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News
Funding cut leaves Thaba-Tseka farmer stranded
Page 3

Opinion
Open letter to the Ministry of Education and Training
Page 8

DOCTORS FACE OFF AT MASERU DISTRICT HOSPITAL

... Consultant accused of misconduct hits back
Page 2

Doctors face off at Maseru District Hospital

... Consultant accused of misconduct hits back

Maseru District Hospital

Staff Reporters

Maseru District Hospital has been thrown into turmoil after a high-stakes clash between its leadership and ophthalmologist Dr. Wenjun Fan.

The medical consultant, accused of professional misconduct in a show-cause letter, has hit back with a scathing response, exposing alleged mismanagement, internal chaos, and threats to patient care.

The letter, dated October 15, 2025 and signed by Dr. 'Mabatho Masupha, Medical Superintendent of Maseru District Hospital, ordered Dr. Fan to explain within 48 hours why disciplinary action should not be taken against him for five alleged acts of professional misconduct.

Dr. Masupha accused Dr. Fan of neglecting a child patient, threatening management, posting disparaging messages on WhatsApp, unilaterally limiting patient consultations, and failing to ensure a child was admitted for surgery.

"On or about September 23, 2025, you failed to conduct a medical review on a five-year-old female patient who had been admitted to the surgical ward on the same date."

"On September 12, 2025, during a management meeting, you threatened the management team of Maseru District Hospital by stating that you would report them to the Government of China, with the intention of influencing the withdrawal of funding from the hospital.

"On September 10, 2025, you posted inappropriate remarks about the Medical Superintendent in a WhatsApp group comprising her junior staff. On or about September 04, 2025, you unilaterally reduced the number of patients to be seen in your department per working day to 40, without prior consultation or approval from your immediate supervisor," it added.

Dr. Masupha further stated that: "On 14 October 2025, you booked a child for surgery but failed to ensure the patient was admitted to the surgical ward."

She said these alleged actions suggest a failure to uphold the values of the Public Service and promote public welfare, and neglect of duties assigned by the appropriate authority.

"If substantiated, these actions may constitute serious breaches of professional conduct and administrative procedures."

But in his reply, Dr. Fan struck a defiant tone, rejected every accusation and accused the hospital's management of confusion, miscommunication, and deliberate misrepresentation of facts.

He insisted that no five-year-old patient was ever referred to him for review in September, and cited hospital records to back his claim.

"According to our agreement during the HOD meeting of 8 July 2025," he wrote, "any doctor needing a review from another department must call or send a formal request form. I checked the surgical ward files for that date. There is no record of the child in question. I never received a call or request form for any five-year-old female patient."

He denied ever threatening the management team.

"I am not a member of the management team of Maseru District Hospital (MD), how can I attend the management meeting on September 12, 2025. If possible, please share the minutes with me because I am not aware of this issue. If the threat was made outside the management meetings and unofficially, I do not understand why it should be a management team's valued point unless anybody who threatens management by reporting does really have the power to do so," he said.

The ophthalmologist also dismissed claims that he insulted the superintendent on WhatsApp. He defended his messages as "a genuine attempt to raise long-ignored challenges" in the absence of proper leadership.

"According to the HOD meeting, we agreed that no actions were taken by the management team for the challenges raised during the HOD meeting, and less than half of the management team members attended the HOD meetings, especially, the superintendent did not attend the meeting for more than six months, that is the reason I posted in the WhatsApp group," he said.

"I also shared the proper communication channels to resolve the challenges within the WhatsApp group. Finally, I was not aware that sharing the information over such challenges with other HODs who did not attend the HOD meeting would appear as compromising the superintendent," he added.

Dr. Fan went further, revealing bitter divisions within the hospital's leadership, claiming that the "eye team has been destroyed" due to poor management and orders that undermined his authority as consultant.

"According to statistics of patients seen in the Eye Department, there has never been a day when less than 60 patients were seen since 04/09/2025. Records can prove this point better than words can," he said.

He revealed details of a stormy meeting held on July 11, 2025, allegedly called to address what he described as a collapse in communication and leadership.

According to Fan, among key issues discussed were persistent miscommunication between staff and management, departmental meetings being held without the knowledge of Heads of Departments, and questionable directives that, in some cases, put patients' health at risk.

He alleged that Superintendent, Dr. Masupha, had instructed him to refer patients suffering from refractive errors and keratoconus, conditions easily corrected with spectacles, to Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital (QMMH) and even to Bloemfontein.

He also raised concerns about the improper admission of patients without proper coordination, a problem he said had already resulted in at least one patient's death.

"As the eye consultant, I can only see 30 to 40 patients a day," Dr. Fan explained. "With the support of two ophthalmic nurses, we can manage up to 100 patients. But without support, it becomes impossible."

Dr. Fan said that instead of acting on the issues raised, hospital management, particularly the matron and the superintendent, ordered ophthalmic nurses not to assist him with patient consultations.

This, he claimed, effectively "destroyed the eye team" and forced him to limit the number of patients he personally attends to.

"I had no choice but to announce that I could only consult a maximum of 40 patients per day," he said. "How the medical officer and the ophthalmic nurse consult the patients is beyond my control."

In his account of the final allegation, that he failed to admit a child for surgery, Dr. Fan painted a picture of chaos and confusion, saying the paediatric surgical ward refused to admit the child despite clear instructions.

On the noted date, I booked a child for squint surgery and I admitted her in the paediatric surgical ward as indicated by the surgical ward that children under 12 years old should be admitted in the paediatric surgical ward, but paediatric surgical ward refused to admit the girl, so I informed the mother that there is nowhere I can admit the child for the operation. But I was later called by the superintendent to admit the child in the eye ward, which I did without hesitation. And the girl was operated on the next day," he said.

Dr. Fan confirmed to Newsday this week that he had received a show cause letter from Maseru District Hospital and stated that he had already submitted his written response. The hospital also confirmed that the ophthalmologist was indeed served with the letter.

The letter, issued on October 15, came after Newsday had spoken to multiple sources within the hospital, who painted a bleak picture of an institution struggling to live up to the promises made when it officially opened last year.

Dr. Fan was the only staff member willing to speak on record, while others requested anonymity, citing fear of retaliation.

Following these interviews, Newsday sent a detailed list of questions to the Ministry of Health Headquarters, seeking clarity on the allegations raised against the hospital and the concerns expressed by its staff.

At the time the letter was written, the questions were still with the ministry, with Dr. 'Makhoase Ranyali, Director General of Health Services, stating they were occupied with a campaign to respond.

Yesterday, the hospital's public relations officer, Kekeletso Motanyane, assured Newsday that Dr. Fan was not being victimised for speaking to the media.

"This is not victimisation," Motanyane said. "The show cause letter was not triggered by media reports. It is the result of issues that began long before Newsday's visit to the hospital."

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Funding cut leaves Thaba-Tseka farmer stranded

Ntsoaki Motaung

Tšele Mohoshela, a farmer and founder of Merino Holdings in Thaba-Tseka, is among those immediately affected by the United States' decision to withdraw funding from development initiatives in Lesotho.

Mohoshela, who rears sheep, dairy cows, and poultry for both meat and egg production, is now grappling with the sudden loss of his primary market for eggs.

He ventured into egg production after local farmers were assured, through the home-grown school feeding initiative, that they would have a sustainable and reliable market. His farm's strategic location, directly opposite Paray Primary School in Thaba-Tseka, reinforced his confidence in the programme's long-term stability.

"For a few months, until June, I think that was when the initiative was tested, the school used to get fresh eggs from me conveniently next to them," Mohoshela told reporters. "We were just left stranded, no communication, nothing. It just happened that the school stopped getting the eggs," he said.

The abrupt halt has left him with a massive surplus of unsold eggs. In desperation, Mohoshela is considering mixing the excess eggs into livestock feed to see if his animals will eat them.

"I have incurred a huge loss because there is a pile of eggs that I have nowhere to take. It means they are just going to spoil," he lamented.

Previously, Mohoshela supplied the school with 28 trays of eggs each week, sold at M55 per tray. Now, facing mounting losses, he has made the difficult decision to slaughter his chickens and sell the meat, vowing not to raise another batch.

The cessation of purchases is directly linked to the withdrawal of the implementing partner, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), following the U.S. government's abrupt funding cut. The Bokamoso ba Bana programme, funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to the tune of $28.5 million (over M511 million) over five years, collapsed earlier this year when the USDA halted its support.

"This week's abrupt termination of CRS' McGovern-Dole Food for Education school feeding programme will deprive school-age children of their only reliable meal each day. Beginning in July, more than 780,000 children across 11 countries will be left without their school meals, as 11 out of CRS' 13 projects have been terminated – deepening the crises of hunger, malnutrition and poverty that already threaten their ability to learn, grow, and thrive," CRS said in a statement on May 21, 2025.

"CRS has implemented school feeding programmes around the world for many decades. In 2024, evaluations of our work highlighted increased literacy rates, economic growth, and reduced absences due to hunger and illness. Funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, CRS worked with governments and communities to sustain school meal programmes and improve education quality," the organisation added.

In an interview, Thuto Ntšekhe, Chief Education Officer for Primary Education, confirmed that CRS had been the implementing partner for the home-grown school feeding pilot project in Semonkong, Thaba-Tseka, and Mokhotlong districts.

"The implementing partner of the home-grown school feeding pilot has withdrawn," she said.

The sudden departure of CRS, Ntšekhe explained, presents a major learning challenge for the government. While the Ministry of Education remains committed to continuing the initiative, she admitted that without CRS' technical presence, "we will not be able to learn to the fullest how best to take over and implement the initiative nationwide." A handover meeting is being planned to discuss the way forward.

Currently, Lesotho's national school feeding programme provides meals to more than 282,000 children in public reception and primary schools, as well as 50,000 children in early childhood care and development (ECCD) centres.

While the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) previously supported about 36,000 children, the recent funding cut has begun to affect operations.

"The impact is that there is no money coming from USAID," Ntšekhe stated. However, she noted that children are still receiving meals for now because food supplies were already in place before the funding withdrawal. The Ministry of Finance is currently stepping in to sustain the programme, including paying cooks.

Beyond the funding challenge, the home-grown school feeding initiative has long faced logistical obstacles, especially in Lesotho's mountainous and hard-to-reach areas.

According to the ministry's guiding menu, schools are expected to serve fresh vegetables and eggs, but this remains a challenge. "It is a problem to get them for remote primary schools," Ntšekhe explained, citing long distances and poor transportation that often result in cracked eggs and spoiled vegetables.

She called for stronger collaboration between ministries, particularly the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Marketing, to better support smallholder farmers and ensure consistent local supply.

Ntšekhe believes that empowering local communities to produce fresh food near schools would boost local economies while ensuring programme sustainability.

"We just want someone who will be reliable and provide quality products consistently," she asserted.

When the people turn against development

• Roma Valley grapples with power infrastructure vandalism

Bereng Mpaki

Electricity poles lay toppled on the ground, their severed bases bearing stark evidence of yet another brazen act of self-sabotage.

On October 17, 2025, unknown vandals struck the Tloutle village, cutting down poles supporting 11kV transmission lines, thereby plunging homes across parts of the Roma Valley into an unscheduled power blackout.

When community members gathered at Tloutle Primary School grounds this week, along with officials from the Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) and police shortly in the aftermath of the incident, the conversation turned confrontational.

Should entire villages pay for the crimes of a few? Is disconnecting power the answer? And could this vandalism be about more than just common theft?

The October 17 incident did more than disrupt power, it created immediate danger as high-voltage cables fell to the ground, coming into contact with trees and shrubs that burst into flames upon electrocution.

While fortunately no people or livestock were harmed, residents were left shaken by how close the community came to tragedy, by the time LEC officials switched off the power.

"It is such a miserable feeling to be without power, as we had to go back to the old way of living, such as using candles and lamps to light our homes. It is a painful reminder of the past," said one villager, 'Malehlohonolo Matekane, capturing the sense of regression that accompanies a blackout.

Ben Ntlaba, another Tloutle villager, said the stakes are even higher. He described vandalism as attempted murder, pointing to vulnerable residents dependent on electrically-powered medical equipment.

"There are people who are on life support machines powered by electricity, and the abrupt cutting of power is tantamount to attempting to murder them," Ntšaba argued.

This was not the area's first encounter with electricity infrastructure vandalism. A few years earlier, the area experienced similar attacks where the poles were cut and burned.

The pattern of repeat offences has led authorities and LEC officials to consider drastic measures to break the cycle.

At the public gathering, which drew residents from at least five villages in the Roma valley area, one suggestion stood out. Senior Inspector Maseli Maseli, a member of the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) team attached to LEC, suggested hitting villagers where it hurts most, in their pockets.

"Maybe all villagers affected by vandalism must be asked to contribute money to replace the vandalised infrastructure to restore power connection, instead of the cost being shouldered by LEC alone," Maseli said.

The rationale behind this controversial proposal is simple: if communities bear the financial pain of vandalism, they might be more motivated to identify and report suspects hiding in their midst. The only problem is that such a collective punishment risks unfairly penalising the innocent alongside the guilty.

He warned that vandalism of electricity infrastructure is a serious crime punishable by up to 20 years imprisonment under the Penal Code Act. He encouraged the public to use their power of citizens' arrest to rid themselves of criminals terrorising the area.

Other suggestions at the gathering were equally severe. Some proposed that LEC disconnect the area from power for an extended period to sensitise villagers about the seriousness of vandalism. Officials pointed to Quthing, where residents have endured up to six months without power due to persistent vandalism in their area.

The most extreme proposal involved unleashing the army. However, this suggestion drew negative reactions, with some villagers recalling the horror of the last time soldiers were deployed to the area.

Some residents were allegedly left permanently maimed from rough treatment by security forces, creating lingering trauma that makes some community members wary of inviting such measures again.

LEC sees each vandalism incident as representing more than just damaged equipment, but as triggering a chain of unbudgeted expenses that ultimately affect all electricity consumers across the country.

Thamae Ngaka, from LEC's public relations department, explained that vandalism is a serious problem for their operations.

"When it happens, LEC has to abandon some of its planned activities and devote financial and other resources towards replacing the vandalised infrastructure for the affected communities to have power back on," Ngaka said.

"And when we restore the vandalised infrastructure, we often do that off budget because vandalism is not normally budgeted for," Ngaka added, explaining that these unforeseen costs ultimately find their way into annual electricity tariff increases.

With the current rate of vandalism around the country, which includes cable theft and meter tampering, the problem is estimated to have cost LEC in excess of M10 million over the past financial year.

Ngaka warned that vandalism could account for a larger portion of power tariffs going forward, meaning all Basotho would increasingly subsidise the criminal acts of a few.

"Let this be the last time this is happening, or we will be forced to take drastic measures to find back," Ngaka warned.

The representatives of the Roma Police Station, highlighted another troubling dimension of power infrastructure vandalism, which is creating conducive conditions for other forms of crime to flourish, in reference of the possibility of the suggestion to cut off power.

The link between darkness and increased criminal activity is well documented. Without street lights and with homes unable to maintain security systems or adequate lighting, communities become more vulnerable to burglary, assault, and other offenses that criminals can commit under cover of darkness.

While most assume vandalism is motivated by opportunistic theft, wooden poles for various household uses and copper cables for scrap metal sales, some Roma Valley residents suspect something more complex may be at play.

Speaking off the record to this publication, some villagers suggested that the persistent vandalism could carry a deeper meaning than just common stealing for household use.

They speculated it might be a subtle complaint about poor governance and management of LEC, which has been prominently featured in news reports over the past several months.

Their suspicion is not without foundation. The parliamentary Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has unearthed shocking mismanagement and misuse of finances at the power utility in recent months, painting a picture of an institution in deep crisis.

According to recent official reports, LEC faces near-bankruptcy, with liabilities spiralling into millions of maloti. Acting Minister of Energy, Mohlomi Moleko, has attributed LEC's financial difficulties to alleged gross financial mismanagement, governance failures, and low energy tariffs.

The government recently injected M300 million to enable the company to continue purchasing electricity from South Africa's Eskom and Mozambique's EDM.

In March 2025, LEC's Board of Directors suspended the entire executive management team for three months to facilitate an independent forensic audit into procurement processes, financial management, and operational inefficiencies.

Minister Moleko also addressed allegations of unfair labour practices within LEC, including wrongful dismissals, prolonged disciplinary hearings, and favouritism in hiring. He claimed that the company had been "captured" by politicians.

The PAC's ongoing investigation has revealed troubling details about contracts with politically connected vendors, duplicate accounting entries, and an institutional culture that the new board, appointed in late 2024, described as toxic and dysfunctional when they took office.

Thaba Tseka DA raises alarm over GBV

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Families are meant to be sanctuaries of love and support rather than battlegrounds of conflict.

However, the District Administrator (DA) of Thaba-Tseka, Tlali Mphafi, has expressed deep concern over the negative influence that gender-based violence (GBV) and domestic violence have on the emotional stability of children in affected families.

Speaking in reflection on this publication's coverage of the challenges facing the youth in his district, Mphafi said that children growing up in environments filled with conflict are deprived of familial love and warmth, forcing them to seek affection and guidance outside their homes.

The Child Protection and Welfare Act of 2011 seeks to safeguard and promote the well-being of children. However, concerns persist regarding parents who leave their children without adequate care while seeking employment or other opportunities.

This situation, Mphafi noted, exposes children to numerous risks and vulnerabilities.

Similarly, the Counter Domestic Violence Act, passed by parliament, has faced criticism due to inadequate facilities and weak coordination among stakeholders. Reports indicate that the judiciary continues to struggle with its effective implementation.

Although the legislation was enacted to curb the widespread problem of domestic violence, family courts, which the law envisions to handle GBV-related cases, are yet to be established. Nevertheless, the Act introduces harsher penalties for perpetrators and prioritises the safety and well-being of victims.

According to Afrobarometer findings, 53 percent of Basotho view violence against women as a common problem in their communities, with 28 percent describing it as "somewhat common" and 25 percent as "very common."

Earlier this year, the Minister of Justice and Law, Richard Ramoeletsi, revealed that Mafeteng District has recorded the highest number of GBV cases. For the 2024/25 period, 145 incidents have been reported. Of these, 35 have resulted in convictions, 29 are still before the courts, and 18 have been dismissed.

Mphafi further highlighted that exposure to GBV within families not only disrupts children's emotional stability but also hampers their ability to build healthy relationships. Deprived of nurturing love and a stable home environment, these children often turn to peers for advice, which can lead to risky behaviour and negative outcomes.

"They take advice from their friends," he said, "and unfortunately, some are encouraged to engage in sexual activity, have babies prematurely, or enter into early marriages. The issue of early child marriage is also common in this district. I don't know where it all went wrong, but most boys from initiation school get married, some as young as 16 or 17, often to their age-mates."

To tackle these challenges, Mphafi said the district has adopted a unified, multi-sectoral approach, emphasising that no single department or agency can address all the issues alone.

Through joint campaigns with stakeholders and partners, the district conducts outreach activities aimed at engaging communities and addressing youth-related challenges.

He added that law enforcement authorities have intensified efforts to arrest those involved in child marriage, while awareness campaigns continue to educate communities about the illegality and consequences of such practices.

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DRIVING DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

Empowering Growth from the Factory Floor to the Global Stage

The Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) continues to advance its mandate of accelerating industrial growth, enabling inclusive finance, and positioning Lesotho among leading investment destinations.

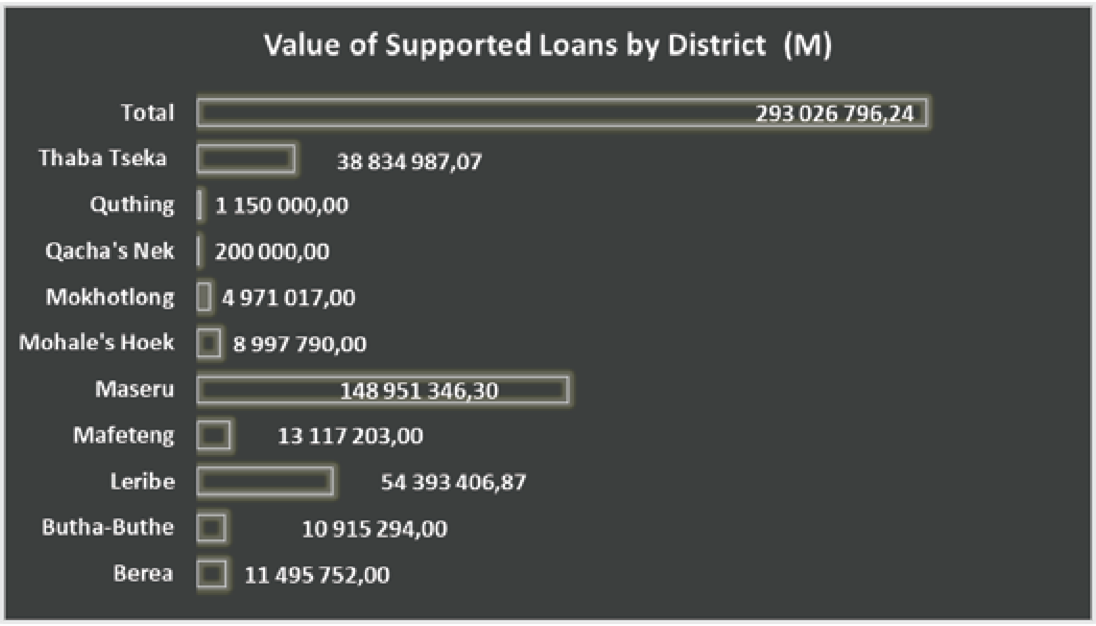
Industrial Growth in Motion: The launch of Isuzu by Zakhura Motor Group

On 16 October 2025, the Zakhura Motor Group (ZMG) officially launched the Isuzu Company in Lesotho, marking a significant milestone in the country's automotive and industrial development journey.

Speaking at the launch, the Interim Chief Executive Officer of the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC), Adv. Molise Ramaili emphasized LNDC's unwavering commitment to positioning Lesotho as a preferred investment and sourcing destination, in line with the National Strategic Development Plan II (NSDP II) priorities.

Finance for All

Through the Partial Credit Guarantee Scheme (PCGS), LNDC is bridging access to finance for local entrepreneurs and MSMEs, ensuring that opportunities for growth reach every corner of the economy.



Supported Loans	223
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Global Engagement, Local Impact

This week LNDC is representing Lesotho at the ADFIAP–AADFI Joint International CEO Forum 2025 in Macau SAR, China, showcasing the nation's growing economic potential.

The Association of African Development Finance Institutions (AADFI) is an umbrella organization for development finance institutions in Africa, created under the auspices of the African Development Bank in 1975.

In 2026, Lesotho will host this prestigious global forum which aims to bring the world's leading development financiers to our doorstep.

Day 1 of the ADFIAP-AADFI Joint International CEO Forum

Bilateral discussion with DBSA in climate finance opportunities.

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In 2026, Lesotho has been earmarked to host this prestigious global forum which will bring the world's leading

Newsday Business

RSL continues drive to cut out human error with automation

Seabata Mahao

In a major step toward digital transformation and service delivery excellence, the Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL) has introduced a new Online Refunds Application.

The platform is designed to streamline tax refund processes, enhance transparency, and increase operational efficiency for taxpayers across the country by minimising human intervention in critical decision-making stages.

Speaking at the launch, the Commissioner General of RSL, 'Mathabo Mokoko, highlighted that the initiative marks more than just a technological upgrade, it signals a people-centered approach to innovation that removes the risk of human error and undue influence from the refunds process.

The Online Refunds Application eliminates discretionary human decision-making at key stages by automating critical steps and improving turnaround times. It categorises refund applications based on their value and status, removing subjective judgment from the initial assessment.

For refunds between M20 and M1, 000: If no issues are detected, applications go directly into 'Processing' mode without requiring manual approval.

For refunds above M1, 000: These require additional checks, entering an 'Audit in Progress' status before processing, but the triggers for audit are system-generated, not human-determined.

Applications with outstanding documents or tax returns: May be marked as 'Rejected' or 'Cancelled', with reasons clearly communicated to the taxpayer via their dashboard through standardised, automated notifications.

Importantly, the system is built to automatically offset outstanding tax liabilities before any refund is disbursed, a feature that strengthens compliance and ensures integrity in line with national revenue laws without requiring human calculation or verification, thereby eliminating potential for manipulation or miscalculation.

The launch aligns with RSL's 2023–2027 Strategic Plan, Lesokoana, which identifies Digitalisation as a core pillar.

Under this framework, the RSL aims to simplify tax compliance, enhance service delivery, enable data-driven decision-making, and promote transparency in tax administration by reducing reliance on manual processes that are vulnerable to inconsistency and influence.

"A modern tax administration must be accessible anytime, anywhere, and on any digital platform," Mokoko said, adding that the Online Refunds Application is a tangible product of that vision.

The Commissioner General of RSL, 'Mathabo Mokoko

The automation-first approach ensures that refund decisions are based on objective criteria programmed into the system, creating a level playing field for all taxpayers regardless of their connections or status.

This marks a significant departure from traditional manual processing, where human judgment, though well-intentioned, could be subject to errors, delays, or external pressures.

While the digital leap is significant, the RSL remains conscious of the country's digital divide. The Commissioner General reaffirmed the institution's commitment to inclusivity through the Mobile Tax Office, which continues to travel across Lesotho from the lowlands to the remotest highlands, helping citizens access and understand the new system.

"Every Mosotho deserves the same level of convenience and service excellence. Our mobile teams will ensure no one is left behind," Mokoko stressed.

She emphasised that the platform's success would be measured not only by its functionality but also by the value it delivers to the people of Lesotho through consistent, impartial service delivery.

"This platform is for you our taxpayers. It is Easier, Faster, and Reliable. Let us continue working together to build a tax administration that is efficient, transparent, and trusted," Mokoko said.

Newsday Health

State-of-the-art vaccine store opened in Thaba-Tseka

Ntsoaki Motaung

In a significant boost to child health and national immunisation capacity, Prime Minister Samuel Ntsokoane Matekane has officially opened the newly constructed Thaba-Tseka District Vaccine Store, which will serve an estimated 63,696 children across the district.

Implemented by UNICEF Lesotho and the Ministry of Health, with generous support from the Government of Japan under the Japan Emergency Grant Aid, the facility marks a critical step toward ensuring equitable access to life-saving vaccines, particularly for children in Lesotho's remote, mountainous regions.

Built to World Health Organisation (WHO) standards, the state-of-the-art store is designed to strengthen Lesotho's vaccine storage and distribution capabilities. Its opening aligns with Japan's broader "Last Mile" strategy, which aims to ensure vaccines reach even the most vulnerable populations across Africa.

The facility boasts sophisticated infrastructure, including an automated electric and cooling system, specialised insulated flooring designed to prevent germ buildup and water damage, and a robust energy backup system powered by solar and generator technology.

Dr. Joseph Mashale, the District Medical Officer (DMO) for Thaba-Tseka, expressed immense pride and gratitude for the new facility.

"This store directly addresses our long-standing challenge of properly storing vaccines and cooler boxes," he said.

Dr. Mashale explained that the district's 22 health facilities, including the hospital, clinics, and health posts, are spread across six community councils, making accessibility difficult. In the past, inadequate storage conditions sometimes led to vaccine spoilage and losses for the government.

"With this new, quality-controlled store, those challenges are now history," he affirmed. He emphasised that the facility's enhanced capacity will support routine immunisation, campaigns, and outreach programmes, significantly strengthening the district's ability to reach every child.

Highlighting the importance of timely vaccination, Dr. Mashale added: "Vaccines play a crucial role in children's lives because their bodies are not yet fully developed and their immune systems still need boosters to fight diseases. It is our duty to ensure every child enjoys their right to access vaccines."

The facility includes four specialised refrigerators that maintain temperatures between 15°C and 25°C, and two units calibrated for

the standard 2°C to 8°C range, ensuring optimal vaccine preservation.

Speaking on behalf of the Government of Japan, Mr. Takuya Januma, Second Secretary at the Embassy of Japan, outlined the evolution of Japan's support. He explained that the initial plan, developed in 2019 during the COVID-19 pandemic, aimed to quickly establish prefabricated vaccine stores in all ten districts to enable a rapid cold-chain response.

However, as the pandemic evolved and following consultations with the Ministry of Health, the strategy was refined to focus on sustainable, high-quality infrastructure.

Januma San further highlighted Japan's broader commitment to Lesotho's development, citing support for hydropower projects at Katse Dam and the construction of primary school buildings, each valued at approximately one billion Japanese yen.

In addition to the Thaba-Tseka facility, the Government of Japan also supplied large, high-quality refrigerators to the other nine district health centres, ensuring that vaccine stocks across the country are maintained at optimal temperatures.

Bob Muchabaiwa, Deputy Representative for UNICEF Lesotho, reiterated UNICEF's unwavering commitment to supporting the Government of Lesotho in advancing child health.

"As UNICEF, we have a vision to ensure that every child has access to immunisation services from birth and across the life course," he said.

He explained that the newly inaugurated Thaba-Tseka District Vaccine Store represents a significant milestone in decentralising vaccine access, as it eliminates the need for health workers to travel to Maseru for essential immunisation supplies.

Muchabaiwa emphasised that this initiative forms part of UNICEF's broader commitment to ensuring every child in Lesotho can live a healthy life. While the Thaba-Tseka facility is the only one constructed "from scratch" and regarded as "state-of-the-art," UNICEF continues to work closely with the government to strengthen the entire district cold chain network.

Reflecting on UNICEF's 30-year partnership with Lesotho, he praised the "tremendous progress" achieved in improving immunisation coverage over the past decade. However, he acknowledged that reaching the "last mile," ensuring that even the most remote and deprived children are vaccinated, remains an ongoing challenge.

Muchabaiwa commended the Government of Lesotho, the Prime Minister, and his cabinet for their "significant political will" and steadfast support for child health initiatives, describing the opening as "a day of celebration" and a testament to their commitment to improving the well-being of the Basotho people.

Minister of Health, Selibe Mochoboroane, announced that the Thaba-Tseka facility is now the sixth district vaccine store to be established, following those in Maseru, Berea, Leribe, Botha-Bothe, and Mokhotlong.

"We are only left with Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, Quthing, and Qacha's Nek," he said.

The Minister explained that the national strategy aims to ensure every district has its own vaccine store to facilitate routine immunisation and streamline the distribution of vaccines to health facilities.

"In the past, we struggled and often delivered vaccines to districts just a day before campaigns," he noted. "Now, vaccines are distributed well in advance, meaning there will be no delays in reaching our beneficiaries."

'Mamamello Holomo, Member of Parliament (MP) for Thaba-Tseka, expressed deep gratitude on behalf of her constituents. She recalled the district's previous challenges with inadequate storage at Paray Hospital, which often forced them to order fewer vaccines than needed and caused significant delays in restocking from Maseru.

"With this new facility, we can now order whatever quantity we need and maintain the highest standards of cold chain quality," she said.

Holomo concluded by underscoring that health is the cornerstone of development, stating: "When we speak of national development and of our people, we must first speak of healthy people."

The Thaba-Tseka vaccine store is part of Lesotho's broader efforts to sustain high immunisation coverage, supported by international partners such as Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

According to 2023 immunisation data, Lesotho has achieved strong national coverage but still faces some gaps:

- DTP3 Coverage: 87 percent
- DTP1 Coverage: 92 percent
- Measles-Containing Vaccine (MCV1): 90 percent
- Dropout Rate (DTP1–DTP3): Five percent
- Zero-dose Children (those who have not received DTP1): 4,262
- DTP3 Coverage in the 20 percent of Districts with Lowest Coverage: 77 percent

Newsday Opinion

Artificial Intelligence, political manipulation, and the final lap of governance

Theko Tlebere

In recent weeks, Lesotho has been shaken by alarming claims regarding the misuse of artificial intelligence (AI) in politics. The controversy began with allegations that Prime Minister Sam Matekane and Deputy Prime Minister Nthomeng Majara were depicted inappropriately through digitally manipulated images. Shortly after, the Alliance for Democrats (AD) retracted a widely circulated circular that had been created using AI. While these incidents may appear isolated, they reveal a troubling trend: the increasing use of AI to manipulate information and distort public perception. This trend raises profound questions about the integrity of our political discourse and the very foundations of democracy.

Prime Minister Matekane's government has been in power for three years, with two years remaining until the next election. This is the critical final lap of governance that demands a focus on service delivery and the pursuit of tangible outcomes for the citizens of Lesotho. However, rather than engaging in discussions about policy outcomes or development priorities, the political landscape is inundated with falsehoods and fabricated scandals. Opposition parties recognise the significance of this moment; as the election approaches, efforts to undermine and destabilise the ruling coalition intensify. In this context, AI, whether wielded by opposition parties or unscrupulous actors, is emerging as a potent weapon that can distort reality and manipulate public sentiment.

While AI holds great potential, it also poses unsettling risks. The technology can produce hyper-realistic images, videos, and documents that are indistinguishable from genuine ones. These so-called "deepfakes" can fabricate events, impersonate institutions, or create convincing false communications that mislead the public. In Lesotho, a single manipulated image or fake circular can quickly spread across platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook, misleading thousands before any official correction is issued. This results in confusion, anger, and mistrust, conditions that no emerging democracy can afford if it hopes to thrive and maintain a cohesive society.

The danger lies not only in the misinformation itself but also in its capacity to distract the government from its core responsibilities. Every moment spent addressing fabrications is time lost in delivering services, creating jobs, and implementing the reforms that citizens expect and deserve. A government nearing the end of its term must be proactive, strategic, and resilient against digital manipulation. The temptation to react emotionally to every viral image must be resisted; instead, the administration should communicate clearly, factually, and consistently about its achievements and plans for the future.

The use of AI for political deception is not unique to Lesotho; countries worldwide are grappling with how to manage and regulate this rapidly evolving technology. However, the stakes are particularly high for us. As a small nation where information travels rapidly and trust is fragile, rural citizens often rely on word of mouth for news and information. When an AI-generated image circulates, many cannot verify its authenticity. Awareness is crucial. Individuals must learn to question what they see and hear online. When encountering sensational or divisive messages, the instinct should be to pause, verify, and seek confirmation from credible sources, whether official statements, reputable media, or trusted community voices. As my uncle from Ha Khohlopo once noted, "In our villages, a rumour can travel faster than the wind." In the age of AI, that wind has turned into a storm that threatens to uproot the very fabric of our society.

For the government, the final two years present an opportunity to solidify its legacy. This period should be viewed as a defining stretch of its administration, an opportunity to showcase results, communicate progress, and restore public confidence. Focus must remain on delivering infrastructure, healthcare, education, and jobs, rather than managing scandals that distract us from the pressing needs of the populace. Transparency should serve as a defence against misinformation. When false statements arise, they must be addressed swiftly and publicly, without allowing them to derail policy priorities or erode the trust that is essential for effective governance. This is also the time to invest in digital governance, establish ethical AI frameworks, and enhance media literacy among citizens to empower them against misinformation.

AI, like any tool, is not inherently harmful. When used responsibly, it can foster development, improve service delivery, and enhance governance. However, when exploited for political gain, it threatens democracy and stability. The government must lead by example, setting standards and safeguards that protect citizens from deception and uphold truth in public discourse. The next two years should focus on building rather than battling, demonstrating to Basotho that technology can serve progress, not politics.

Ultimately, Lesotho's success hinges on our ability to distinguish truth from fabrication and concentrate on the real issues affecting our daily lives. The government has a duty to guide the nation away from distraction and towards meaningful delivery. Citizens, in turn, must develop a habit of digital skepticism. We cannot allow artificial intelligence to dictate our emotions, our votes, or our future. If the government approaches these remaining years as the final lap with clarity, discipline, and purpose, it can cross the finish line with dignity and maintain the trust of the people. In that lies the true victory, one that no fabricated image or false circular can ever erase. The future is **NOW!**

Open letter to the Ministry of Education and Training

Subject: A plea for urgent intervention at Maseru Preparatory School

I write this letter as a long-standing and deeply concerned parent of a child at Maseru Preparatory School. For years, this school has been known as one of the most respected institutions in the country, often referred to as an *international school*. Sadly, that title no longer reflects the reality our children face today.

Since 2022, the school has been without a permanent Headmaster. Those who have stepped in as acting Heads have stayed only briefly, often leaving the school in an even worse state than they found it. These appointments appear to have been made based on personal friendships with successive Chairpersons of the Board rather than on merit or through any transparent consultation with parents. Each appointment has only deepened the instability and decline.

Over the past few years, we have watched with heartbreak as the school's standards have fallen. Among the most troubling issues are:

- Teachers not being paid regularly, leaving many demotivated or leaving altogether;
- The absence of a school nurse, which puts our children's safety at risk;
- Poor leadership and planning, leading to confusion and disorganisation; and
- A visible drop in the school's communication standards, with letters and notices that no longer reflect the quality of education we once trusted this school to provide.

Articles published by *Newsday Lesotho* have painted an accurate picture of what is happening. Yet, the Ministry of Education has remained silent. As parents, we are shocked and disappointed that such a well-known school, one that has educated generations of this country's children, could be allowed to crumble without intervention.

The issue of financial accountability also needs urgent attention. There are growing concerns that some members of the school's leadership, including the acting Head and certain teachers, are not paying school fees for their own children. If that is true, we ask the Ministry to investigate and clarify whether it is right for individuals who owe the school to continue holding leadership positions.

Even more disturbing is the fact that other staff members have lost their jobs, allegedly because of the school's financial difficulties, while those who owe fees continue to enjoy free education for their children and full salaries for themselves. This shows clear bias and unfair treatment that must be urgently addressed. Furthermore, if the school is truly struggling financially, why has the new board introduced allowances for itself, something that was never done before?

Another serious concern is the matter of school uniforms. Many of us have paid for uniforms that have never been delivered. We have been given endless promises that they would arrive "the following day," yet weeks have passed. Parents deserve to know what happened to our money.

But what has disturbed us most deeply are the recent reports of inhumane and degrading punishment at the school. There are credible claims that some children have been stripped naked and made to wear diapers as discipline. This is not only cruel but raises serious fears about the safety and dignity of our children.

Because of this, I have chosen to withhold my name. I am genuinely afraid that my child could be victimised for my speaking out. The atmosphere at the school has become unsafe for both children and parents who question decisions. I cannot risk exposing my child to further humiliation or the possibility of sexual harassment under such disturbing disciplinary practices.

I therefore appeal to the Ministry of Education and Training to act immediately by:

1. Investigating the governance, management, and financial operations of Maseru Preparatory School;
2. Reviewing how acting Heads and Board members have been appointed;
3. Looking into reports of child mistreatment and ensuring that children's rights are fully protected; and
4. Providing parents with a transparent report on the findings and steps that will be taken to restore trust and quality at the school.

Maseru Preparatory School was once a place of pride, a symbol of academic excellence and integrity. Today, it stands as a painful reminder of what happens when leadership fails and oversight is absent. Our children deserve better.

Yours sincerely,
A Concerned Parent

Newsday Opinion

Keeping up with our kin

How did Botswana leave Lesotho behind?

"Those who have no record of what their forebears have accomplished lose the inspiration that comes from the teaching of biography and history" – Carter G. Woodson (1875 - 1950)

Nkopane Mathibeli

According to the version of our history written by D.F. Ellenberger, the group of migrants (Bakoena) from whom emerged the founder of our nation came from Botswana, led by Napo, the second son of Masilo II. Napo left as an expression of his refusal to be overshadowed by his older brother (Mochudi), who inherited the throne of the Bakoena tribe, which was just one of the 12 tribes in Botswana. Might Napo's obviously ego-driven rebellion against legitimate authority be the basis of what became the mainstay of his descendants' political DNA – a selfish obsession with power? That aside, this narrative regarding our origin somehow makes Batswana our older siblings. As if to emphasise that seniority, the Brits granted them independence on September 30, 1966, after which Lesotho followed only three days later.

Given the current contrast between these two nations, how did the Batswana leverage their three-day head start to leap ahead by what today seems like three decades? I contend that they did so because to them, nationhood is the centre on which everything turns, courtesy of the political wisdom of their founding father (Seretse Khama) who inspired by the accomplishments of his forebears (specifically Khama III), ensured that not only the founding principles general to all tribes are central to the new state machinery but also that the virtue of national leadership is measured by its subservience to the electorate. This virtue is only demonstrable by utilising the state machinery for the sole benefit of the electorate. This led to Batswana's loyalty to national/political leadership being subservient, and so did the political and national psyche of Batswana come into being. But how different are Botswana and Lesotho today?

Differences and their causes

Currently, Botswana has its GDP at P49,4 billion and its GDP/capita at $6,937/P95,883. According to the Bank of Botswana's statement of financial position as at 31st May 2025, its international Net Reserves are at $ 3,508,771. This translates to P48.4 billion, which is equivalent to nine months of import cover. On the other hand, Lesotho currently has its GDP at a little over $2 billion, and its GDP/capita is at $1,100/M19,106. According to the Central Bank of Lesotho's Monetary policy statement of 25th March 2025, our Net International Reserves are at $998,9 million, which translates to M 17,3 billion, i.e. 4.7 months of import cover. Is it rationally possible to attribute Lesotho's economic backwardness to its small size and being completely inside South Africa? Absolutely not. For instance, a country named San Marino, completely inside Italy, is 495 times smaller than Lesotho but richer than Italy on a per capita basis.

It may, of course, be easier to contest this comparison of San Marino with Italy on the basis of the former having a total population of a little less than 34,000 compared to Italy's 58 million. But in the same vein, Lesotho's population is 27 times smaller than that of South Africa, yet its GDP/capita is even smaller than that of South Africa's poorest province (Eastern Cape). Isn't this enough proof that the root of our country's economic backwardness is not so much its population size, land mass, an enclave status or even a little mineral endowment? Have we ever considered whether our collective (political elites & electorate's) political wisdom and virtue are par to the task at hand? Here is a classic example that is likely to convince holders of a different viewpoint. The DRC is way bigger than Botswana in land mass, has a larger population and is much more endowed with minerals, yet its GDP/capital is even smaller than that of Lesotho, let alone Botswana's.

Nation-building and state formation

Basotho under Morena Moshoeshoe I became a nation many decades before the idea of nationhood took root among the tribes inhabiting the territory of Botswana. As advised by his mentor (Morena Mohlomi), the central principles around which our nation was formed were: take care of the weak and vulnerable (social development policies); share your wealth with your subjects (wealth redistribution policies); enjoy the profits of hard work not the fruits of war (virtuous living/moral uprightness); marry many wives (broaden diplomatic footprint). This worked well, and Basotho became a formidable nation that successfully defended its territory and sovereignty against Afrikaner encroachment. On the contrary, the lifaqane, which essentially became a catalyst of nation-building among Basotho, led to the opposite among Batswana. Between 1823 and 1842, they were torn apart by the Bakololo of Sebetwane and later by the Amandebele of Mzilikazi. Both invasions wreaked havoc, further deferring the idea of nationhood.

Although like Basotho, Batswana successfully defended their territory from Afrikaner encroachment, their military offensive was not a national affair but an offensive of only four tribes led by Kgosi Sechele I of Bakoena. The first seed of Tswana nationhood was planted by a Wesleyan missionary (Josef Ludorf) when he encouraged the chiefs of three tribes (Batlhaping, Barolong and Bangwaketse) to form a nation in 1871. He even drafted a constitution for them, but the project failed due to the narrowness of his envisioned nationhood. Even when the Brits took over Botswana as a protectorate in 1885, its inhabitants were still not a nation in the strict, technical sense of being a people inhabiting a specific area overseen by a central government. It is on this background that Seretse Khama is rightly regarded as Botswana's founding father.

Seretse Khama, power politics and nation-building

On March 1, 1965, Botswana held its first general elections, and Khama's party won 28 out of the 31 contested seats. Interestingly, BDP's victory was not based solely on its election promises. His popularity soared to great heights following his decision to forfeit his right as the heir of the Bangwato chieftainship, as triggered by the then Regent's opposition to his taking over the chieftaincy for two reasons. The regent had already chosen a wife for Khama; Khama had already married a white woman while studying in London. On the other hand, he appealed to the masses not because the masses were excited by his white wife. He impressed himself upon them as a selfless man for forfeiting such a prestigious position, especially of the largest and wealthiest tribe of them all (Bangwato).

On acquiring political power, Khama embarked on nation-building, successfully giving it an impeccable standard of virtuous national life below which it has proudly refused to go. Since the economic trajectory on which he took Botswana is well documented, I want to sum up by briefly highlighting how Batswana's enviable ethical orientation and discipline were instilled by Khama's model of boldly taking patriotic decisions without fear of loss of power. I do this by bringing forth a model he emulated, as inspired by arguably the greatest chief among the numerous tribes of precolonial Botswana. Interestingly, that chief was his great-grandfather (Khama III), who became the Chief of Bangwato in 1872 but was, however, rebelled against, deposed and replaced by his father (Sekgoma I) only a year into his tenure. The reason was the radical nature of his programme to modernise Bangwato, after which he ran away only to come back and topple his father in 1875. From then, he ruled until 1923.

On his return, he implemented the same radical programme that got him deposed, and it, in turn, led to the growth of the tribe from merely being the biggest in population. Its capital (Shoshong) became Botswana's biggest commercial hub, making Bangwato the wealthiest of all tribes. He stopped the brewing and selling of alcohol; he prohibited selling goods on credit, hunting, tree cutting, rainmaking, lebollo, polygamy and conducted espionage on adulterers. All this constituted a very hard pill to swallow for the Bangwato, but he persisted. Under Khama III's grandson, Botswana's progress is similarly based on selfless leadership, bold decisions and ethical conduct.

Have Basotho failed because they do not have a historical reference point? Not quite. Their fault is their despicable disregard of the wisdom of their founding father, such that today some are contemplating exchanging, for a bowl of soup, the sovereignty he gave us. Unlike Khama, they are not inspired by the biography and history of their great forebear. Instead, like Napo, many have a selfish obsession with power hence; instead of politicians of substance, many are mere dream merchants. Unlike in Botswana, where loyalty to national/political leadership is determined by its exclusive use of the state for the sole benefit of the electorate, our national political psyche is such that loyalty is determined by who sells better dreams and dishes out better crumbs. Now, that is the primary reason why Botswana left Lesotho behind and may continue to widen the gap.


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Revenue Services Lesotho

RSL/BE/SCM/EOI/01/10/2025

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

REGISTRATION OF SUPPLIERS / SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR INCLUSION IN THE SUPPLIER DATABASE

Revenue Services Lesotho invites suitably qualified, reputable, and eligible suppliers and service providers to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) for inclusion in its Supplier Database for the provision of goods, works, and services. The objective of this exercise is to update and expand the organization's Supplier Database in line with applicable policies and procedures. The database will serve as the official source for identifying pre-qualified suppliers and service providers who may be invited to participate in future procurement opportunities. Registration on the database does not guarantee the award of any contract but ensures that your organization will be considered for relevant procurement processes.

Interested suppliers/service providers are required to obtain and complete the official Request for Information **(RFI Form)** obtainable at a non-refundable fee of **M100.00.** The form can be requested via email by writing to supplychainmanagment@rsl.org.ls with the subject line: **"REQUEST FOR SUPPLIER REGISTRATION FORM"**. Applicants must complete the form in full and strictly adhere to all instructions provided. The form is designed to ensure that all necessary information and documentation are submitted. Incomplete or incorrectly filled forms will result in disqualification from consideration.

The Expressions of Interest must be submitted to the SCM address below on or before **15th January 2026 at 17:00hrs**. They must be submitted through an email provided below

N.B. The RFI form needs to be filled by every supplier who intends to do business with the RSL from 2026-28, it also applies to those who are already in the supplier database and those who have already supplied RSL before. Those who have also recently submitted the profiles (within 2025/26 financial year)

Suppliers are expected to express interest in supplying goods they are licensed for

All queries concerning this Expression of interest should be addressed to Supply Chain Management unit at supplychainmanagment@rsl.org.ls

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MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND CHIEFTAINSHIP, HOME-AFFAIRS AND POLICE
BEREA DISTRICT COUNCIL

INVITATION TO TENDER NO: BDC/D/01/2025/2026

The Ministry of Local Government & Chieftainship, Home Affairs and Police (MoLGCHP) – Berea District Council has received funds from the Government of Lesotho and intends to apply these funds for **Water Supply Maintenance and Extension at Ha-Tšoeunyane in Berea Urban Council**. Therefore, contractors who possess **Category C of Department of Rural Water Supply (DWRS)** are invited to tender for the above works for year ending 31st March 2026.

REGISTRATION OF THE TENDER DOCUMENT

Tender documents are available at Berea District Council (Procurement unit) at a non-refundable registration fee for participation amounting to **M2, 000.00** (Two Thousand Maloti Only) during working hours paid into the Standard Lesotho Bank a/c **No: 9080006362180** (Reference be Company's name). The Stamped Bank Confirmation to be taken to Accounts office at **Berea Urban Council** for Receipt. Tender documents will be provided to the potential bidder upon provision of receipt from Accounts office by the District Council Procurement Unit.

SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

For Category C

Lot	Name of Council	Project Name	Category
1	Berea Urban Council	Water Supply Maintenance and Extension at Ha-Ts'oeunyane in Berea Urban Council	C

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Bid Security

Submission of 2% bid security from the bank or institution recognized by Central Bank of Lesotho.

Pre bid Meeting

Compulsory pre-bid meeting will be held on the **05th November 2025** at **Berea District Council's** Board Room at**10:00 a.m.**

Site-visits

Site visit is compulsory on the same date after pre-bid meeting. Site visit is at the bidders expenses.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

Bidders who do not comply with the following requirements will be disqualified:

- Relevant and valid Trader's License
- Valid Tax Clearance Certificate
- Valid DRWS Certificate certified at source
- 2% bid security of a tendered price
- Compulsory Pre-tender meeting and Site visit (Certificate of Attendance)
- Company profile with clear **IBR Number**
- Notarized Power of Attorney will be needed in case of existing Joint Ventures, companies and societies
- Certificate of Incorporation and Company Extract on companies.
- Completed and stamped (suppliers stamp) Certificate of Bonafide
- Completed and stamped (suppliers stamp) statement of commitment

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Compliance to Tender Conditions
- Technical Capability (85%)
- Financial Capability (15%)

Tender Issuance and Submission

The issue date for this tender is 15th October 2025 and the closing date is 18th November 2025. Original documents of the tender responses are to be delivered to the tender box situated, **at Berea District Council, *NOT LATER THAN 11:00 A.M on the 18th November 2025***. All tenders will be opened **on the same date *at 11:30 a.m***. Sealed envelope or packaging bearing no identification of **bidder must be marked: WATER SUPPLY MAINTENANCE AND EXTENSION AT HA TŠOEUNYANE BEREA URBAN COUNCIL**. Tenders will be opened in the presence of bidders or representatives at 11:30 a.m. on the same day at Berea District Council's boardroom.

For further information please contact +266 5718 3276 during office hours on or before 18th November 2025

Berea District Council also reserves the right to cancel the tenders before submission/opening of tenders, postpone the tender submission/opening date and to accept/reject any or all tenders. Berea District Council is not bound to accept the lowest or any bid.

EXPRESSSIONS OF INTEREST

CALL FOR EXPRESSSIONS OF INTEREST

ROADS DIRECTORATE (RD) is seeking expressions of interest from qualified companies and consultants to provide goods and services in the categories as shown below. This exercise is intended to assist Roads Directorate to get a better appreciation of registered companies that are operating in these areas of expertise and to update its vendor database.

Areas of services include:

- Road construction material such as asphalt, prime mix, cement, paint
- Road construction tools such as pickaxes, wheelbarrows, shovels, spades
- Road construction equipment such as rollers, compactors, waterbowsers, road marking equipment, concrete mixers
- Building Material such as crushed stone, meshwire, reinforcement
- Fuel and Lubricants such as coal, wood, paraffin, petrol, diesel
- Hardware (e.g. for electrical works, plumbing)
- Road construction laboratory equipment
- Air travel including, air tickets and related packages
- Management consulting services
- Corporate image consulting and promotional items
- Logistics services including customs clearance, freight forwarding etc
- Commercial security services
- Cleaning and Landscaping services
- ICT equipment, network cabling, ICT supplies and consumables
- Air conditioning and refrigeration
- Catering, events management and hotel and conferencing services
- Vehicle and property insurance
- Office equipment, furniture, stationery and other office supplies
- Water purification services
- Corporate wear and protective gear
- Maintenance of Motor and Plant Vehicle (eg Graders, Excavators, Rollers,Tipper trucks(Different Sizes) Water Tankers etc.
- Maintenance of Office Equipment
- Printing and Branding Services (for ID cards, flyers, posters, office documents etcetera)
- Advertising Agencies
- Road and Office Signage
- Stationery
- Sound System and PA System
- Supply and fitting of Carpets and Blinds
- Motor Towing Services
- Motor Panel Beating and Spray Painting
- Office Partitioning
- Electronics and Electrical Appliances
- Durable Tents (Hiring and/ selling)
- Supply and Maintenance of Fire Extinguishers
- Any other categories which not have been included here

For companies to qualify they must meet the following criteria (by proof of submissons):

- Must have a proven track record of service provision in Lesotho in their areas of expertise. A full company profile on a letter head detailing the registration, current physical address, services provided, similar assignments, references of previous assignments with contact details must be submitted.
- Must show financial viability of their businesses
- Registration licence/Business Identity and TAX Clearance certificate certified at source

If applicable, the Roads Directorate reserves the right to visit your facilities as part of the pre-qualification process to verify factors such as (but no limited to) existence of organisation, availablility of goods on hand and operational framework.

Submissions through email with sebject **"Expression of Interest for Supply of Goods, Works and Services"** should be addressed to Procurement Specialist, Roads Directorate. Submissions should be sent to the following emails manoelin@rd.org.ls cc: molefimt@rd.org.ls on or before **31st October 2025 at 12:00 noon**

Attention to: Procurement Specialist

Roads Directorate @Roads_LS Road Directorate Lesotho

Quality Roads, Improving Connectivity

KHOTSO PULA NALA

The Kingdom of Lesotho
Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition

WITHDRAWAL

Applicants are hereby notified that due to unforeseen circumstances, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition Advertisement which ended on the 31/07/2025 at 14:00 pm; for Project Management Unit Positions of Building Climate Resilient Livelihoods and Food Systems Project is hereby withdrawn.


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LETOFE marks 21 years of rhythm and growth

Chris Theko

What began as a jazz gathering has evolved into Lesotho's premier lifestyle festival, a celebration of music, art, and community proudly backed by Standard Lesotho Bank (SLB).

The Standard Lesotho Bank LETOFE Lifestyle Festival, one of Lesotho's most iconic cultural events, is celebrating its 21st anniversary, a milestone that marks two decades of rhythm, resilience, and remarkable growth in the nation's creative landscape.

From its early days as a modest jazz event to its current status as a fully-fledged lifestyle festival, LETOFE has become a powerful platform that brings together thousands of people each year to celebrate music, art, fashion, and Basotho culture.

The event has played a key role in shaping Lesotho's entertainment identity and boosting local tourism.

At the official media launch in Maseru on Tuesday, festival founder Montoeli 'Moleli reflected on the journey that has defined LETOFE's two-decade legacy.

"LETOFE started in 2005 with the first ever leg taking place at Setsoto Stadium," 'Moleli explained.

"It was at one point hosted at Khotsong Lodge and NUL Grounds, but eventually settled at Thaba Bosiu Cultural Village. It began under the name Lesotho Tourism Jazz Festival, later became Lesotho Jazz Festival, and eventually evolved into LETOFE.

"When Standard Lesotho Bank came on board as the brand sponsor, it became LETOFE Sounds of Blue, and as it transitioned into a broader lifestyle experience, it became the Standard Lesotho Bank LETOFE Lifestyle."

"The evolution was driven by a vision to create not just an entertainment event, but a lifestyle platform showcasing the best of Lesotho's creative talent while drawing visitors from across the region.

"We wanted to build something that Basotho could be proud of. Over the years, LETOFE has become a reflection of who we are, vibrant, resilient, and deeply connected through music and culture. The consistency has also been much to the credit of my team, the sponsors who committed year in and year out," he added.

The festival has since grown into a household name, with its annual celebration now attracting attendees from Lesotho, South Africa, Botswana, and beyond. More than just a concert, it has become a key tourism and economic driver, supporting small businesses, local vendors, and artisans who form part of the wider creative economy.

For Standard Lesotho Bank, the festival represents much more than a sponsorship, it is a long-standing partnership rooted in shared values of creativity, connection, and African pride.

Speaking at the launch, the bank's Marketing Manager for Communications and Sponsorships, Manyathela Kheleli, described LETOFE as a flagship event that perfectly aligns with the bank's brand and cultural mission.

"This festival is our flagship sponsorship, and it resonates very well with our brand. Over the years, our Bank and LETOFE have been inseparable, and we are proud to contribute to the promotion of arts and culture in Lesotho and across Africa," Kheleli said.

He explained that LETOFE forms part of the wider Standard Bank Group's Africa Music Series, a continental initiative that supports similar festivals in South Africa, Botswana, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Zambia. Through this series, the bank has positioned itself as one of Africa's biggest patrons of the arts.

"The Standard Lesotho Bank LETOFE Lifestyle Experience is arguably one of the biggest music festivals in the country, a celebration that brings together music, fashion, and food as Basotho wind up the year," Kheleli noted.

In addition to celebrating the 21-year milestone, the launch also marked another significant achievement, the renewal of Standard Lesotho Bank's partnership with the festival for another three years, ensuring LETOFE's continuity until 2027.

"We have signed a new three-year contract that will see the festival hosted until 2027. In the true spirit of the slogan We Live, We Love, We Connect, we aim to grow this festival into a fully-fledged lifestyle event, aligning with global trends in the entertainment industry," Kheleli confirmed.

Beyond entertainment, the bank views its involvement as an investment in Lesotho's creative economy. Kheleli highlighted the festival's economic and social impact, citing the role it plays in stimulating local business and drawing regional visitors.

"For us, LETOFE is not only about great entertainment; it's a major investment in the economy and the arts industry. The festival creates significant economic spin-offs, attracting scores of revelers from the SADC region and beyond," he explained.

Over the years, the festival's stage has hosted a mix of international acts and homegrown stars, giving local artists the opportunity to share platforms with some of Africa's finest.

"Standard Lesotho Bank is a true patron of the arts. We have nurtured talent and provided platforms for Basotho artists to share stages with some of the best in the region. Our journey with the creative industry spans over 20 years, and it continues," Kheleli continued.

To show appreciation for its customers, the bank has introduced a six percent discount on festival tickets purchased with Standard Lesotho Bank debit or credit cards through Computicket outlets in Lesotho and other Common Monetary Area (CMA) countries.

"This festival is one way we express gratitude to our customers. Their loyalty has allowed us to sustain this partnership for two decades, and through their continued support, the festival has grown in leaps and bounds," said Kheleli.

Looking ahead, the bank and organisers share a bold vision for LETOFE's future, to position it as one of Southern Africa's leading lifestyle and tourism events.

"We envision LETOFE evolving beyond music, becoming a hotspot for food, art, fashion, and lifestyle, while still preserving its roots as a tourism event. We are benchmarking on the best in Africa and improving our offering year on year," Kheleli said.

As the summer season approaches, excitement is already building for what promises to be a landmark 21st edition. For festival-goers, it is not just another concert, it is a cultural homecoming. For artists, it is a stage of opportunity.

And for Standard Lesotho Bank, it is a celebration of partnership, creativity, and the unbreakable rhythm of Basotho pride.

"LETOFE has grown into something far bigger than we imagined. It belongs to the people now, and that is what makes it special," Moleli said.

Whose state is it anyway?

Lesotho's democratic crisis and the urgent need for change.

Mangoane M'phuthi

This month, Lesotho marked 59 years of independence from British Colonial Rule. Letsatsi La Boipuso is a day meant to stir national pride. Instead, it casts a stark shadow over our nation's trajectory. Behind the carefully crafted speeches about development and the endless promises of successive governments lies an uncomfortable truth: the daily reality for most Basotho remains fundamentally unchanged. Our colonial masters packed their bags, but left their playbook behind, now expertly wielded by our own.

Steve Biko's powerful declaration: "Black man, you are on your own," galvanised the Black Consciousness Movement during South Africa's apartheid era. Today, in 2025, this message resonates anew in Lesotho: Mosotho, you are on your own. This is not a cry of despair but a call to action. The inferno consuming our state institutions demands a response from within. Only Basotho possess the power to extinguish these flames.

We can no longer delegate our future to others or wait for leadership that consistently prioritises personal or partisan interests over national welfare. If we seek accountability, stability, and genuine progress, we must not merely request it. We must demand it relentlessly.

Lesotho stands paralysed at a critical crossroads, and emigration cannot be our default response. The rising tide of xenophobia in South Africa, exemplified by Operation Dudula, serves as a sobering reminder that fleeing is not a solution. True security can only come from stabilising our own nation.

A dangerous paralysis grips Lesotho today. Our government institutions are crumbling under the weight of systemic corruption. Each passing week brings fresh revelations: financial mismanagement spreads like a cancer through ministries, constitutional breaches become commonplace, and corruption permeates every level of governance. Our governmental institutions, parliamentary bodies, and increasingly, our citizenry are mired in a collective indifference that feeds upon itself. When leadership fails to fulfill its promises, public engagement withers. This disengagement, in turn, removes crucial pressure from leaders to perform their duties. Like an uncontrolled blaze, this cycle of apathy spreads unchecked through our democracy.

The state of our democracy tells a troubling story. While registered political parties surged by 85% between 2017 and 2022, voter participation plummeted to unprecedented levels. The 2022 elections saw a record 1.3 million registered voters, yet less than 40% exercised their democratic right. Rather than inspiring civic engagement, this proliferation of parties convinced many Basotho that politics has devolved into a self-serving enterprise rather than a platform for public service.

Even the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) acknowledges its shortcomings in civic education, conducting rushed awareness campaigns before elections instead of maintaining sustained educational efforts. A compromised voters' register, still listing deceased citizens, only deepens public scepticism. In this climate, political disengagement becomes the path of least resistance. Yet this withdrawal carries a devastating price: it allows our nation to burn while we stand idle.

Here lies an essential truth: tax payment provides citizens with the strongest foundation for demanding accountability. When Basotho fulfill their fiscal responsibilities to the state, leadership has no justification for failing to deliver.

It is crucial to understand that being a taxpayer transcends mere obligation. It represents a source of voice and influence. Citizens who contribute to the national treasury are not beggars. They are stakeholders who have earned their right to participate in national dialogue.

When corruption or mismanagement depletes these public contributions, it constitutes more than administrative failure. It represents direct theft from every citizen who has invested in the system.

As we move through 2025, Lesotho's economic decline continues unabated. Manufacturing facilities close their doors, agriculture struggles, and tourism remains stagnant. Even before Donald Trump's tariffs impacted our exports, our economy had already contracted by 43%.

In an economic wasteland, criminal activity becomes the default employer. The rise of Makhomosha represents more than just individuals entering illegal mines. It reflects a society breeding desperation. Litotomeng has transformed from a location into a metaphor for the limited options facing our rural youth. For many, participating in dangerous, illegal economies is not a reckless choice but the only survival strategy in an opportunity-barren landscape. We are cultivating successive generations of Makhomosha through our failure to provide economic alternatives. They stand as stark evidence of a nation where opportunity has been supplanted by economic despair.

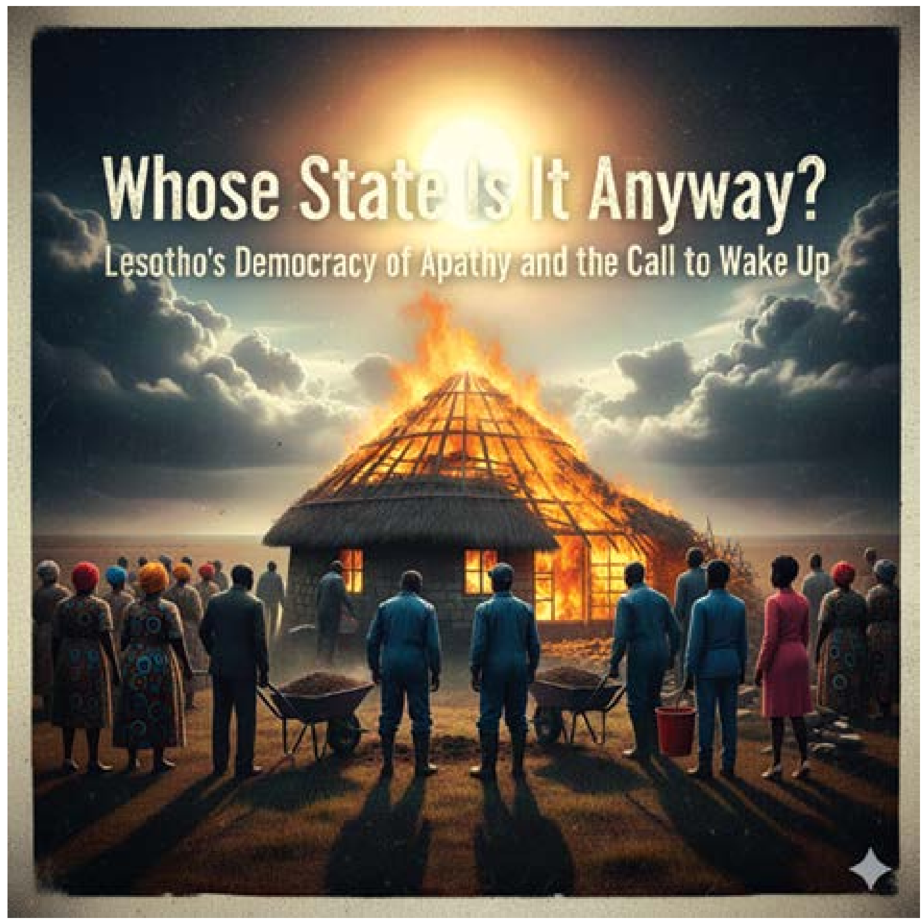
Local and international experts have consistently cautioned against Lesotho's pattern of reckless spending while relying on foreign aid or SACU windfalls to bridge financial gaps. The World Bank's recent Lesotho Economic Update delivered an unambiguous message: fiscal policy could drive inclusive growth if implemented strategically.

The report advocated establishing robust fiscal rules and a Stabilisation Fund to prevent the mismanagement of temporary SACU surpluses. It emphasised controlling the escalating public wage bill, redirecting expenditure toward critical infrastructure and education, and enhancing procurement efficiency and service delivery.

Furthermore, it highlighted crucial opportunities Lesotho continues to overlook: integration with the African Continental Free Trade Area, enhancement of the investment climate, and restructuring state involvement to foster private sector growth.

These recommendations are not revolutionary or impossible to implement. Yet in Lesotho, they remain unrealised potential, gathering dust in archived reports. Our nation burns while solutions lie within reach, unused.

Today's Basotho youth represent our most educated generation. With higher literacy rates, increased access to tertiary education, and unprecedented global connectivity through digital platforms, they possess transformative potential. This educational investment was not futile. An informed, connected youth population represents a powerful catalyst for change. If directed toward civic engagement rather than disillusionment, it could fundamentally alter our national trajectory.



These factors are not peripheral details. They represent possibilities amid our national crisis. Yet they will remain mere potential unless citizens transform them into concrete demands for accountability and reform.

While criticising state institutions and political parties comes easily, democratic strength ultimately flows from citizen participation. Every eligible Mosotho who abstains from voting effectively endorses the current system. Silence does not constitute resistance. It represents tacit acceptance of our national decline.

The vitality of a democracy is measured not through political rhetoric but through active citizen engagement. The 1993 elections, following military rule, saw a remarkable 72% turnout – a testament to citizens' power when they recognise their democratic responsibility. Similarly, 2012's coalition politics momentarily reinvigorated public participation. These instances demonstrate that when circumstances demand action, Basotho respond decisively.

Today's reality presents a stark contrast. With unemployment soaring, hunger widespread, and crime undermining the social fabric, many citizens have lost faith in the electoral process. Yet paradoxically, this represents our most critical juncture. The moment to salvage democracy before it deteriorates beyond recovery.

We stand at a decisive crossroads. One path leads deeper into civic apathy, surrendering governance while we bemoan deteriorating conditions. The alternative demands reclaiming democracy as a dynamic process requiring sustained engagement, critical oversight, and meaningful participation.

Voting transcends symbolism or ritual. It serves as our primary instrument against governmental stagnation and mismanagement. Without robust voter participation, administrations operate with diminishing legitimacy, institutions decay unchecked, and promises remain perpetually unrealised.

So what now? The critical question facing citizens between electoral cycles demands more than passive observation. The sobering reality confronting every Mosotho is self-reliance. Yet this should not inspire despair but galvanise agency. We cannot await external intervention. Our salvation lies in collective action. While challenges mount, we retain the power to effect change.

Firstly, demand transparency and accountability. Your parliamentary representative is not a distant figure in Maseru but your direct advocate. Question their decisions. Demand explanations. Government ministries and local councils must face direct citizen scrutiny through formal petitions, correspondence, and public demands that create undeniable records.

Secondly, mobilise around concrete issues beyond party politics. Religious institutions, youth organisations, labour unions, and community associations provide natural platforms for collective action. When unified voices address infrastructure, employment, education, or basic services, leadership must respond. When civil society and independent media expose malfeasance, active citizen support strengthens their impact.

Thirdly, take ownership of civic education. Do not wait for last-minute IEC workshops. Engage family members, colleagues, and community networks. Send a WhatsApp chain message like our parents used to. Have discussions during tulo ea mokhatlo oa likhooho. Emphasise our collective role in democratic governance – that leadership accountability begins with informed voter participation. Each conversation strengthens democratic foundations.

Finally, prepare deliberately for electoral participation. Low turnout perpetuates systemic failures. Research candidates thoroughly, evaluate past performance, and scrutinise parliamentary voting records. Reject superficial campaign promises and temporary inducements. Most crucially, participate. Converting frustration into electoral engagement represents the first step toward meaningful change.

Accountability extends beyond leadership obligations to citizens. It hinges on our persistent, unwavering demands for transparency and action from those in power. We cannot afford to be silent passengers while the bus goes over the cliff. Your elected officials should be making the noise on your behalf. But if they will not, then you must.

Mangoane M'phuthi (she/her) is a writer, communications specialist, and activist for gender equality. She focuses on socio-political issues, gender and civic participation, with a particular interest in amplifying youth and women's voices in Southern Africa.

Boost for grassroots rugby

Seabata Mahao

In a significant show of international support for grassroots sport, the United Kingdom, through its High Commission in Lesotho, donated a substantial consignment of rugby equipment to the Lesotho Rugby Academy on Monday during a handover ceremony held in Maseru.

The donation, facilitated by UK-based charity Kid Aid SOS, comprised approximately 30 boxes of rugby kits, including jerseys, boots, and balls, intended to bolster the Academy's nationwide efforts to develop the sport among young Basotho.

Speaking at the event, British High Commissioner to Lesotho, Her Excellency Martine Sobey, commended the Lesotho Rugby Academy for its commitment to youth development through sport.

"Rugby is more than just a game it teaches unity, discipline, and resilience," said Sobey.

"I wish the Lesotho Rugby Academy continued success in their mission to mentor young players. Sports play a vital role in uniting communities and engaging youth in positive activities."

She further emphasised the importance of equitable distribution of the gear, urging the Academy's leadership to ensure the equipment reaches all intended beneficiaries across the country.

Kid Aid SOS, the organisation behind the donation, was founded in 2001 and has since focused on equipping underserved communities around the world with sports equipment and apparel. Their partnership with Lesotho Rugby Academy dates back to 2014.

Litšitso Motšeremeli, representing the Academy, expressed gratitude for the ongoing support from the UK, revealing that the Academy receives two shipments of gear annually from Kid Aid SOS.

"We have also established partnerships with rugby clubs in the UK, and some have shown interest in recruiting our players to compete abroad. Though some players were set to travel to Wales, documentation delays have stalled the process. However, preparations are underway to ensure they eventually make the trip," Motšeremeli said.

Motšeremeli also highlighted the Academy's expanding international connections, with support now flowing from rugby clubs in Australia and Wales.

The newly donated gear will be distributed across the districts where the Lesotho Rugby Academy operates, supporting training and competitions held under its umbrella.

Founded in 2014, the Lesotho Rugby Academy has grown into a vital institution promoting rugby in schools and communities across the country. It is an active participant in the Econet Rugby League, which is set to resume this coming weekend after a lengthy hiatus.

Rugby fans can look forward to an exciting return, as the Maseru Warriors men's and women's teams prepare to host the Mabita Gorillas at their home ground.

Kick4Life women maintain perfect start with second straight win

Reigning champions Kick4Life Women squad

Seabata Mahao

Reigning champions Kick4Life Women continued their strong title defence in the 2024/2025 Women's Super League with a composed 2–0 away victory over LMPS at the PTC Ground on Sunday, securing their second consecutive win of the new season.

The result cements Kick4Life's place at the top of the league table with six points from two matches, following their emphatic 7–0 win over Mphaki Ladies on the opening weekend.

As early-season form begins to shape the league narrative, Kick4Life are making a bold statement that they remain the team to beat.

The weekend's victory also underscores Kick4Life's growing dominance in Lesotho women's football. The club recently represented the nation at the CAF Women's Champions League qualifiers, gaining valuable experience against top-tier African clubs, exposure that appears to be paying dividends domestically.

Speaking after the match, Kick4Life Assistant Coach Teboho Takisi credited the team's continental campaign for their early-season sharpness.

"We learned a lot during the African club competition, including high-level organisation, competing against strong teams, and adapting to international playing standards," said Takisi.

"We are focused on collecting maximum points each game to retain our title and return to the continental stage."

In what's shaping up to be a competitive season, traditional powerhouses LDF Ladies are also in pursuit of glory. They picked up a narrow 1–0 win over Lijabatho Ladies to sit second on the table, just behind Kick4Life on goal difference.

LDF's campaign had opened with a crucial 1–0 victory over Berea Ladies, another club vying for top honours, suggesting a tight title race could unfold.

LDF Ladies head coach Lire Phiri remains optimistic about his side's trajectory, noting that consistency will be key.

"This year, our objective is to work hard and bring back the glory days by winning the league again. We are treating every match as a final and aiming to avoid the mistakes that cost us last season."

Elsewhere in Week 2 action, Berea Ladies bounced back from their opening-day loss with a dominant 7–3 win over Mphaki Ladies, while Bokamoso Ladies edged out Villa Ladies 4–3 in a thrilling encounter. Mawes Ladies also opened their account with a 2–0 win against FC Stoko.

Women's Super League – Week 2 Results:

Kick4Life Women 2 – 0 LMPS FC
LDF Ladies FC 1 – 0 Lijabatho Ladies FC
Berea Ladies FC 7 – 3 Mphaki Ladies FC
Bokamoso Ladies FC 4 – 3 Villa Ladies FC
Mawes Ladies FC 2 – 0 FC Stoko

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Vicious battle in LeFA's presidential race

Seabata Mahao

The stage is set for what promises to be a fiercely contested showdown in Lesotho's football leadership as the Lesotho Football Association (LeFA) prepares to hold its presidential elections tomorrow, on October 25.

The contest will once again pit incumbent president Advocate Salemane Phafane KC against a more determined and battle-ready Maseru District Football Association (DiFA)'s president and Machokha Football Club boss, Lijane Nthunya.

LeFA's Secretary General, Mokhosi Mohapi, confirmed on Wednesday that Phafane and Nthunya are the only two candidates vying for the top post, setting up a rematch of the 2021 election, where Phafane triumphed by a wide margin, 42 votes to 7.

This year, however, the political landscape has shifted dramatically. Unlike the 2021 contest, Nthunya has emerged as a formidable challenger with momentum building behind his campaign.

"Nthunya is determined to make the contest far more competitive this time," sources within the football fraternity revealed, hinting at growing support for the DiFA Maseru president among some district delegates.

Insiders suggest that what was once seen as a foregone conclusion may now be genuinely up for grabs.

Mohapi further announced that the elections will be conducted by LeFA's own staff, a decision that has sparked quiet murmurs within certain football constituencies. He compared the arrangement to the "Confederation of African Football (CAF)'s system of managing its own elections."

"The elections will be handled internally, provided our staff have the capacity," Mohapi explained. "If they do not, we may engage the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) to assist."

Pressed on reports that some districts are uneasy about this approach but fear speaking out due to possible victimisation, Mohapi maintained that LeFA's statutes empower the constituencies themselves to propose changes.

"If members are unhappy with how elections are run, they can amend the statutes at Congress," he said.

In total, 52 votes will determine the future leadership of Lesotho football. The breakdown is as follows: District Football Associations (10) – 30 votes; LeFA National Executive Committee (8) – 8 votes; and Other Football Structures (7 bodies) – 14 votes. Among these influential voting blocs are the Coaches Association, LEPSA, LISA, LUCSA, PLMC, Referees Association, and Women's Football, each carrying two votes.

Advocate Phafane, who has been at the helm of LeFA for over two decades, is widely regarded as one of the most experienced sports administrators in the country. His leadership has been marked by stability and the association's strong ties with CAF and FIFA.

Nthunya, however, has emerged as a genuine contender, positioning himself as the candidate of reform and calling for a more inclusive, transparent, and development-oriented football administration.

His previous defeat has not deterred him; if anything, it appears to have galvanized his campaign and sharpened his message. The challenger has been working the districts methodically, building relationships and presenting a compelling vision that is resonating with delegates hungry for change.