master of the High Court at the office of the Master of the High Court on Mohale's Hoek on WEDNESDAY 30TH APRIL 2025 at 10:00 AM for the purpose of; Proposing some person/ persons to be appointed by the Master as Executor Dative.

Dated at MOHALE'S HOEK this 28th day of March, 2025.

Master of the High Court Office
Magistrate Court Yard

Opp. St. Stephens Anglican Church
Mohale's Hoek

R. MOLUPE (MR.)
ASSISTANT MASTER OF THE HIGH COURT

Lesotho seeks urgent U.S. talks over tariff hike

Seabata Mahao

The Minister of Trade, Industry, and Business Development, Mokhethi Shelile, has announced plans to engage in urgent discussions with U.S. officials following the recent imposition of a 50 percent tariff on Lesotho imports, effective from this month.

Speaking to journalists in Maseru last night flanked by Foreign Affairs Minister Lejone Mpotjoane and Finance Minister Dr Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane, Shelile emphasised the importance of these talks to reaffirm the strong trade relations between Lesotho and the United States.

"We are preparing for an urgent meeting with our U.S. counterparts to address the two tariffs imposed—the baseline tariff of 10%, which will take effect on April 5, 2025, and the reciprocal 40% tariff, effective on April 9, 2025," Shelile explained.

Earlier in the day, Shelile and his team met with the U.S. Embassy in Lesotho's Charge d'Affaires a.i. Thomas Hines to seek guidance on how to approach the negotiations.

"The U.S. government wants Lesotho to have a more solid fiscal position, one that is less reliant on imports," Shelile said.

"Currently, we have spent USD 240 million on imported materials this year, which significantly exceeds what we receive in returns from the U.S. In their calculations, 99% of the tariffs reflect Lesotho's exports to the U.S., compared to only 1% of U.S. exports to Lesotho. By dividing this figure in half, they arrived at the decision to impose a 50% tariff on our goods."

Shelile noted that the tariff hike comes at a crucial time, as Lesotho prepares to enter negotiations with the U.S. government regarding the renewal of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which is set to



expire in September 2025.

"The majority of our exports to the U.S. are textile products, motor vehicle seats, and trout, though they don't directly reach the U.S. market. The textile sector, in particular, is crucial, with 11 firms directly supplying the U.S. market through AGOA, employing over 12,000 Basotho, the majority of whom are women," Shelile emphasised.

"This tariff increase threatens jobs, and if it continues, we face a significant challenge in protecting our workforce."

In announcing the tariff on Lesotho imports this week, the U.S. President Donald Trump said:

"I have signed the reciprocal tariffs order that means, they do it to us, and we do it to them. It is a declaration of economic independence, for years hardworking Americans were forced to seat on the side-lines as other

nations got and powerful much of it at our expense but now it is our turn to prosper and in so doing, the trillions and trillions of dollars to reduce our taxes and pay our national debt and it will happen real quickly. If you want your tariff rate to be 0%, build your product or plant here in America."

Earlier in the week, Shelile had underscored the vital role AGOA has played in Lesotho's economic growth, particularly in the textile sector. He reflected on the history of AGOA's impact.

"In 2000, before AGOA's launch, employment in the apparel sector stood at 19,000. By 2003, thanks to AGOA, that number skyrocketed to over 30,000. For the first time in Lesotho's history, more people were employed in the private sector than in the public sector, marking a transformative shift in our economic landscape."

The extension of AGOA, first renewed in 2015, is set to expire on September 25, 2025.

"The consequences of not renewing AGOA would be disastrous. Currently, 11 companies in Lesotho are directly servicing the U.S. market, employing over 12,000 Basotho. If AGOA is not extended, these jobs could disappear, and the ripple effects would extend to other sectors, including the taxi industry, real estate, and retail businesses."

In response to recent market challenges, Lesotho has been working to diversify its markets, particularly focusing on Southern Africa, where there is a growing demand for locally sourced products, similar to trends in the U.S.

"All textile factories that have opened or expanded since September 2024 are now servicing the South African market. We are encouraging this through Supply Chain Financing, which allows us to process orders for South African retailers. While this is a step in the right direction, it is still not enough to tackle the unemployment challenges we face," the Minister explained.

The government is also focusing on expanding into other sectors beyond textiles. Shelile pointed to the Belo industrial estate in Botha-Bothe as an example of new opportunities.

"The estate has been successful, with all 51,000 square meters now available for lease. We expect this to create up to 7,000 new jobs in the coming year," he said, noting that the projects being planned range from automotive manufacturing to the production of electric scooters.

"The livelihoods of 12,000 Basotho are at stake. We cannot afford to lose these jobs, and we must continue fighting for the renewal of AGOA to protect our people and our economy," Shelile stated.



Newsday Health

Lesotho backed to stay on track amidst U.S. health funding cuts



Minister of Health Selibe Mochoboroane

Ntsoaki Motaung

In a recent session of the National Assembly, Democratic Congress (DC) propotional representative legislator 'Mabafokeng Mpobole questioned the Minister of Health regarding the impact of reduced funding from the United

States of America (USA) on Lesotho's "Test and Treat" HIV and AIDS policy.

Minister of Health, Selibe Mochoboroane, responded by revealing that the suspension of funds by the USA has put 1,367 jobs at risk, including those of doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and counselors who are critical to pro-

viding HIV/AIDS-related services. He stated that M111,259,680 is required to ensure the continued employment of these essential workers.

Additionally, M69,992,499 is needed to procure testing commodities and medical oxygen. In total, the funding gap left by the US suspension amounts to M181,252,179.

Despite these financial challenges, the Minister assured the Assembly that the Ministry of Health will continue with the "Test and Treat" HIV/AIDS policy.

"This policy aims to detect new infections and ensure that individuals who test positive are encouraged to start treatment immediately. The goal is to provide medication early, preventing patients from developing severe illnesses and opportunistic diseases such as TB and cervical cancer," he said.

Mochoboroane also indicated that Lesotho remains on track to achieve the 95-95-95 global targets. He reported that in 2023, the country had already achieved 95 percent,

94 percent, and 99 percent gains. He further stated that new HIV infections from November 1, 2024, to February 28, 2025, numbered 2,701.

The Minister emphasised that the USA funding suspension has not disrupted health services, and the ministry is taking measures to ensure that people living with HIV continue to receive blood testing and medication.

"These measures include ongoing health education and the involvement of the Lesotho Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (LENPWHA), as well as network companies, in reminding individuals to attend health facilities through short messages (SMS). The Ministry will maintain the availability of HIV/AIDS treatment at the National Drug Service Organisation (NDSO) and continue with existing policies, including the provision of long-term (six-month) treatment.

"The budget for 2025/2026 includes the allocation of M268,306,602 for the procurement of ARVs," he said.

Railway failure: A dereliction of duty by govt

The breakdown of Lesotho's sole railway link is not just an infrastructure failure - it is a national crisis that lays bare the government's chronic neglect, incompetence, and lack of strategic foresight.

This is not merely about a crumbling 2.5-kilometer track; it is about a failing state apparatus that has once again betrayed the people it is supposed to serve.

For over a century, the railway track linking Maseru Border Gate to Maseru Station has been a crucial artery for the country's economy. It has played a fundamental role in transporting goods, particularly grain - a staple food source for thousands of Basotho.

Yet, after years of use and inadequate maintenance, the railway has deteriorated to such an extent that Transnet, the operator, was left with no choice but to halt deliveries to Lesotho Flour Mills (LFM), citing fears of derailment.

The consequence? Increased transport costs, skyrocketing food prices, and worsening food insecurity in a country already struggling to feed its people.

Reliable sources indicate that the government was repeatedly warned by Transnet about the deteriorating condition of the railway line. These warnings were met with indifference and inaction.

Instead of proactively allocating funds for maintenance, the government chose to ignore the crisis until it reached breaking point. The result is an essential supply chain collapsed, businesses were forced to resort to more expensive road transport, and consumers - already grappling with economic hardship - were left to bear the brunt of price hikes.

Even when Transnet finally suspended grain deliveries to LFM, the government failed to react with urgency. Incredibly, no budget was allocated for railway repairs in the 2024/25 fiscal year, despite the clear and immediate need.

The government took its time, dragging its feet while the cost of staple foods surged. Bread and maize meal prices climbed beyond the reach of many ordinary Basotho, deepening poverty and exacerbating the country's food crisis.

Given the government's gross negligence, it is only fair to ask: should the public demand compensation for the financial losses they have suffered due to its incompetence?

If a private company had failed this spectacularly, heads would roll. Lawsuits would be filed. Why should the government be held to a lower standard when its inaction has plunged the nation into deeper economic turmoil?

At the very least, the government owes the people of Lesotho an explanation, a plan, and, more importantly, immediate action. Empty promises and vague reassurances will no longer suffice. The government must demonstrate accountability and ensure that a crisis of this magnitude never happens again.

Beyond the economic impact, this railway disaster exposes a much larger problem: the government's misplaced priorities. A functional railway system is not a luxury - it is a necessity for food security and economic stability.

When a government fails to uphold such a fundamental responsibility, it must be asked: what exactly is it prioritising? Where is public money going if not toward maintaining critical infrastructure?

Lesotho's leaders must recognise that infrastructure failures have real human costs. Every delay in restoring the railway line translates to more hardship for the people. The longer they take, the more suffering they inflict. This crisis is a direct attack on the livelihoods and well-being of the people.

It is time to end the excuses. It is time for urgent intervention. The government must not only repair the railway line but also commit to a long-term infrastructure maintenance strategy to prevent future disasters.

Anything less is a dereliction of duty, and the people cannot afford to tolerate such failures any longer.



NO COMMENT



Theko Tlebere

Common Concern

Lesotho's democratic facade cracks as militarisation and power consolidation deepen



The mountain kingdom of Lesotho has long been a paradox: a constitutional monarchy with a veneer of democratic governance, yet perpetually teetering on the edge of military-driven chaos.

Today, under Prime Minister Sam Matekane, a former businessman who campaigned on vows of meritocracy, prosperity, and depoliticising the security forces, the nation's democratic aspirations are unravelling.

Instead of reform, Matekane's government has deepened the military's grip on power, raising alarms about a slide toward authoritarianism masked by hollow rhetoric.

When Matekane's Revolution for Prosperity (RFP) party swept elections in 2022, it was hailed as a break from Lesotho's cycle of political instability. Matekane, a self-made millionaire, positioned himself as an outsider capable of curbing corruption and modernising the state.

Central to his platform was the long-stalled Security Sector Reform Programme (SSRP), a blueprint to professionalise the military and police, clarify their roles, and hold abusers accountable.

Yet two years on, the SSRP remains shelved. Instead, Matekane's administration is now prioritising extending the

tenure of military loyalists, notably Lieutenant General Mojalefa Letsoela, the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) commander, whose term was controversially prolonged despite reaching mandatory retirement age.

This is not reform; its entrenchment, the military is not being depoliticised rather it is being empowered as a political actor.

There is a clear pattern. Last year, the heads of the LDF, police, and national security service appeared jointly on national television to declare they would "not tolerate" parliamentary efforts to oust Matekane via a no-confidence vote - a brazen threat against legislative democracy.

The move, unprecedented in Lesotho's recent history, drew condemnation from civil society. When security chiefs publicly threaten elected representatives, it is a coup against democratic norms. This is militarisation without tanks.

Matekane's supporters defend his approach as pragmatic stabilisation. They are in pains on social media, saying security is the foundation of development and implicitly adding that the PM is ensuring institutions can function without interference. Letsoela's agents are already in charge of the DCEO.

But such arguments ring hollow to Basotho. Unemployment hovers near 45 percent, poverty afflicts half the population, and the

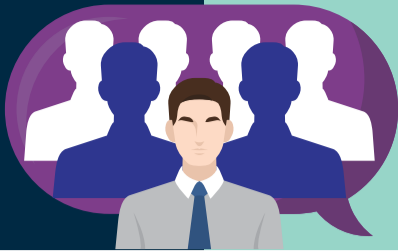
government's austerity measures have slashed social spending. Meanwhile, Matekane's focus on consolidating security alliances has overshadowed governance.

So, he promised meritocracy but delivered militarism. The nation voted for change not to have 100-year-old Generals!

Lesotho's backslide carries implications beyond its borders. As Southern Africa grapples with democratic erosion, from Zimbabwe's entrenched autocracy to Mozambique's insurgency, Lesotho risks becoming a cautionary tale. The SADC, which mediated past crises here, has remained muted, prioritising stability over democratic scrutiny.

For Matekane, the path ahead is fraught. With elections due in 2027, his reliance on military backing may secure short-term survival but jeopardise long-term legitimacy. As the saying goes: "You can't build prosperity on a foundation of fear."

The question now is whether Basotho and the international community will hold Matekane to his promises or allow Lesotho to become another democracy subsumed by the men in uniform.



Newsday Feature

Raped and infected with HIV: Lisemelo's heart-wrenching story of GBV

Ntsoaki Motaung

Lisemelo Seboka* carries a burden that is neither visible nor tangible but deeply embedded in her soul - a silent wound that refuses to heal.

Her story is not just one of pain but of resilience in the face of a trauma that continues to shape her life. Eight years ago, Seboka's world was shattered in a single night, a night that altered the course of her life indefinitely.

Even now, the memories remain vivid, lurking just beneath the surface of her daily routine.

"There is no place I can hide from what happened," she says, her voice steady yet burdened with sorrow.

At 28, she is both a survivor and a single mother, navigating life between moments of strength and overwhelming sadness.

Seeking a fresh start, she left Lesotho for South Africa, hoping to leave the painful past behind. But every time she takes her daily HIV medication, she is reminded of that fateful night - a cruel reality that refuses to be forgotten.

The night that changed everything

Seboka did not contract HIV through reckless choices. It was violently imposed upon her. The trauma followed her even as she tried to rebuild her life. She took a job as a maid in Maseru, seeking stability for herself and her child. It was in this position that she suffered yet another betrayal of trust.

One evening, left alone with her employer's son, what seemed like an innocent request for a phone quickly escalated into a nightmare. What followed was a brutal assault that stripped away her sense of safety.

"He told me not to scream. We fought, but I got tired, and he was stronger. I just lay there, helpless until he was done," Seboka recalls, her voice barely above a whisper.

The next morning, despite her terror, she reported the attack to the police and sought medical help. But the legal battle proved to be another painful ordeal.

Reliving the trauma through court proceedings drained her mentally and physically.

"Everything was just so tiring. It was hard on my mind, my body, everything,"



she says. The thought of facing her attacker in court became unbearable. Eventually, she made the difficult choice to withdraw the case and flee to South Africa, hoping to escape the trauma. But the pain followed her there, too.

As a domestic worker in South Africa, Lisemelo found herself constantly on edge, fearful of every man she encountered.

"Just seeing a man made me feel terrified. I was, and I still am, scared to be alone with any man," she admits.

She switched jobs multiple times, each move fueled by an unrelenting search for a sense of security she could not find. One night, a male employer frightened her so much that she suffered a panic attack, landing her in the hospital. It was in that moment she realized she could not outrun her trauma.

The lifelong reminder

Every day, Seboka takes her HIV medication - a constant, bitter reminder of what was stolen from her.

"I was healthy the day I went to the doctor after I was attacked. But months later, I tested positive. Each pill is a painful reminder of the night my life was stolen."

Lisemelo's story is a stark testament to the lingering wounds of gender-based violence (GBV). It is a call to action for greater awareness, support, and justice for survivors.

"We need to remember that healing takes a long time, and some wounds never fully disappear. We must strive to build a society where survivors like me find compassion and support," she urges.

The reality of gender-based violence in Lesotho

The Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) has reported alarming levels of GBV in the country.

In December 2024, Assistant Commissioner of Police, Tebello Tšepe, revealed that from January to September 2024 alone, 454 cases involving adults were recorded. Of these, 266 were sexual offences, primarily affecting women.

"Most victims of sexual offences are women or females. We also recorded 127 cases of assault, including common assault and grievous bodily harm (GBH), in which women were assaulted by their husbands, spouses, or intimate partners," Tšepe stated.

Cases involving children were even more distressing, with 364 reported incidents, including 284 sexual offences.

"At least one girl was sexually assaulted every day in Lesotho from January to September 2024, making the country an unsafe place for girls aged 12 to 17 to live," Tšepe disclosed.

A 2015 Gender-Based Violence Indicators Study by Gender Links found that 86 percent of women and 40 percent of

men in Lesotho had experienced some form of violence in their lifetime. However, the vast majority of these cases go unreported, with survivors often too afraid or discouraged to seek legal or medical assistance.

According to an Afro-Barometer study, GBV ranks as the most pressing women's rights issue in Lesotho. A staggering 53 percent of Basotho believe that violence against women is either a "somewhat common" (28 percent) or "very common" (25 percent) occurrence in their communities.

Seboka's story is not just about her own suffering—it is about the countless other women who endure similar fates in silence. It is a call for justice, for stronger protections, and for a society that refuses to let these crimes go unpunished.

Gender-based violence is not just a women's issue; it is a national crisis that demands urgent action. Survivors like Seboka need more than sympathy—they need support, legal protection, and a system that does not force them to relive their trauma in courtrooms that fail to deliver justice.

The scars of violence do not fade easily. But with collective action, advocacy, and systemic change, we can work towards a future where survivors are no longer left to suffer in the shadows.

*Not her real names



LEROATHOLI POLYTECHNIC

INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

TOURISM TRAINING PROGRAMME

Assignment Title: Development of Training Manuals for Tourism Skills at Lerotholi Polytechnic

INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to put forward a Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) for the development of Training Manuals for Tourism Skills at Lerotholi Polytechnic. It is therefore necessary to invite and encourage local and international organizations which may show "Expressions of Interest" in working together with Lerotholi Polytechnic in its efforts to see this significant undertaking.

INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The Government of Lesotho (GOL), through Lerotholi Polytechnic (LP), has identified the need to develop a high-quality training programme with materials for critical Tourism and Hospitality skills. This initiative is aimed at equipping trainees with practical knowledge and competencies to succeed in Lesotho's growing tourism sector. The programme will align with Lerotholi Polytechnic's commitment to creating industry-ready graduates who can contribute to the country's strategic tourism goals.

This initiative seeks to develop comprehensive training manuals that cover diverse tourism areas, focusing on practical skills and theoretical foundations. The manuals will prepare trainees to specialize in activities such as hiking, mountaineering, abseiling, fly fishing, bird watching, skiing, sports tourism, heritage site management, and Hospitality to name a few. It is on the basis of the above background that Lerotholi Polytechnic hereby announces an invitation for Expression of Interest from local and international companies in helping in development of the training manuals.

SCOPE OF WORK

The role of the Curriculum Development Expert is to work closely with Lerotholi Polytechnic to develop an integrated curriculum, training manuals, handbooks and to:

- Conduct a consultative workshop to enable stakeholders and development partners to make inputs on the proposed curriculum;
- Follow Lerotholi Polytechnic curriculum development guidelines;
- Align the curriculum with the Lesotho Qualifications Framework;
- Develop an integrated curriculum of short courses that respond to the needs of the country, with a provision of e-learning modules too.
- Develop comprehensive teaching/training manuals to be used by trainers, to build the capacity of industry service providers;
- Develop handbooks that will give trainees practical guidance in becoming players in the tourism sector;
- Make recommendations on how best the curricula can be delivered, including recommendations about the most effective training strategies, methodologies, and tools;

- To align the short courses with the changing nature of the discipline;
- To ensure that the short courses are still in line with the National Development Goals of Lesotho.

SCOPE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The assignment involves the development of a training programme with manuals or materials in the following focus areas:

1. **Tour Guiding:** Practical and theoretical approaches to leading groups.
2. **Tour Operations:** Operational and logistical aspects of tour operating businesses.
3. **Event Management:** Organizing and managing tourism events.
4. **Hospitality Skills:** Customer service, food and beverage management, and accommodations.
5. **Specialized Activities:**
 - Hiking and mountaineering
 - Abseiling and adventure sports
 - Fly fishing and bird watching
 - Skiing and other winter sports
 - Sports tourism
 - National monuments and cultural heritage management

The deliverables will serve as practical tools for learners, enabling them to become key players in Lesotho's tourism sector.

SHORTLISTING CRITERIA

Interested consultants/firms must demonstrate expertise in tourism training and manual development. The criteria for shortlisting are as follows:

1. Evidence of business registration and a valid trader's license.
2. Valid tax clearance from the relevant authority.
3. Proof of current registration with relevant professional tourism or educational bodies.
4. Demonstrated experience in curriculum or training manual development in tourism or related fields.
5. Evidence of similar assignments completed within the past 5 years, including references.
6. Technical and managerial capacity, including an organogram or narrative of key personnel.
7. A detailed cost proposal with clear identification of all costs.
8. Knowledge of Lesotho's tourism sector will be an added advantage.
9. Among its personnel, there should be local Basotho experts with the knowledge of regional tourism.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Expressions of Interest must be submitted in written form in five (5) hard copies (one original and four copies) in a sealed envelope clearly labelled: "Expression of Interest – Development of Training Manuals for Tourism at Lerotholi Polytechnic" Submissions must be delivered in person to the Procurement Manager's Office on or before **30th April 2025 at 12:00 noon**. Submissions by email are also accepted on this email address: procurement@lp.ac.ls.

For further details, please contact:

Procurement Manager
Lerotholi Polytechnic,
P. O. Box 16
Matsoatlareng,
Maseru
Email: mokoenan@lp.ac.ls/ procurement@lp.ac.ls/ neotlebere@gmail.com

DISCLAIMER

Lerotholi Polytechnic is not committed contractually in any way to those applicants who will be shortlisted and invited to submit their proposals. The issue of this Request for EOI does not commit or otherwise oblige Lerotholi Polytechnic to proceed with any part or steps of the process. Whilst the information contained in this Request for EOI has been formulated with all due care, Lerotholi Polytechnic does not warrant or represent that the information is free from errors or omissions. The information is made available on the understanding that Lerotholi Polytechnic and its respective employees and agents, shall have no liability (including liability by reason of negligence) for any loss, damage, cost or expense incurred or arising by reason of any person using or relying on the information and whether caused by reason of any error, omission or misrepresentation in the information or otherwise.

LATE APPLICATIONS

Late applications will not be accepted. Any application that is not received in full by the closing time and date shall not be considered. Where an application is received by post after the closing time and date, the applicant may need to satisfy the Lerotholi Polytechnic that all the required information was posted or lodged at a Post Office or other recognised delivery agency at a time that should reasonably have allowed delivery before the closing time and date. Applications sent by email and not completely received by the closing time and date shall not be considered.

Applicants will be advised in writing whether they are to be shortlisted for submission of proposals or were unsuccessful. An unsuccessful applicant will not be provided with information specifically comparing its application with those of other applicants. No rating data will be provided.



Road Users are informed of Toll Gate Fees increase at all Ports of Entry, effective 01 April 2025

Class	Local Registered Vehicles / Foreign Registered Vehicles	Old Fees	New Fees
Class 1 Motor Cycle and Light Vehicle designed or adopted for conveyance of people or freight with no heavy axle	Local Registered Vehicles	M65.00	M70.00
	Foreign Registered Vehicles	M90.00	M100.00
Class 2 Medium Heavy Vehicles designed or adopted for conveyance of people or freight with heavy axle	Local Registered Vehicles	M110.00	M120.00
	Foreign Registered Vehicles	M150.00	M165.00
Class 3 Large Heavy Vehicles designed or adopted for conveyance of people or freight with 3 axle	Local Registered Vehicles	M160.00	M175.00
	Foreign Registered Vehicles	M270.00	M300.00
Class 4 Extra Large Heavy Vehicles designed or adopted for conveyance of people or freight with 4 or more axle	Local Registered Vehicles	M390.00	M420.00
	Foreign Registered Vehicles	M580.00	M650.00

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NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO

VACANCY

The National University of Lesotho invites applications from suitably qualified candidates for the following posts:

POST NO.	POSITION	DEPARTMENT / FACULTY	DEADLINE
2245	Laboratory Technician	Chemistry & Chemical Technology / Science & Technology	30th April, 2025
2250	Laboratory Technician	Chemistry & Chemical Technology / Science & Technology	30th April, 2025

For full job description please refer to NUL Website: www.nul.ls or visit our HR Office at Roma for a hard copy. Please quote the post number you are applying for. For further clarifications call +266 22340247 or +266 22340601 ext 3842/3844.

In your application letter, include the names and contact details of your three (3) referees

Please combine covering letter, CV, certificates, Identity Document/Passport and email them in read only PDF file, if not, will be disqualified). All applications should be emailed to dh@nul.ls and addressed to:

Director - Human Resources
National University of Lesotho
Roma 180 - Lesotho



Government of Lesotho
THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

TENDER NO: 01 OF 2025/2026

PRIVATE VEHICLES SHORT TERM HIRE FOR BOS- PHASE II OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY CENSUS.

1. Introduction

The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFD), through the Bureau of Statistics (BOS); will be conducting an Economic Activity Census (EAC) phase II. EAC is the full measurement of the state of the economy, which aims to enhance availability and quality of existing basic economic statistics. Bidding will be conducted through National Competitive Tendering.

A complete set of bidding documents in English may be available to the interested bidders. Bidding documents must be collected in person at Planning Procurement Unit office number 124 with a certified copy of the vehicle registration certificate. Clarification requests on bidding documents will be allowed up to the day before submission date line, during office hours between 9:30 am until 3:30 pm.

Bids must be deposited on or before **13 May 2025 at 12: 00**, HRS in the tender box situated at Government Complex Phase 2 at Development Planning 2nd floor. Bids arriving after closing time shall be rejected. Tenders will be opened in the presence of bidders or representatives at **14:30** on the same day.

The address for procurement of bidding documents, clarification requests and bid submission is: Ministry of Finance and Development Planning

Procurement Unit
P.O. Box 630
Maseru 100.
Tel no. 22 317433 / 266 22 328187

Tender Timetable

Activity	Dates
ITT Issued	28 March 2025
Clarification dates	28 March – 13 May 2025
Vehicle inspection dates	20 May 2025
Deadline for obtaining Tender Document	12 May 2025
ITT Close	13 May 2025 at 12:00 noon
Tender opening	13 May 2025 at 14: 30 hours
Evaluation and tender award	30 May 2025

The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning is not bound to accept the lowest at any bid, also reserves the right to reject or cancel the contract .



The Kingdom of Lesotho
Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition
Wool and Mohair Value Chain Competitiveness Project

Vacancy

The Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho through the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition (MAFSN) has just started implementation of the Wool and Mohair Value Chain Competitiveness Project (WaMCoP), which is a 7 years project that covers the 10 districts of Lesotho. The project is financed by the Government of Lesotho, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), OPEC Fund for International Development, Global Environment Facility and beneficiary's contributions. The projects overall goal is to increase the economic and climate resilience of wool and mohair value chain stakeholders, with emphasis on wool and mohair farmers' livelihoods, including women and youth. The MAFSN has established the key positions of the project coordination unit and would like to make a call to the relevant professionals for the following additional positions:

1.
Position: Assistant Monitoring & Evaluation Officer
Duty Station: Maseru, Lesotho
Reports to: Monitoring & Evaluation officer
Number of positions: 1

Job Summary

The Assistant M&E Officer will support the M&E Officer in all data collection, analysis, and learning activities to help ensure accountability and efficiency of the project implementation for the Wool and Mohair Value Chain Competitiveness Project (WaMCoP). The incumbent will provide technical field support to the M&E unit and liaise with all beneficiary project departments engaging in the WaMCoP. The Assistant M&E Officer will work closely with technical offices (Livestock Production and Business Development) to assess field conditions, support capacity building initiatives, and facilitate the collection of quality data under the supervision of the M&E Officer.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Program management Support
 - 1.1 Support all M&E initiatives for assigned project, including monitoring data quality, tracking progress of activities, and contributing to staff capacity building initiatives as necessary.
- System Development**
 - 2.1 Support in creating framework and procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of project activities
 - 2.2 Support in defining and implementing key performance indicators as well as monitoring them throughout the duration of the projects.
 - 2.3 Assist in proposing strategies to increase data use, communication and M&E culture
 - 2.4 Support project staff and other stakeholders on ways to properly document, organize and capture project progress
 - 2.5 Draft tools and their revisions as well as data collection procedures under the supervision of the M&E Officer (e.g. logical framework, project performance tracking, indicators, data flow chart, M&E manuals)
 - 2.6 Support in the development of the management information systems.

3. Data Management and Analysis

- 3.1 Keep abreast of developments in project changes and progress in order to advise and recommend tools and strategies to increase project performance and results
- 3.2 Suggest ways to facilitate data collection and flow of data within project components
- 3.3 Identify strengths and weaknesses in existing data collection and management systems and propose solutions along with the M&E Officer
- 3.4 Perform regular field visits to ensure quality of data collected by project field staff and verify accuracy of reported data
- 3.5 Analyse changes and patterns in key performance indicators data and performance reports in order to support project beneficiaries

3.6 Supports data queries to ensure accurate and timely presentation and submission of required data.

3.7 Support and participate in project evaluations.

4. Communication and Reporting

- 4.1 Support M&E Officer in preparing required reports for timely submission.
- 4.2 Assist project stakeholders in developing log frames, M&E work plans, and targets throughout project implementation
- 4.3 Review and analyse periodic reports (weekly, monthly, quarterly, bi-annual and annual) with the M&E Officer to identify the causes of potential bottlenecks in project implementation and to enhance quality of reporting.
- 4.4 Collaborate with stakeholders in reviewing and preparing monthly, quarterly and final narrative and financial reports.

Qualification and Experience

Bachelor's degree in Economics, Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation Plus minimum of 3 years in a similar position

Skills and Competencies

- Capacity to produce high-quality briefs and reports in English
- Proficiency in Ms Project, Ms Excel and any other quantitative data analysis tool
- Ability to design M&E tools, surveys, surveillance systems, and evaluations
- Demonstrated ability to train and build capacity of others
- Cultural sensitivity and flexibility are desired characteristics.
- Excellent command of both Sesotho and English language
- Experience with Development Partner project implementation i.e IFAD, OPEC, and GEF is desirable.

Mode and Duration of Contract

The duration of the assignment will be three years, renewable depending on satisfactory performance.

2.

Position: Assistant Procurement Officer
Report to: Procurement and Contracts Manager
Duty Station: Maseru
Number of positions: 1

Job Summary:

Under the supervision of Procurement and Contracts Manager, the Procurement Assistant will be responsible for assisting with planning, coordinating, executing and delivering project procurement function consistent with the agreed project procurement arrangement with quality and efficiency. The project follows IFAD Procurement Guidelines and procedures as stated in the Financing Agreement. Duties and responsibilities

- Ensure that the procurement function is delivered with the agreed requirements, and procedures stipulated in the agreements entered in by the Government of Lesotho and IFAD.
- Assist in the compilation of the requirements of different user departments to enable preparation of annual procurement plans
- Prepare bidding documents, evaluation reports and draft contracts using IFAD standard bidding documents;
- Prepare procurement plan and Uploads all procurement documents in the OPEN system for IFAD review and keeping the Contract Monitoring Tool updated;
- Participate in relevant tender committee meetings and assist with the preparation of com-

mittee reports;

- Solicit quotations from Suppliers for national and international shopping procurement methods;
- Prepare advertisements for the local and international newspapers pertaining to active procurement activities;
- Support safekeep and confidentiality of all procurement documents, including bids/quotations/proposals received, various securities.
- Take part in evaluation of quotations /bids and prepare draft evaluation reports for review by the Procurement and Contracts Manager;
- Fill in the requisition forms and initiate preparation of purchase orders to commence contractual relationship with the selected Supplier;
- Inspect the goods delivered in consultations with the user department to ensure that the supplier has satisfied its contractual obligations, and the goods delivered are in accordance with the agreed specifications;
- Keep track of various contractual deliverables from the suppliers/contract/consultants and send reminder as needed
- Guide the user departments on how to prepare terms of reference for consultancy services;
- Track payment to suppliers/contract/consultant against all contracts and follow up on delays in payments
- Maintain the contract register and regularly update the same with monitoring data on progress of all contracts;
- Liaise with user departments, bid evaluation committees, procurement staff of MAFSN and other stakeholders for smooth conduct of procurement functions
- Participate in procurement audits and reviews of the Project;

Qualification and Experience

Degree in Business Management Studies/ Business Administration/ Supply Chain Management/ Procurement. CIPS Advanced Diploma Certificate is an added advantage
Have a minimum of 3 years dealing with procurement of civil works, goods, and services, and award of contracts.

Skills and Competencies

- Planning and organizing skills
- Effective Communication & negotiation skills
- Results oriented
- A high level of interpersonal skills and ability to work with teams.

Mode and Duration of Contract

The duration of the assignment will be three years, renewable depending on satisfactory performance.

SUBMISSION

Interested candidates' applications should be accompanied by detailed CVs, certified copies of national identity document, educational certificates and transcripts and be delivered to the address below not later than **18 April 2025 At 16:00hrs**

The Director Human Resources
Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition
80 Constitution Road
P.O. Box 24
Maseru 100

Only shortlisted candidates will be notified.

Thabo Moleko (Mr.)
Principal Secretary - MAFSN



Fees	3 Months	6 Months	12 Months
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Arts & Entertainment

Newsday

Econet ready to deliver another epic APICA showpiece



Fusi Hlaoli

Excitement is building across the Mountain Kingdom as preparations hit high gear for the highly anticipated Econet APICA festival.

This premier event, a dynamic collaboration between Econet Telecom Lesotho and Global Events, promises an unforgettable fusion of world-class music, thrilling adventure, and vibrant local culture at the scenic Ramabanta Trading Post.

Since its inception in 2019, Econet APICA, which stands for African Picnic and Camping, has rapidly grown into a cornerstone of Lesotho's entertainment calendar, drawing enthusiasts from across the region.

"Econet APICA is a visionary collaboration," explains Puleng Mathabo Masoabi, Econet's acting GM for Marketing Communications and Customer Experience.

"Our aim is to create a world-class music and adventure festival that celebrates entertainment, culture, and tourism in Lesotho."

The festival's mission extends beyond mere entertainment.

"The primary mission is to enhance Lesotho's entertainment landscape, foster community engagement, and promote the country's tourism sector," Masoabi stated.

Importantly, it also serves as a platform "to have fun with Econet's valued customers for their invaluable support."

Underscoring this commitment, Econet has invested over M700,000 into this year's edition, highlighting the event's significance and scale.

Evolution has been key to APICA's success. Masoabi noted that the festival has "evolved quite significantly," expanding its artist line-ups to include both international icons and local heroes, while integrating unique outdoor experiences like hiking, horse riding, and gaming.

This year boasts a particularly stellar roster, featuring jazz legend Jonathan Butler, known primarily for his smooth jazz and R&B music and soulful vocals, K.O and Azana, alongside beloved local artists like Wave Rhyder, Omali Themba, and Ntate Stunna.

True to its name, APICA deeply embraces Lesotho's heritage.

"It is not just about music. Econet APICA is a celebration of Lesotho's rich cultural heritage, from outdoor adventure, nature exploration, and temporary sheltering in the wilderness," emphasises Masoabi.

The Ramabanta location provides an immersive backdrop, allowing attendees to engage in hiking, horse riding excursions, and purchase locally crafted arts and souvenirs. This focus also provides a crucial platform for local talent.

"The festival serves as a platform for Lesotho's artists to showcase their talent alongside internationally acclaimed musicians," giving them vital exposure and opening doors for future opportunities.

Montoeli Moleli of Global Events also elaborates on the festival's broader impact.

"Econet APICA has helped put Lesotho on the entertainment map by attracting visitors from outside the country," he said.

"It strengthens the cultural scene by integrating various art forms—music, crafts, food, and adventure—into one holistic experience."

Selecting the artists involves balancing audience demand, musical diversity, and thematic alignment, ensuring a fresh and engaging lineup each year.

Organising such a large-scale event requires meticulous planning and strong partnerships. "The festival is made possible through a strong partnership between Econet Telecom Lesotho and Global Events, along with other partners," Moleli confirms, acknowledging the complexities of logistics, security, and hospitality in an outdoor setting.

Despite challenges like transportation and crowd management, "through strong partnerships and efficient planning, the festival continues to deliver an exceptional experience."

Inclusivity is a core principle. The festival

attracts a diverse crowd of music lovers, adventure seekers, and cultural enthusiasts engaged through various media channels.

"Affordable ticket pricing, varied entertainment options, and diverse artist selections ensure that the festival appeals to different groups," Moleli noted, adding that the inclusion of local vendors ensures benefits ripple through the community. This approach has seen a noticeable shift towards more regional and international attendees, boosting Lesotho's tourism.

Reflecting on past triumphs, Moleli recalls "iconic performances from top-tier artists such as the legendary Tšepo Tshola, Master KG, Selimo Thabane, and Kwesta," moments that cement the festival's reputation.

This year, attendees can expect similar high-energy sets from the announced stars, complemented by an enhanced focus on the outdoor and camping experience.

Looking ahead, sustainability and future growth are priorities. The festival promotes eco-friendly practices and supports local businesses, aiming to minimise its environmental footprint while maximising economic benefits.

Future plans include attracting more international visitors and integrating even more interactive Basotho cultural experiences.

Stunna headlines eSwatini's Makoti festival

Chris Theko

Rap phenomenon, Ntate Stunna, is set to headline the highly anticipated Makoti Festival at Malkerns Country Club in Eswatini on April 26.

The festival promises a vibrant celebration of music, culture, and community empowerment.

More than just a music festival, this annual event serves as a platform dedicated to uplifting women and fostering cultural exchange across the Southern African region.

Organizers of the Makoti Festival revealed during a media launch held in Maseru on Friday that the Sesotho Fashioneng rapper will be one of the headline artists to entertain revelers at the festival.

Makoti Festival executive Nomathemba Xaba expressed excitement about Ntate Stunna's participation.

"His performance will elevate Basotho culture on an international stage and showcase Lesotho's rich heritage to a diverse audience, and for this, we are excited to have him as one of the headline acts for this year's edition," Xaba said.

The festival has a history of spotlighting Lesotho's musical talent, having previously featured artists such as Mavele, Tash, DJ Mekonko, and DJ Tseko, who are now part of the event as resident DJs. It serves as a cultural melting pot, attracting attendees from Eswatini, South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, and Mozambique, all gathering to celebrate married women.

Xaba stated that their primary goal is



to create a space where women, particularly married women—known as makoti—can celebrate their cultural identity while also engaging in conversations around empowerment and economic independence. Through music, art, and entrepreneurship, the festival aims to inspire and support women in various aspects of their lives.

Beyond music, the Makoti Festival is committed to fostering a supportive network for entrepreneurs and local artists. The event will host a variety of activities, including workshops, networking sessions, and marketplace opportunities for women-led businesses and artisans.

Organisers believe that economic empowerment is a key factor in strengthening women's roles in society, and they are determined to provide a platform where women can thrive.

"Makoti Festival is not just about entertainment; it's about celebrating and empowering women while embracing the diverse cultures that make Southern Africa unique," said Xaba at the event's media launch.

"This festival provides a space for women to connect, share experiences, and support each other in a way that transcends borders."

The festival continues to attract attendees from across the region, including Eswatini, South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, and Mozambique. This gathering of cultures underscores the event's broader mission of unity and mutual appreciation among Southern African communities.

Intimate music experience: A hub for emerging talent in Lesotho

Chris Theko



Maseru's music scene is undergoing a thrilling revival, thanks to Think Music's Intimate Music Experience - a weekly event that has become a beacon for both budding artists and seasoned musicians.

Hosted every Sunday evening at La Minezi, a fresh and stylish new venue in the heart of the city, this initiative provides a platform for emerging talent to showcase their skills while celebrating the contributions of veteran artists.

The brainchild of artist and producer Thabiso Doti, along with his partner Letšohla Jr, the event was conceived as a means to elevate and empower musicians in Lesotho, ensuring they gain the exposure and experience necessary to thrive in the steadily growing local music industry.

According to Doti, Think Music's Intimate Music Experience aims to bridge the gap between new and established artists while fostering a culture of live performance and musical appreciation.

"We saw a need for a space where up-and-coming musicians could share their artistry with a receptive audience," Doti explained.

"We also wanted to create an environment where industry veterans could perform and mentor the next generation, building a more robust and sustainable music industry in Lesotho."

Since its inception, the event has gained loyal following, attracting music lovers who appreciate raw, unfiltered talent. The lineup changes weekly, featuring a diverse range of genres, including soulful R&B, Afrosoul, hip-

hop, Afrobeats, and Sesotho Hop.

This eclectic mix ensures that every show remains fresh, engaging, and full of surprises. The majority of the performances are done with a live band, in collaboration with Klikk Sounds, adding an authentic and vibrant touch to each session.

Beyond the performances, Think Music's Intimate Music Experience has fostered a sense of community within the industry. Musicians, producers, and creatives gather at La Minezi not only to perform but also to network, exchange ideas, and form collaborations that extend beyond the Sunday night stage.

The intimate setting allows for genuine connections between artists and their audiences, making it more than just a music event - it is a cultural movement.

For music enthusiasts and industry stakeholders, this initiative represents a crucial step toward professionalising the music sector in Lesotho. By providing consistent opportunities for live performances and skill-building, Think Music's Intimate Music Experience is helping shape a new era for local talent.

The event recently reached the final lap of its first season, concluding after ten successful sessions. However, it is expected to return after a brief break, with the organisers exploring ways to expand its reach.

Potential partnerships with radio stations, recording studios, and music festivals are being considered to provide artists with even more platforms to showcase their craft.

SPORTS

Ref's assessment postpones league action

Seabata Mahao

The much-anticipated week 21 fixtures of the Vodacom Premier League (VPL) have been postponed by the Premier League Management Committee (PLMC) due to the scheduling of a referee's fitness test.

The decision, announced in an official memorandum, has affected all matches initially set for April 5.

"Kindly be informed that all matches scheduled for the April 5th, 2025 have been postponed due to a change in the dates for the referee's fitness tests. Initially scheduled for the 6th of April, the responsible committee has now confirmed that the fitness tests will be a two-day event, resulting in the postponement of the matches," read the PLMC's statement.

"These postponed matches will be re-scheduled, and the new date will be communicated to you by the PLMC in due course. However, please note that the fixtures scheduled for the April 12th and 13th 2025 will proceed as per the schedule shared with you this past week," the memorandum further stated.

The announcement has drawn mixed reactions from clubs and supporters alike, with many expressing disappointment at the disruption, while others acknowledge the necessity of maintaining high refereeing standards.

Meanwhile, last weekend's results saw Matlama FC produce a stunning display, demolishing Manonyane FC 5-0 in an electrifying showdown as the 2025/2026 league season heats up.

The match, played last Sunday, was a masterclass in attacking football from Matlama, who left their opponents reeling.

Right from the kickoff, Matlama showcased their intent, launching wave after wave of attack. Within the first ten minutes, the breakthrough came when Freddie Hlalele found the back of the net, putting Matlama ahead 1-0.

As the match progressed, the dominance of Matlama became even more evident. In the 31st minute, Lazola Jokojwana doubled the lead, sending their supporters into jubilation.

Four minutes later, the pressure intensified as Charlie Hlalele added a third goal, leaving Manonyane struggling to contain the relentless attack. With Matlama in complete control, Jokojwana



Likuena Head Coach, Leslie Nots'i

struck again just before halftime, securing his brace and extending Matlama's lead to a commanding 4-0.

Despite the uphill battle, Manonyane made tactical adjustments at halftime in an attempt to contain Matlama's attacking threat. However, their efforts proved futile as Matlama's defense stood firm, shutting down any hopes of a comeback.

The final blow came in the dying moments of the match when Phafa Tšosane sealed the victory with a fifth goal in the 90th minute, capping off a dominant performance by the league leaders.

Following the match, Matlama's head coach, Halemakale Mahlaha, praised his team's tactical discipline and execution on the field.

"I am very pleased with how the team played. We made adjustments in our formation and the boys executed it well," Mahlaha stated.

He further emphasised the importance of returning strongly after a long break, citing the need to maintain momentum.

"After a long break, we knew we had to come back strong, and we are thrilled with how the boys performed."

Mahlaha also highlighted that squad

rotation was necessary due to player fatigue following their involvement in the Mantšonyane Cup and international competitions.

"Each player is vital to our setup, and I am happy to see everyone giving their best. The victory today is a collective effort," he added.

On the other hand, Manonyane's coach, Mpo Ramokotjo, admitted that his team had been caught off guard by Matlama's strategy.

"We expected Matlama to play through the center of the field, but they attacked more from the wings, which we weren't prepared for," Ramokotjo said.

He acknowledged that tactical changes were necessary during the match but conceded that the early deficit made it difficult to mount a comeback.

"This is our fifth consecutive loss, and we know we need to regroup," he added.

Despite the heavy defeat, Ramokotjo remains determined to rebuild his team's confidence and refocus ahead of their upcoming fixtures. He stressed the need for mental resilience as the season approaches its critical stages.

Following this emphatic victory, Matla-

ma now sits comfortably at the top of the league standings with 48 points. Lioli FC remains in close pursuit with 45 points, keeping the title race alive. On the other hand, Manonyane finds itself in a precarious 11th position with just 21 points and will be looking to turn their fortunes around in their next encounter against Liphakoe FC.

In other weekend results, Lioli FC secured a narrow 1-0 victory over Majantja FC, while LCS FC showcased their firepower with a commanding 3-0 win over ACE Maseru FC. Bantu FC edged out Mzamane FC with a 1-0 victory, while LMPS FC and Lifofane FC played out a 1-1 draw. Similarly, Liphakoe FC and Lijabatho FC also settled for a 1-1 stalemate.

As the league action resumes in the coming weeks, all eyes will be on Matlama as they prepare for a high-stakes clash against title challengers Lioli FC. Meanwhile, Manonyane will face a crucial test against Liphakoe FC in what could be a defining match for their survival hopes.

With the business end of the season fast approaching, the race for the title and the fight for survival promise thrilling action in the coming weeks.

Rugby match abandoned

Kananelo Mokhele

The much-anticipated women's clash between Liqhomane Ladies and Maseru Warriors Ladies last weekend ended in disappointment as Warriors were forced to forfeit the match due to a shortage of players.

This unfortunate turn of events meant that Liqhomane Ladies were automatically awarded a 28-0 victory, highlighting the on-going challenges some teams face in maintaining full squads throughout the season.

While the women's match ended before it could even begin, the men's contest between Liqhomane and Maseru Warriors delivered some action.

Liqhomane showcased their strength and tactical superiority, securing an impressive 17-5 victory over their opponents. The game started with both teams showing resilience and determination, but Liqhomane quickly found their rhythm, capitalising on Maseru Warriors'



Liqhomane Rugby Club and Maseru Warriors Rugby Club in action at Makoanyane Ground

defensive gaps.

Liqhomane's forwards dominated the set pieces, consistently winning scrums and line-outs to provide their backs with

attacking opportunities. Their well-structured game play saw them cross the try line multiple times, leaving Warriors struggling to keep up.

Warriors, on the other hand, showed moments of promise, managing to get on the scoreboard with a single try, but their inability to convert chances into points ultimately cost them.

This victory further cements Liqhomane's reputation as one of the most formidable teams in the Econet Rugby League. Their well-rounded squad, featuring powerful forwards and skillful backs, has proven time and again that they are strong contenders for the championship.

For Warriors, the loss signals the need for adjustments as they look ahead to their upcoming fixtures. With key matches still to be played, they must regroup, address their weaknesses, and come back stronger to remain competitive in the league.

This weekend's upcoming games will see NUL Spears Ladies taking on Maseru Warriors Ladies, while Mabote Beavers Ladies will lock horns with Mabita Gorilla Ladies. Both matches are scheduled for Saturday.

In the afternoon, the corresponding matches in the males division will take place, with NUL Spears facing Maseru Warriors, while Mabote Beavers will battle Mabita Gorrillas.



Maroala's fairytale rise to top flight



Maroala FC squad photo

Seabata Mahao

Football has always had a way of producing the most heartwarming and inspiring stories. This season, that honor belongs to Maroala Football Club, a team that has climbed from the depths of the B Division to the grand stage of Lesotho's Vodacom Premier League (VPL).

Their rise has been nothing short of magical, a tale of resilience, ambition, and determination that has captured the hearts of their supporters.

The small club from Maqhaka, Berea, has achieved the ultimate dream: securing promotion to the Vodacom Premier League with three matches still to play. Maroala's decisive 2-1 victory over Litšilo FC last weekend sealed their fate in spectacular fashion.

Their journey to the top, however, has been years in the making. Only three seasons ago, Maroala were battling it out in the B Division. Last season, they came heartbreakingly close to promotion but were edged out in the final stages by Mzamane FC. This time, they made sure not to let history repeat itself.

Moeketsi Thebe, the president of Maroala explained that since the club's formation in 1947, they have never tasted premier league football.

"We are one of the oldest football clubs in the country, but we have never played in the Premier League. When I took over in the 2017/18 season, we were in the B-Division. After the 2021/22 season, we moved up to the A-Division, where we reached sixth place in the 2022/23 season, second place in 2023/24, and the first place in 2024/25," Thebe said.

As the excitement of playing in the premier league grips Maroala camp, they have already kicked-started preparation for life in the big time with the hunt for sponsors and fixing their home ground.

"We have also started fixing our home ground so that we can ask Lesotho Football Association (LeFA) to inspect it before the next premier league begins.

With an impressive tally of 35 points from 15 matches, Maroala have dominated the A Division Northern Stream, leaving their closest challengers behind. Litšilo FC, their nearest rivals with 24 points, saw their own promotion hopes dashed with

last weekend's loss.

While Maroala celebrate their triumph, the battle in the Southern Stream remains intense. Members FC, Qoaling Highlanders FC, and Quthing LMPS are locked in a fierce contest for the top spot. Members FC currently lead the pack with 31 points, but Qoaling Highlanders are right behind with 30 points, while Quthing LMPS trail closely at 29. With only three matches remaining, the race for promotion is still wide open.

Last season's Southern Stream champions, Majantja, and Northern Stream winners, Mzamane, will soon welcome Maroala into the elite ranks of the Premier League. The Premier League Management Committee is expected to officially confirm their promotion soon.

As the season nears its dramatic conclusion, football fans across the country will be watching closely. Maroala's next fixture sees them take on Rangers FC from Thaba-Tseka, while Members FC face a high-stakes encounter against Qoaling Highlanders.

For now, Maroala can bask in the glory of their well-earned promotion. Their jour-

ney is a testament to the power of persistence and belief, proving that in football, as in life, dreams can indeed come true.

Weekend Results:

Saturday, 29 March 2025:

Northern Stream:

Kick4Life Juventude 6 - 3 Lilemela FC
BB Warriors 2 - 2 Rangers FC
Litšilo FC 1 - 2 Maroala FC

Southern Stream:

Qoaling Highlanders 2 - 0 Qacha LMPS
Members FC 3 - 0 Mahlaseli FC
Naughty Boys 1 - 3 05 United FC

Sunday, 30 March 2025:

Northern Stream:

CCX FC 0 - 2 Sehenene FC
Litšehlo FC 1 - 1 Lerotholi Polytechnic FC

Southern Stream:

Summit FC 0 - 2 Quthing LMPS
Liponono FC 1 - 0 Swallows FC

With the final games approaching, the stage is set for an unforgettable climax to the season. Whether Maroala's story will inspire other underdogs remains to be seen, but for now, they stand as a shining example of what is possible with hard work and determination.



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